

# ELLDP<sub>one</sub>

## PRE MAIN ISSUES REPORT ENGAGEMENT - DISCUSSION PAPER

### Introduction

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#### *Purpose*

- 1 East Lothian Council is preparing a new **local development plan**, the East Lothian Local Development Plan, or **ELLDP<sub>one</sub>** for short. This will be a new land-use plan that will eventually replace the policies and proposals of the existing East Lothian Local Plan 2008. The first stage will be the preparation of a **Main Issues Report** (MIR) and, as the name suggests, it will discuss the main land use planning issues that ELLDP<sub>one</sub> must deal with. The MIR will be published in summer 2012. To help the Council prepare it, and make sure it has a wide input of views, we want to hear what residents, local organisations, the development industry, etc. think are the main land use planning issues that the MIR should cover and what their views on these issues are. It is also the opportunity for those wishing to have land identified in ELLDP<sub>one</sub> for a specific purpose to draw this to the Council's attention, with suitable justification.

#### *Background*

- 2 ELLDP<sub>one</sub> will guide the uses that can be made of land and buildings, where these uses require planning permission. It will manage land use change and promote the right types of development in the right place at the right time. The Council refers to the development plan when making decisions on planning applications, and will normally support applications that are in line with the plan. Under the new planning system, the development plan will be the **strategic development plan** (SESplan) read in conjunction with the **local development plan**. It is expected that ELLDP<sub>one</sub> will be approved in 2014, will plan for a ten year period to 2024 and will be reviewed every five years.
- 3 The MIR will be the **main consultation stage** in the plan's preparation. It will be a discussion document asking for views on where people think development should or should not happen and the land use planning policy issues that should be dealt with in the Proposed Plan. The MIR will not be a draft Plan but it will have to give some idea of the Council's preferred spatial strategy for East Lothian (i.e. where

major new land uses will go), and any reasonable alternatives to this. Both the MIR and the Proposed Plan will have an Environmental Report which will assess their likely strategic environmental impacts on a range of matters (biodiversity, population and human health, soil, water, etc.)

- 4 We want the MIR to be based on a clear understanding of what people living, working and doing business in East Lothian think:
  - are the main land use planning issues facing East Lothian which the new LDP should deal with, and
  - how and where its communities should develop over the next 10 years or so
- 5 Developers and landowners will also be able to suggest where and why the Plan should support development on specific sites. We will use all this information and feedback to help us prepare the MIR.

## Context

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- 6 The ELLDP<sub>one</sub> has to take account of the National Planning Framework<sup>1</sup>, Scottish Planning Policy<sup>2</sup> and a number of other national and regional policy documents. It must also be consistent with the Strategic Development Plan (SESplan)<sup>3</sup>.

### *The National Planning Framework (NPF2)*

- 7 NPF2 notes that there is a need to plan for a substantial growth in the number of households in the Edinburgh city region, of which East Lothian is a part. The planning system must ensure that the supply of development land is adequate, that major sites identified for housing are made available in good time and that more affordable housing is provided. Investment in transport and environmental infrastructure will be needed.

### *Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)*

- 8 SPP covers a range of land use planning issues. Notably, it encourages planning authorities to take a positive approach to development and requires that the settlement strategies in development plans should promote a more sustainable pattern of growth. To limit likely greenhouse gas emissions the location, design and layout of new development should reduce energy and resource requirements and reduce the need to travel. Economic development should be supported and a generous supply of land provided to meet identified housing requirements. Planning authorities should maintain at all times a supply of effective housing land for at least five years to ensure a continuing generous supply of land for house building.

