



# Lasswade District Civic Society

Planning (MLDP)  
Communities and Economy  
Midlothian Council  
Fairfield House  
8 Lothian Road  
Dalkeith EH22 3ZN

c/o Hillwood  
Braeside Road  
Loanhead  
EH20 9SF

12<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Dear Sirs,

## **Midlothian Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan 2014**

Lasswade District Civic Society has been established for over 40 years, and its adult membership now stands at around 400. Our constitution objectives include '... care for the beauty and character of the local area and the preservation of the general public amenity'. For these reasons, we are writing on behalf of the Society, and many local neighbours to express our concerns about a number of the proposed policies set out in the above document.

### **Sections 1 and 2**

The Strategic Objectives of the MLDP Proposed Plan 2014 are commendable. The impact on Midlothian of the SESplan requirement for 12,490 new housing units in Midlothian over the period 2009 – 2024 is a cause for great concern and we question whether the requirement for this huge number of houses, set in the last decade during a period of high economic growth, is still valid. We very concerned that without careful management, the large housing estates proposed will turn North Midlothian into a large sprawling dormitory suburb of Edinburgh, to the detriment of the existing local communities.

It is disappointing that the majority of the new housing and employment allocations are located on greenfield sites. When was the last inventory of brownfield sites carried out and can such sites be given priority as development sites over greenfield sites in the Policies of the MLDP?

### **Section 3**

We are very concerned about the loss of Community Identity and Coalescence. Policy **DEV1** should be strengthened to ensure against coalescence by requiring and defining the minimum acceptable width of "landscaped buffer zones and other community woodland".

Policies **DEV2** – **DEV10** should not be diluted.

### **Section 4**

We are very concerned that as a consequence of all the new housing units planned there will be a significant increase in traffic on the roads through Lasswade and on the Lasswade Bridge, and on the road between Loanhead and the Wadingburn junction. There is also the rat run from Poltonhall to Loanhead to consider which is not only congested but possibly not fit for purpose as a two-laned road with the increase in



# Lasswade District Civic Society

traffic using it over the years! These roads are already busy and queues are an everyday occurrence, particularly at peak hours when residents in the surrounding area leave for work in the morning and return in the evening. There is not sufficient information about the transport proposals in Policy **TRANS2** to know whether or more importantly how these issues will be addressed by developers.

Policy **MIN3** is contrary to the Strategic Objectives set out in Section 1 and should be amended as follows: Proposals for oil and gas extraction will not be permitted. Given that Lasswade District is an ex-mining community which has suffered subsidence leading to extra reinforcement of foundations for building work, will fracking not be hazardous in this area, and in the other ex-mining communities in Midlothian? Evidence the landslides on the back road to Roslin which closed the road for some considerable time, and there is evidence of strain on the road from Poltonhall to Polton Village with cracks from wall to road.

We object to the section of Policy **RD1** which permits all housing development which the developer says is required to fund the renovation of historically important buildings, and seek stronger protections for the integrity of the setting and the character of the surrounding area of historically important buildings, along the lines of the protections in Policies **RD2** – **RD4**.

## Section 5

With the exception of the Bush Bioscience Cluster, we object to all changes to the Green Belt boundary. In particular we object to the proposal to remove Polton Industrial Estate from the protection of the Green Belt given the prominence of this location with respect to the Mavisbank Conservation Area and Designed Landscape, and we object to condition E of Policy **ENV1** which permits development in the Green Belt that meets a national requirement or established need if the developer says that no other site is available. We see no reason for these changes and seek greater protections for the preservation of the Green Belt.

Policy **ENV6** significantly dilutes the current protection granted to Areas of Great Landscape Value. The current protection Policy **RP6** should be reinstated.

We object to the section of Policy **ENV8** permitting development in the River Valleys within the urban envelopes, particularly in view of Flood Plane and drainage concerns; this sentence should be removed from Policy **ENV8**.

We object to the section of Policy **ENV22** permitting Enabling Development, and seek stronger protections for the integrity of the setting and the character of the surrounding area of Listed Buildings.

The word 'significant' should be removed from Policy **NRG1** clauses A and C and Clauses D and H.

## Section 8

That the Bonnyrigg, Lasswade and Poltonhall community is expected to become the largest town in the county when taking account of the proposed housing growth causes great concern.



# Lasswade District Civic Society

We object to the following Strategic Housing Land Allocations:

Broomieknowe, Bonnyrigg – capacity: 55  
Dalhousie Mains, Bonnyrigg – capacity: 300  
Dalhousie South, Bonnyrigg – capacity: 360  
Hopefield Farm 2, Bonnyrigg – capacity: 375 increasing to 750  
Larkfield West, Eskbank – capacity: 60  
Larkfield South West, Eskbank – capacity: 30-40

Our objections are for the following reasons:

1. Loss of Green Belt.
2. Loss of Countryside.
3. Coalescence of Bonnyrigg with Eskbank.
4. Urban sprawl. The size of each of these housing developments is too big: Dalhousie Mains, Dalhousie South and Hopefield Farm 2 are each larger in size than many of the settlements in Midlothian!
5. Loss of community identity.
6. The potential effect these developments will have on the already extremely busy roads through Lasswade; there is no mention in the MLDP Proposed Plan 2014 and Traffic Appraisal documents of any Trip Generation Modelling having been done; the transport strategy and assessment appears to be focused solely on these residents using the A7, yet already the existing residents are avoiding the Bonnyrigg southern distributor road/A7 route to the City Bypass and Edinburgh and using Polton Road and Lasswade Road instead.
7. The impact on already stretched community facilities: Health, Education, Police and Fire safety.
8. The impact on waste management systems: where is all the waste from these new developments going to go?
7. Loss of amenity greenspace.

## **Supplementary Guidance**

Where are all the Supplementary Guidance documents? It is not possible to comment fully on the MDLP Proposed Plan 2014 when the supporting Supplementary Guidance documents referred to in the MDLP Proposed Plan 2014 are not available. It is a matter of concern that policy protection for important issues such as development in the Countryside and Green Belt and Special Landscape Areas has been delegated to Supplementary Guidance not currently available which should surely have been issued for the same statutory period for representation/ expressions of opinion as the MDLP Proposed Plan 2014.

We trust you will address these concerns in full when preparing the Midlothian Local Development Plan.

Yours faithfully

**Lasswade District Civic Society Committee,**

Michael Stoneham, Rosemary Mackay, Adam Lansdown, Sheila Murray, Jacquie Dunlop,  
Sheena Dryden, John Blackwell