

**JUNE 2010
FINAL VERSION**



**A Vision for Linlithgow
2010-2030**
Linlithgow Civic Trust

	Page
Introduction	3
SECTION A	
Strengths, Problems, Threats and Opportunities	3
Linlithgow's Strengths	3
The Main Problems, Needs and Unfulfilled Potential	3
Threats to the Environment and Well-being of Linlithgow	4
Map 1 – Current and Future Housing Development, under Council's Restraint Policy	5
Opportunities to Remedy the Situation	7
SECTION B	
A Plan for Action	8
1. Built/Archaeological Heritage and Tourism	
Heritage	8
Tourism	10
2. Business and Employment	
13	
3. Housing	
14	
4. Transport and Accessibility	
16	
5. Retailing and Town Centre	
22	
6. Community, Sports, Education & Health Facilities and Open Space	
Community Facilities and Open Space	24
Green Wedges and Other Development Free Areas	24
Youth Provision	24
Education	25
Health	25
7. Environmental Sustainability	
27	
8. Implementation	
27	
Appendix One	
Linlithgow Civic Trust Policy on Town Expansion, 2000	29
Map 2 – Proposals Map and List of Proposals	30

Introduction

Linlithgow Civic Trust prepared its original *Vision for Linlithgow 2005-2015* document as a constructive response to the finalised draft of the West Lothian Local Plan. Unfortunately, its contents were largely ignored by the Council and the Reporters at the Public Local Inquiry on the grounds that the provisions of the *Vision for Linlithgow* envisaged, and depended upon, growth of the town to an extent greater than that permitted by the strategic development plan ('Structure Plan') for Edinburgh and the Lothians.

The West Lothian Local Plan, was adopted as the local development plan covering the town of Linlithgow on 13 January 2009, was strongly believed to give little or no benefit to the town over the following ten to fifteen years - indeed it seems likely to perpetuate and worsen present-day problems of congestion and under-capacity in local services. Of course, much has recently been achieved at a detailed level through the activities of the

Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Town Management Group, but its ability to tackle the major problems in the town are fairly limited, particularly as the effects on public expenditure of the 'financial downturn' become manifest.

2010 sees the opportunity to influence the 'strategic' planning policies affecting Linlithgow, the abovementioned Structure Plan for Edinburgh and the Lothians being up for review with a view to replacement by a new Strategic Development Plan for South-East Scotland. The first public consultation stage for the strategic development plan related to a Major Issues Report, issued in June 2010. The *Vision for Linlithgow 2010-2030*, amended after local consultation, forms the basis of the Civic Trust's submission at this initial stage of consultation and we hope that the detailed proposals will then be incorporated in subsequent Local Plans.

SECTION A - STRENGTHS, PROBLEMS, THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Linlithgow's Strengths

The attractiveness of Linlithgow as a place to live and work is well-known to its 14,000 residents. It has a strong sense of identity as an ancient royal burgh and as the traditional county town of West Lothian (formerly known as Linlithgowshire). Its pleasant lochside situation, its hilly rural surroundings and its wealth of historic buildings and features give the town a unique character, making it one of the most attractive towns in central Scotland.

Linlithgow has a strong feeling of community, as indicated by the enthusiastic continuation of traditions such as the Marches and its support for countless voluntary organisations and groups. Its location convenient for Edinburgh, Glasgow, Livingston and the industrial towns of Stirlingshire has caused it to become a popular commuter town, more than trebling its population over the past fifty years. The standards of housing and education are notably high.

2. The Main Problems, Needs and Unfulfilled Potential

It is clear that recent over-development, without obvious benefits to the community, has meant that the town's infrastructure and services are struggling to cope. On the other hand, there has been under-investment to cater for the housing needs of the less well-off and in improvements to capitalise on the town's historic environment. This has meant that the advantages of Linlithgow as a place to live are being eroded.

The lack of educational capacity has been, and possibly still is, being used by West Lothian Council as a crude means of controlling development in Linlithgow. At the same time, the rise in house prices and consequent increase in the value of potential housing land have, even at time of economic recession, created a high residential 'hope value' for practically every commercial/industrial site in the town.

The main problems or issues needing resolution can be listed as follows:

1. Roads, Parking and Transport - A basic problem is traffic congestion, mainly in the High Street, exacerbated by lack of westbound access to the M9 at Burghmuir. There is a lack of adequate parking facilities in the town centre, and problems associated with commuter car parking are experienced in the streets around the railway station. Bus services, which could otherwise help to combat a strong reliance on the private car, are limited, both within the town, and to Livingston and Glasgow.

2. Education - Generally speaking, there is insufficient capacity in the schools to cater for the existing and future population of the town, and this has been used as a means of controlling or preventing town expansion. Up till now, parents of school-age children have frequently had to worry whether their local school would be able to accommodate their children. The Council has recently decided to increase the pupil capacity of Linlithgow Academy (but not the feeder primary schools) to cater mainly for housing development outwith the town.

3. Heritage/Townscape - Whilst the potential is there, and despite some good improvements to street furniture, signage and floral displays, the town centre of Linlithgow does not compare favourably with other similar historic towns in Scotland in terms of street/pavement surfaces (unacceptably poor in many cases), street lighting columns, condition of buildings, parking arrangements, etc. Unfortunately, the Council is going ahead with paving, etc proposals for the High Street which, although welcome, are less comprehensive than those now extant in similar Outstanding Conservation Areas throughout the United Kingdom.

4. Social-rented and Affordable Housing - There have been no social-rented 'mainstream' houses built in Linlithgow since the 1975 local government reorganisation and still there are no plans to cater for local needs, despite a new Council House building programme which has been successful elsewhere in West Lothian. Recently, the average waiting time for a Council house in Linlithgow stood at approximately eight years. House prices in Linlithgow are also high, making it very difficult, if not impossible, for people of limited means to acquire suitable property in the town.

5. Youth Provision - There is a lack of accessible services for young people in Linlithgow and, despite the achievements of the LLYP, a lack of support and resources for existing projects.

6. Lack of Realisation of Business Opportunities – More encouragement for small business is needed, taking advantage of modern technology to improve local business diversity, to make the town less vulnerable to downturns in the economy, to minimise commuting, and to realise the potential for high-end technological and consultancy businesses close to Edinburgh, Glasgow and the airport.

7. Tourist Potential - Linlithgow's potential to attract more tourists, based mainly on the history, heritage and

physical attractiveness of the town, is recognised in the West Lothian Local Plan. However, the plan does not address the "promotion of the district as a visitor destination" through any sort of proposals which recognise that Linlithgow has, by far, the greatest potential for increased tourism in the part of West Lothian administered by West Lothian Council. Linlithgow needs to be marketed more in Edinburgh – a place full of tourists who could easily come for a day trip – and a good tourist information centre is a must.

8. Shopping - The town's High Street shopping area suffers from poor vehicular access, inadequate off street car parking provision, excessive through traffic which detracts from the enjoyment of using /visiting the retail area, problems with traditional on-pavement parking and lack of rear service facilities. Recent edge-of-town shopping developments are adversely affecting High Street businesses.

9. Health Facilities - Existing health provision in Linlithgow is inadequate to cater for the inevitable rise in the town's population which will result from even the infill development permitted by the West Lothian Local Plan. This may be exacerbated by an emphasis on 'flatted' development, much of which will be occupied by senior citizens.

10. Community and Cultural Facilities – Although the refurbishment of the Burgh Halls, to form an arts centre for the area, has been completed to a high standard in 2010, this has resulted in a loss of much-needed community meeting rooms and a less extensive tourist information facility than formerly existed in the building.

11. Environmental Sustainability – As an overarching theme, the Vision also has to address the need to conserve resources through such matters as encouragement of walking, cycling and public transport, minimisation of waste, local business and employment, consumption of local produce, and housing design.

3. Threats to the Environment and Well-being of Linlithgow

The main threats to the future of Linlithgow could be regarded as a failure to comprehensively address the problems outlined above - such a failure is the main criticism of the adopted West Lothian Local Plan.

From 'Restraint' to Neglect

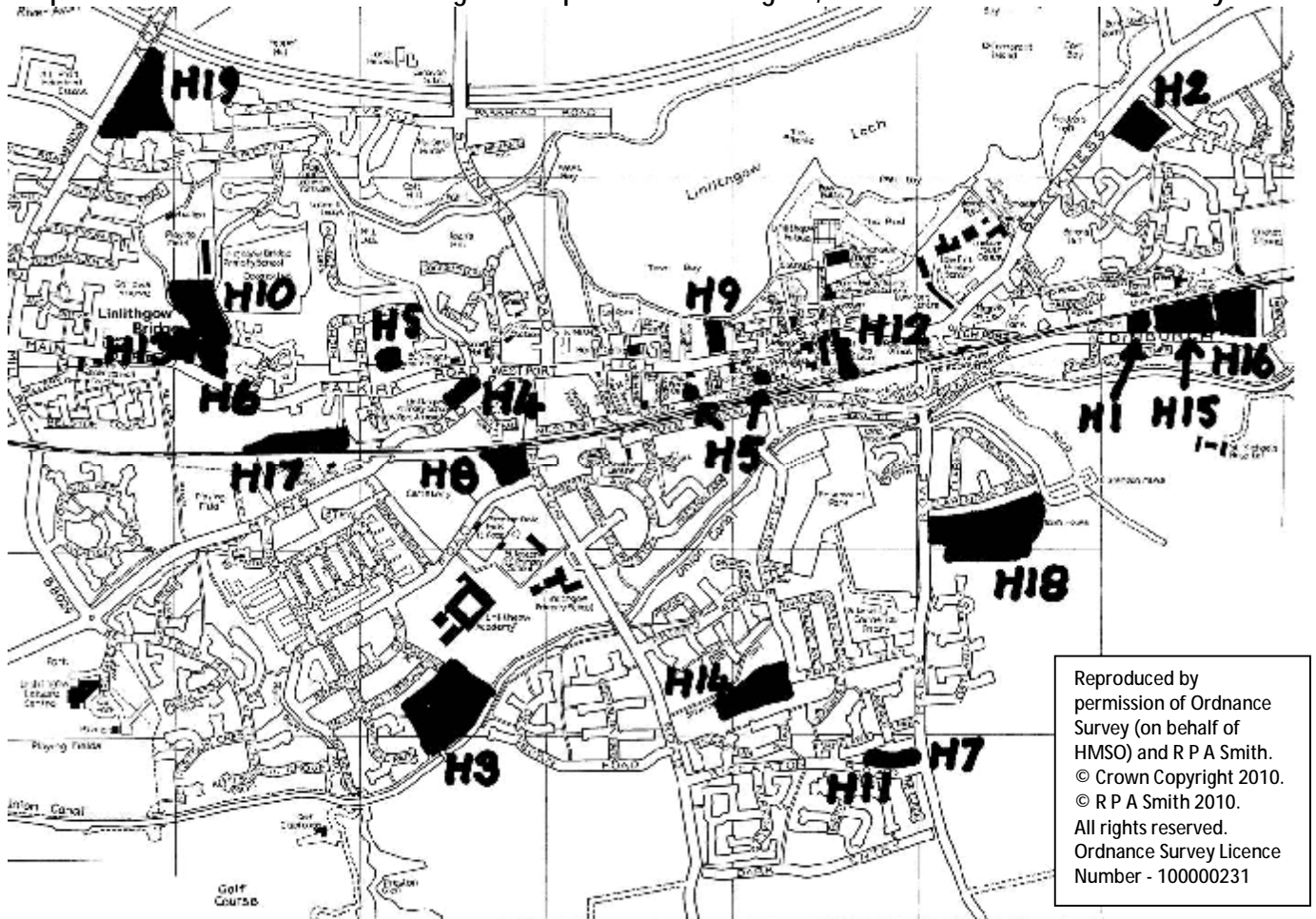
In recent years, West Lothian Council has operated a policy of development 'restraint', despite which many hundreds of extra houses have been built, leading to the problems outlined above. This appears from the Council's Local Plan to be moving from restraint to neglect, when compared with other communities in West Lothian, albeit some very welcome cosmetic improvements, as mentioned above, are being made. This 'restraint' strategy is indefensible if West Lothian Council sees Linlithgow as a vibrant and well-functioning community.

Yet More Housing without Community Benefit

The Council's new Local Plan does not signal any change to the control of 'infill' housing development in Linlithgow (although, against that, the Council's recent decision to increase the roll of Linlithgow Academy seems somewhat perverse!). Taking into account around 250 houses under construction or completed since the 2005 *Vision*, and all the sites likely to become available in the next few years, there are likely to be around 600 extra house completions (see Map 1 with accompanying table. This could represent a potential population increase of approaching 10% and demonstrates the sheer scale of housing development taking place in Linlithgow despite the Council's planning policies of 'restraint'.

