

WEST CALDER & HARBURN LOCAL PLACE PLAN

2024- 2034



West Calder Public Library. Built 1903 with funds from Andrew Carnegie

A Local Place Plan (LPP) is a community-led plan setting out proposals for the development and use of land. Local Place Plans, offer communities the opportunity to develop proposals for their local area, expressing their aspirations and ambitions for future development.

West Calder Community Council have produced a LPP with reference to the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019/Planning Circular 1/2022, a residents' survey and in conjunction with the West Calder & Harburn Design Study (2014) and our Community Action Plan (CAP). The CAP outlines areas for action- some of which is based on the community expectations outlined in this LPP.

Contents

Introduction	Page 4
Our Village Heritage	Page 5
Our Green Space	Page 6
The Boundaries of West Calder & Harburn	Page 8
Developing our Place Plan	Page 9
West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan	Page 10
Key Themes and Considerations	Page 11
Development and Future Planning.....	Page 14

Introduction

This LPP incorporates feedback from residents and from our community partnership groups. It also represents the community aspirations for land-use within our area and with local community-led development projects, currently being delivered on the ground . Furthermore, our LPP aims to improve places and spaces for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors by adopting a place-based approach to determine the physical infrastructure and services that best respond to local needs.

We have also focused on the importance of our village heritage, green space and our desire to preserve our historical links for future generations.

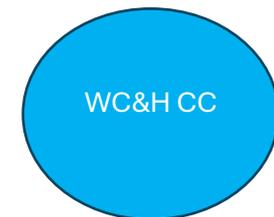
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Our Village Heritage

West Calder residents are justifiably proud of the village’s social, political and industrial heritage. The history dates back to Roman times. We are committed to keeping this rich history alive for future generations.

- West Calder served as a midway point on the Edinburgh to Airdrie route likely functioning as a refreshment station for early travellers. Evidence of settlement in the area includes Castle Greg, a Roman fortlet (dated 79AD) to the south-east of the village in neighbouring Harburn.
- During the medieval period the area was part of Calder Comitis, a large parish owned by the Earls of Fife. In 1643, the parish was divided into two districts: Mid Calder and West Calder.
- The original West Calder Church, dating back to 1643, is now a roofless ruin but remains a scheduled ancient monument.
- In 1792, residents of West Calder submitted a petition against the slave trade to the House of Lords.
- Hermand House, built in 1797, still stands on the western edge of the village.
- West Calder played a crucial role in the oil shale industry during the Victorian era. Burngrange mine, owned by Paraffin Young’s Light & Mineral Oil Company Ltd., operated nearby. The village prospered alongside other towns and villages in the region during the oil boom of the 1860s.
- West Calder Co-operative Society was set up by a group of shale miners in 1875. It grew to provide a wide range of goods and services in dedicated shops in West Calder with branches in Mid Calder, East Calder, Pumpherston, Uphall, Deans, Blackburn, Stoneyburn, Addiewell and Haywood and Tarbrax. The West Calder Society amalgamated with the West Lothian Co-operative Society in 1979.
- The village was home to an explosives factory for the mining industry, until the outbreak of WW1 when it became a munitions factory supplying the war effort.
- The population steadily increased throughout the 19th century and currently stands at 3,407 (Census 2022).

Our Green Space



Addiewell Bing Nature Reserve

To the north of West Calder, this oil-shale bing now supports valuable wildlife habitat including woodland, scrub and flower-rich grassland. It is an excellent example of how a former industrial site can be transformed into a haven for wildlife.



Hermand Birchwood

Hermand Birchwood is an important area of birch woodland growing on the remnants of a raised bog. Blaeberry, heather and broad buckler fern grow in abundance on the woodland floor and the damp conditions favour mosses and lichens.

West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan supports the retention of all existing green spaces within our community boundary. West Lothian Council should proactively establish new planting/biodiversity sites and maintain all current green areas and support the countryside belts to the North, Northwest and West of the West Calder & Harburn district.



