

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 21 April 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Responses to Consultation on the Main Issues Report and Interim Environmental Statement for the East Lothian Local Development Plan

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Council of a summary of the key messages of the consultation responses to the Main Issues Report (MIR) and Interim Environmental Report (IER) for the East Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council note the content of this report and the Consultation Feedback: Summaries & Key Messages report, including the MIR and EIR Consultation Question Summaries, published in the Members Library (Ref: 51/15, April 2015 Bulletin):

http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/5674/members_library_service

Members should also refer to the full responses as available on the Council's consultation hub. The Consultation Feedback Report also contains full details of the consultation process and summaries of the public events held.

- 2.2 Further, that Council gives due consideration to the views expressed in the consultation responses noted above when it decides on the development strategy, sites and policies of the proposed Local Development Plan.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The publication for consultation purposes of the Local Development Plan MIR and IER as approved by Council on 28 October 2014 was a key stage in progress towards the proposed LDP.
- 3.2 The consultation period opened on 17 November 2014 and closed on 8 February 2015. The MIR and IER both contained a number of questions on specific points and sites, which were replicated in the consultation hub, as well as allowing for more general comment.
- 3.3 Responses were submitted via the Council's consultation hub (around half), by email and by post. All responses not submitted via the consultation hub were subsequently entered into it to enable a summary encompassing all responses and to allow public accessibility, subject to Data Protection legislation.
- 3.4 With due regard to duplicate electronic/paper submissions, 1001 responses were received. The number of responses on the hub is 514 (from both hub submissions and written submissions added), with a further 93 form letters in relation to objection to the Goshen proposed site, 101 for Cockenzie, 52 ascribing to the Ravensheugh Tenants and Residents Association response supporting dispersed growth and 51 as signatories to a letter from a resident of Aberlady supporting compact growth. Two anti-fracking petitions were submitted, with a further 72 and 118 signatories respectively.
- 3.5 The details of the number of responses on an issue basis and the breakdown of views within each issue are given in each of the Consultation Question Summaries in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Consultation Feedback report. Some responses that were received by post and email did not respond to the specific questions posed in the document or make clear whether a particular approach or site was supported or opposed. All responses have been included in the summaries, but where a position is implied rather than stated clearly or has not been stated at all this has not been included in the quantitative analysis. There is a degree of cross-over between some of the topics, for example Spatial Strategy and Housing or the Energy section (in relation to Cockenzie) and the Prestonpans cluster. The responses have generally been reported under the topic the responder indicated, but summaries should be read together for a complete picture of views expressed where such cross-over exists.
- 3.6 The summary of key messages given below is itself compiled from extensive Consultation Question Summaries as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Consultation Feedback report, which codify all of the responses given on the hub, by email and in writing. The publication date of the full responses on the consultation hub as subject to redaction, is not confirmed at the time of writing but will be publicised in due course. The full responses will be considered in the preparation of the Proposed LDP.

- 3.7 In respect of each question of the MIR, the key points arising from the consultation responses are as follows.
- 3.8 **Q1** – Visions, aims and objectives: overall there is support for these from all groups, tempered with concerns about scale of growth versus environmental and infrastructure impacts, the effects on character of settlements and coalescence, including with Edinburgh; loss of prime agricultural land; the need to support town centres; developers stress the need to ensure housing allocations are in marketable locations to support delivery; and the need for measurable targets.
- 3.9 **Q2** - Sustainability and climate change: the Scottish Government, suggest the proposed LDP should take account of the delivery of net economic and social benefits through development; SEPA consider that the MIR balances this with environmental/sustainability/climate change factors and risks; Scottish Water is supportive of locating development where there is available capacity and capacity can be created; Network Rail suggest it may be necessary to protect existing development from the effects of climate change, including flood risk; developers suggest that the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development from Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) June 2014 be a key consideration and the LDP explain how this will be applied; Community Councils suggest that without criteria for assessment the SPP presumption can be used to justify almost anything. Developers also suggest there should be support for renewable electricity generation and infrastructure. Comments from the public reflect concerns about fracking, the sustainability of continued growth and impacts on flood risk and air quality with support for renewable energy provision and improved public transport provision to enhance sustainability of new build areas and existing more isolated settlements.
- 3.10 **Q3** – Spatial strategy: the Scottish Government and key agencies support the compact growth strategy, though agencies express some concerns over some potential environmental impacts; whilst developers share this support a significant number of them are of the view that a combination of compact and dispersed strategy will be needed to deliver housing targets. The views of Community Councils, the Area Partnerships and other community groups generally, though not exclusively, show a distinction between those in the west preferring the dispersed strategy and those in the east supporting the compact strategy. Of the individual member of public responses, many more supported the compact than the dispersed strategy, for housing market, employment and infrastructure reasons. Concerns are expressed over coalescence under the compact strategy and harm to the countryside and smaller settlements under the dispersed strategy. Those supporting dispersed growth see it as a fairer option for all settlements. Overall there is strong support across contributors for Blindwells as an area of growth.
- 3.11 **Q4** – Town centres: The Scottish Government requires the proposed plan to promote the town centre first principle; they and the majority of contributors support introducing a new town centre at Blindwells, though