The continued determination of piecemeal planning applications for the hundreds of houses in the pipeline

Map 1 – Current and Future Housing Development in Linlithgow, under Current ‘Restraint’ Policy



Category of Site	Site ref on Map	Description of Site	No. of houses
Housing completed since last version of the 'Vision', 2005	H1	Builder's yard, Edinburgh Road	14
	H2	Kinloch View	65
	H3	Braehead Place	25
	H4	Old School Court (West Port)	23
	H5	Highfield House and Union Road	4
	H6	Broomyhill Place, Linlithgow Bridge	42
	H7	Riccarton Drive	1
	H8	Prestonfield Gardens, Braehead Road	64
	H9	Lochside Mews (bakery/tannery site)	10
Sub-total for housing built since last 'Vision'			248
Other potential sites in accordance with adopted West Lothian Local Plan	H10	East Mill Road, Linlithgow Bridge	15
	H11	Riccarton Drive	4
	H12	Bus Depot Site, High Street	34
	H13	West of Murco petrol station	40
	H14	Westerlea	10
	H15	Petrol station site, Edinburgh Road	64
	H16	Whisky bond next to the above	50
	H17	Sawmill site, Falkirk Road	40?
	H18	Clarendon House and grounds	40?
	H19	Mill Road (East)	40
		Various infills/conversions	10
Sub-total for other potential sites			347
GRAND TOTAL			595

cannot solve any of the town's problems and will only worsen them. Over the past few years, such an approach has provided none of the community benefits that such a scale of development could have potentially brought to the town. Instead, the disadvantages of congestion, potential gridlock, loss of amenity and inadequate educational provision look set to continue unless a different approach is taken.

Effects of Proposals for expanding Winchburgh into a New Town

The West Lothian Local Plan (in accordance with the Structure Plan) introduced an element of uncertainty, which could have greater or lesser effects on Linlithgow, by proposing Winchburgh/North Broxburn as a 'Core Development Area' for around 5,000 houses without first securing definite agreement on provision of a railway station or an interchange with the M9. Indeed, a planning application was submitted over five years ago for the expansion of Winchburgh, although the railway station (albeit supported by Linlithgow Civic Trust) seems to be a long-term prospect depending on the construction of the rail link to Edinburgh Airport via Dalmeny. The Council only 'safeguards' the possibility of a motorway junction (Policy TRAN 28) within the context of the Scottish Executive's policy, as contained in 'Scottish Planning Policy SPP17 - Planning for Transport', that there is a general presumption against completely new motorway or trunk road junctions. These transport issues cast doubt on the Council's proposals to expand Winchburgh.

The Council's draft Local Plan has effectively established a precedent for large-scale housing development in the 'M9 corridor' which could logically transfer to Linlithgow if the motorway link and railway station could not be provided at Winchburgh. If, on the other hand, the Winchburgh development proceeds, the necessary establishment of a non-denominational secondary school in the 'new town' would effectively release capacity at Linlithgow Academy and potentially allow further housing development at Linlithgow.

Effects of Potential Large-Scale Developments at Bo'ness and Whitecross

Although outwith the boundaries of the area administered by West Lothian Council, possible large-scale housing developments at Bo'ness (around the harbour) and at Whitecross are even closer to Linlithgow than Winchburgh. The Bo'ness waterfront proposal is for 700 houses plus marina, etc by ING. At Whitecross, Morston Assets Ltd is proposing 1,500 new houses on the derelict sites at Manuel Works and greenfield sites around Whitecross village. This project has been selected as an exemplar project by the Scottish Government's Sustainable Communities Initiative, but the practical effects of such designation in bringing the works forward are unclear. Although there may be a question mark over the delivery of these projects for the

time being, mainly because of the amount of expensive ground remediation and preparation that will be required, they will, if implemented in isolation, add to congestion and parking problems in Linlithgow, particularly with regard to those wishing to drive into the town and commute from the railway station.

Effects of Edge-of-Town Retail Developments

The Stockbridge Retail Park, off Falkirk Road, has had an undoubted detrimental effect on the High Street shops. Loss of trade was originally estimated to amount to up to a sixth of the existing revenue, but this is hard to quantify overall. Some businesses have been severely affected, but some new ones have opened. Certainly, the car park and the traffic-controlled junction on Falkirk Road can be extremely busy. A more recent threat has arisen from the possibility of a large new supermarket on the 'Boghall East' site off Blackness Road, towards the town's eastern outskirts. Such a proposal would have an extremely detrimental impact on town centre retailers, particularly if it led to the closure of the existing Tesco store in the Regent Centre. The local community has galvanised its opposition to the supermarket, but no planning application has yet been submitted.

Burgh Halls Refurbishment

Conversion of the Burgh Halls into a very impressive county-wide arts centre (while admirable in itself) has reduced the amount of accommodation available for local community activities, and a lack of available kitchen facilities and bar license opportunities will curtail traditional events. The loss of the self-contained tourist information centre formerly based in the building, if permanent, will also be counter-productive, and the opening of a commercial café could adversely affect existing High Street businesses.

Loss of County-wide Administrative Functions

The retention of the County Buildings as an important office of West Lothian Council is very welcome, thus perpetuating Linlithgow's traditional role as (an) administrative centre for West Lothian. However, the Sheriff Court and Procurator Fiscal did move to Livingston in August 2009, and trade for local businesses has declined as a result. New uses are awaited for the relevant buildings.

High, and Increasing, Car Use

Like it or not, the private car plays an important role in the daily lives of most Linlithgow residents. Linlithgow has high car ownership and many households have two, or more, cars. As the town grows, so does the need to use the car to get to the station and for local journeys to the town centre. The lack of an effective local bus service and the distances involved lead to increased car use. This has been made worse by the retail park at Stockbridge, which spreads out the shopping zone beyond practical walking distances and by recent housing developments in Bo'ness, commuting residents from which drive to Linlithgow each working day to catch the train.



4. Opportunities to Remedy the Situation

Because the point of no return has been passed, there appear to be only three options, and the choice is stark:-

- a) Continuing the poorly-implemented and probably futile policy of 'restraint' as proposed in the Council's finalised Local Plan (accompanied by extensive lobbying of the Council and other public agencies for relatively minor improvements); or
- b) Relying on public authorities and other initiatives to respond to the town's needs, providing new infrastructure as required without it having to be related to new housing development (fairly unlikely in the light of the emerging economic climate); or
- c) Recognising that significant town expansion is inevitable, and making maximum effort to extract community benefit from that inevitability (see the 2000 Civic Trust policy statement in Appendix One) - a more radical, balanced approach might conceivably address all of the problems and threats outlined in parts 2 and 3 of Section A of this document.

All of these options could be supplemented by other ways of raising funding, including the establishment of a Community Interest Trust.

Linlithgow Civic Trust does not favour significant new development *per se*. The prospect of further large scale residential development will cause considerable concern to many people, on the basis of their current experience of the increasing strains under which the town operates.

However, with housing land in the Linlithgow area probably worth at least £1,100,000 per hectare (£440,000 per acre), there exists the potential for some of that value to be transferred into town improvements through 'planning gain'. In other words, planning permission for a fixed extent of housing development could be conditional on the provision of a list of priority community requirements which might include:

- adequate educational capacity;
- a four-way junction at Burghmuir;
- traffic reductions in, and environmental improvements to, the High Street (would need new road to divert traffic);
- a solution to the car parking problem related to Linlithgow railway station;
- the construction of enough social-rented housing to cater for the needs of the community.
- provision of a range of housing choice to ensure access to affordable housing for first time buyers, currently resident within Linlithgow;
- provision of adequate range of youth facilities; and
- provision of enhanced health service facilities.

The price would be a significant residential land release on the east and/or south-east outskirts of the town, programmed and phased as part of the one overall masterplan for the development area, as advocated extensively in planning advice from the Scottish Government. Planning permission related to such a masterplan would have to be dependent on West Lothian Council being satisfied that adequate funding, plans and associated programmes were in place to ensure that all the priority community requirements were provided before the start of the residential developments. The scale of the developments on the town outskirts would be much reduced if all relevant infill developments in the pipeline could be tied into the overall development package through policies in the West Lothian Local Plan. The alternative would be a community which continues to creak under the strain of inadequate infrastructure, and with unfulfilled potential as a business centre, as a distinctive specialist retail centre and/or as a key tourism focus in the Central Belt.

Do nothing/do the minimum is a distinctly unattractive option.

SECTION B - A PLAN FOR ACTION

The continued determination of unco-ordinated planning applications and the perpetuation of the present problems are unsustainable, as proved by experience over the past thirty years. Inevitable large-scale growth should be properly planned and managed, with a clear link between extra housing development and community benefit to the people of Linlithgow. It is a prerequisite that no further infill housing development and no expansion whatsoever beyond the present town boundaries would be acceptable unless it formed part of a comprehensive plan which forced the developers to carry out (or, in the case of infill developments, contribute to) the priority community requirements as outlined above.

The overall aim would be to keep and enhance the town of Linlithgow as a reasonably balanced community, combining the following roles:-

- A commuter and residential town - continuing to attract new residents (preferably with more local employment) and catering for the needs of existing residents
- A tourism town - making the most of the potential to attract more visitors
- A business community – with much more emphasis on promoting more local employment opportunities
- A specialist retail centre - capitalising on the existing range of small, privately-owned shops.

At the outset, it will be necessary for West Lothian Council to address two basic concerns:-

- Development and delivery of a comprehensive transportation strategy for the town and its setting,

primarily addressing the problems of through traffic in the High Street, and car parking; and

- Provision of adequate educational infrastructure, sufficient to indefinitely support an expanded population to a level to be determined.

The proposals of the 'Vision for Linlithgow' are set out under similar (relevant) headings to those in the adopted West Lothian Plan, namely:

1. Built/Archaeological Heritage and Tourism
2. Employment
3. Housing
4. Transport and Accessibility
5. Retailing and Town Centre
6. Community, Sports, Education & Health Facilities and Open Space
7. Environmental Sustainability
8. Implementation

Under each heading, all proposals are accompanied by an analysis of the present situation, needs and opportunities, giving reasoned justification. The proposals are all numbered, giving easy reference to the proposals map (Map 2) at the end of the document. In some cases, alternatives are indicated.

At the end, before Map 2 and the Appendix, is a section on the implementation of the plan and how the implementation of the proposals could be scrutinised and monitored. This includes a table indicating proposals which might be financed directly by housing development. Other projects would generally be self-financing.

1. Built/Archaeological Heritage and Tourism

As previously stated, Linlithgow's attractiveness as a tourist destination is inextricably linked to its history and built heritage. The heritage aspects are considered first, followed by 'Tourism' under a separate heading.

Heritage

Linlithgow is often quoted as being the 'jewel in the crown' of West Lothian, and includes the only conservation area in West Lothian designated as 'outstanding' by the Scottish Government. The superb juxtaposition of Linlithgow Palace, St Michael's Parish Church, the Peel, the Loch and the ancient Royal Burgh make it one of Scotland's most attractive towns. Strict development and advertisement control continues to preserve the historic fabric (although not, unfortunately, in relation to the Vennel and West Port flats), and some, good-quality streetscape work has been carried out at the Cross, leading up Kirkgate to the Palace.

A new Heritage Trail is being established, street furniture

and sign-posting have recently been improved, and the joint efforts of the Civic Trust's Burgh Beautiful campaign and West Lothian Council have added colour to the town centre through floral displays. In late 2009, West Lothian Council was successful in securing a Scottish Government grant for town centre improvements, including £857,000 for Linlithgow. This sum is being immediately spent on a range of projects including the improvement of some of the High Street paving (some in Caithness stone), more new street furniture, upgrading the Rose Garden, the Heritage Trail interpretation boards, a service bridge to the Peel, and a public art feature (sundial and seating) at the West Port. Unfortunately, these commendable works, while a good start, are insufficient to comprehensively address the overall issues of street design, pavement surfaces, street lighting columns, condition of buildings and so on, to an extent that compares favourably with the environment of other similar historic towns in Scotland. The approach to the railway station from the High Street could be given

greater prominence, while the area could be improved to give visitors a better first impression of the town.

Further upgrading of the High Street in particular (but also of some of the wynds and footpaths leading southwards) is vital to make the best of the historic environment, to help sustain the shops from competition elsewhere, and to set the scene for floral enhancement. Because of the great importance given to quality street/pavement surfaces and street furniture in Beautiful Scotland and similar competitions, Linlithgow, with its remaining tarmac pavements in the High Street, is greatly handicapped by the lack of a street environment which has almost become the norm in today's historic towns.



View of Annet House showing, in the foreground, paving currently undergoing welcome replacement. However, the tarmac pavement immediately in front of the building gives it a poor setting, partly because of its material and partly because of its restricted width.

Other historic towns throughout Scotland have benefitted from generous grant aid from organisations such as Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund, including Queensferry, Dunbar, Leith, Montrose, the Trongate area of Glasgow, West Wemyss, Dumbarton, and nearby Bo'ness, to name but a few. Towns from Wick in the north, to Dumfries in the south, have benefited from quality improvements to their High Streets.

Although West Lothian Council is carrying out a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Linlithgow Palace and High Street Conservation Area (which will identify improvement opportunities and is mentioned as Policy HER 18 in the West Lothian Local Plan), it has no budget allocation for a townscape heritage improvement, nor does one seem likely in the short or medium term. Even the provision of 'heritage' lampposts, as recently introduced at the West Port and at Blackness Road/Low Port, is unlikely to be extended along the High Street in the foreseeable future. Such columns could carry prominent floral decoration, greatly enhancing the town centre over the summer months.