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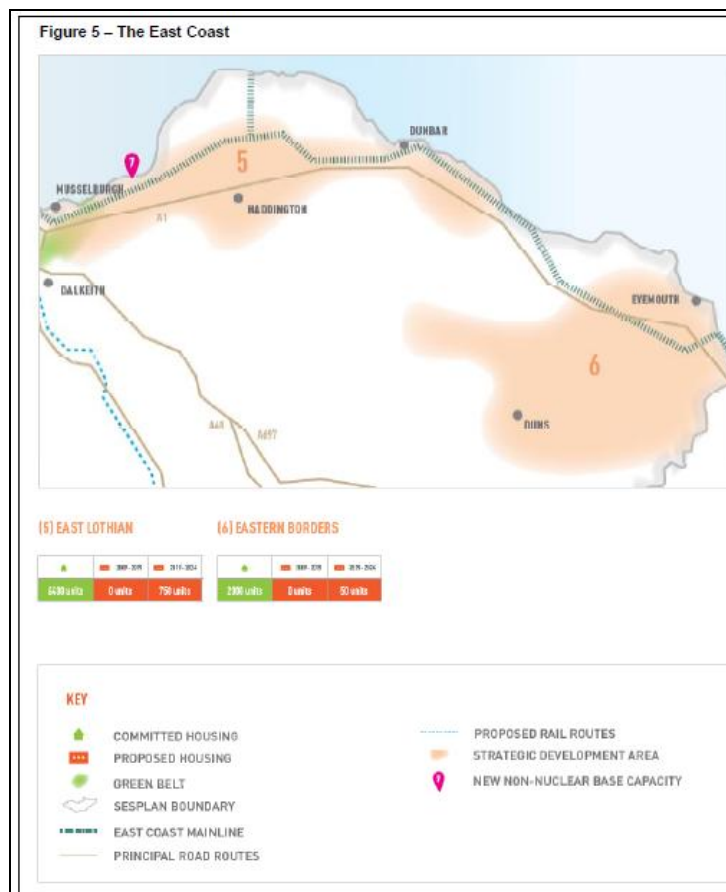
<sup>1</sup> National Planning Framework 2, The Scottish Government, 2009

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Planning Policy, The Scottish Government, 2010

<sup>3</sup> SESplan, Proposed Plan, The Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland, November 2011

*SESplan*

- 9 SESplan, the Strategic Development Plan Authority, published in November 2011 its Proposed Plan for the Edinburgh city region, an area comprising the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and the southern part of Fife. When finally approved by Scottish Ministers, the Plan will set out a long term spatial land use strategy and the policies and proposals to deliver it. It will also set out in broad terms where development should and should not go and the required infrastructure support. The East Lothian Local Development Plan must be consistent with the approved Strategic Development Plan and set out any other requirements necessary to deliver its strategy.
- 10 SESplan's Proposed Plan identifies the East Coast, of which East Lothian is a part, as one of a number of broad locations for development. Within East Lothian, new development is focussed on the A1 and East Coast Main Line, within a 'strategic development area' extending eastwards along a corridor from Musselburgh through Haddington to Dunbar. There is currently no strategic requirement to identify new housing or employment land elsewhere within East Lothian, although appropriate small-scale local allocations may be made.



**11** SESplan's Proposed Plan proposes that land for a further 750 houses be allocated in the East Lothian strategic development area over the period 2019 to 2024. No additional housing land release over and above this is proposed, with no additional early allocations proposed in the period 2009 to 2019. In East Lothian there is land available for the development of around 6,400 houses up to 2032 and it includes the major local plan sites still to be built out at Blindwells, Wallyford, Haddington, Dunbar, Musselburgh and North Berwick, and a number of smaller sites throughout East Lothian. SESplan's Proposed Plan indicates that these dwellings will be delivered over the period 2009-2032. Over and above this, SESplan has also anticipated that around a further 440 houses will be built in this area on other as yet unknown 'windfall'<sup>4</sup> sites to contribute to the overall SDP's housing land requirement.



