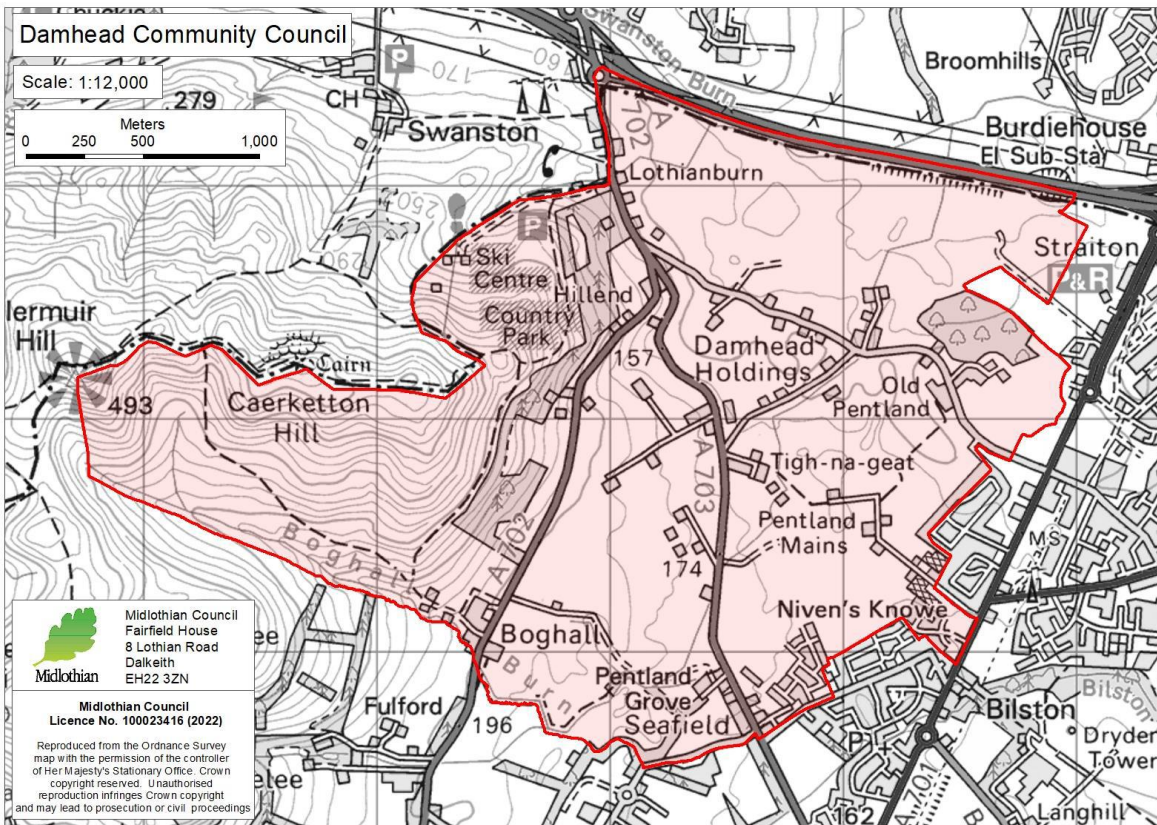


# DAMHEAD AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY

## LOCAL PLACE PLAN

FINAL v6 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024



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# 1 Context

## 1.1 Clarify purpose of LPP

Our LPP has been developed to guide our community in how our immediate area develops and how to respond to proposals in neighbouring communities as well as the wider Midlothian and Edinburgh Local Authorities. Because it is generated following widespread consultation within Damhead and District, the LPP provides us with a sound basis for new initiatives. It also gives us clear guidance on how to respond to new proposals that affect our residents. The process of developing the LPP has been designed to clarify views about our future. The LPP as a reference document will strengthen community cohesion and capability.

DDCC has used the LPP to build on the 2015-30 Neighbourhood Action Plan, updating it to take account of local changes (for example changes in residents, house building, proposals for a new secondary school, further discussions about the A701 relief road, developments at the Snowsports Centre, Calderstones, and Straiton ) as well as regional, national and global factors (for example climate change; threats to biodiversity; significant rises in the cost of living). Our Climate Action Plan has also been incorporated into the LPP.

## 1.2 Outline planning policy context

We have referred to the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Local Development Plan, the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and our Neighbourhood Plan. For each in turn we list the points that are of greatest relevance to our community and our residents' vision.