Because of lack of Council commitment, the following essential proposal is included in the package of (part) developer-funded town improvements:-

Proposal B1 - Townscape Heritage Initiative/ Conservation Area Enhancement

Upgrading of street/pavement surfaces in the High Street, wynds and links up to the Station/Union Canal to the standards of other historic towns,

installation/completion of a more suitable, consistent style of street furniture including street lighting columns, improvement of the condition/appearance of buildings which have been allowed to fall into poor repair or are out of keeping (including potentially the Victoria Hall and Vennel flats), provision for a greater element of floral decoration, tree planting, revision to parking arrangements, shopfront improvements, etc. This would be an extension to the commendable work undertaken to the Cross and the Kirkgate a number of years ago, and present improvements, and could benefit from generous grant aid.

See related proposals:-

T1 Traffic Management to 'Reclaim' the High Street.

Also, it should be noted that Linlithgow Civic Trust supports appropriate redevelopment of the site of the Victoria Hall, re-using suitable architectural details.

Linlithgow Palace

The heritage and tourist potential of Linlithgow Palace has not been fully realised. The expenditure on the reconstruction of the ancient courtyard fountain is welcomed, however spending by Historic Scotland at the Palace is a fraction of that spent at properties such as Stirling and Edinburgh Castles. The Palace contains a room for hire and a retail outlet but there are no interpretative centre or toilets, visitors being directed to the toilets in the Vennel. There is no indication of the likely birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots. There is no co-ordinated dropping off space for tour buses and so these are discouraged from coming to Linlithgow (see Proposal T12).



Proposal B2 - Restoration and Re-use of (parts of) Linlithgow Palace

Provision of a visitor interpretation centre, with adequate toilet provision and access for the disabled is proposed. Entry to the Palace could be from the east through the original main entrance by forming a ramped access from the Peel. Option appraisals are required to investigate the potential of restoring the empty rooms of the North Wing of the Palace and locating appropriate uses there.

Tourism

Visitors to Scotland, and even from within the country, tend to bypass West Lothian whilst travelling to Scotland's better-known destinations such as Edinburgh, Stirling, Glasgow and those further north such as Fife, Perthshire, Inverness and the Hebrides. The 2009 survey of visitors to West Lothian (conducted by Kim Pieper on behalf of VisitWestLothian) showed that 87.5% of visitors to West Lothian were from other parts of Scotland, 60% were on a day trip, 30% were on holiday, and 9% were visiting relatives or friends.

For a community of its size, Linlithgow has a disproportionate wealth of resources of interest to the tourism market. However, the full potential of these resources is not being realised - there is an invaluable opportunity to plan and market Linlithgow as the prime focus of tourism within West Lothian, and to target Linlithgow as the ideal base from which to travel to other major attractions in and around West Lothian. Complemented by its rail links to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling, local bus services and the houseboat holidays on the Union Canal, Linlithgow could ultimately lead on the raising of West Lothian's profile, both nationally and internationally, as a renowned Scottish tourist destination. Linlithgow needs to be marketed more to the myriad of tourists who visit Edinburgh, many of whom could be easily tempted to visit such an attractive town for a day trip.

The Royal Burgh has one of the finest renaissance royal palaces (the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots), the impressive St. Michael's Church, a wealth of other historic architecture and archaeological interest, Linlithgow Loch and the Union Canal offering trips to the Avon Aqueduct and the Falkirk Wheel from the Canal Centre (operated by the Linlithgow Union Canal Society - LUCS). Linlithgow also offers a potentially very attractive high street with a good range of specialist retail outlets (see Retailing and Town Centre section) plus restaurants, tearooms, pubs and carry-out establishments. Other attractions include Linlithgow's Story (Linlithgow Heritage Trust), the interesting local history museum at Annet House and a wealth of outdoor activities such as walking, golf (Linlithgow Golf Club, West Lothian Golf Club and Kingsfield Golf Centre), canoeing, fishing and the 'Go Ape' facility at Beecraigs. Nearby visitor attractions include the Bo'ness & Kinneil (steam) Railway (and railway museum), the Birkhill Clay Mine, Blackness Castle, House of the Binns, Hopetoun House, Cairnpapple, Torphichen Preceptory, and the Beecraigs and Muiravonside Country Parks. Another significant visitor attraction in the pipeline is the proposed relocation of the West Lothian local history library from Blackburn to the County Buildings, Linlithgow, part of the draw being its facilities for genealogical research.

The ancient traditions of Linlithgow could also be a greater draw for visitors - the annual Marches celebrations and associated events. Other, increasing,

notable activities include 'Scotch Hop' events, the Canal Fun Day, historical events at Linlithgow Palace, concerts in St Michael's Parish Church, Celebrate Linlithgow, the Linlithgow Book Festival, the Linlithgow Folk Festival and the Advent Fair. Engendering great civic pride at many of these events are the Linlithgow Reed Band and the Linlithgow Pipe Band. Specialist tours of the area are offered by Linlithgow Tours. Despite the large variety of visitor attractions, tourist accommodation is limited to three small hotels (two graded and one not), one guesthouse (graded) and five graded Bed and Breakfast establishments. Surprisingly, attempts to promote a high-quality hotel on two sites overlooking the east end of Linlithgow Loch have not come to fruition, and the international Laetare Centre, formerly run by the RC Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, has closed.

A good tourist information centre (TIC) is a 'must' for a tourist destination like Linlithgow. However, the former excellent facility within the ground floor of the Burgh Halls, directly facing the Cross and featuring an audio-visual display on the area's tourist attractions, was closed in 2007 and replaced with a less attractive provision in the County Buildings. The former TIC had approximately 17,800 visitors in 2004 (April to October) and arranged in excess of 600 accommodation bookings. In 2010, a replacement facility is being created within the Burgh Halls, and it is considered essential that this will take the form of a fully-staffed and stocked Tourist Information Centre.

Linlithgow is well placed to capitalise on the following trends in the tourism market:-

- The growth of environmental awareness and interest in conservation ('Green' Tourism);
- The growth in seeking a wide range of experiences that are special treats (luxury holidays/alternatives to daily lives including relaxation, cultural and physical pursuits, individual self-fulfilment);
- The rise in demand for short breaks and special interest/activity holidays;
- The growth of interest in ancestry, genealogy and local history;
- The tendency for people to become more discerning about choice and quality in the pursuit of our leisure and tourism activities.

Conclusions - In order to maximise the undoubted tourism potential of the town (and West Lothian as a whole), the following improvements must be given serious consideration:-

- The key to start bringing about improvements to Linlithgow attractiveness to tourists lies in resolution of the High Street traffic congestion/parking problems. See *Transport and Accessibility Section*.
- The excellent range of specialist retail outlets should be a keystone in this regeneration of Linlithgow and promoted as such. See *Retailing and Town Centre Section*.
- The upgrading of the High Street 'public realm' to appropriate standards. See *Proposal B1*.

- The promotion of the use of the Union Canal generally in accordance with "The Union Canal Moorings Study" devised by British Waterways. The aim of the report is to identify points along the canal for more moorings and future areas of expansion. *Proposals B5 and B6 below.*
- A northward extension of Learmonth Gardens (*Proposal B3*) in association with refurbishment of the routes under the railway, both behind the County Buildings and past the railway station (*see Proposal B1*).
- Support for the conversion of the former Sheriff Courthouse into a hotel. *Proposal B7.*
- For Linlithgow to be the focus of tourism within West Lothian, it also requires to have a larger hotel with adequate parking and conference facilities. Rather than a chain hotel, an independently-owned 'theme' hotel might be more appropriate for the promotion of year-round tourism in Linlithgow – for example provision for 'weekend pamper breaks', outdoor pursuits such as cycle hire, horse riding and walking etc. *Proposal B8 for Clarendon House below – also see proposal R2.*
- Restoration/upgrading of the facilities at the Carmelite Friary. *Proposal B4.*
- Completion of preparations for the town's Heritage Trail, including the fixing of markers to the places of interest and the erection of interpretation boards at the West Port, The Cross, and the east end of the High Street.



Recent finger posts pointing to places of interest.

- Review and extension of the Council's proposals to relocate its local history library from Blackburn to a 'Heritage Hub' in the County Buildings, possibly with consideration of the best location for the storage of the Council's own archives and the transfer of appropriate materials from the National Archives of Scotland.
- Restoration of the Tourist Information Centre to its former location in the ground floor of the Burgh Halls. As a prime focus for tourism, it is an essential facility to advertise the attractions of the whole of West Lothian. *Proposal B9.*

- Continuing to raise the community's awareness of the significance of Linlithgow's heritage assets to enhance civic pride and support promotion of the town.
- Inclusion of a prominent detour via Linlithgow on the Round-the-Forth cycle route being developed by Sustrans and relevant local authorities, with Scottish Executive financial support.
- Creation of a 'Round Linlithgow' walk/cycle recreational route, suitable for families with young children and for tourists, and publicised through a leaflet/map.

To co-ordinate and execute these required improvements, it is suggested a management group would require to be set up and co-ordinated by Pride & Passion Linlithgow, and including all major interests in the town including retailers, the community councils, Linlithgow Civic Trust, British Waterways, Linlithgow Heritage Trust, LUCS and all other groups and societies with an interest of the well being of the town, plus the West Lothian Tourism Forum. Comprehensive marketing leaflets for the town and its places to eat have been produced by Pride & Passion as an early priority, together with the installation of two webcams (at The Cross and the Canal Basin), the establishment of the Linlithgow.com website, and progress is being made towards creating 'visitor information points' in existing tourist facilities. The West Lothian Tourism Forum is a voluntary trade association that works to promote tourism in west Lothian and to represent the interests of the tourist trade. West Lothian Council has also established a 'destination management organisation' (VisitWest-Lothian) which will have its own business development officer, leaflet and website.

Proposals leading from the above are as follows:

*Proposal B3 - Extension of Learmonth Gardens
Upgrading of the area north of the doocot.*

Proposal B4 - Upgrading of facilities at Carmelite Friary

Restoration and upgrading of interpretative boards, etc; upgrading of pathway through to Rosemount Park.

Although the West Lothian Local Plan includes a general policy (ENV17) to encourage canal-side development at Linlithgow, no actual opportunities are identified and there is no site delineated on the Proposals Map, simply because no suitable opportunities exist within the built-up area, without spoiling what is there already. Furthermore, any possible sites on the south bank of the canal to the east of Manse Road would be outwith the existing settlement boundary and within the conservation area, perhaps, on the face of it, under present circumstances, ruling out any development at all.

In accordance with the West Lothian Local Plan statement (paragraph 3.49a), it is agreed that the Clarendon/St Michael's Hospital area is likely to offer the best opportunities for canal related development in Linlithgow, but their scale, location, access and design

parameters would be better established through the Local Plan process, rather than in response to one-off planning applications. The canal bank between Manse Road and St Michael's Hospital should ideally be kept free of development (see proposal R3 and policy proposals for 'green wedges'), but ground below the hospital itself would lend itself to carefully-designed development, sympathetic to the conservation area. Even greater potential exists eastwards towards Park Farm where a marina development has been suggested in the "Union Canal Moorings Study" for British Waterways.

Proposal B5 - Canalside Facilities near St Michael's Hospital

Proposal B6 - Canal Marina near Park Farm

On the site below St Michael's Hospital, possible facilities could include a small hotel, a pub/café/restaurant, marine supplies, boat repair yard, etc. The main vehicular access would have to be taken from the Edinburgh Road, south-east of the canal bridge, via an improved access road, and a footbridge over the canal would be needed to facilitate non-motorised access from the towpath on the north bank. The proposed marina to the east, catering for up to 100 boats, would have direct vehicular access from the Eastern Link Road (Proposal T5).

As stated above, further opportunities for tourist-related development should be pursued. Redundant and soon-to-be-vacated buildings include the Sheriff Courthouse and Clarendon House as per the following proposals.

Proposal B7 - Conversion of Sheriff Courthouse

Current proposals for conversion of the former Sheriff Courthouse into a hotel are supported.

Proposal B8 - Conversion of Clarendon House

Clarendon House, when vacated, should be marketed for conversion into a hotel, preferably not part of a chain, most of its grounds being retained as part of a

larger public park and/or allotments (see proposal R3 and policy proposals for 'green wedges' to be kept free of development).



Clarendon House

Proposal B9 – Tourist Information Centre

The Tourist Information Centre should be restored to its former location on the ground floor of the Burgh Halls.

See related proposal:-

T1 Traffic Management to 'Reclaim' the High Street

2. Business and Employment

Over the past fifty years or so, Linlithgow has progressively lost its traditional industrial base with the closure of paper mills, distillery, etc. Their sites have been redeveloped for housing occupied by commuters to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Grangemouth and elsewhere, reflecting the burgh's transformation into a dormitory town.

The main employers remaining are Sun Microsystems and West Lothian Council, but the trend continues for industrial and commercial businesses throughout the town to close and relocate, to capitalise on the high residential value of their sites. Recent examples have included the former builder's yard, petrol station, etc on Edinburgh Road and the former abattoir at Preston Road, thus increasing the number of houses and decreasing employment opportunities locally.

On the other hand, there is a thriving small business sector in the town, mainly concentrated in the High Street (see also section on 'Retailing & Town Centre'. This is reflected in the existence of the thriving Linlithgow Business Association which strives to promote the town as a successful business location.

The town has particular potential for the establishment of high-tech small business, serving as an attractive base for people who might otherwise commute. The encouragement of such businesses would:

1. establish a better balance of businesses in the town, including a wider range of shops
2. make the town less vulnerable to downturns in the economy
3. minimise commuting and promote local productivity.