**12** Blindwells new settlement remains a key element of SESplan's and East Lothian's settlement strategy. SESplan envisages a potential settlement expansion to a total of 4,600 houses, although no more than 1600 houses is expected to be delivered at the new settlement before 2032. However, for any further expansion to be realised, the Proposed SDP requires comprehensive solutions to be identified that will deliver the entire new settlement and that the LDP allocate the area of land within which it will be developed. SESplan notes that this will be a matter for ELLDP<sub>one</sub>: its conclusions as to the future capacity of Blindwells and the implications of this for future SDP strategy will help guide the next review of the SDP Proposed Plan.

**13** No more strategic employment land is proposed in the East Lothian SDA. The reasons for this are its substantial amount of undeveloped employment land (particularly on the west side of Musselburgh and at Dunbar), its relative remoteness from strategic employment centres and infrastructure, and an aspiration to encourage smaller-scale, local and tourism-based employment opportunities here.

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<sup>4</sup> Sites which become available for development during the plan period that were not anticipated to be available when the plan was prepared

## ELLDP<sub>one</sub> Objectives

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- 14** It is in the context of NPF2, SPP and SESplan that the local development plan's MIR will be prepared. The Council wants to use SESplan's Proposed Plan and its proposals for East Lothian to form the basis of discussions with the public, community councils, local organisations, key agencies, community planning partners and the development industry to tell us what they think the main land use planning issues are that should be addressed in the Local Development Plan. This will help the Council subsequently prepare the MIR.
- 15** As a first stage in this process draft objectives for ELLDP<sub>one</sub> are suggested. A number of these are broadly aligned with the East Lothian Community partnership's Single Outcome Agreement.
- a. *To help develop an economy based on and supported by East Lothian's natural assets, ensuring that there is sufficient, deliverable land available for employment use [SOA1 ]*
  - b. *To protect and improve the quality of East Lothian's countryside, natural and built environment assets and the character and identity of its settlements [SOA 11]*
  - c. *To ensure that there is sufficient land allocated for housing of all tenures to help ensure that people in housing need have access to an appropriate type, tenure and standard of housing [SOA 10]*
  - d. *To help accommodate the development requirements of the wider Edinburgh City Region of which East Lothian is a part, while recognising our environmental, accessibility and infrastructure constraints*
  - e. *To direct development to where it can be accommodated within the environmental, landscape and infrastructure capacity of East Lothian's settlements [SOA 11]*
  - f. *To help create safe, sustainable, mixed communities [SOA 9 & 14]*
  - g. *To define the respective roles of our main settlements and their centres and to help promote regeneration and improvement [SOA 11]*
  - h. *To support quality design and layout in new development [SOA 11]*
  - i. *To locate traffic-generating uses where they reduce the need to travel and where they can be accessed by public transport and/or active travel modes (cycling/walking) [SOA 13]*
  - j. *To promote sustainable development, to contribute to a zero waste and zero carbon agenda and to help address the implications of climate change [SOA 12]*

***Do you agree with these objectives?***

***Are there any other land use planning objectives that you think ELLDP<sub>one</sub> should include?***

## Land Use Planning Issues

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- 16** Planning policies and proposals indicate the planning authority's attitude to particular uses for land and buildings, what uses may or may not be appropriate in particular situations, where development will take place and what might be needed to make a proposed development acceptable. All applications for planning permission are assessed against the terms of the development plan.
- 17** As discussed above, planning policy and strategy have to take account of NPF2, Scottish Planning Policy and the emerging Strategic Development Plan. They must also consider East Lothian itself: what it is like, what we would like it to be, what issues the land use planning process should address and what needs to be done to deliver the plan's objectives.

### *The local context*

- 18** East Lothian is an area of varied and attractive landscape character comprising countryside and coast, with an agricultural coastal plain set at the foot of the Lammermuir and Garleton Hills. This landscape is interspersed with historic towns and villages as well as designed landscapes and historical sites, buildings, landmarks and other monuments, and internationally important coastal habitats. These characteristics and built and natural heritage assets are all integral to East Lothian's sense of place and identity and its desirability as a high quality place to live, work, recreate and visit.