split over whether this should be local to Blindwells or more of a sub-regional centre. SNH advises that Blindwells centre should be connected to other areas through green infrastructure. Otherwise support is offered for the existing designation of town centres and means of supporting these, some which are outwith the LDP process. Haddington is also suggested for retail investment, including outwith the town centre, as is Dunbar. Traffic, parking and lack of facilities are seen as issues for town centres and the need to improve buildings and spaces.

- 3.12 **Q5** – Planning for employment: the Scottish Government support the preferred approach as consistent with SPP and there is majority support from other contributors, with additional support for greater emphasis on rural enterprise and tourism, including some Community Councils, whilst respondents not supporting the preferred approach gave site specific reasons, including opposition to proposed development at Cockenzie. There are public views that employment sites not be given over to housing.
- 3.13 **Q6** – Planning for housing: The Scottish Government makes no comment on the options but requests that the LDP or Monitoring Statement set out findings on specialist housing provision. Overall, majority support is given for the preferred approach of planning for land releases for a long term housing strategy rather than confining it to current requirements only, including support from key agencies, developers and around half of members of the public who gave a view on this, although there is a view that more smaller sites which are deliverable in the short term need to be brought forward. The longer term view is seen as allowing for infrastructure planning, provision of a generous land supply, more certainty around investment decisions and allowing for intensification of existing allocations. Reasons for supporting the alternative approach include that requirements may change in the future, over allocation may result in less desirable sites being developed before other more strategically important ones and the potential for development and infrastructure to be misaligned. Homes for Scotland and some developers suggest there should be provision for existing allocated sites to be de-allocated. In addition to many comments on the fine detail of housing targets, some concerns are expressed that the level of development expectation is unrealistic.
- 3.14 **Q7** – Green belt: Overall more of those responding supported the preferred approach to green belt, including key agencies and developers; SNH note that protection of natural assets is required; Community Councils, local groups and members of the public are split between the preferred and alternative approaches. Concerns about landscape impact and potential coalescence, including with Edinburgh, are expressed.
- 3.15 **Q8** – Countryside around towns: the Scottish Government and Historic Scotland suggest that the role of the proposed policy needs to be better explained in relation to Special Landscape Area designations; National Trust for Scotland and Scottish Wildlife Trust support it whilst Homes for Scotland sees it as unnecessary; whilst overall there is some support for

the policy, some see it as a potentially restrictive tool and some developers see it as contrary to Sesplan policy 7 and suggest it may be legally challenged. Others have concerns as to how the policy would be applied in the long term if it is subject to review. There is strong public support for it.