The Shale Trail

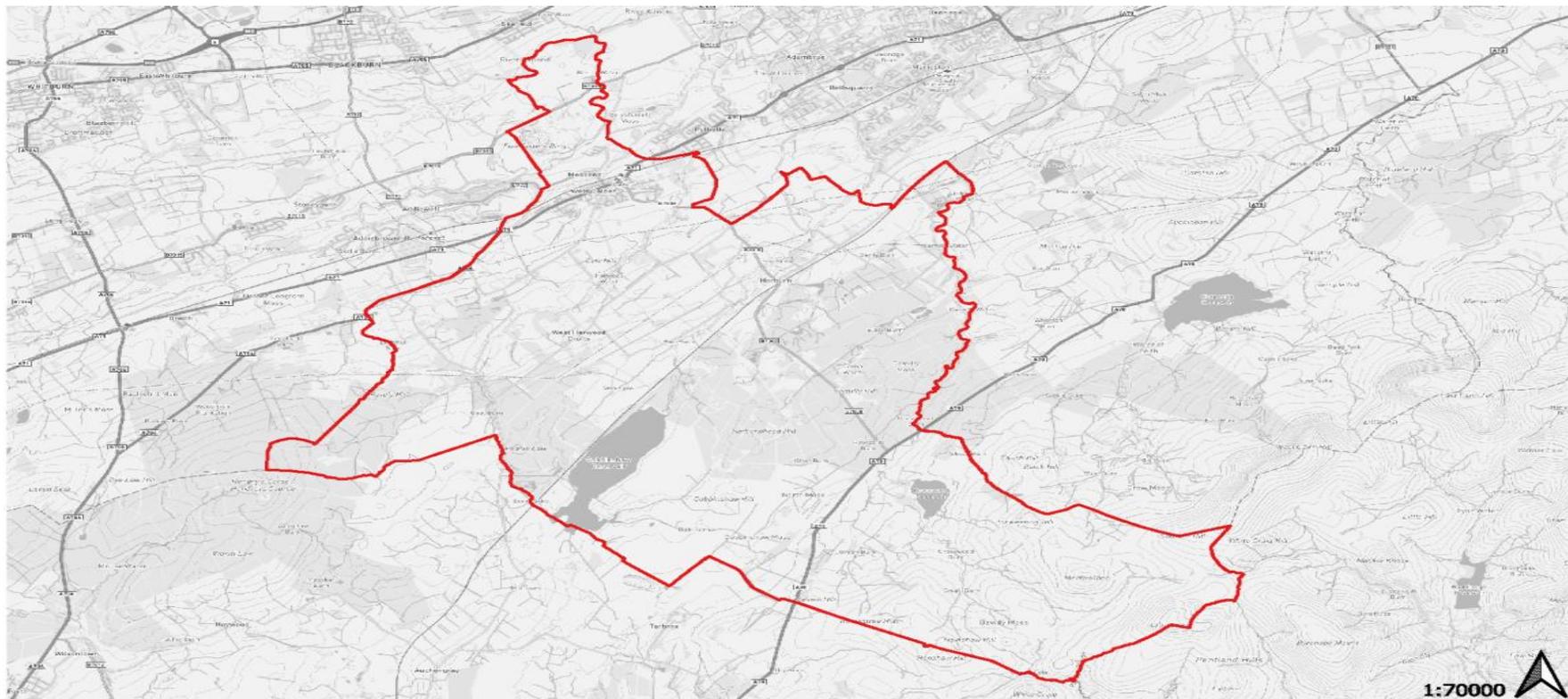
The trail stretches from West Calder in the south-west to Winchburgh in the north-east and is based on the “Paraffin Young Heritage Trail” which was first set up in the 1970s for automobile users. The path has now been re-imagined for walkers and cyclists, opening access to exciting new paths including the Five Sisters bings. Abandoned quarries re-inhabited by nature are particular highlights.

The Shale Trail must be protected and maintained for the future.