Mill Road Industrial Estate is the main focus for new industrial/business development in Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge, and the Vision for Linlithgow endorses the Finalised Local Plan proposal to complete development of the industrial estate. Road access to the industrial estate is not ideal, either through a residential area or via a narrow, winding country road with a very poor access on to the A706 (see Transport and Accessibility Section for proposed solution to this problem - Proposal T3). Better business facilities are desirable, with particular regard to car parking, access to postal services and access to banking services.

Proposal E1 - Completion and Review of Mill Road Industrial Estate

The development of the remaining sites on Mill Road Industrial Estate should be completed, but, in the meantime, a strategic review should be undertaken to improve its efficiency as a business location.

However, the Mill Road Industrial Estate, with its windowless sheds, is perhaps not the ideal environment for many of the high-tech and professional small businesses that the town should attract and foster. Accordingly, other opportunities should be pursued.

The Local Plan already allocates land for further industrial development to the north-east of the present Sun Microsystems factory, but this is an ill-defined site the development of which would establish an unsatisfactory precedent. However, if developed comprehensively, this whole area, extending to the proposed four-way motorway interchange at Burghmuir (see Proposal T2), is seen as the best location for future economic development in the longer term, say the next 20-30 years. Its development potential should be protected from alternative uses such as housing, since a better, more conveniently-located site for large-scale business development is unlikely to present itself. A petrol station in this vicinity would be well-located to cater for motorists passing through the east end of the town.

Proposal E2 - Establishment of Burghmuir Business Park

The whole area between Sun Microsystems and the M9 junction should be reserved for 'high-amenity' business or light industrial development, including offices, hotel, petrol filling station, etc. Vehicular access would be by means of roundabouts on Blackness Road at the east end of Springfield Road, and at the road leading to Kingsfield (Proposal T4). The landscape structure of the site should be established from the outset and high-quality building design should be mandatory (as per Policy EM 8 of the West Lothian Local Plan). The development should be carefully phased to ensure that land is kept in productive agricultural use for as long as possible.

In the meantime, there are three specific proposals for business development:

Proposal E3 - Establishment of Office 'Campus' at Boghall East

The field between Springfield Grange and the eastern end of Springfield Road should be promoted for campus-style office development in accordance with the West Lothian Local Plan. Vehicular access should be taken from at roundabout at Blackness Road/Springfield Road.

Proposal E4 - Establishment of Business Centre at The Cross

Opportunities exist at The Cross for creation of/conversion into office suites for professional businesses. Such development, provided either through conversion of the former 'British Linen Bank' building, or as part of the redevelopment of the bus garage, should include hireable meeting rooms to cater for home-based businesses.

Proposal E5 - Home/Business Accommodation

All substantial new housing developments should be required to include an element of suitably-located home/business accommodation.

3. Housing

The attractive environment of Linlithgow, and its strategic commuting location, mean that owner-occupied housing is in great demand. Since the early 1960s, when Linlithgow Town Council was keen to promote new private housing development, there has been large-scale expansion to the south, south-west and east. Between 1951 and 1991, the population increased from 3,929 to 11,866. During the following ten years of so-called 'development restraint', the population increased still further to 13,370 and is probably now around 14,000. It is interesting to note that, in 2001, there were, in addition, 193 students staying away from home, almost the same as Livingston (209) which had 50,826 inhabitants.

Despite the growth in private housing, there have been no 'mainstream' social-rented houses of any description built in Linlithgow since the abolition of the Town Council in 1975. There has been no housing association activity in that respect. Indeed, there has been a reduction in the number of Council houses as a result of the fairly recent demolition of two blocks of flats in St Ninian's Way. Partly as a result of this, people applying for a Council house in Linlithgow recently had an average wait of eight years (according to the 'Housing Market Context Statement' produced by Communities Scotland in April 2002 – this is probably longer now).

Owing to rising house prices, there are now very few properties within the financial reach of people with modest incomes - thus life-long Linlithgow residents have to look elsewhere to purchase a house, particularly manifested in an ongoing drift of Linlithgow people to Bo'ness. Without detailed statistics, it is difficult to be sure of the true extent of the problem, but it is clear that there is a shortfall of social-rented, 'affordable' and single-person private housing in the town.

Controlled town expansion gives a major opportunity to cater for the unsatisfied housing needs of the less well-off, and thus it is proposed as follows:-

Proposal H1 - Social-Rented and 'Affordable' Private Housing

100 social-rented houses and at least 50 'affordable' private houses should be provided as an integral part of the new housing areas to the east and south-east of Linlithgow (or, preferably, on suitable infill sites closer to the town centre), precise methods of tenure and locations to be the subject of further consideration, one possibility being the establishment of a locally-based housing association.

With regard to private housing development, reference should be made to the 'threats' section of Section A of this 'Vision for Linlithgow'. Recognising the problems which have resulted from large-scale development in the past, it is seen as essential that any further development is definitely required to accompany the 'shopping list' of

improvements desired by the community, and is controlled sufficiently not to create any new problems. The two expansion proposals (Proposals H2 and H3) are put forward as the price the town would have to pay to solve current problems, and are regarded as the absolute maximum which would be acceptable for the foreseeable future, say the next 25 years. During this time, there should be a general presumption against identifying further sites for development, other than those already listed in the table under Map 1.

It would be a strict condition of permitting Proposals H2 and H3, plus (where realistic) the infill developments set out below (H10, H13, H14, H16, H17 and H19), that they make financial provision towards the 'shopping list' of town improvements specified in the table in Section 8 of this plan, and in accordance with the terms indicated in the table below (also to be borne in mind are the likely costs of public utilities, mainly public sewers and augmentation of the town's sewage treatment works). Without such an undertaking made under a legal agreement in accordance with Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the housing development contents of the Vision for Linlithgow would be null and void, and the Civic Trust would strongly oppose any development whatsoever outwith the town boundaries. The West Lothian Council would be expected to ensure that the amount of 'greenfield' development permitted would be the absolute minimum required to finance the planning gains required (see Section 8 for an assessment of the house numbers thought to be reasonably acceptable – up to around 800 private houses).

It should be noted that implementation of the town improvements would (or could) actually be carried out by the developers of Proposals H2 and H3, whereas the developers of H10, H13, H14, H16, H17 and H19 (see list on the next page numbered to tie in with the location map (Map 1) as well as on the Proposals Map at the end) would be expected, where feasible, to contribute financially towards the project. Proposals H10, H13, H14, H16, H17 and H19 have been linked into the arrangement in order to minimise the encroachment on to greenfield land.

New housing should pay due regard to meet standards of environmental sustainability (see Section 7) without looking shoddy or 'wacky', the aims being to minimise energy consumption during construction and use.

Proposal H2 - New Private Housing - Burghmuir Housing in the area extending east from Springfield towards Kingsfield (site extent minimised in conjunction with Proposal H3 below and to be restricted to lie between the 'green wedges' shown on the Proposals Map). Site should be generously landscaped on all boundaries with a formal feature

boulevard (Proposal T5), and cycle/footpath links to the town centre via the existing Springfield housing area. There should be an allotment garden with at least 20 full-sized plots and a highly-accessible local centre with a community hall and at least two shops. Design and layout of the entire area to be subject to detailed design brief/master plan requiring a high standard of urban design, character, building materials and landscaping. Structure landscaping and main roads/paths to be completed before sale of the first house.

Proposal H3 - New Private Housing - Edinburgh Road
Housing in area extending south up the hill from Edinburgh Road, to follow the implementation of Proposal H2. The site area should be minimised in conjunction with Proposal H2 above and be restricted to lie between the 'green wedges' shown on the Proposals Map. Site should be generously landscaped on all boundaries with a formal feature boulevard along the southern edge (Proposal T5), and cycle/footpath links to the railway station and town centre via the Clarendon 'green wedge'. There should be an allotment garden with at least 20 full-sized plots and a highly-accessible local centre with one primary school, a community hall and at least two shops. Design and layout to be subject to detailed design brief/master plan requiring a high standard of urban design, character, building materials and landscaping. A particular requirement would be that all edge and 'structure' tree planting should be completed before the sale of the first house in Proposal H2 - this is to ensure that the site acquires a wooded character in line with the part of Linlithgow already existing on the north-facing slope to the south of the Union Canal.



Plan of allotments provided as part of housing development in Glasgow.

Proposal H10 - New Private Housing – East Mill Road, Linlithgow Bridge

15 detached or semi-detached houses.

Proposal H12 - New Private or Social-Rented Housing – The Cross

Approximately 10 flats on first and second floors on High Street frontage of bus depot site, above the proposed health centre (see Proposal HE1). Proposal to could extend to include upper floors of adjacent former British Linen Bank building (see alternative proposal E4).

Proposal H13 - New Private Housing - West of Murco petrol station, Falkirk Road, Linlithgow Bridge

A maximum of 40 flats with no direct vehicular access from the main road.

Proposal H14 - New Private Housing - Westerlea, Friarsbrae

A maximum of 5 detached houses.

Proposal H16 - New Private Housing - Whisky Bond Site, Edinburgh Road

A maximum of 50 flats, scaling down to two-storey housing towards the east. Mature trees on the site should be retained.

Proposal H17 - New Private Housing - Sawmill Site, Falkirk Road

A maximum of 10 dwellings, not flats.

Proposal H19 - New Private Housing - East of Mill Road, Linlithgow Bridge

Around 40 two-storey dwellings.

It should be noted that the Civic Trust is opposed to the following housing developments:

- Housing on the site of the former petrol filling station in Edinburgh Road. This site is now proposed for car parking (see Proposal T9);
- Housing on the bulk of the bus depot site at The Cross (apart from upstairs on the High Street frontage). This site is proposed for a new health centre (see Proposal HE1);
- Any houses in the grounds of Clarendon House (see Proposal R3).

A table showing Possible Planning Gains from Housing Development can be found in the Implementation Section

4. Transport and Accessibility

Linlithgow's attractiveness and consequent success in attracting new residents and activity has, ironically, created the endemic problem of traffic congestion, mainly in the High Street. Pedestrians often find it difficult to cross the street at convenient points because of the seemingly incessant traffic flow which effectively creates a barrier between the north and south sides of the street. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of both a westbound access to the M9 at Burghmuir and an immediately obvious location for a local traffic by-pass. There is also a lack of adequate parking facilities in the town centre, and problems associated with commuter car parking are experienced in the streets around the railway station.



Traffic in the High Street can be incessant.

There are, of course, strongly opposing views on transport matters – on one hand, there is a view that considerably more car parking needs to be provided; on the other that walking, cycling and public transport should be encouraged to cut down car use. This *Vision* document attempts to provide an appropriate balance between both views.

The traffic and parking problems detract from:-

- Linlithgow as a shopping centre (with particular additional problems related to on-pavement car parking and lack of rear access for servicing - see Section 5 on Retailing);
- Linlithgow's heritage and townscape (see Section 1 on Heritage issues);
- Realisation of the town's tourist potential (particular problems being experienced from lack of provision for the parking of tourist buses);
- The potential to maintain a vibrant town centre through the establishment of facilities such as the new Arts Centre and hotel accommodation, which might be deterred through worries about inadequate visitor parking.

There is clearly a need for residents to 'reclaim' the High Street as an attractive place to walk, shop, and visit the many visitor attractions, pubs, restaurants, etc. The most attractive historic towns to visit are easy and pleasant to walk around, but Linlithgow has fairly narrow pavements, a busy High Street, and no simple solution to traffic diversion. Alleviation of through-traffic is the key, and the upgrading of the paving and general environment to the standard one would expect in an outstanding conservation area through a Townscape Heritage Initiative or similar (see Proposal B1 of this plan) is vital. Some sections of pavement have split levels or are very narrow, sometimes forcing pedestrians on to the road, while pavements immediately across the road can be very wide, suggesting the need for carriageway realignment where practical.

Although the precise design of road works and the actual extent of restrictions on through traffic could only be decided after considerable constructive debate, the following aims are worth pursuing:-

- A prohibition on heavy lorries without a destination in the High Street;
- A very considerable reduction in general through traffic;
- Priority for pedestrians in certain well-defined but extensive areas (this may be enough to deter most through traffic) and frequent pedestrian-priority crossing points elsewhere;
- Clear demarcation of all parking spaces from footways, and improved loading facilities;
- Through access for buses and cyclists.

A consequence of this would likely be 'rat-running' in Royal Terrace/Strawberry Bank. This could be eliminated by having access only via Friarsbrae feeding into one-way eastwards along Strawberry Bank and one-way westwards along Royal Terrace. If suitable turning heads could be provided, the length of the one-way restrictions could be minimised. Such one-way streets should, wherever possible, allow 'contraflow' cycle movements.

Proposal T1 - Traffic Management to 'Reclaim' the High Street'

Introduction of restrictions on through traffic in High Street as outlined above and possible accompanying measures to stop short-cuts via Royal Terrace.

Crucial to relieving the High Street from through traffic is the prior provision of alternative, more appealing routes for vehicles. Two measures to meet this challenge are considered equally important (subject to full traffic analysis) - a four-way motorway interchange at Burghmuir, and a High Street Traffic By-pass or relief road, positioned unobtrusively north of the loch. Provision of new west-facing slip roads connecting to/from the M9 would cater for traffic from the Springfield and Edinburgh Road areas which would

otherwise use the High Street en route to Falkirk. Additionally, if Proposal T5 below (the Eastern Link Road) is constructed, this would cater in the same way for any new housing developments on the eastern and south-eastern edges of the town, plus potentially for many people already living in the Manse Road area of the town. The High Street by-pass would cater for local traffic in either direction between the eastern and western parts of the town, including cars and lorries associated with the new retail park at Linlithgow Bridge, as well as through traffic from the Burghmuir interchange to Bathgate, Armadale, Lanark, etc. The route proposed would require the closure to motorised vehicles of the Bonnytoun Farm Road around the point where it crosses the motorway, to prevent short-cuts by motorists.