- 3.16 **Q9** – Central Scotland Green Network: generally this is acknowledged as a national policy and needs to be followed. There is support from community groups and the public including for the capacity to deliver multiple benefits and integration with other related policy areas; Midlothian Council sees the need to work on cross-boundary strategy; the need is seen for objectives and approaches to be set out in supplementary guidance, including for developer contributions; the role of larger strategic sites in delivering the objectives is particularly recognised. Some concerns are expressed that the policy could have a negative effect on the rural economy and farmers.
- 3.17 **Q10** – Development in the countryside and on the coast: the Scottish Government seek clarification on whether all countryside should be categorised in the same way or there might be different policies for different parts; SNH emphasise development fitting with local patterns and landscape. Scottish Enterprise and Network Rail note a need for balance with essential infrastructure; other national bodies support the present policy; there are bodies of support for both preferred and alternative approaches, including differing views of Community Councils, but also that there should be a more permissive policy for economic development and tourism development in the countryside if not the coast, or where a rural area is remote rather than under development pressure; particular points are expressed in relation to renewable energy related development; there is also support for market as well as/rather than affordable housing in rural areas, including site specific suggestions; however, others are of the view that developers would exploit a more permissive approach. Generally, developers want to see the countryside opened up particularly to housing development whilst members of the public support the present policy.
- 3.18 **Cluster areas.** In respect of each of the clusters there are some general points made in relation to all or most of the clusters: Transport Scotland has concerns about the capacity of the strategic road network, particularly in the west of East Lothian, however, they are working with ELC to identify solutions and funding mechanisms; Midlothian Council shares these concerns; Homes for Scotland is concerned that there are difficulties with meeting SESplan housing requirements; SportScotland raises concerns over potential school expansions where this would impact on sports pitch provision; Developers offer support for their own sites with and opposition to other sites in the same cluster.
- 3.19 **Q11** – Musselburgh cluster: Key Agencies raise a number of specific issues including; Historic Scotland has concerns over Goshen proposed site and would not support Howe Mire, both due to potential battlefield site impacts; Transport Scotland advises there is no commitment to fund

or deliver a Musselburgh Parkway station as safeguarded in the existing Local Plan 2008; SNH has concerns over the Dolphingstone site due to landscape and visual impacts. Midlothian Council sees merit in the compact strategy but has concerns over education/transportation constraints which joint working may address. Community Councils, local interest groups and members of the public express concerns over impacts on traffic, air quality, green belt, agricultural land, infrastructure and services but also there were positive views in relation to housing market demand, links to Edinburgh and potential regeneration benefits. The Goshen site attracted most concerns with key issues being transport and education infrastructure, traffic congestion and air quality, loss of green belt and coalescence. Goshen, Craighall and Wallyford all presented options to overcome education capacity issues. A common theme of responses on education issues is opposition to having two secondary schools in the cluster, mainly in respect of impacts on community integration.

- 3.20 **Q12** – Prestonpans/Port Seton/Cockenzie/Longniddry cluster: Key Agencies raise a number of specific site issues including; Historic Scotland concern at impact on Scheduled Monument at Cockenzie, though they recognise scope for mitigation; SEPA advice on requirement for flood risk assessment at Cockenzie and Longniddry South; SNH advice on need for landscape impact mitigation at Cockenzie. There is a significant level of public opposition to the Cockenzie site as proposed due to a wide range of issues including loss of open space, impact on battlefield site, overall scale of development and impact on communities. Concerns are expressed about the interpretation of NPF3, including whether it supports / reflects all of the development types suggested. Support is also offered for the preferred site as a redevelopment of brownfield land and others support development on the footprint of the power station and coal store. The majority of comments on Longniddry South object to it, the main reasons being lack of integration, overall scale, transport capacity, coalescence and impact on agricultural land. Support is given on the grounds of affordable housing provision, transport infrastructure and opportunities for benefits to the village.
- 3.21 **Q13** – Tranent cluster: Key Agencies raise a number of site specific concerns including; Historic Scotland concern that the Bankpark Grove proposed site would need to be designed to avoid impact to the Prestonpans battlefield site and Tranent Conservation Area; SNH has landscape and visual impact concerns over Elphinstone West proposed site which may be addressed through design guidance and comments on other sites. Local community concerns are particularly about loss of identity of settlements, impact on the road network, poor public transport links, insufficient education capacity and building on prime agricultural land.
- 3.22 **Q14** – Haddington cluster: Key Agencies raise a number of site specific concerns including; Historic Scotland stresses the need to safeguard historic assets around the Dovecot proposed site; SNH raises concerns about the Harperdean proposed site and landscape/visual impact but

supports potential mitigation. The Community Council, developers and the wider public support the preferred approach. Public comments oppose the alternative strategy and development at Amisfield and Dovecot, but this is promoted by some developers. Concerns are raised in relation to more housing demand being closer to Edinburgh, concerns at ability of schools and infrastructure to cope with growth, need for better public transport links and impact on Haddington's character.