The Boundaries and Duration of West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan

The boundaries of the Local Place Plan West Calder & Harburn, West Lothian are the boundaries of the jurisdiction of West Calder & Harburn Community Council as shown in the plan below.

The duration of the West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan is 10 years from publication.



West Calder and Harburn Community Council

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Developing our Place Plan

The community groups involved in developing West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan were:

- West Calder & Harburn Community Council
- West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust
- West Calder Community Hub
- Five Sisters Partnership Group
- Harburn Village Hall

A community survey was also carried out by West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust

(https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCH_LPP) A selection of comments is given below:

“Improving parking restrictions on roads and in general making roads safer and more adequate to deal with the higher volume of traffic. e.g. parking restrictions on West Calder Main Street.”

“We need to maintain the village with its amazing and historic heritage.”

“Paths for children to walk safely. We teach kids to not walk on the roads, and yet the council/developers build houses without any safe paths to walk on. Parents with babies also walking into oncoming cars. It's absolutely stupid !”

“Improve parking at the train station and improve the junction. Very dangerous trying to drive out of the station. Current car park is too small.”

“Wildflower planting on verges would look great and save the council money. Tree planting is crucial to improve our areas in and around West Calder. Overall look could be improved on with some planting etc.”

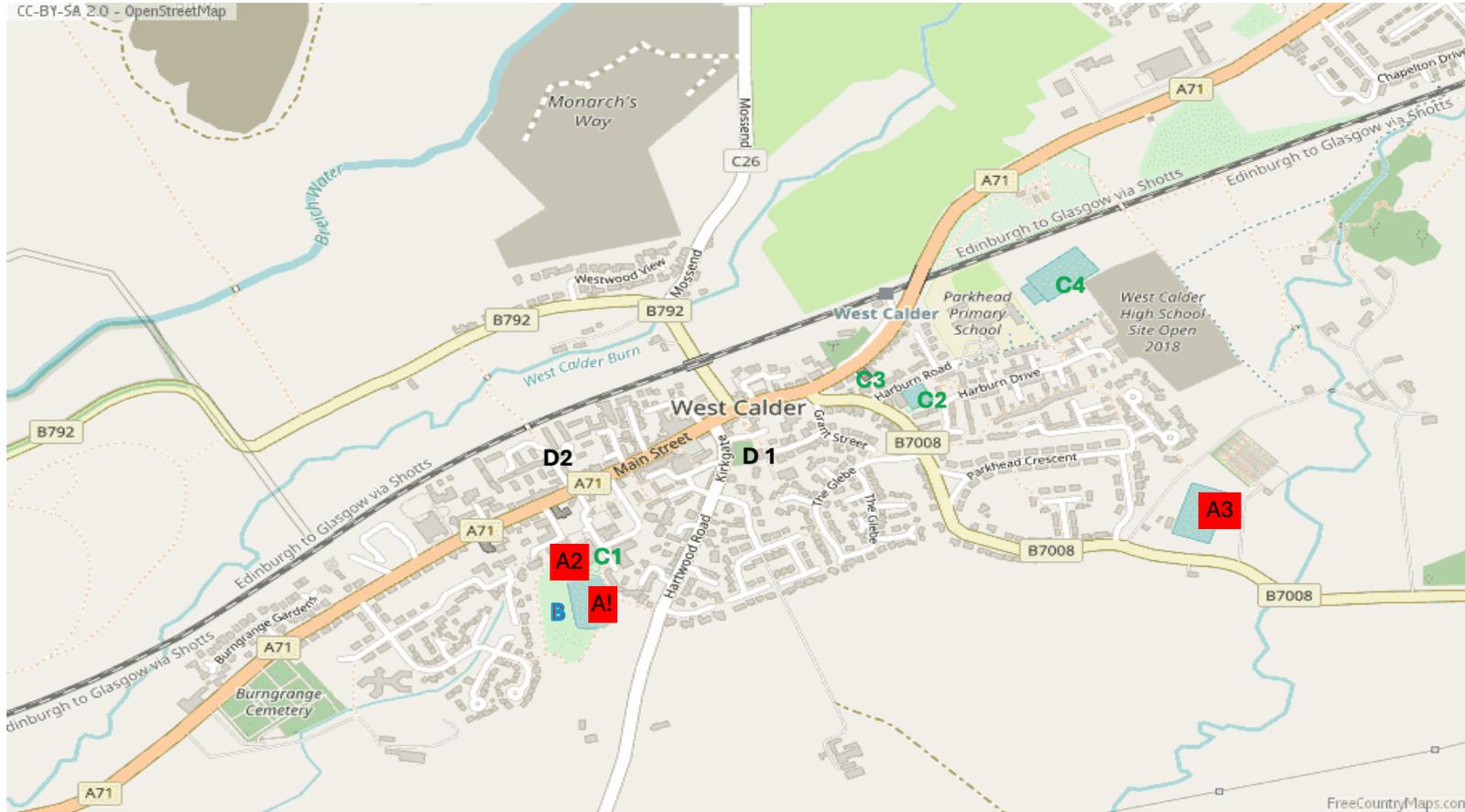
“New housing developments in the area thus far have not been matched with increased infrastructure - schools, roads, health facilities and youth hubs.”