Although the West Lothian Local Plan includes a policy (TRAN 29) to 'safeguard' land for a slip road and associated coach park-and-ride facility at Burghmuir (and there is a similar policy commitment from Falkirk Council for the off-ramp on the north side), this is far from being a commitment - it merely means that they will stop any development taking place on the land where the slip road is to be situated, hence the proposal in this Vision for Linlithgow that its cost (and that of the High Street By-pass - Proposal T3) be met from housing development value.

A further relevant issue is the general presumption against new motorway or trunk road junctions, as stated in 'Scottish Planning Policy SPP17 - Planning for Transport'. It is considered that the case made above is sufficient to go against the general presumption. In addition, it is very noticeable that traffic volumes between Burghmuir and the Lathallan interchange are relatively low, therefore there can be no concerns about capacity. Also, as the junction already exists in part, and the junctions in this vicinity are well-spaced, the road safety aspect of joining traffic is hardly likely to be a significant problem.

Proposal T2 - Four-way Motorway Interchange at Burghmuir

Provision of east-bound off-ramp and west-bound on-ramp to the M9, including roundabouts tying in with existing slip roads. As well as helping to relieve through traffic within the town, the roundabouts would have significant road safety benefits, as compared to the existing T-junctions.

Proposal T3 - High Street Traffic By-pass

This would be a single-carriageway, unlit road starting from the Bonnytoun Farm Road over the M9, then running westwards beyond the north side of Linlithgow Loch, behind Parkhead Holdings and thus largely hidden from view from Linlithgow by the landform, except near the eastern end where particular attention would have to be devoted to earthworks and tree planting to screen the road. A roundabout junction with St Ninian's Road (the road to Bo'ness), and a

continuation to meet Mill Road where it crosses the M9 would be required. This continuation would replace the existing poor-quality, narrow, winding country road and allow a weight limit to be imposed to prevent heavy industrial traffic going through the residential area in Linlithgow Bridge.

In order to encourage right-turn movements to link in with the four-way interchange and the High Street By-Pass, the following two roundabouts are proposed. They would also have the useful functions of slowing down traffic entering the town and giving an opportunity for vivid floral enhancement. In order to minimise the problems of the roundabouts for pedestrians and cyclists (for whom traffic lights are preferable), they would require dedicated cycle lanes outwith the junction area, and safe pedestrian/cycle road-crossing points.

Proposal T4 - Roundabouts on Blackness Road at the eastern entrance to Springfield Road and at the Kingsfield Road Junction

These would be fairly large feature roundabouts at the town entrance.

With the development of housing sites H2 and H3 to the east and south-east of the town, there will be a need for a new road linking the Burghmuir four-way motorway junction to Edinburgh Road in the vicinity of Kildimmery (unfortunately the optimum connection point has been taken up by the new cemetery, so the junction will have to be a little to the east). As stated under Proposals H2 and H3, the parts of the road through the housing areas should be designed as a formal tree-lined boulevard with separate cycle lanes and footpaths, interrupted by (not too many) well-landscaped roundabouts to provide a measure of traffic-calming (while having appropriate provision for cyclists as above). The route will have the advantages of allowing an alternative route for high vehicles approaching Linlithgow on the old Edinburgh Road, avoiding the canal and railway overbridges, and, in the longer term, it would allow traffic from proposed housing along Edinburgh Road and existing housing around Manse Road to by-pass the Low Port area and link directly to the M9. Along with Proposal T3, it would help with through traffic on Marches and Gala Days, and, specifically, it could allow closure or restriction of the Manse Road canal bridge to traffic (Proposal T6 below).

Proposal T5 - Eastern Access Road

Single-carriageway road from Burghmuir (proposed Kingsfield roundabout - Proposal T4) to Edinburgh Road at Kildimmery, crossing both railway and canal, followed by longer-term extension through proposed housing area (Proposal H3) to Manse Road at its junction with Riccarton Drive.

The Civic Trust has for some time been concerned about the risk of serious damage to the narrow Manse Road canal bridge, and the full implementation of Proposal T5 (Eastern Link Road) would give the opportunity to close

the bridge to all but pedestrians and cyclists, or at least restrict flow to one-way traffic.

Proposal T6 Relief of traffic over Canal Bridge at Manse Road

Traffic relief (including possibly traffic light control) for the Manse Road canal bridge should be considered in the context of Proposal T5 above.

Increased traffic on St Ninian's Road caused by the construction of the High Street By-Pass (Proposal T3) would necessitate the installation of traffic lights at the junction of High Street/West Port/St Ninian's Road to facilitate right-turning traffic. It should be noted that St Ninian's Road was widened in the 1960s in anticipation of a motorway junction that was never constructed. A speed-camera would be a useful deterrent on the curving slope down towards the lochside.

Proposal T7 - Traffic lights at St Ninians Road/West Port

Provision of a set of traffic lights with pedestrian phase at existing junction.

Car Parking

The lack of available car parking spaces in the town centre for potential shoppers, tourists and other visitors to the town centre, and the clogging up of streets around the railway station with parked cars reflect the fact that dedicated parking for rail commuters and travellers is insufficient to meet demand. Additionally, people wishing to travel off-peak are unable to find a parking place anywhere near the station, resulting in lost revenue for First Scotrail, frustrated locals and more city congestion. Residents and visitors to the town have problems in locating convenient parking spaces during the day. This reduces footfall in Linlithgow, impacts negatively on shops and tourist attractions, and spoils the visitor experience. Although many argue that providing more car parking spaces only stimulates further car use, it is considered that, in the case of Linlithgow, there is a need to address the problem positively.

The West Lothian Local Plan includes a policy (Policy TRAN 34) that a parking management scheme will be developed for Linlithgow Town Centre and that this will look at detailed issues including rationalisation of parking spaces in the High Street, enforcement of parking regulations, and (presumably) charging to ensure a turnover of spaces. This policy presumably led to the consultation paper 'Parking Proposals for Linlithgow', published in June 2006, which contained numerous ideas to solve the various problems, but has been taken no further except that a limited number of additional spaces will be created in 2010 at Linlithgow Sports Club and at St Ninian's Way (on the site previously suggested in this 'Vision' document for tourist bus parking). The number of car parking spaces to be provided in these locations will be insufficient to properly address the issue, and proposed restrictions on all-day parking near the station

will, in fact, merely spread the problem more widely. It should be borne in mind that possible increases in staffing at the County Buildings, and possible electrification of the main railway line, could further increase the demand for employee/commuter parking.

However, the only practicable solutions so far identified which would provide a large number of parking spaces in relatively unobtrusive locations, on a permanent basis, are decking over the car park behind the Regent Centre and the use of the former petrol station site in Edinburgh Road. The Regent Centre parking proposal would cater primarily for shoppers, visitors to the town, and off-peak railway travellers, partly on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis, while the Edinburgh Road car park would be provided for commuters, in many cases displaced from elsewhere. The number of decks at the Regent Centre car park would be decided bearing in mind the car park's impact on the conservation area. At present, the car park is far from ideal as a supermarket car park on account of its slope, and there is potential to link the upper deck directly to the railway station eastbound platform by means of a footbridge.

It is recommended that:-

- A charge be levied for commuter all-day parking, to encourage those who live fairly close to walk or cycle to the station. Note that such a charge already exists at many stations, for example Falkirk;
- Only once adequate commuter parking is provided, new parking restrictions be introduced on roads currently clogged by commuter parking, particularly where this is causing any form of nuisance; and
- Cycle parking arrangements at the station be significantly upgraded, with potential for future growth if justified by usage.
- All or part of the station car park adjacent to the south platform be dedicated for the use of off-peak railway travellers.
- Park and ride facilities be considered on the edge of town, if justified by likely demand.

Proposal T8 - Decked Car Park at Regent Centre

Levelling of the existing car park and the erection of around two decks on top. This would need traffic lights at the Blackness Road entrance and should be accompanied by suitable parking restrictions on nearby roads and the upgrading of cycle parking provision at the railway station.

Proposal T9 - Commuter Car Park at Edinburgh Road

This would involve redevelopment of the former petrol station site. The car park would require good landscaping to safeguard the appearance of an important entry point to the town, and to protect the amenity of nearby residents.

In addition, there would be strong benefits in providing some more car parking for tourists specifically visiting Linlithgow Palace and The Peel. An opportunity to meet such a demand exists in the underused grounds of St Michael's Church, from which direct access to The Peel

could be provided. The use of this site could perhaps be negotiated in exchange for new church hall accommodation and/or the replacement of the former Laetare Centre.

Proposal T10 – Tourist Car Parking at Blackness Road
Construction of a tourist car park behind St Michael's RC Church, Blackness Road, catering particularly for visitors approaching the town centre from the east.

Station Access and Railway Services

Having a town centre station is a major bonus for Linlithgow in terms of sustainable transport and access, for visitors, commuters, recreation, shoppers, etc. However, at present someone in the High Street would hardly know that Linlithgow has a station (unless they spot the recently-erected finger-post), and to reach it, they are squeezed up a narrow pavement.



Linlithgow Railway Station

There should be a high quality paved, pavement-less access (See Proposal B1). The station should also be made much more obvious - for example the planted area and/or the high railway wall and/or the suggested re-paving might allow for a rail-related artwork drawing attention to the station from the High Street.

The train service provided may alter with the opening of the new rail link between Edinburgh and Glasgow via Bathgate and Airdrie, now under construction, but this depends on whether the new line is regarded as a relief line for inter-city traffic, thus freeing up capacity via Linlithgow. Possibilities, which should be the subject of representations to First ScotRail, include:

- more services from Glasgow direct to Fife via Linlithgow;
- a circular service, via Linlithgow, from Edinburgh or Glasgow via Stirling, Alloa and Dunfermline;
- direct services from Linlithgow via a Dalmeny 'chord' to an airport interchange station at Gogar.

Bus Services and Parking for Tourist Buses

Bus services within the town of Linlithgow are, at present, poorly developed, partly because the town's layout mitigates against a good and viable circular service. The road links proposed in this *Vision* document should overcome many of the problems in this respect, making it possible to introduce services which will link more directly with the town centre and railway station,

thereby fulfilling the aim of discouraging car use for local journeys. In addition, the proposed Eastern Link Road (Proposal T5) would allow Edinburgh-Falkirk through bus services the option of routing certain journeys via Springfield. Lack of information about times, frequency and cost of bus services is one of the main disincentives to bus patronage, hence the following proposal:

Proposal T11 – Bus Information at Stops

All bus stops in Linlithgow should be provided with full relevant timetable information, and details of fares as appropriate.

The lack of specific provision for the parking of tourist buses has been identified as a significant issue. There is understood to be a private arrangement for the accommodation of one such bus at the existing bus depot at the Cross, but this arrangement seems to be little known and in fact will cease once the depot closes and is replaced by proposed flats already granted detailed planning permission by the Council, or by the alternative proposals in this document. After much consideration of the best solution, it is proposed that a few bus parking spaces be marked out in the present Vennel car park in the very heart of the town at The Cross, with compensatory car parking being provided as part of the proposal to redevelop the bus depot site with a health centre and its associated private car parking (proposal HE1).

Proposal T12 - Parking for Tourist Buses at The Vennel Car Park

Allocation of part of the Vennel Car Park for tourist buses, with compensatory car parking to be provided as part of the proposal for a new health centre on the bus depot site (Proposal HE1).

Cycle and Pedestrian Links

A draft cycle network for Linlithgow was drawn up by the former Lothian Regional Council but has since been shelved. This could form the basis for discussions on a cycle network, taking into account the following principles:-

- The High Street to become a slow-speed mixed-purpose area, only accommodating traffic with a specific purpose in the High Street, and excluding all through-traffic, as discussed earlier. In this case, cycle lanes probably become unnecessary. A survey by Spokes suggested that the High Street is probably the greatest deterrent to cycle use in Linlithgow at present.
- High quality cycle routes to the town centre and railway station from all existing and new residential areas. Many of these routes, particularly from existing areas, will be on-road with the use of cycle lanes in many cases.
- Ensuring similar high-quality connections to all important facilities outwith the centre - such as the Leisure Centre, Sun Microsystems, schools, etc.

- 'Home-zone' design should be considered for all new residential areas, and where possible in existing areas, with slow-speed mixed-use areas not normally requiring cycle lanes.
- A recreational round-Linlithgow route, including a new cycle access along the north side of Linlithgow Loch, suitable for families with young children, and promoted by a free map-leaflet.
- A completed cycle/footpath link to Beecraigs Country Park.
- Links between Linlithgow and the Round-Forth route, and Linlithgow being on its map.

A current proposal to improve cycle provision (as well as conditions for pedestrians) is that the British Waterways Board intends to hard-surface the most heavily-used section of canal towpath between the Canal Basin and Preston Road, and this Vision proposes extension of this welcome provision to the entire stretch within the town, plus lighting.