3.23 **Q15** – Dunbar cluster: Key Agencies make no comment on specific sites, however, Historic Scotland advise on the need to safeguard historic assists in the area. The National Trust states it would not be appropriate to develop land to the north and east of Preston within the proposed area of search for East Linton. Asda would like to see recognition of its site at Spott Road as a commercial or district centre. Public support is given for the preferred compact strategy but that if development at Eweford is to go ahead then there is strong support for an additional link with Dunbar town under or over the East Coast Main Line. There are concerns about impact on education provision and infrastructure and loss of prime agricultural land; support for a rail halt at East Linton (recognising this will attract further housing demand); support for employment sites at Spott Road and East Linton Auction Mart and support for better public transport links. There are concerns at the potential coalescence of West Barns/Belhaven.

3.24 **Q16** – North Berwick cluster: Key Agencies raise concerns over site specific issues, including; Historic Scotland over impact of Castlemains Dirleton proposed site on the setting of Dirleton Castle and Dirleton Conservation Area; impact of proposals at Aberlady on its Conservation Area; development at Drem surrounding the village impacting on its Conservation Area and fundamentally altering its character; SNH over the impact of the proposed Tantallon Road site on landscape and visual impact on North Berwick Law with support for alternative and other sites as preferable; Scottish Water over capacity issues, however, this is over the short term and a growth project has been initiated which will include any sites allocated within the cluster. Public support is given for the preferred compact strategy and opposition to specific sites – Ferrygate, Saltcoats in Gullane and Aberlady East as well as concern that villages will lose their character if the alternative approach is followed. There is both opposition to and support for the Aberlady West site and support for mixed use development at the former Fire Service College in Gullane. Similar levels of both support and objection are stated for Foreshot Terrace and Castlemains in Dirleton. There are general concerns about the impact of development on the road network, education capacity, infrastructure, tourism and prime agricultural land. Concerns at the impact of development on Drem are balanced by this being seen to direct development away from other settlements.

3.25 **Q17** – Blindwells: Key Agencies support the proposals; Historic Scotland advises that development near the northwest boundary might affect the setting of Seton Castle and its designed landscape; Transport Scotland advises that access solutions should not focus on rail from the outset and

that if a new A1 trunk road interchange is to be promoted it will need the relevant technical assessments; SportScotland recognises the potential for high quality leisure and recreation facilities; Scottish Water advises it would make good use of existing asserts through support alternatives also. Network Rail has concerns over impact of development on the St Germain's level crossing. The Coal Authority supports development and the potential for environmental improvements where mining activity has taken place. Homes for Scotland considers the site constrained and that it will only provide for the LDP period if comprehensive solutions are found for infrastructure issues pre LDP. The RSPB considers that development of the site should mitigate loss of wetland habitat on the northwest of the site.

Developers and landowners with an interest in the site support development of the greater Blindwells site, although some wish to retain the ability to progress separately of the others. Suggestions are made for developer contributions/land exchange to assist with development, whilst one landowner suggests that land to the east of Tranent be included in the area of proposed Blindwells expansion. General concerns expressed by respondents reflect the history and potential costs of developing the existing allocated site as well as the timescales for this.

Community Council and local groups are generally supportive of the proposal but do raise questions over the extent of proposed allocation, the loss of prime agricultural land and potential negative social aspects (unspecified).

Comments from the public raise a number of concerns: need for additional public and commercial facilities; proposed three way phasing strategy could result in piecemeal development and greenfield areas to the east may be developed before the 'brownfield' to the west; a definite plan for education provision needs to be given without putting pressure on Ross High or Preston Lodge; the site is too large and would lead to coalescence; employment opportunities may not be delivered; congestion and air quality impacts from traffic; ground conditions and whether the site can be delivered and should be returned to agriculture. Opportunities are also cited including: potential for proactive design and high quality development; renaming the site Charlestoun to provide an immediate sense of history; potential for a large new town centre and retail park; developer funded schools to alleviate pressure on nearby schools; and if a rail halt cannot be delivered, a park and ride facility could.

- 3.26 **Q18** – Housing land requirements and supply: the proposals here gathered some support and some objection, however, some respondents did not have sufficient understanding of the issue to comment meaningfully. Support is tempered by an acknowledgement that the rate of development needed to meet the targets set out is optimistic in the context of past trends. Significantly, those who do not support the approach are split in their views; that too much land would be made available, as generally held by the public on the basis of past

completions and the SESplan Supplementary Guidance; or that not enough land would be made available, as generally held by developers on the basis that although a significant increase in annual completions would be required, and this is not controlled by the Council, there are policy and technical reasons why there should be a requirement for more land allocations. These relate primarily to the timing of delivery of housing within the SDP and LDP timescales, SPP's new requirement for a generosity allowance (though this ignores other aspects of SPP), and also to contentions about the effectiveness of sites at Blindwells and Wallyford.

