

West Lothian Council, Local Development Plan

Consultation on the [Delivery Plan](#) for the [Local Development Plan \(LDP1\)](#)

Response from Spokes members in Linlithgow, July 2024

Thanks for this opportunity to comment on the draft LDP1 [delivery plan](#). We hope our comments can also feed into the forthcoming [LDP2 Local Development Plan \(2026-2035?\)](#)

Please note that our comments refer only to issues in or relevant to our local area in and around Linlithgow, not the whole local authority area.

Our comments are in the order of the Plan, not in order of our priority. Our top concern is in fact P-115, conditions in Linlithgow High Street.

A general point is that actions relating to cycling seem largely concentrated in rural areas and to serve recreational cycling. Whilst this is important, urban provision is a higher priority in order to encourage more people to cycle more for everyday purposes such as shopping, work, visiting and school.

Schedule 3, Strategic Transport Actions

P-35 Rail – Dalmeny chord – we strongly support early action, to improve rail service quality and reliability to Edinburgh, and we urge the Council to press the Scottish Government for action on this delayed project

P-37 A8/A89/A899 sustainable transport corridor – we support this as being valuable for both public transport and bike travel between our area and Edinburgh. The existing A89 bike route is already valuable, but improvements are needed particularly in the A8 section

P-102(b) Union Canal Accesses – this needs to include, with urgency, the long-desired access at Maidlands, to give the very large Springfield population safe cycling and walking access to the towpath. The existing access used by walkers involves a dangerous crossing of the busy Edinburgh Road at a blind corner. For cycling (let alone prams, wheelchairs, etc, this ‘access’ is ‘inaccessible’ due to its steep and narrow steps. Cyclists or wheelchair users have to travel along Edinburgh Road, and for many the next access, the St Magdalene’s ramp, is so steep (1 in 3 at the bottom?) as to be unuseable, with the only remaining option being to continue up the narrow, steep and trafficked Back Station Road.

Furthermore, the Maidlands access needs to be combined at the same time with some limited reconstruction and redetermination at the corner between Maidlands and the road down to the railway bridge, so that people cycling between Springfield and the towpath (including children heading for the Academy) do not have to enter (and immediately leave) the busy Edinburgh Road (at a corner and with 2 side roads entering it).

P-108 Linlithgow/Blackness connection from A803 to B903 (missing link in Round-Forth cycle route). However, note that separated cycle provision on the very fast A803 (Blackness Road) from Linlithgow town centre outwards is a necessary accompaniment to this project, and probably a higher priority as it serves commuting and shopping cycling needs, not just recreational.

P-109 Cycle route at A904 Newton to Edinburgh boundary (for Queensferry) Whilst supporting this, sections of the very fast A904 west of here are also of high priority. In particular, you already have the recent detailed [submission](#) from our member John Crighton re the very short stretch of overgrown path from the existing A904 path at the former Abercorn primary up to the Duntarvie junction. This gives access to a network of quiet roads, and indeed a good connection to Edinburgh, often used for recreational cycling. We are aware of one such cyclist from Edinburgh who came off on the overgrown path, whilst the more confident risk the A904 itself. This small project could be done at an early date. It could at the same time be linked to Hopetoun Garden Centre by opening up the adjacent connection to the old road. Ideally the path would later be continued beside the A904 (or segregated onroad) to Newton as an expanded P-109 project.

P-111 Ecclesmachan/Threemiletown cyclistroute parallel to B8046 Whilst we very much support this proposal, given the narrow road with fast motor traffic, it is a costly project and probably lower priority than urban-area provision when finances are limited

P113 Linlithgow/Bathgate/Beecraigs We are not clear what is proposed. A priority should be reduced speed limits and enforcement of such on the narrow but often fast rural roads.

P-44 Burghmuir 4-way junction (M9-J3) This is intended to relieve the High Street. Although bringing some initial relief, the freer flow would likely result in induced traffic, re-creating high traffic levels within a few years, or sooner. We would *consider* supporting the junction development *if* the High Street was *at the same time* closed to all through traffic other than buses, emergency vehicles and possibly other categories; with electronic enforcement. Traffic calming measures alone would not suffice without a bus gate. We also point to the very high junction costs, over £15m. This sum, for one road junction, could alternatively fund major provision for active travel, including many of the unfunded projects in the Delivery Plan.

P-46 Kettil'stoun Mains Park cycle track We are not sure what this is – is it an extension to the existing Cycle Circuit? In this part of the town, a high priority is an onroad segregated cycling connection to the town centre, accompanied by publicity measures to encourage people to get to the Xcite Centre and indeed the Cycle Circuit by bike instead of by car.

P-115 Linlithgow Town Centre, traffic management [see also TCR2 in Schedule 7] Making the High Street safer and more welcoming for cycling, walking and shopping should be the top priority to encourage modal shift to active travel in the town. The existing conditions prevent all but the most confident from using the High Street by bike, and are thus a major deterrent to families and to less confident and potential adult cyclists, also thereby greatly limiting the opportunities for shopping by bike in the town. We are very concerned that the Council continues to put all its eggs into the basket of the £15m Burghmuir junction, which has not happened during some 2 decades of trying, may never happen given the cost, and whose effectiveness anyway cannot be certain [see P-44 comments above].

We urge that, with Burghmuir in likely limbo for years, the Council implements a people-friendly redesign of the High Street, with pavement parking removed, regulated loading bays, widening of footways where narrow, and a bidirectional cyclistroute. In the immediate term many small improvements are possible, such as reduced footway parking and creating continuous footways at side streets.

P-91 Winchburgh Rail Station We strongly support this long-overdue station. It is extremely disappointing that the motorway connection has been built years before the station, thus cementing the town into car dependency. The station will also hopefully somewhat reduce existing car commuting to Linlithgow station.

Schedule 5 – Active Travel, Open Space and Greenspace Actions

[wrongly called schedule 4 on its first page?]

P-102(b), P-108, P-109, P-111, P-113, P-46, P-115 – all as under Schedule 3 above.

P-93 to P-96 Winchburgh Community buildings – Safe and convenient cycling routes to these facilities from residential areas should be provided.

Other Schedules

We appreciate there is active travel relevance in other schedules, notably Schedule 7, Site-Specific, but we have not had the capacity to look carefully at these.

Additionally...

Whilst generally requiring roadspace reallocation rather than new land reservations, we urge the Council to create safe and welcoming cycling conditions on the main roads leading to the town centre. These include A803 Blackness Road (P-108 above, where an adjacent path is feasible much of the way) and A803 Falkirk Road (the coloured lane was very badly laid, needs re-laid and segregation added).