Proposal T13 - Creation of Cycle Network

A cycle network should be drawn up for Linlithgow in accordance with the principles set out above, including preferred cycle-rack locations. Reference should be made to the suggestions of the Linlithgow Cycle Action Group, as shown on the plan opposite.

Proposal T14 - Upgrading of Union Canal Towpath

The canal towpath within the town should be hard-surfaced and lit for the better use of cyclists and pedestrians.

Proposal T15 - Completion of Cycle and Pedestrian Path to Beecraigs Country Park

The existing footpath and bridleway alongside Preston Road should be extended from its existing termination on the northern edge of Beecraigs Country Park, to both the Park Centre and the park focal point at Balvormie, the latter having potential to extend to Bathgate via Witches Craig and The Knock.

The Scottish Executive's Planning Advice Note PAN75 (paragraph 28) refers to setting modal share targets (that

is, the projected relative amount of walking, cycling, public transport use and car use) for whole areas, and paragraph 64 mentions the appointment of a travel co-ordinator. Whilst these were probably intended in the context of commercial developments rather than housing (though that is not stated explicitly) it would be an interesting possibility, and perhaps there might be funding available for an innovative scheme on these lines. Already Sustrans (the 'green' transport charity, both Scotland and UK) has set up experimental Scottish Executive-funded and Department for Transport-funded 'active travel' schemes to encourage sustainable transport (walking, cycling, bus, rail) at household-by-household level, and there might well be interest in testing out similar ideas from the planning stages onwards in a new area-wide development. This could tie in with the 'cittaslow' concept (Section 5).

Proposal T16 - Modal Share/Active Travel Policy for New Housing Areas

Consideration could be given to an experimental policy to attempt to maximise the use of walking and cycling in the two completely new development areas (proposals H2 and H3), by innovative measures in addition to the provision of high quality walking and cycling routes.

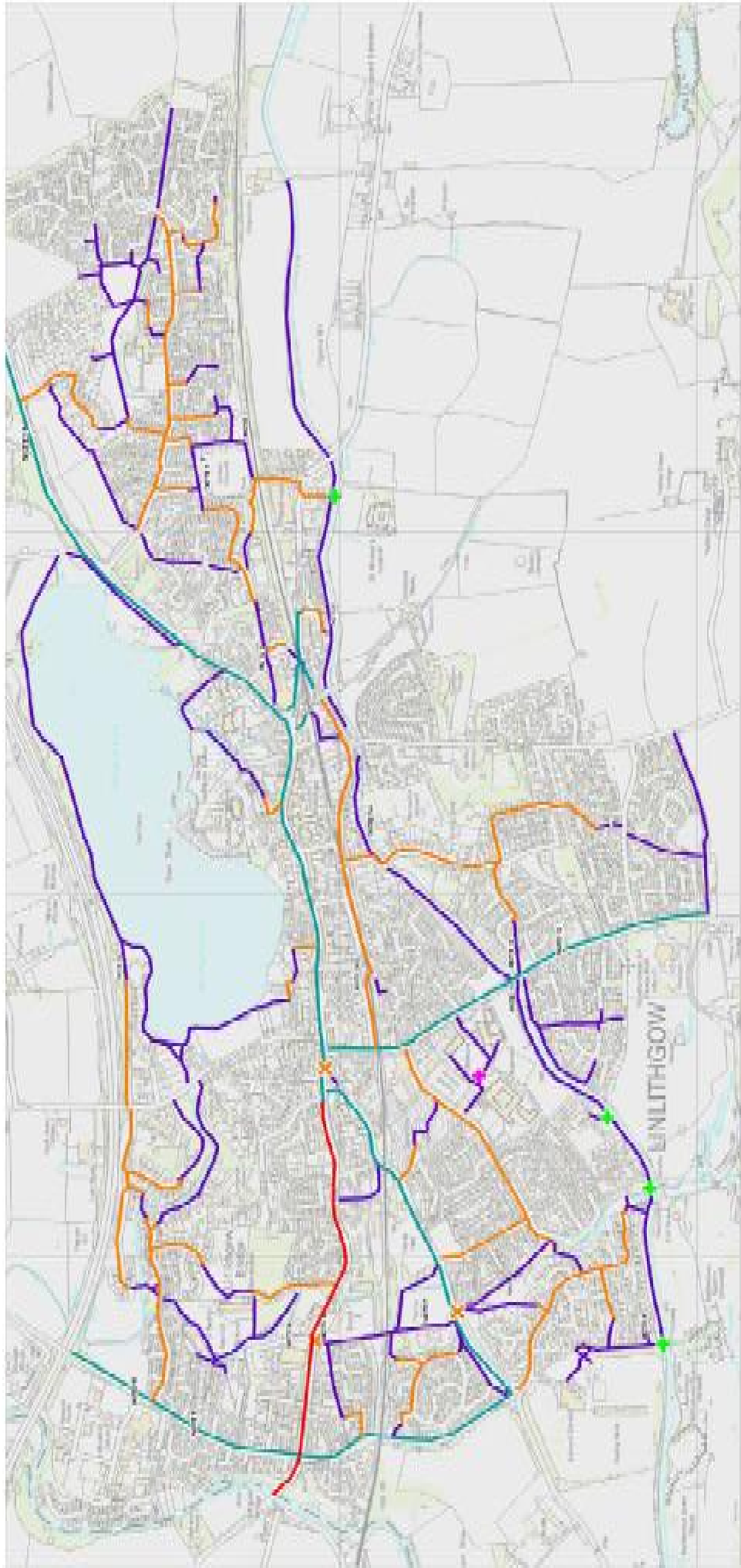
It is proposed to keep the north-facing slopes east of Clarendon within the conservation area free of development, but the attractiveness of the new housing area at Edinburgh Road further east could be enhanced by cycle and pedestrian links across this area to the station and town centre. In addition, it would reduce dependence on car use.

Proposal T17 - Cycle and Pedestrian Links across 'Green Wedge' at Clarendon

Provision of an interesting network of footpaths and cycle paths to link new housing area to the railway station and town centre. Will require canal crossing (for both pedestrian and cycle use) unless existing underpass can be used.

Opposite:

Map indicating possible improvements to cycle provision in Linlithgow, as suggested by the Linlithgow Cycle Action Group for discussion.



- Note 1: Signalised through to Thistle. Shared like lights required on publicly wide steps
- Note 2: Canal 1 Walk. Remove left on path replace with alternative signal
- Note 3: New clear road required to the rear of new ground to connect in round
- Note 4: Entrance to Selkirk Road through Sumburghly steep ramp. or Great Gull Cypripis existing grade ramp
- Note 5: Mill Rd requires in-road walkways
- Note 6: Feildon rd access to crossing and link to Sheldurgh
- Note 7: Improve authority on south half of Salfers Rd Path
- Note 8: Safety of bridge through to Bassendean Rd
- Note 9: Ramp down to Lissieu Cairns requires upgrade of steps
- Note 10: 2 way central lane required on Brnoos Street -> Great Park Place
- Note 11: Footbridge link above to school
- Note 12: Footway kerbs on road at Phoenix Road
- Note 13: Signal light on: at first cycle road crossing steep hill on Preston Rd from Bannockburn County Park and then vertically Linlithgow
- Note 14: Turned surface of main canal towards
- Note 15: Crossing of Millburn Rd required
- Note 16: On road cycle lanes required
- Note 17: Street access road to St Michaelians requires kerbs

- Traffic_light_sections
- Signalised_junctions
- Churned_cycles_lanes
- Crossovers
- Steeps
- Busy_roads

5. Retailing and Town Centre

For the future, it is vital that community and commercial facilities which attract large numbers of people are located, whenever possible, in the town centre, to encourage multi-purpose trips and a lively centre. The role of inward commuting to town centre workplaces, as part of the mix, is extremely important, bringing revenue to existing businesses. This whole philosophy is supported by Scottish Government guidance on town centres (SPP8) and endorsed by the proposals and preferences stated in this *Vision for Linlithgow*.

Recent planning decisions with regard to retailing in Linlithgow have taken an opposite trend. Firstly, in terms of convenience (everyday requirements) shopping, Linlithgow has probably adjusted to the recent impact of the two major supermarket outlets at either end of the town. At the time of their opening, there was considerable impact upon the fortunes of the affected individual High Street traders, although this has now largely stabilised with turnover at a lower level. As the influence of such dominant multi-national outlets continues to grow, with Tesco, for example, now accounting for one pound in every eight spent in the United Kingdom, the pressures on independent retailers are unrelenting.

This process was more recently replicated in relation to comparison (occasional, major purchases) shopping, with the opening of the Stockbridge Retail Park at Linlithgow Bridge, occupied primarily by a series of national chain stores, a development which West Lothian Council's own committee report suggested could impact upon remaining High Street trade by between 7% and 16%. In addition, internet shopping may be having an impact.



The High Street provides a good shopping and business environment, but one which much potential for improvement.

Despite all of this, Linlithgow's High Street seems to have stayed remarkably resilient, compared to the experience in other similar towns. Although many shop unit occupancies appear short-lived, and the average turnover in retail outlets must have declined, there is a clear evolution towards the provision of services that are not available online or in soul-less retail parks, such as a meal

at a quality restaurant, a drink with friends, a cup of coffee and a fresh cake, beauty treatments and hair cuts, fresh sandwiches, browsing in bookshops, professional services and personal expertise. In many cases, High Street shop units are becoming vacant on the High Street as successful businesses move to larger premises.

The continuing success of the High Street in attracting new businesses is to be welcomed, but complacency must be avoided. Rent reductions for Council-owned shop units must still be considered to help re-invigorate the retail (as opposed to the 'business') sector in Linlithgow. Already, the Council, through its Local Plan, advocates support for change of use of vacated retail outlets to consolidate (reduce the size of) the retail area. As a result, the potential threat to the viability of the High Street as a traditional retail area, to the jobs of those employed in independent outlets, and to the overall townscape quality, becomes very real.

Some progress has already been made – two of the proposals of the original Vision document have been implemented – designation of Linlithgow as a 'Cittaslow' (Slow City) and the establishment of a regular Farmers' Market. The Cittaslow initiative, developed from the slow food movement founded in Italy in the early 1990s, has, as one of its aims, the promotion of a think local, buy local, eat local mentality, in which the whole community philosophy is focused on the encouragement of local industries, growers, outlets, and promotion of distinctive quality and choice. The idea is to fight back against the overwhelming sameness of so many of our communities, to counteract the suffocating influence of the multi national supermarkets, the diminution of consumer choice, and to retain the distinctive characteristics of the traditional High Street shopping area, which contributes to the attractiveness of Linlithgow as a retail centre for residents and visitors alike. The regular farmers' market provides a local opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the choice and quality of products produced locally, as a counterbalance to the fare offered by supermarkets.

Of great importance also is the quality of the shopping environment – the attractiveness of the buildings, the existence of trees and flowers, and the quality of the paving and street furniture (see 'Heritage' section). The Council has made a good start on the necessary

improvements, aided by the activities of Burgh Beautiful, but a more comprehensive approach is still required (Proposal B1).





The public library at Guyancourt Vennel has the potential to provide a sound basis around which the regeneration of the area as a centre for specialist retailing could be pursued.

Still, the opportunity exists to redevelop Guyancourt Vennel for specialist retail outlets - such an initiative might prove a catalyst to attract other independent specialist retailers, perhaps focused on the tourism market. Ideally, if such a specialist 'retailer row' were to be developed, it would require major redesigning or reconstruction of the units at this location. The development of themed specialist retailing has been successful elsewhere - one need only visit the likes of Aberfeldy (Fairtrade Town before Linlithgow), Wigtown (Scotland's Booktown) or Castle Douglas (Foodtown) to see how such initiatives can transform the fortunes of previously declining communities. Linlithgow already has specialised 'craft' and hobby shops in the fields of embroidery, patchwork, knitting, artwork and 'DIY' and, with its history of manufacturing skills particularly in connection with the leather industry, there may be

opportunities to market Linlithgow as a craft and hobby shop centre.

Proposal S1 - Redevelopment of Guyancourt Vennel for Retail Purposes

Demolition of the buildings along the western side of Guyancourt Vennel and redevelopment with a range of small units to attract tourist-related commercial activity such as craft shops, leather workshops.

The new housing areas resulting from Proposal H2 and H3 will require local shops, and the provision of shop units should be a requirement of the relevant housing developers. Ideally, the school, community hall, shop and other such facilities should be located centrally, next to each other, possibly with other community facilities, and easily accessible by foot/cycle from the whole housing area. Having these facilities/services together will "encourage multi-purpose trips and reduce distances travelled by car by bringing together related land uses" (Planning Advice Note PAN75, paragraph 24). Having them together will also help foster economic and social success, for example with parents and schoolchildren using a shop next to the school, whilst waiting or at lunchtimes. These should be 'key locations ... with a sense of place" (paragraph 26).

Proposal S2 - Neighbourhood Shops within New Housing Areas

At least two new shop units should be provided within each of the new housing areas proposed for the east and south-east fringes of the town (see Proposals H2 and H3).

See related proposals:-

T1 Town Centre Traffic Management to 'reclaim' the High Street

6. Community, Sports, Education & Health Facilities and Open Space

Community Facilities and Open Space

The refurbishment of the Burgh Halls as a community and arts centre is a considerable achievement by the Council, and should be applauded. However, the implementation of the proposals has meant the relocation of the Tourist Information Centre from a self-contained facility opening direct on to The Cross, and a loss of community meeting rooms. This has exacerbated the considerable shortage of community meeting space in Linlithgow, as will the proposed removal of the old huts at Low Port Primary School.