### 1.2.1 the National Planning Framework

In the foreword of the NPF4, Tom Arthur MSP says *Putting the twin global climate and nature crises at the heart of our vision for a future Scotland will ensure the decisions we make today will be in the long-term interest of our country.* This is mirrored by Damhead & District's wish for our little 'place' within the national context and summarises the key planning principle that is most meaningful for us.

#### 1.2.1.1 Spatial principles

Of the six overarching spatial principles our wishes align most closely with:

- **Local living.** We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.
- **Compact urban growth.** We will limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- **Rural revitalisation.** We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.

We agree that by applying these spatial principles, the national spatial strategy will support the planning and delivery of **sustainable places**, where emissions are reduced and biodiversity is restored and better connected; **liveable places**, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and **productive places**, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

### 1.2.1.2 Policies

Our wishes are consistent with many of the policies listed in NPF4, especially:

- Green belts
- Tackling the climate and nature crises
- Climate mitigation and adaptation
- Biodiversity and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
- Sustainable transport
- Natural places
- Soils
- Forestry, woodland and trees
- Historic assets and places

### 1.2.1.3 National Development Statements

The most relevant national development statements of need are numbers 5, 6, 7 and 8 with number 7, the Central Scotland Green Network, being especially important.

#### **5. Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Surface Water Management Solutions**

**Location** Glasgow and Edinburgh City Regions and their wider water catchment areas

We agree that our biggest cities and their regions will require improved infrastructure to ensure they are more resilient to climate change and the development of a strategic, catchment-scale, nature-based approach to adaptation through surface water and drainage infrastructure investment seems a sensible approach to reduce impacts. We agree that the prioritisation of nature-based solutions offers the potential to deliver of multiple climate, wellbeing and economic benefits and should form the basis of the approach. Because of the topography and streams in and around DDCC we have only limited possibilities of impacting Edinburgh City but implementation of sustainable drainage solutions designed to cope with anticipated more severe rainfall events could protect local houses, businesses and infrastructure.

#### **6. Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks**

**Location** Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh City Regions.

We support the national development statement of prioritising the need to reduce transport emissions in and around Edinburgh by using low carbon transport solutions including the transformational reduction in private car use. In the case of our 'place' the main options are to both improve the bus service, particularly electric buses, and stop the A701 relief road (in combination with improvements to the triple junction and the junction of Bush Loan and the A702). These should help reduce transport related emissions overall, improve air quality, and reduce the demand for private vehicle use. We agree that an improved bus service should be designed to link to active travel routes and provide access to the countryside. Greatly improved bus services and safe active travel routes take on an added significance in light of the new secondary school planned between Bilston and Bush.

## **7. Central Scotland Green Network**

**Location** Central Scotland local authorities within a boundary identified by the Green Action Trust.

We strongly support the priority of tackling the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss including by building and strengthening nature networks. We agree that a greener approach to development will benefit biodiversity connectivity and may contribute to the roll-out of 20-minute neighbourhoods. Being sandwiched between the urban areas of Edinburgh City and the development zones around Straiton and Penicuik, DDCC already provides a small oasis of green linked to the Pentlands and meets the national development statement's aim of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure that provides environmental, lifelong physical and mental health, social wellbeing and economic benefits. Because much of our 'place' is Green Belt and good agricultural ground we do not support any further development within DDCC whereas we can support the adjacent development areas and their populations by providing access to quality green space including helping people adapt to future climate risks. We agree with the statement that regeneration, repurposing and reuse of brownfield land should be a priority and see the neighbouring land of the oil shale bings as being preferred sites for development rather than the easier cheaper Green Belt. We are in full agreement that nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation may include woodland expansion as a priority although there is limited scope for peatland restoration. Our suggestions improve the connectivity of biodiversity rich areas including corridors and stepping stones to provide enhanced natural capital and improved ecosystem services.

## **8. National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network**

**Location** All Scotland.

Our residents strongly support the national development aimed at facilitating the shift from vehicles to walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport. We have identified routes to be upgraded and additional routes to create a sustainable travel network providing access to settlements, key services and amenities, employment and multi-modal hubs. This will help to deliver great places to live and work, including through connecting neighbourhoods, villages and towns, active freeways and long-distance routes. Some DDCC residents have livery businesses and many residents ride so we propose improvements to the riding networks.