The effect of the proposed changes would be to increase the number of houses for which land should be allocated by some 20%. The recommendations of objectors are that the Council: plan for 'generosity' of land supply at the upper end of the 10-20% scale set out in SPP; allocate a range of sites in terms of size, location and type (greenfield/brownfield); be flexible in spatial strategy so as to help deliver houses in the volumes needed; and identify a range of sites in addition to those already identified in the MIR. It is also requested that the Council review its approach to decisions on windfall housing applications before LDP adoption.

- 3.27 **Q19** – Developer contributions: the Scottish Government advise that the alternative approach of a roof tax/standard charge approach may not be consistent with the relevant Circular on planning obligations (Circular 3/2012) and others also suggest this. Support is given to the current and preferred approach of assessing contributions on a case by case basis though the merit of an upfront roof tax approach is acknowledged by some. A key theme is that early, upfront information and clarity are needed through all channels of the planning process, including the LDP. The development industry is of the view that it should be able to understand the obligations being placed on a site before allocation, to inform the viability consideration. Many members of the public consider that the Council should be firmer in its approach to seeking developer contributions, and there is a suggestion that local bodies should have a say on what is sought, potentially through the Area Partnerships.
- 3.28 **Q20** – Affordable housing quota: NHS Lothian supports the alternative approach for a 30% rather than 25% affordable quota; Homes for Scotland supports neither the preferred or alternative approach, but suggests instead the rate should be reviewed on a case by case basis where an applicant presents good evidence that the development would be unviable if the full quota is required; developers overwhelmingly support the preferred option but express concerns that the 25% requirement may make some sites unviable, which should be assessed on a case by case basis in line with SPP guidance; Community Councils, community groups and the public mostly support the preferred approach, however, there is also support for the alternative and flexibility to take into account local demand and circumstances; some note that the 25% quota would not meet affordable housing demand but there is also recognition that the higher 30% could affect viability; some acknowledged

that smaller houses for sale (circa 90 square metres could be held to contribute to affordable housing supply) whilst others are of a view that different tenure approaches, including mid-market rent would also contribute; some also query the trigger for contribution and that this could be raised from 5 units as current to a higher level. Other comments are made in relation to need for affordable housing in particular areas, including rural areas, and some that the quota should be kept as low as possible.

3.29 **Q21** – Affordable housing tenure mix: Homes for Scotland and developers support the preferred approach and the introduction of more flexible tenures for affordable housing provision including small homes (less than 90 square metres) for sale and mid-market rent; some are of the view the mix should be established at pre-application stage to understand development viability; a view that RSLs should be responsible for mix and provision; Community Councils offer some support for preferred approach allowing mix to be tailored to the local area and also that more provision is needed to support an aging population. Views of the public support both the preferred and alternative approaches; additionally, support is given for a wider choice of tenure and house types; self build homes and community trusts building homes and specialist housing for the less-abled and elderly. Concern is expressed that some affordable housing types and tenures may not be maintained as affordable over time.

3.30 **Q22** – Energy including renewable energy:

Cockenzie – the Scottish Government considers that the preferred approach closely reflects NPF3 in terms of off-shore renewable, port related activity and grid connections; Scottish Enterprise expresses concern at lack of reference to East Lothian role in off shore renewable and on-shore connections. Cockenzie and Port Seton Community Council supports the approved gas power station development or development within the existing power station footprint. Scottish Power's comments reflect the desire to safeguard the gas power station consent and the related pipeline route. Those involved in the energy industry request a safeguarding of onshore works in relation to offshore renewable, including grid connections. National Trust Scotland refers to existing concerns expressed in relation to Cockenzie and the battlefield site; the RSPB seeks clarification over Cockenzie in relation to Scottish Power's consent for a gas power station and Scottish Enterprise proposals and concerns about the integrity of the Firth of Forth SPA. Some state that the gas power station will not be developed therefore emphasis should be on renewables or a port development. Whilst there is some public support for renewable energy development at Cockenzie there are concerns at the scale proposed.