- 19** Protecting and enhancing these assets can require the application of restrictive planning policies, for example, for the control of development in the countryside or within a conservation area, or for alterations to a listed building. At the same time, there is government encouragement for planning authorities to provide a generous supply of land for housing and to support a greater range of uses in the countryside. There is also government support for renewable energy where it is technically feasible and environmentally acceptable. The landscape and visual impact of wind turbines is a particular issue, both in upland and lowland East Lothian.



- 20** The A1(T), the East Coast Main Line and the North Berwick Branch Line are the main strategic transport corridors through East Lothian. While East Lothian is relatively well served by the strategic transport network, there is an underlying problem in a lack of capacity in local rail services. Many residents work outside East Lothian, with a high proportion of these trips being by private car.



- 21** East Lothian's main towns have experienced substantial growth over the last 15 years or so. This has reflected East Lothian's role in the wider strategic planning of Edinburgh and the Lothians and in its attractiveness as a place to live. However, growth can have an impact on the character and setting of settlements. The Edinburgh Green Belt has a role in managing settlement growth in the west of East Lothian. The provision of affordable housing provision<sup>5</sup> is a particular issue.



- 22** Growth has also placed demands on available infrastructure capacity. The rail network is also at / very near capacity with severe capacity constraints on the East Coast Main Line affecting scheduling for local services as well as those from the North Berwick Branch Line. Buses serve the area with the more numerous and

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<sup>5</sup> Housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes (SPP para 86)

frequent services to the city found in settlements located to the west rather than in the more eastern settlements. There is limited current capacity on the A1 and at its junctions/interchanges. The availability of education capacity and the ability to further expand some of our schools is a particular local issue. Additional drainage capacity is a particular issue in North Berwick and, to a lesser extent, in Dunbar.

- 23** Housing growth has not been accompanied by any significant increase in employment opportunity, in part contributing to the levels of commuting referred to previously. East Lothian is not perhaps so well-located to Central Scotland's strategic transport network and therefore to its key employment hubs as other areas. There is also a balance to be found between encouraging business and industry while retaining the character and appearance of East Lothian.

#### *Key planning issues*

- 24** With this context in mind, the following are suggested as the main planning issues that the Main Issues Report of ELLDP<sub>one</sub> should consider:

#### **Sustainable Development/Climate Change/Environment**

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- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> contribute to the sustainable development of East Lothian and help promote a low/zero carbon economy?
- What are the land use planning implications of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 for ELLDP<sub>one</sub>?
- How can the land use policies and proposals of ELLDP<sub>one</sub> help reduce flooding?
- What policy approach should ELLDP<sub>one</sub> take towards renewable energy, including wind turbines?
- Do the boundaries of our conservation areas properly define areas of special architectural or historic character?
- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> ensure that the design of new development in East Lothian is appropriate to its location and context?

#### **Spatial Strategy**

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- Where should new development be located: for example, should ELLDP<sub>one</sub> concentrate the housing land requirements of the Proposed SDP around a few key towns/locations in the East Lothian strategic development area or should a more dispersed strategy of a little around many be adopted?
- What role should the proposed Blindwells new settlement play in the hierarchy of settlements and centres and in meeting housing land requirements beyond its present 1600 house allocation in the current East Lothian Local Plan 2008? How can infrastructure be provided, phased and delivered to facilitate both the 1600 houses and any further expansion?



- Should ELLDP<sub>one</sub> consider modest planned growth in our villages?
- In the longer term, what opportunities do our main towns have for further growth?
- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> help to improve sustainable travel and the relationship between the settlement strategy and transport provision?
- Does the Green Belt within East Lothian achieve its intended purpose?
- Does the policy for the control of development in the countryside achieve a reasonable balance between encouraging appropriate uses while protecting environmental and landscape quality?
- How can the spatial strategy protect and enhance biodiversity?
- How might the availability of infrastructure capacity affect the scale and location of new development?