### **1.2.1.4. Spatial Planning Priorities.**

Damhead and District is included in the Central area which broadly covers central Scotland from the Glasgow city region and the Ayrshires in the west to Edinburgh city region in the east. We fully support the priority given to creating sustainable places and the statement that *Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should support net zero energy solutions including extended heat networks and improved energy efficiency, together with urban greening and improved low carbon transport.* Given our size, location and current landuse, the most relevant aspects for Damhead and District are improved energy efficiency and improved low carbon transport.

### **1.2.2 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan.**

We broadly support the vision of the 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan.

We are especially supportive of the following strategic aims:

- To respond to the challenges of mitigating climate change and adapting to its impacts
- Providing positively for development that secures long-term social, environmental and economic gain
- Implement green network for Midlothian consistent with national and regional green networks

We support the following strategic environmental objectives:

- To avoid coalescence and loss of community identity
- To protect and enhance the countryside and rural environment
- To prioritise the development of brownfield over greenfield especially the Green Belt

We support the following strategic social objectives:

- Provide active sustainable transport for existing and future growth areas and promote walking, cycling and public transport links to shared open space
- Seek agreement with developers and agencies to ensure delivery of infrastructure, affordable housing, facilities and environmental enhancements
- Improve access to public open space

### **1.2.3 Single Midlothian Plan 2023/27 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan**

We strongly support the vision of the Single Midlothian Plan 2023/27: *By working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.*

Considering the three desired outcomes for the next four years (*Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work; No child or household living in poverty; Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030*) Damhead and District is best placed to contribute to making significant progress towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030 but can also contribute to Individuals and communities have improved health.

Looking at the seven themes identified (*Midlothian will be healthier; Midlothian will be safer; Midlothian will get it right for every child; Midlothian will support residents to improve employability and outcomes in our communities; Midlothian will be greener; Midlothian will have a wellbeing economy and be better connected; and Midlothian will work towards reducing poverty*) our main contribution will be to the Greener Outcomes (Learning for Sustainability is increased; sustainable living is increased; Low Carbon/Renewable Energy Development and Home Energy Saving is Increased; and Carbon Storage is increased). We were one of two pilot areas in Midlothian to develop a climate emergency action plan and we are certainly willing to work with the Climate Emergency Group and Climate Emergency Champion. Many of our proposals for local improvements link directly to the Greener Outcomes.

We feel that Damhead and District already helps to deliver two outcomes: *Midlothian will be healthier* and *Midlothian will be safer* and several of our suggestions for improved active travel routes will help to deliver these over the next four years.

#### 1.2.4 our Neighbourhood Plan.

Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 is still relevant and has strong support.

### **1.3 analyse baseline information**

#### 1.3.1 General

Damhead and District is a mosaic of varying physical features in a rural setting. The city bypass forms the northern boundary, the Pentland Regional Park the western side, Straiton and Bilston to the east and Boghall Burn to the south. Damhead and District is scattered across the A702, Old Pentland Road and A703 and is home to a unique community with the best of both countryside and city living. It is surrounded with scenic woodland, paths, cycle networks and holdings that are attractive to both residents and visitors.

Many small-holdings were set up for disabled soldiers after the First World War and named “Homes for Heroes”. The small acreage of the holdings allowed them to carry out important agricultural activities such as pig-farming. The total population of Damhead for mid-year 2010 is approximately 250 and there are now approximately 102 dwellings in Damhead. Official statistics indicate that the older population has increased within Damhead over the last ten years and the child population has decreased. However, the local perception is that the numbers of young people and children in the area has increased in recent years.

Due to the size and location of the area it shares educational establishments, doctors, dentists, churches and other amenities with neighbouring regions. The community is made up of a number of farm holdings, cottages, houses, various businesses including stables, Damhead Nursery, Damhead Small Farm, Hillend winter sports and a petrol station. The community has close access to the retail park in the Straiton area.

Over recent years we have endeavoured to strengthen the community spirit. Damhead and District Community Council (DDCC) is a small group of community representatives that regularly meets to discuss and address local issues that may have relevance to Damhead and its future development. Over the years, the Damhead and District Community Council has been involved with a number of significant milestones with regards to the future of their rural and green belt area. For instance, the preparation of a Straiton Bing Community Visions in 1998 and a major submission of comments in 2013 to Midlothian Council’s Main Issues Report.

More recently, the DDCC has started to discuss national and global issues, such as climate change, land use and food security, and longer term sustainable development. This has coincided with the establishment of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with the intent to ensure communication and consultation with the local residents. Damhead Climate Action is now organising events and discussions for the community and has become a member of Midlothian Climate Action network.