Proposal R1 – Provision of Community Rooms

Proposals for more community meeting space should be brought forward as a matter of urgency. Possible locations might include part of the proposed youth centre in the current Health Centre building (Proposal R4), or an extension of the Low Port Centre.

In addition, it is believed that the main courtroom of the former Sheriff Courthouse, to be preserved as part of the building's conversion into a hotel (Proposal B7), may be made available as a valuable additional meeting resource.

The opportunity presents itself for the retention of the grounds of Clarendon House as public park, then extending eastwards as a wide buffer ('green wedge' on the Proposals Map) between existing housing areas at Clarendon/Oatlands Park and the proposed development along Edinburgh Road. This would tie into the need for a substantial open space to east of Clarendon to protect the amenity of existing dwellings and to retain the open aspect to the part of the conservation area on the south of the Union Canal between Manse Road and St Michael's Hospital. The part of the park within the existing grounds of Clarendon House would be primarily ornamental, but could include provision of community allotments. To the east, the rest of the 'green wedge' would be predominantly informal in nature, incorporating woodland planting/community orchards and crossed by footpaths and cycle routes.

Proposal R2 - Formation of Clarendon Public Park, Allotments and Community Orchards

Preservation from development of land to the east of Clarendon/Oatlands Park to retain 'green wedge' from the countryside to the town centre, and extending from grounds of Clarendon House to the side of St Michael's Hospital); formation of public park with community allotments, community orchards and through footpaths and cycle routes (see Proposal T17).

There are insufficient formal playing field facilities to cater for the high demand in the town, as well as a desire for a skateboarding facility - plans for both at Kettilstoun have been held back due to lack of finance. Allotments

have also been considered for this area. The prospect of 'planning gain', as advocated in this Vision document, could bring forward their implementation.

Proposal R5 - New/Upgraded Playing Fields and Allotments, Kettilstoun

Facilities to be provided through the upgrading and extension of the playing fields would include three rugby pitches, five football pitches, two seven-a-side pitches, new pavilion accommodation, a skateboard park, and allotment gardens.

Green Wedges and other Development Free Areas

Mention has already been made of the specific proposal for a public park at Clarendon which would constitute a 'green wedge' of undeveloped land extending from the countryside to the Union Canal, close to the town centre. This forms part of a very important strategy to preserve and enhance for all time the landscape setting of Linlithgow whereby the following areas must be kept entirely free of urban development:-

- Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) - the Bathgate Hills and River Avon Valley AGLV, extending right up to the town's southern and south-western boundaries and the Airngath Hill AGLV which provides the backdrop to Linlithgow Loch and includes the policies of Bonnytoun House and the open area on the opposite side of Blackness Road;
- Conservation Areas - the Linlithgow Palace and High Street Conservation Area and the Upper Linlithgow and Union Canal Conservation Area which, between them, include undeveloped land around the loch and south of the Union Canal at Clarendon;
- The Canal Corridor eastwards of the Edinburgh Road aqueduct and Maidlands - a 'green wedge' taking in the whole area between Edinburgh Road and the railway and extending out to the countryside;
- The slopes east of Clarendon, the other 'green wedge' as mentioned above;
- Broad landscaped strips on either side of Blackness Road and Edinburgh Road; and
- Wooded buffers to safeguard the amenity of existing housing at Edinburgh Road and Kingsfield.

Youth Provision

No specific mention is made in the West Lothian Local Plan for the development of youth facilities in Linlithgow despite the increase in numbers of young people in the town (there are approximately 1800 young people between the ages of 12 and 21 years) and the increasing rate of anti-social behaviour and binge drinking reported by Lothian and Borders Police. Although community-based youth provision is essential to provide opportunities for young people to build confidence/self

esteem and to develop skills and knowledge, such provision has in fact decreased over the last ten years with a number of council and voluntary youth groups closing due to a number of factors. While the uniformed and sporting youth organisations are strong in the town, they too suffer from a lack of resources, staffing and rely on the commitment of a few individuals to continue to run. However, such organisations are often viewed as elite by young people and a certain level of ability, income and dedication is needed to participate.

There is no doubt that there is a lack of accessible services for young people in Linlithgow and a lack of support and resources for existing projects. It is therefore strongly recommended that West Lothian Council makes appropriate provision for:-

- Financial and resource support for existing youth services;
- Accessible and affordable sporting/games facilities for young people who are not members of clubs; and
- Youth friendly recreational and pastime facilities (ie Youth / Cyber Café).

In particular, the opportunity for suitable premises presents itself in the proposed relocation of the health centre to an alternative site at The Cross.

Proposal R4 - Establishment of Permanent Youth Centre

The conversion of the existing Health Centre building to a Youth Centre is proposed. This would also help resolve the increasing shortage of community meeting accommodation in the town.

Education

The current educational context is that Linlithgow is served by two secondary schools – Linlithgow Academy (non-denominational) and St Kentigern's RC Academy in Blackburn. Linlithgow Academy is fed by six primary schools, four in the town plus Bridgend and Winchburgh Primary Schools. St Joseph's Primary School is the only local school associated with St Kentigern's.

Linlithgow's schools have an extremely high reputation and are undoubtedly a significant factor in attracting people to move into the area. The high demand for places is a chronic problem for Linlithgow Academy and there have been some high-profile disputes ending up in court. Similar problems affect the primary schools, particularly Linlithgow Bridge Primary School, from time to time.

School capacity has been used as a mechanism to justify the policy of 'restraint' on development in Linlithgow, and, for this reason, West Lothian Council had, until recently, consistently refused to deal with capacity problems by creating extensions to local schools. Therefore, the only tools available to deal with school capacity problems in recent years have been development control and management of intakes through 'roll capping'. The adopted West Lothian Local

Plan, and its entire consultation and public inquiry process, gave no inkling of any change to this situation, but, in June 2008, the Council formally decided to expand the capacity of Linlithgow Academy by 110 (just under 10%), to 1320 pupils, and, in March 2010, made public its rationale for the expansion, namely that it was to cater for an expansion in the catchment area to include Torphichen and Westfield. Currently these primary schools feed Bathgate and Armadale Academies respectively. Additionally, Linlithgow Academy is proposed to accommodate pupils from the initial phases of the proposed 'New Town' at Winchburgh.

If the non-denominational secondary school for Winchburgh, proposed in the West Lothian Local Plan, is built, this could remove Winchburgh and Bridgend from Linlithgow Academy's catchment area, reducing pressure on the Academy and freeing up some of the additional places now proposed to be created. Additionally, there is potential to re-zone Torphichen and Westfield Primary Schools to feed once more into more conveniently-located secondary schools in the Armadale/Bathgate area. Either or both of these eventualities would allow the proposals in this 'Vision' to be implemented without the need to provide an additional secondary school in Linlithgow, thus avoiding the need for extra house-building to finance it.

However, it is considered that one new primary school will be required, and this is proposed to be sited in the proposed new housing area at Edinburgh Road. The new housing area east of Springfield would be served by Springfield Primary School, with consequent adjustments to the school catchment areas to the west, one of which would logically mean that pupils at the southern edge of the town could conveniently attend the new school at Edinburgh Road.

Proposal ED1 - New Primary School at Edinburgh Road

Construction of a single-stream primary school with a site area of approximately 12,000 square metres and a building capacity for 222 pupils.

Health

The National Context - The Scottish Government's National Framework 'Building a Health Service for the Future' (2005) proposed a new model of care for the NHS in Scotland. This would require:

- All NHS Boards to put in place a systematic approach to caring for people (especially older people) with long term conditions with a view to managing their care at home or in the community and, where possible, without being admitted to hospital;
- The NHS to be viewed as a service delivered predominately locally rather than in hospital;
- Sustainable and safe services, redesigned where possible to meet local needs and expectations.
- Full integration within the NHS, including contribution of general practice teams, social care

providers, patients and carers to meet the key challenges; and

- The development of options for change *with* people not *for* them, using patients' experience to develop solutions rather than as a response by the professionals.

In effect, the Scottish Government's Framework would require the NHS in Scotland to work as a single whole system, for example in the better integration of primary, secondary, and social care.

The Local Context - The Community Plan for West Lothian "Shaping the Future" described a vision "to promote a more inclusive community by providing health and social care services in an integrated way which allows all groups of people to live as independently as possible". The Community Plan also identified a number of specific challenges such as "helping local communities to define their own priorities for improving health and social care services by joining up health and social care services".

The Challenges for West Lothian, and Linlithgow in Particular

- The increasing population of Linlithgow places a heavy demand on health and social care provision in the town, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and those with disabilities;
- The present Health Centre, situated in Linlithgow's High Street, is physically incapable of fulfilling integrated healthcare requirements as detailed in the Scottish Executives strategy and the West Lothian Community Plan;
- Linlithgow Health Centre has limited rooms for consultation and for staff meetings, and vital therapy space is at a premium;
- Resident General Practitioners and those providing locum cover are presently required to share existing consultation rooms; and
- There is no resident social work support available at the Health Centre.

Rising to the Challenges - Rising to West Lothian's challenges and indeed the Scottish Government's overall Health Improvement Strategy will require an integrated approach to ensure that the people of Linlithgow have the same benefit and equal access to a comprehensive health care facility as Bathgate and other areas of West Lothian. Options are being explored for the relocation or extension of the present Health Centre, in order to create a 'one stop' facility for the town where health and social care can be provided in one building. It is considered that the development of a new health centre in the very centre of the town would be best from a community point of view because the location would be more convenient for patients, being centrally situated near the shops and other facilities and is easily reached by public transport. At this location, it would contribute to the vitality of the town centre. Such an opportunity presents itself in the site of the bus depot at The Cross. With an entrance through the ground floor of three-storey buildings closing the gap on the south side of the High Street (possibly with housing above and business accommodation adjacent – Proposals H12 and E4), a new building on this site could be served by its own dedicated parking area at the rear, accessed via Court Square and the back of the County Buildings (see also Proposal T12 – compensatory car parking to allow tourist bus parking in The Vennel car park).

Should this proposal be found impracticable, a second preference might be for consideration to be directed towards the underused grounds of St Michael's RC Church (otherwise proposed in this document as a possible location for tourist car parking - Proposal T10).

Proposal HE1 – New Integrated Health Centre at The Cross

For the reasons stated above, the preference is for a central location rather than a 'greenfield' site in a location such as Blackness Road.

7. Environmental Sustainability

Underlying this *Vision* for Linlithgow is a desire to minimise the consumption of energy, consistent with the reasonable expectations of the populace, and striking a balance between opposing needs in such a way that the visual appearance of the town and its surroundings is not unnecessarily compromised.

Current thinking favours solid measures to make the best use of land, save energy, produce/consume locally, encourage community involvement and foster civic pride. In the local context, the more visible features traditionally associated with 'sustainability', such as wind turbines and large amounts of timber cladding, are of less importance than the need to build to last, and to re-use resources as far as possible.

The main 'sustainable' features of the *Vision* for Linlithgow, many of which are outlined in the previous sections, are:

- Encouraging local employment to cut down the dependence on commuting elsewhere, and to make the town more self-sufficient economically;
- Providing a range of housing to allow lower-income residents to remain in the town;
- Discouragement of car use by promoting public transport and the provision of an attractive cycle and footpath network with easy routes to the town centre and the railway station;
- Encouragement of retail and business development in locations most accessible by foot, cycle or public transport, particularly the town centre;
- Upgrading the town centre environment and encouraging tourism via the railway;
- Encouragement of the use of natural building

materials wherever possible, coupled with avoidance of materials with high embodied energy and short life expectancy such as plastic wall cladding and uPVC window frames, as circumstances permit;

- Incorporation of sustainable drainage systems involving the installation of underground filter drains/water storage, and, in new developments, the provision of storage ponds which can function as high-quality landscape features and havens for wildlife;
- High levels of thermal insulation in buildings, improving comfort and minimising heating costs and energy usage;
- Education of the community on the wider world impact of excessive energy use and the throw-away society;
- Re-use of materials wherever possible;
- Remediation of ground contamination where appropriate;
- Designating 'green wedges' and other development-free areas;
- Conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats, principally around Linlithgow Loch and the canal;
- Allowing for the creation of 'wildlife corridors';
- Provision of allotment gardens and community orchards;
- Creation of market gardens, food-growing nurseries, smallholdings and orchards on the town outskirts, and encouragement of 'community supported agriculture' to produce local food and create local employment; and
- High levels of community engagement in all aspects of development.

8. Implementation

The implementation of the *Vision* for Linlithgow would depend on the realisation of land value, as described earlier in this report. The table on the following page gives an idea of rough development costs which would have to be met. Proposals not included in this table are to be regarded as self-financing, would be financed as an integral part of adjacent development (for example road access to a housing site), or would be entirely funded from other sources such as the Scottish Government, West Lothian Council, or a community trust.

For the purposes of this 'Vision' document, it is estimated that £19,725,000 of development works for the benefit of the community would have to be raised through the realisation of land value. Based on Government figures suggesting that the average value of bulk housing land in

Scotland is around £1,100,000 per hectare, it can be deduced that, based on a gross density of 25 houses per hectare, the value per housing plot is £44,000.