“Double yellow lines along the full length of Main Street. (Both sides).”

“Better access to country walks from West Calder that allow use by prams and wheelchair users.”

“More cycle paths.”

West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan



KEY

- A** - Greenspace asset - retained for community use. Improve planting and biodiversity.
- B** - Local Biodiversity to be maintained and protected. Improve planting and biodiversity.
- C** - Valued community asset to be retained.
- D** - Historical asset/project to be retained.

SEE PAGE 11 FOR DETAILS

Key Themes and Considerations

Greenspace assets to be retained for community use. Improve planting and biodiversity:

- A1** – Burngrange Park with children’s play area.
- A2** - Kick Pitch area adjacent to West Calder Community Hub.
- A3** – Hermand Park - football training ground for local football teams.

Local Biodiversity to be maintained and protected. Improve planting and biodiversity:

- B1** – Local, biodiversity site (adjacent to Burngrange Park) designed by West Lothian Council.

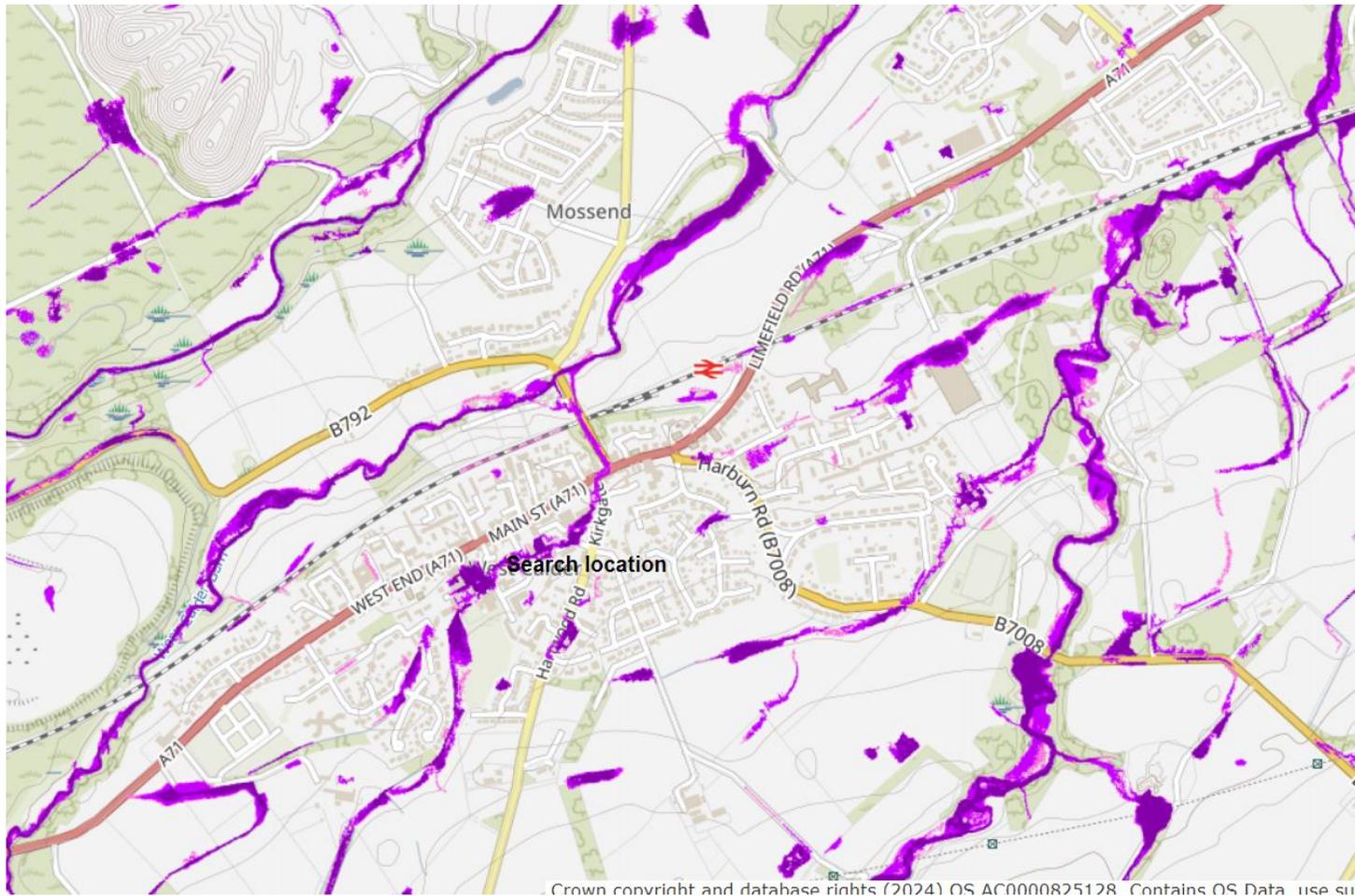
Valued community assets to be retained:

- C1 – West Calder Community Hub.** This is a busy, vibrant meeting place that is well used by the whole community (from pre-school children through to senior residents). It hosts an independent gym, café, Brunch Club and provides a wide range of activities.
- C2 – Bowling Club.** This is a long, established facility offering Outdoor Bowling for members and for non-members.
- C3 – Library.** Built in 1903 and funded by a grant from Andrew Carnegie. Received a SPACES (Society for Public Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Surveying) award in 2017.
- C4 – Community Garden.** This project has grown and developed in response to the needs of the local community. It is a place where residents can increase their life skills, well-being and confidence through participation in a diverse range of engaging activities and support. The produce grown is used within the local area and is supplied to the Brunch Club at West Calder Community Hub.

Historical asset/project to be retained:

- D1** – West Calder Old Kirk (built 1684).
- D2** – The Old Co-op Bakery/Workspace Building is being developed to become The Scottish Co-operative Discovery Centre. This is a current project being undertaken by West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust to provide a heritage centre and museum. It is projected to attract residents and visitors from outwith the locality thereby increasing the footfall to the village.

Flood Risk



Surface Water
Flooding. High
Likelihood:

Each year this area has a 10% chance of flooding.

We would ask West Lothian Council to pay particular attention to this flood risk when approving any future, housing development, in these areas and to ensure that developers install good drainage and/or update existing drainage.

West Lothian Council must integrate the blue-green infrastructure into this local area to increase resilience to flood risk.

SEPA FLOOD MAP

Access around West Calder

Our survey revealed that many residents felt they could not walk safely within the village.