### **Housing and the Economy**

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- Are the current land allocations for business and industry in East Lothian appropriate: are they of the right type and in the right locations?
- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> assist the delivery of employment uses on allocated sites?
- Is current planning policy sufficiently supportive of proposals for new employment use and of retaining existing employment sites/buildings in employment use?
- SESplan's Proposed Plan requires local development plans to review the need to identify areas of search or specific sites for aggregate minerals and coal. Should the current local plan's resistance to opencast coal extraction on environmental grounds continue to be supported in ELLDP<sub>one</sub>?
- Is it sufficient for ELLDP<sub>one</sub> to identify land for an additional 750 houses to meet the SDP's proposals for East Lothian?
- SPP requires that local development plans have available at all times an effective land supply<sup>6</sup> for at least five years of house completions. What might the implications of this be of on the amount of new housing land that ELLDP<sub>one</sub> should identify?
- What sites might be suitable for new housing to contribute to the requirements of SESplan's Proposed Plan, and why?
- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> help to maximise the delivery of land for affordable housing?

### **Town Centres/Regeneration**

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- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> help our town centres thrive? What are the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, threats and aspirations of our individual towns?
- Should ELLDP<sub>one</sub> look at the relative roles and functions of our existing town centres, now and in the future and what role should Blindwells play?

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<sup>6</sup> Land which is capable of being developed within any five year period

- Should ELLDP<sub>one</sub> encourage more shops in East Lothian so that some of the shopping expenditure available to East Lothian residents currently lost to places like Edinburgh, Straiton and Livingston can be retained within East Lothian? Would this be supported if it meant more out of centre shops, including supermarkets?
- Should planning policy continue to resist the change of use of shops to other uses in our town centres? Alternatively, are there other uses able to maintain/increase the vitality and viability of our centres, for example, cafes and restaurants, that could replace existing shops?
- Should 'prime' shopping areas be identified and protected exclusively, or almost exclusively, for retail use?
- Should planning policy place limits on the number and/or location of hot food takeaways?
- Should parking continue to be encouraged in town centres or should the emphasis be on public transport provision?
- How can ELLDP<sub>one</sub> encourage more employment in our town centres and retain existing employment uses there

***Do you agree that these are the main land use planning issues that should be discussed in the MIR and taken forward into the Proposed Plan?***

***Do you have any views on these issues?***

***Are there any other planning issues that should be addressed? What are these?***

## **Existing land Use Planning Policies**

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- 25** Finally, in preparing the new local development plan, the Council will review the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the land use planning policies of its existing East Lothian Local Plan 2008. Most are probably still relevant and can be carried forward into the new local development plan. Those policies most directly related to the settlement strategy itself and to the use of land would be contained within the plan itself. Those policies related more to the detailed assessment of specific development proposals might be better presented as supplementary guidance. There may also be areas where land use policy guidance is either lacking or could be improved. The Council would welcome views on these matters.

## Comments

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Any comments can be submitted to us at [localplan@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@eastlothian.gov.uk) or sent by post to:

Policy and Projects  
Environment Department  
East Lothian Council  
John Muir House  
Haddington  
EH41 3HA


Any comments on the issues raised in this paper, or on any other matters relating to the preparation of the ELLDP<sub>one</sub> Main Issues Report, should be received by **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012**.

**If you are making a submission in support of a specific use (or uses) for a particular area of land then your submission should include a location plan, sufficient details of the use(s) proposed and a completed sustainability check-list (available on the Council's web site at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/ldp](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/ldp)).**

You can also phone the following planners for further information:

Phil McLean	01620 827017
Jean Squires	01620 827370 ( <i>Monday to Wednesday only</i> )
Andrew Stewart	01620 827257
Paul Zochowski	01620 827264

For further information on progress on ELLDP<sub>one</sub> please check the Development Planning page of the Council's website at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/ldp](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/ldp)



**This document is available on request on audiotape, in Braille or in your own language.**

# ELLDP<sub>one</sub>

*your chance to help shape the future of East Lothian*

v0.3  
19 January 2012