Assuming for the purposes of this exercise that £25,000 per plot can be extracted from the land value, it would be necessary to build 789 houses to fund the £19,725,000 of development works. Rounded up to 800, this would take up 32 hectares/79 acres of land and would therefore be comfortably accommodated into the 'white' development areas at Burghmuir and Edinburgh Road, as shown on the Proposals Map. Of course, additional ground provision within the 'white' areas would be needed for the 100 social-rented houses (another 4 hectares/10 acres) and for generous landscaping, allotments, etc.

Table showing Possible 'Planning Gains'

Proposal Number	Description of Proposal	Notional Cost	Contribution from Dev't Consortium	Other or Alternative Sources of Finance
B1 and T1	Townscape Heritage Initiative/Conservation Area Enhancement & Traffic Management to 'Reclaim' the High Street	2,500,000	1,250,000	Heritage Lottery Fund; Historic Scotland
H1	Social-Rented and Affordable Housing (subsidy @ £40,000 per house)	6,000,000	4,000,000	Scottish Government
T2	Four-way Motorway Interchange	4,500,000	1,500,000	Scottish Gov't and developers of Business Park (Proposal E2)
T3	High Street By-Pass	6,000,000	6,000,000	
T4	Blackness Road Roundabouts	200,000	100,000	Business Park
T7	Traffic Lights at St Ninian's Road/West Port	50,000	25,000	West Lothian Council
T8, T9, T10	Car Parking at Regent Centre, Edinburgh Road and Blackness Road	2,000,000	1,500,000	ScotRail
T12	Parking for Tourist Buses/comp. car parking	100,000	100,000	
T13/14/15	Cycle Network (outwith new development areas)	400,000	300,000	Sustrans; British Waterways Board
R2; T17	Clarendon Public Park/'Green Wedge'	1,750,000	1,750,000	
R3	New/Upgraded Playing Fields and Allotments, Kettilstoun	500,000	200,000	West Lothian Council; Environmental/sports charities, etc
R4	Permanent Youth Centre	500,000	500,000	(LYPP)
ED1	New Primary School	2,300,000	2,000,000	West Lothian Council
HE1	New integrated Health Centre, The Cross	2,000,000	500,000	NHS, West Lothian Council
	TOTALS	£28,800,000	£19,725,000	

The construction of the public works, and of the housing developments that would pay for them, would proceed by means of a binding legal agreement between West Lothian Council and a consortium of all the housing developers involved, under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. In order to ensure the completion of works, the development consortium would be expected to adhere to performance or contract completion bonds as appropriate.

Unless already in public ownership, the development consortium would be required to buy the necessary land to carry out the public works, and West Lothian Council would be expected to apply its best endeavours to assist acquisition through the use of agency compulsory purchase powers. Another possibility is community acquisition, ownership and resultant control of the development land, via a Development Trust, and this should be thoroughly investigated.

At the outset, the overall development package would have to be the subject of a detailed Action Plan/Design Guide or brief - the Council and/or Development Trust would be expected to involve and consult the public on

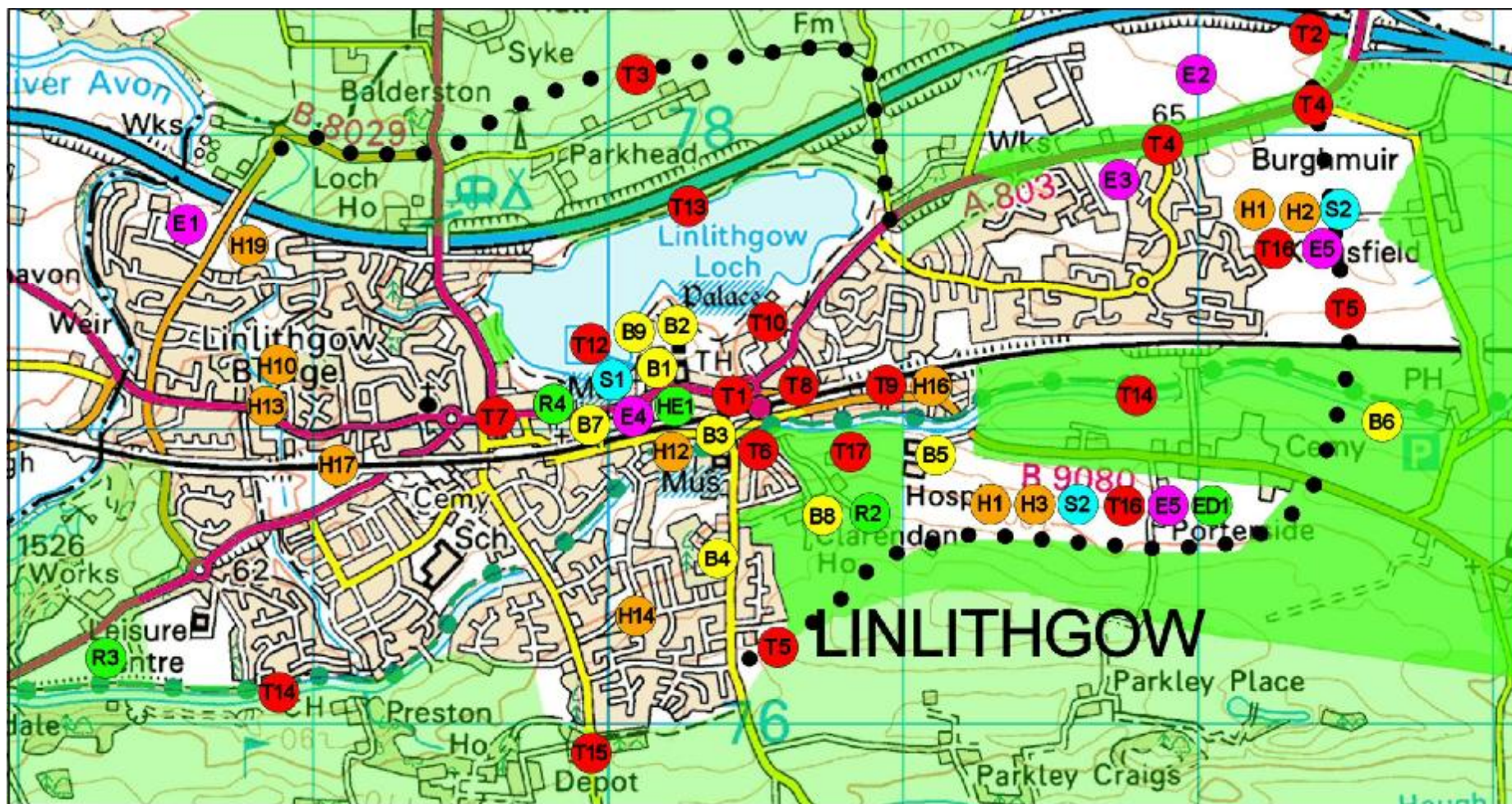
its contents in accordance with current best practice. Subsequent comprehensive development submissions or masterplans for the affected areas, in response to the brief, would have to be the subject of widespread public consultation.

It would be essential that a dedicated Steering Group be established to oversee the planning and implementation of the *Vision* for Linlithgow. If led by West Lothian Council, it would be attended by the three local councillors, relevant Council officials, representatives of the development consortium and any Town Management/Community Trust, Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Councils, Linlithgow Civic Trust, and representatives of any other agencies, and any individuals able or willing to contribute positively to the project. If community led, a similar approach could be taken. Day-to-day co-ordination and enforcement would be the responsibility of an officer reporting to the Steering Group, and employed for this purpose by either the Council or, preferably, by the/any Town Management/Community Trust.

Linlithgow Civic Trust Policy on Town Expansion, 2000

1. The objectives of Linlithgow Civic Trust broadly relate to the preservation and enhancement of, and the quality of life in, the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow.
2. The Civic Trust believes that both character and quality have been damaged and diminished by excessive development of the town, and that they will be further damaged and diminished by continuing development.
3. For that reason, the Civic Trust supports now, as in the drafting of the 1994 Local Plan, a policy of restraint on development in Linlithgow.
4. The Civic Trust believes, however, that the effect of the 1994 Plan has been limited and disappointing, and that what effect it might have had has been partly eroded by successful appeals against, and Council decisions contrary to its provisions.
5. The Civic Trust sees no reason to believe that a continuation of the restraint policy for a further five years will be any more effective than it has been so far. It also believes that erosion, from the same causes, of its effects is liable to be greater, rather than less, in the extended period.
6. Therefore, whilst the Civic Trust sees no alternative to the policy of 'restraint' in the short term, it believes that it will be of limited effectiveness and therefore unsustainable in the longer term.
7. The Civic Trust believes that the policy of restraint can at best be considered a holding measure of limited effectiveness, and that a search must begin for a long term, viable and sustainable policy which will not only prevent further damage to character and quality, but will actively mitigate the damage done by past development.
8. It believes the most likely basis for such a policy to be the adoption of a carefully prepared and detailed plan which will permit development in response to the inevitable pressures, but within a framework which provides all the infrastructure necessary to accommodate that development and ease existing pressures (eg traffic in the High Street and educational capacity).
9. Such a plan would need to balance the existing infrastructure inadequacies and the improvements needed to overcome them with the additional development the improved infrastructure could support and the ability of that development to create the necessary improved infrastructure. The plan must contain both physical and financial proposals.
10. The preparation of such a plan will not be easily or quickly accomplished. It is therefore essential, in the Civic Trust's opinion, that feasibility studies be started in the near future, in readiness for the 2005 Local Plan Review.
11. The Trust believes that the implementation, or intention to implement, such feasibility studies will lend support to the policy of restraint.
12. Even if the studies show such a plan to be unfeasible, they will identify and express more clearly the problems, both existing and to be anticipated, of further development, and will thereby lend support to the continuation of the policy of restraint.
13. In short, the Linlithgow Civic Trust does not favour development, but believes it to be inevitable. It therefore believes that every effort should be made to extract benefit from the inevitable. (Any growth should be managed and planned on the basis of a 'shopping list' for developers to ensure benefits for the community as a whole.)

PROPOSALS MAP



Linlithgow Civic Trust's Vision for Linlithgow

Map Legend and Colour Key

- Areas of Great Landscape Value
- 'Green wedges' and other Development-free Areas
- Proposals for Built/Archaeological Heritage and Tourism
- Proposals relating to Employment
- Housing Proposals
- Transport/Accessibility Proposals
- Proposals for Retailing and Town Centre
- Community/Recreation/Education/Health Proposals
- Road Links

List of Proposals

BUILT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

- B1 Townscape Heritage Initiative/Conservation Area Enhancement
- B2 Restoration and Re-use of (parts of) Linlithgow Palace
- B3 Extension of Learmonth Gardens
- B4 Upgrading of Facilities at Carmelite Friary
- B5 Canalside Facilities near St Michael's Hospital
- B6 Canal Marina near Park Farm
- B7 Conversion of Sheriff Courthouse (hotel)
- B8 Conversion of Clarendon House (hotel)
- B9 Tourist Information Centre

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

- E1 Completion of Mill Road Industrial Estate
- E2 Burghmuir Business Park
- E3 Office 'Campus' at Boghall East
- E4 Business Centre at The Cross
- E5 Home/Business Accommodation

HOUSING

- H1 Social-Rented and 'Affordable' Private Housing
- H2 New Private Housing - Burghmuir
- H3 New Private Housing - Edinburgh Road
- H10 New Private Housing – Eastmill Road, Linlithgow Bridge
- H12 New Private or Social-Rented Housing – The Cross
- H13 New Private Housing – West of Murco petrol station, Falkirk Road

- H14 New Private Housing - Westerlea, Friarsbrae
- H16 New Private Housing - Whisky Bond Site, Edinburgh Road
- H17 New Private Housing - Sawmill site, Falkirk Road
- H19 New Private Housing - East of Mill Road, Linlithgow Bridge

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

- T1 Traffic Management to 'Reclaim' the High Street
- T2 Four-way motorway interchange at Burghmuir
- T3 High Street Traffic By-pass
- T4 Roundabouts on Blackness Road at eastern end of Springfield Road and at the Kingsfield Road junction
- T5 Eastern Access Road
- T6 Relief of Traffic over Canal Bridge at Manse Road
- T7 Traffic Lights at St Ninians Road/West Port
- T8 Decked Car Park at Regent Centre
- T9 Commuter Car Park at Edinburgh Road
- T10 Tourist Car Park at Blackness Road
- T11 Bus Information at Stops
- T12 Parking for Tourist Buses at The Vennel Car Park
- T13 Formation of Cycle Network
- T14 Upgrading of Canal Towpath
- T15 Cycle/Footpath Link to Beecraigs Country Park
- T16 Modal Share/Active Travel Policy for New Housing Areas
- T17 Cycle and Pedestrian Links across 'Green Wedge' at Clarendon

RETAILING AND TOWN CENTRE

- S1 Redevelopment of Guyancourt Vennel for Retail Purposes
- S2 Neighbourhood Shops within New Housing Areas

COMMUNITY, SPORTS, EDUCATION & HEALTH FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

- R1 Provision of Community Rooms
- R2 Formation of Clarendon Public Park, Allotments and Community Orchards
- R3 New/Upgraded Playing Fields and Allotments, Kettilstoun
- R4 Establishment of Permanent Youth Centre
- ED1 New Primary School at Edinburgh Road
- HE1 New Integrated Health Centre at The Cross