This included the poor state of pavements/no pavement provision. West Lothian Council should ensure that developer funds are used to address the increased footfall, resulting from new housing developments, by upgrading local public pavements to an acceptable standard. The developer for Latham Park has damaged the public footpath (near Comitis Road, south side) - this has not been reinstated.

Safe crossing points for all children who walk to local schools, from all housing developments, are to be put in place and maintained.

There are many walking routes around West Calder and these need to have easy accessibility for wheelchair users/parents using prams.

It was also apparent that car users had difficulty negotiating the roads in and around the village.

The lack of parking spaces at West Calder station is sorely inadequate for commuters. Many parking spaces, within the village, are taken up for the full day by rail users, which adds to traffic congestion. There is no safe egress/traffic management system in place for West Calder station.

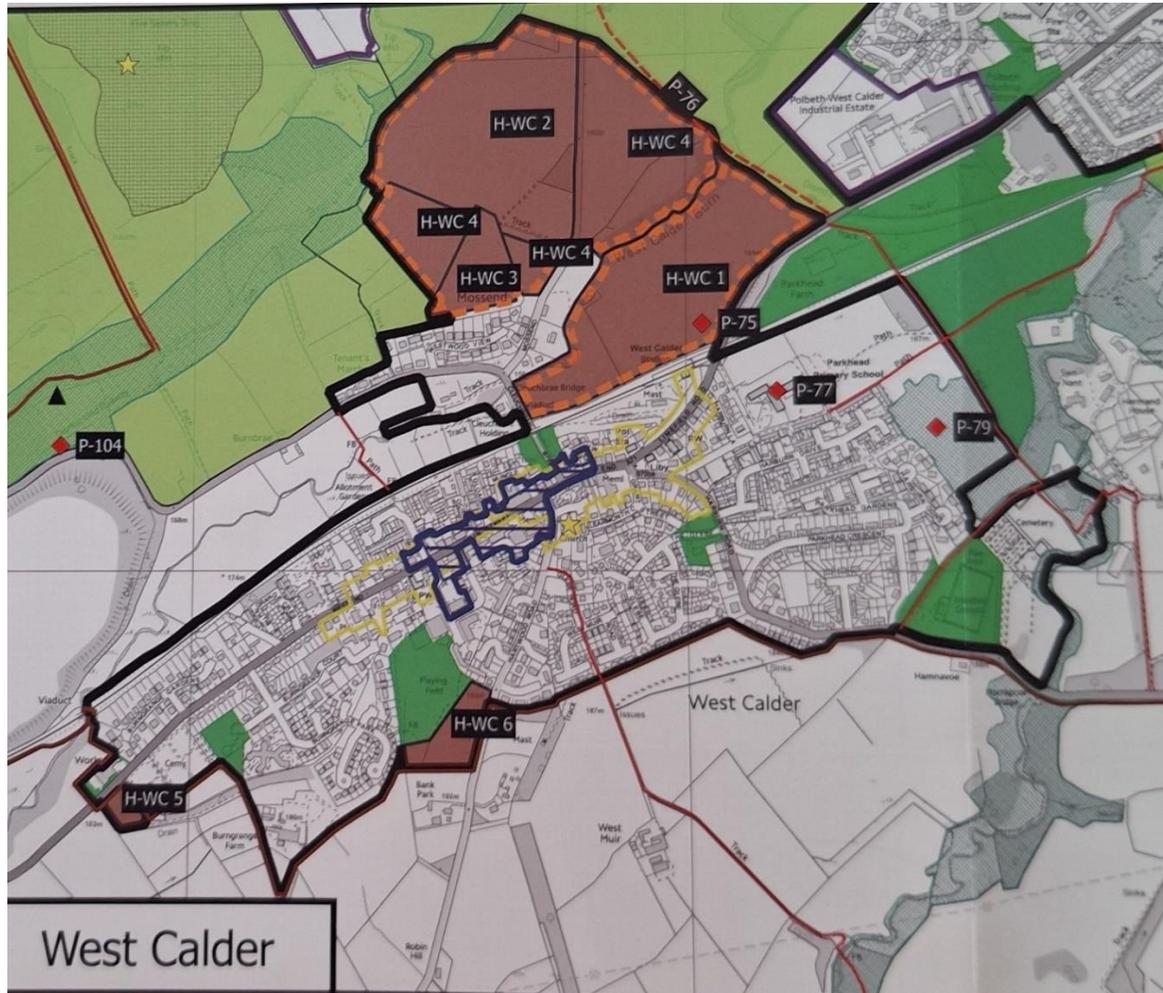
Driving through the village on the busy A71 arterial road can be problematic with parked cars on each side of the road. Residents have suggested that double yellow lines are drawn on both sides of the Main Street to ease the flow of traffic and to avoid congestion. 4 Way traffic lights on the Cleuch Brae/Kirkgate/A71 junction in West Calder is highly recommended.