Onshore wind - the Scottish Government notes that further work could be done to refine i.e. reduce community separation distances in the proposed spatial framework and related thresholds; some Community Councils and other groups including the National Trust support a

cautious approach, whilst other groups including the Scottish Greens, Dunbar environmental groups and some landowners consider policy should be more supportive of wind development. The RSPB supports in principle but has concerns about the potential impact on birds, whilst SABEL want to see an updated landscape capacity study taking into account cumulative impact and informing criteria based policy. Concerns at impact on tourism are also expressed. Public views are mixed, with support but some concerns that wind energy is not as green or economic as it is made out to be.

Heat networks, combined heat and power – support expressed by the Scottish Government, SEPA and Viridor including for energy from waste where compliant with the Zero Waste Plan; Viridor and Midlothian Council note the potential of the Oxwellmains and Millerhill energy from waste sites respectively; Dunbar Community Council supports energy from waste at Lafarge but this may not reflect community views; support for the principal of heat networks and combined sources from the public and Dunbar environmental groups, though some concerns about impact on development viability are stated.

Other renewable issues – general support for preferred approach to microrenewables; Dunpender Community Council suggests renewable energy sources should be fitted to all new houses; general support for solar power, though concerns expressed over solar panels where they affect a conservation area; support for community renewable generation schemes from the Scottish Greens and Dunbar environmental groups.

Other energy generation – nuclear power generation is supported by one respondent whilst the Scottish Greens and Dunbar environmental groups support decommissioning at Torness.

- 3.31 **Q23** – Low and zero carbon generating technologies: the Scottish Government advises both preferred and alternative approaches are viable but that the measure to be saved should be in LDP policy and not in supplementary guidance; a majority of those commenting on this support the preferred approach as more realistic and achievable but a significant minority support the higher targets of the alternative.
- 3.32 **Q24** – Minerals: the Scottish Government supports the preferred strategy in respect of onshore oil and gas; the Coal Authority supports the reasonable alternative on identifying areas of search where opencast is most likely to be acceptable; Scottish Water has no preference between the approaches; Midlothian Council supports the preferred approach in relation to unacceptable environmental impacts; the RSPB believe a firmer approach should be taken; some developers suggest a more permissive approach should be taken to allow new mineral resources to come forward. Lafarge is exploring long-term opportunities for their land. Public views are opposed to new areas for open cast coal and other mineral extraction due to impact on local communities and on tourism and support strict policies and particularly a robust policy on unconventional gas extraction (fracking).

- 3.33 **Q25** – Waste: general support for the preferred approach.
- 3.34 **Q26** – Minor policy review: Scottish Government advises there should be a review of flooding policy taking into account revised SPP position on managing flood risk and drainage; Historic Scotland welcomes a policy to protect battlefield sites; the National Trust for Scotland seeks enhancement of environmental and conservation policies; support from developers for a tourism policy; support from the public for policies to support the aging population; support for review of conservation area and designed landscape boundaries; support for integrating policy DC1 and countryside around towns, for encouraging better energy efficiency in new homes and for increasing density of house building.
- 3.35 **Q27** – Other Comments: SportScotland notes that the predicted increase in East Lothian population should lead to an increase in sports provision; the Council’s Amenity Services advises of the need to ensure continued supply of burial space; some community groups believe there should be more joined up thinking in the Council; some view the MIR as inaccessible and difficult for members of the public understand; others think the consultation has been inadequate and has led to confusion amongst the public over housing developments.
- 3.36 In respect of the Interim Environmental Report (IER), overall there were a low number of responses: 22 directly through the hub and 3 statutory Consultation Authorities through the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. A number of additional relevant comments from MIR responses have been added to these. In addition 102 standard letters on Cockenzie are considered in the Site Assessments part of the IER Consultation Question Summaries.
- 3.37 A number of respondents misunderstood that the IER consultation sought views in relation to the adequacy of the assessment rather than seeking views on the merits of strategy or policy approaches being assessed, since this is a matter for the MIR itself. Consequently, the quantitative aspect should be treated with caution since a number of responses focused on the merits of the subject being assessed, not the assessment itself.
- 3.38 A number of responses to the MIR also made comments on the IER, particularly the site assessments where respondents took issue with the content or scoring of the assessment. A number of specific responses to the IER were also received and these have been summarised as part of the relevant MIR submissions. The IER summaries should therefore be read together with the MIR summaries for a complete picture as duplication in reporting has generally been avoided.
- 3.39 In the review of the IER for the preparation of the Proposed Plan, all relevant responses will be considered in the preparation of the associated Draft Environmental Report.

