



West Lothian Council

COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

DRAFT PLANNING BRIEF – ALMONDVALE ROUNDABOUT SOUTH WEST, LIVINGSTON

REPORT BY PLANNING SERVICES MANAGER

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Council Executive of the terms of a draft planning brief for a site at the Almondvale Roundabout South West, Livingston. A copy of the brief is included as Appendix One.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- approve the draft planning brief;
- note that if the site is marketed, the brief will form part of the marketing particulars for the site; and
- delegate authority to the Planning Services Manager to make any non-substantive revisions to the planning brief as matters arise.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources and working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>The site is identified for development in the West Lothian Local Plan as a site for town centre uses. The council adopted the local plan on 13 January 2009.</p> <p>There are no SEA, equality, health or risk assessment issues associated with the planning brief.</p>
III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The disposal of the site will generate a capital receipt to support the council's capital programme.
IV Consultations	Education, NETS and Land Services, Transportation and Finance and Estates Services were consulted in the preparation of the brief.

Local members were consulted prior to consultation with Bellsquarry, Dedridge and Livingston Village Community Councils. Adjoining proprietors at Bluebell Glade, Livingston were also consulted.

The brief is consistent with the terms of the West Lothian Local Plan and does not raise any policy issues. As such a report to the Development and Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel was not required.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The site is located on the southwestern edge of the Almondvale Roundabout at the junction of Charlesfield Road and Alderstone Road. The site lies within the southwest corner of the Livingston town centre envelope as identified in the adopted West Lothian Local Plan (WLLP). Under the terms of the Local Plan the site is allocated for town centre uses. Such an allocation allows for a broad range of uses including retail, leisure, offices, business, recreation and housing (including flats). The brief allows for these uses. A copy of the brief is attached as Appendix One.

The site was first allocated for town centre uses in the Finalised West Lothian Local Plan 2005 (FWLLP), which was approved for formal consultation at the council's Enterprise and Development Committee on 19 April 2005. The formal consultation period, known as the 'on deposit period' inviting objections and representations to the FWLLP, ran from May to July 2005. The council received no objections to the site from third parties and it consequently now forms part of the West Lothian Local Plan that was adopted by the council on 13 January 2009.

The brief is intended to guide the development of the site and identify key design, environmental and infrastructural requirements of the council as well as any additional community benefits that will be required as a result of development. As is standard practice with planning briefs, it has been the subject of consultation with interested parties. The consultation period ended on 10 June 2011.

Local Members were consulted on the brief. Councillor Johnston responded to advise that he is happy for the site to be developed for housing, as agreed in the Local Plan and that his preference would be for council housing. The brief allows for housing development. Councillor Fitzpatrick responded opposing development of the site which he considers to be a very pretty, much valued amenity space by the local community.

Graeme Morrice MP asked for a copy of the brief and has responded to request that no development takes place on the site as it is a piece of wooded land which is highly valued by local residents. He also expresses concerns relating to the proximity of the proposed site access to the Almondvale Roundabout which, he advises, would exacerbate problems on the roundabout.

Given the location of the site, at the edge of the administrative boundaries of Bellsquarry, Dedridge and Livingston Village Community Councils, all three Community Councils were consulted on 4 May 2011 on the terms of the brief and an invitation extended to meet to discuss if requested. No comments were received.

As neighbouring proprietors, residents at numbers 7 and 8 Bluebell Glade, Livingston were also consulted. The consultation resulted in twenty-seven individual objections largely from residents in the Adambrae area, these are attached as Appendix Two to this report.

The following concerns have been raised relating to:

- loss of green belt and amenity;
- adverse impact on wildlife, quality of life and property values;
- density of development;
- adverse impact on traffic, particularly on the Almondvale Roundabout and increased congestion;
- the proposed new footpath connecting Adambrae with the site;
- the availability of business, office and warehouse space elsewhere in the town should be considered rather than developing the proposed site;
- adverse impact on local amenities and lack of school capacity; and
- lack of consultation.

In response to the comments raised, Members are advised as follows:

The site is not designated as green belt and is allocated for development in the adopted West Lothian Local Plan as advised earlier in this report.

The brief specifies a build zone, which allows for development to be set back from the existing housing at Adambrae and for the retention/enhancement of the woodland, thus forming a buffer between developments, having regard to local amenity. The brief also requires the retention of a substantial area of trees in the south of the site and provision of enhanced landscaping on the western boundary. This will allow for protection and enhancement of residential amenity and improve the setting for future development, particularly in relation for the council's proposals for an extension to the Adambrae Cemetery to the west.

In response to concerns relating to the impact on trees and wildlife, further safeguards have been added into the brief to protect the trees during construction and provide further landscaping. In addition, the brief has been amended to allow for further landscaping on the southern boundary, which would include tree planting. Safeguards for the protection and retention of the woodland have also been written into the brief. In addition, the terms of the brief require potential purchasers to assess and have regard to biodiversity on the site.

Housing is only one of a number of possible uses for the site. The types of development, which could come forward, will be determined by the submission of a planning application to develop the site and the brief will be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining any application. There is no planning application to develop the site and no immediate plans to market the site. Property values are not a material planning consideration.

In response to concerns relating to the proposed density of development the brief has been amended to allow for a range of densities from 35 – 45 units per hectare. The need for play facilities on the site will be determined by the type of development which comes forward and the brief alerts purchasers to the fact that a contribution towards play facilities may be required should housing development proceed.

The proposed footpath connecting Adambrae with the site, would be located outwith the existing housing developments and run along the western boundary of Alderstone Road to link with an existing underpass and footpath network towards Charlesfield Road to the north and into the retail park to the east. The new footpath would also link with an existing footpath to the south at the Adambrae Roundabout, therefore providing for enhanced pedestrian access for those wishing to access the town centre on foot. The proposed vehicular access to the site is via Charlesfield Road and not the Almondvale roundabout. Developers will be required to carry out a capacity assessment of the junction and interaction with Almondvale Roundabout to support development of the site. The location plan attached to the brief indicates the likely vehicular access and location of the proposed footpath.

With regard to Adambrae Cemetery, the WLLP makes provision for an extension to this facility and reserves an area of land to the east of the existing cemetery for expansion of the facility.

Developer contributions would be required towards education provision in accordance with council policy. With regard to school capacity, particularly at Bankton Primary School, Education has been consulted on the terms of the brief and raised no objections.

The draft planning brief has been the subject of consultation with local members and Community Council's as advised earlier in this report. With regard to wider consultation with neighbours, the procedure for preparing planning briefs only requires those residents abutting the site to be notified, in this instance proprietors at numbers 7 and 8 Bluebell Glade.

E. CONCLUSION

The draft planning brief allows for a range of uses on the site and will act as a guide to potential purchasers. The site has been declared surplus by the council and inclusion of the site in the adopted Local Plan indicates that the council is minded to dispose of it at some future date.

Finance and Estates have, in the meantime, advised that there are no immediate plans to market the site. The purpose of the brief at this stage is to allow for the site to come forward quickly should the council decide at some future date to move forward on marketing.

Appendices/Attachments: Two

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Appendix One - Draft Planning Brief, Almondvale Roundabout SW Quadrant