Traffic lights should be installed at the railway bridge on the B7008 at Harburn to ensure safe traffic flow around the rural road . An accident blackspot (at the bend before the road up to Harburn House) has shown the need for West Lothian Council to consider installing “sharp deviation” signage. Traffic Lights should be installed at the railway bridge on the B7008 at Harburn.

The construction of windfarms and their related cable connections have caused endless roadworks and subsequent road surface issues. This has been a feature of life in Harburn since the inception of wind farms. Residents “ ...simply want their roads returned to normal.” We propose that any future and in-development windfarms are planned to avoid these issues.”

Access/egress to the Community Woods and Garden from the A71 proves problematic and unsafe for pedestrians, wheelchair users, car users and cyclists. This is an unsafe option for users of the Community Woods and Garden and should be addressed as a priority.

Development and Future Planning



West Lothian Council Local Development Plan (2018)

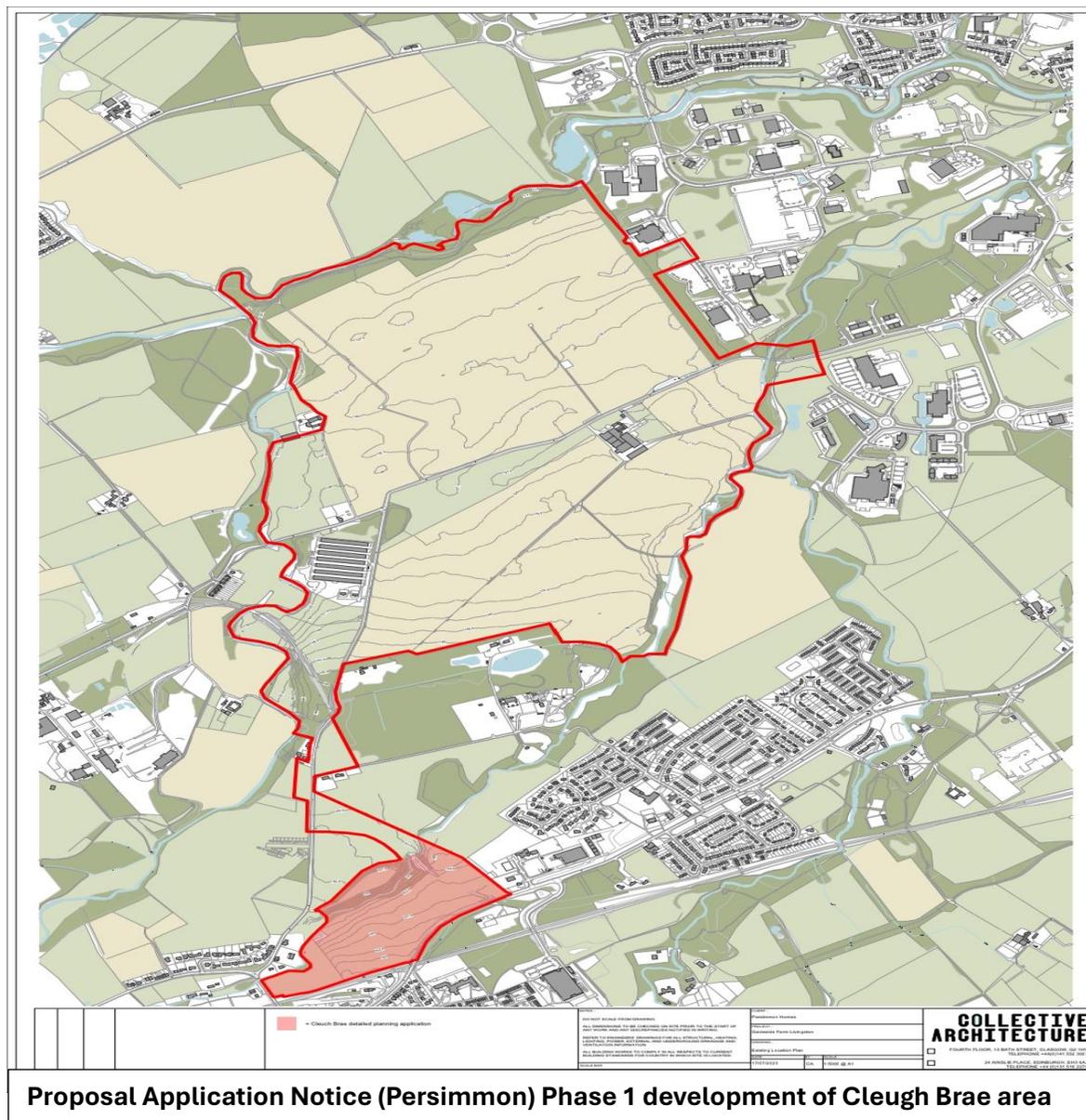
H-WC-1,2,3,4
 Housing development still to be fully completed but approved by WC&H Community Council