- 3.40 Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation authority comments on the IER are difficult to summarise given their scope and have a unique statutory basis – they should be read in full and in conjunction with the summaries of other IER responses.
- 3.41 For ease of consideration, key points have been mostly grouped here by respondent type: statutory Consultation Authorities; national interest groups; community councils and local interest groups; members of the public.
- 3.42 Although there were relatively few responses, detailed comments were received from all statutory Consultation Authorities including SEPA, SNH and Historic Scotland and these were very positive in respect of the adequacy of the assessment.
- 3.43 In general, more respondents, including the statutory Consultation Authorities, viewed the assessment (including cumulative assessment of the spatial strategy) as appropriate than those who viewed it as inappropriate.
- 3.44 In respect of minerals search, the Coal Authority supports the assessment of the alternative approach proposed.

In respect of mitigation of environmental impacts generally the National Trust for Scotland supports the measures identified in the IER but states that these will only be sufficient if applied thoroughly and effectively.

- 3.45 Some landowners, developers and agents are critical of aspects of the assessment and one believes that the whole assessment should be revised.

Some are critical of the Blindwells proposals as unlikely to be delivered.

They believe employment sites should be smaller, mixed use sites rather than large allocations, and should not be protected from other uses, especially housing.

They have concerns over proposed countryside around towns policy and green network as prescriptive and unlikely to have benefits. One believes weighting should be given to acute housing shortage over environmental constraints.

They take differing views on the impact of the compact and dispersed strategy on the environment, one seeing the compact strategy as environmentally beneficial, another that dispersed growth could have lower impact.

One is opposed to the proposed redevelopment of Cockenzie as NPF3 out of date and seen to be irrelevant.

One also states that all major opportunities for waste sites should be pursued as the Zero Waste Plan is in the early stages of delivery.

One believes that mitigation measures proposed generally appear to be excessive and may stifle delivery, whilst assessments may prevent delivery if costs are excessive and timelines unknown.

- 3.46 Cockenzie and Port Seton Community Council (the only Community Council responding) would like to see a drive towards East Lothian becoming carbon neutral. They support a dispersed strategy to minimise development on green belt land, lessen traffic congestion and reduce coalescence.

They believe new developments should be in character with their surroundings.

They support Blindwells only as a local centre and see retail parks as out of character with East Lothian.

They consider that strategic employment sites should be maintained but opened up to mixed use.

They offer support for countryside towns and green network proposed policies to prevent coalescence.

Development within the Cockenzie power station footprint is supported.

The preferred approach for mineral and other types of extraction is supported.

They also support for the drive to reduce waste in East Lothian and manage it responsibly.

- 3.47 Public comments reflect concerns over low density development, impacts of increased car use, flood risk and the impacts on natural and built heritage and biodiversity.

There are a mix of views as to the benefits of the preferred and alternative development locations.

Some support employment sites having housing located around them or mixed use allocations.

Some support is offered for the compact over the dispersed strategy, though there are concerns over impacts on heritage and landscape.

Strong concerns at the loss of green belt land and related impacts.

Support for proposed countryside around towns policy and green network but some consideration that it replicates other policies e.g. DC1, conservation area designations.

Strong opposition to redevelopment of Cockenzie power station as envisaged under NPF3.

Onshore impacts of offshore mineral and gas extraction should be considered.

One view is that the cumulative scoring is seen as not necessarily consistent with stated facts within the IER.

One respondent sees the process as incredibly positive, another as a thorough and well handled process though difficult to engage with as a consequence of how difficult the task is. Another expresses the view that the consultation process is confusing and intimidating and that other ways of communicating with communities could be more meaningful.

- 3.48 Under Q37 on Site Assessments there are a significant number of comments on individual sites from landowners, agents and developers in relation to how they are assessed and scored on individual environmental impacts. Community Councils, community groups and members of the public also give their views on sites assessed within this part of the IER.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report does not propose policy changes, though consideration of its content may affect the policies of the Local Development Plan.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - none
6.2 Personnel - none
6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 East Lothian Local Development Plan Main Issues Report
7.2 East Lothian Local Development Plan Interim Environmental Report
7.3 East Lothian Consultation Hub Main Issues Report Consultation

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