H-WC-5
 Proposed housing development Not yet started but approved by WC&H Community Council

H-WC-6
 Housing development completed

Protected Right of Way/Core Path

Any vacant, WLC business units should be made temporarily available to community groups at a peppercorn rent.



This Planning Application Notice has been presented to West Calder & Harburn Community Council for consideration and has been fully discussed.

The Planning Application Notice is in the process of being submitted to West Lothian Council.

This initial Phase 1 of H-WC-1,2,3,4, - Page 11 refers) will include c180 new homes (25% affordable homes) along with construction of a new access road onto the A71 and first elements of the park & ride facility at West Calder rail station.

There will also be a local park delivered as part of the Cleugh Brae development and relevant contributions will be made to address school capacity matters in the catchment schools.

The developer has indicated that ensuring safe access and egress to the community garden is an important consideration.

The proposed developments H-WC-1,2,3 and 4 (Page 14 and 15 refers) will have a huge impact on our village. The number of units for these sites is 540 – this will increase the village population by approximately one third. Currently, the infrastructure is showing some signs of failure. Local schools are now at capacity and traffic management systems are inadequate for the increase in car users. A lack of parking facilities also means some residents are struggling to access good public transport links. West Lothian Council must ensure that new housing developments are well served with essential amenities, from the outset. Residents care about their neighbourhoods and rightly expect that new developments should improve their way of living, rather than undermining what they value most.

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The West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan has been developed with consideration to West Lothian Council Local Development Plan (2018) and the Scottish National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). This Place Plan should be read in conjunction with the West Calder & Harburn Community Action Plan and West Calder & Harburn Design Study (2014).

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) National Spatial Strategy – Strategic Connections. West Calder & Harburn is adjacent to the strategic connection between Edinburgh and Glasgow outlined in National Planning Framework 4.

Key NPF4 Policy areas incorporated or considered within West Calder & Harburn Local Place Plan are:

- Sustainable Places.
- Tackling the climate and nature crises.
- Biodiversity
- Natural Places

- Vacant and empty buildings.
- Play recreation and sport.
- Flood risk and water management (blue-green infrastructure).
- Community Wealthbuilding