#### 1.3.2 Zoning in the 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan



Most of Damhead and District is designated as Green Belt. About half of the Green Belt has additional designations of Pentland Hills Regional Park and Special Landscape Areas and the northern end of the Pentland Hills Regional Park is also identified as Country Park and a Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Site. The Eastern half of the Green Belt is almost entirely Prime Agricultural Land with the balance comprising wetland and an area that had been 'improved' over the last 5 years or so.

The Eastern edge Damhead and District is subject to a variety of developments: the A701 relief road and to the east of the relief road's route, both mixed and economic developments with some areas allocated for longer term safeguarding for housing.

The following images, looking NE to Arthur's Seat and the bypass, East across Damhead and District, and SE across Damhead and District to Bilston to show this vital green patch among development.....





and looking west to the western boundary of Damhead and District.



***1.4 Engage with community, stakeholders and elected members (see sections 2.2, 5.2 and 5.3 for further detail)***

**The level of engagement was sufficient to be confident that our Local Place Plan is an unbiased strong representation of our residents' opinions.**

## **2. Vision**

### **2.1 Analyse local place and identify LPP site**

#### **Overview**

Damhead is a truly unique place, not just in Midlothian, but beyond, in Scotland. No other settlement has an area like Damhead in the peri-urban fringe with so many land-based businesses run by local long-term residents and families. It is a significant cultural landscape. It will act as a role model for other parts of Scotland where local communities/residents are trying to access land for land based local businesses, initiatives and new entrant farm starts.

Scottish Government is encouraging this movement through its land reform and related policies. Spending vast amounts of public spending to support communities to become active, self-empowered, resilient, create livelihoods and jobs and to provide multiple benefits and address the multiple crises. Scottish Government wants communities to do what we already have in Damhead. This is an important point.

The remaining rural parts of Damhead, not yet lost to development, but under increasing pressure through the Midlothian Local Development Plan policies and Council decisions, are absolutely vital as examples of what many settlement fringes could move towards to provide multiple benefits and services.

Damhead is an essential part of any Midlothian Nature or Habitat Network. Is it an essential part of a much-needed Midlothian Foodbelt, proposed for inclusion in the Midlothian Local Community Food Growing Strategy. Food security and increased food costs (of living) are increasing as a result of the climate emergency and other crises.

In Scotland today by far the majority of farms are 200 hectares or more. And yet the highest productivity (as well as number of jobs supported) is on small units of less than 10 hectares in terms of horticulture, fruit production, pigs and poultry. A significant part of the area has been farmed for many generations. One of the last remaining viable farms in Damhead is part of the area covered by Mx1 (See proposed amendment 3.2). Looking ahead - at a time when the climate emergency is making clear that food security is an issue - peri-urban farmland, such as this, near to settlements and increasing local populations can play a key role in climate resilience. The farm may evolve into a significant contribution to the local food economy. Small farms of less than 20 ha have been shown to provide multiple benefits and higher amounts of food produce than larger farms.

Good Quality farmland, such as Damhead's brown forest soils, in areas near to population centres should be a priority for protection against further incursion of development pressure.

Damhead has been and still is a largely agricultural (with some horticultural and increasing equestrian) area. About 20% of the area, which lies in the Pentland Hills is upland in nature (rough grasslands, heather moor and some scrub).

#### **Organic land**

Although no land is certified as organic in the area by the Soil Association, it is estimated that an area of about 0.5 km<sup>2</sup> is sprayed for intensive crop management. This is 6.5% of the Damhead area, which means 93.5% is basically organic by default. These areas are used for grazing, hay/haylage making, horticulture, equestrian businesses and nature rich sites (see below). Some areas, e.g. Damhead

Small Farm have been basically organic for 25 years and have established over 2 acres of wildflower meadows/grasslands, which now also provide seeds for other wildflower projects in Midlothian.

### Land based businesses

The landscape of Damhead has evolved in the last 100 years – from the original Damhead Small Holdings Scheme, to market gardens, and now diversified rural businesses. As an example, some of today’s businesses are listed below but for reasons of confidentiality are not mapped or identified further.

Table 1. Businesses based in DDCC

<b>Business</b>
Acre Wood Nursery
Atlas Endurance
Damhead Nursery
Damhead Small Farm
Horse Choice
Menagerie Edinburgh
MKM Fencing
Pentland Livery Stables
Pentland Plants
Saltire Stables
Two flower growers
Previous Damhead Organic Farm (veg box scheme, farm shop)
Previous market gardens supplying vegetables to local shops
Original Damhead Small Holdings Scheme 1920

### Composition

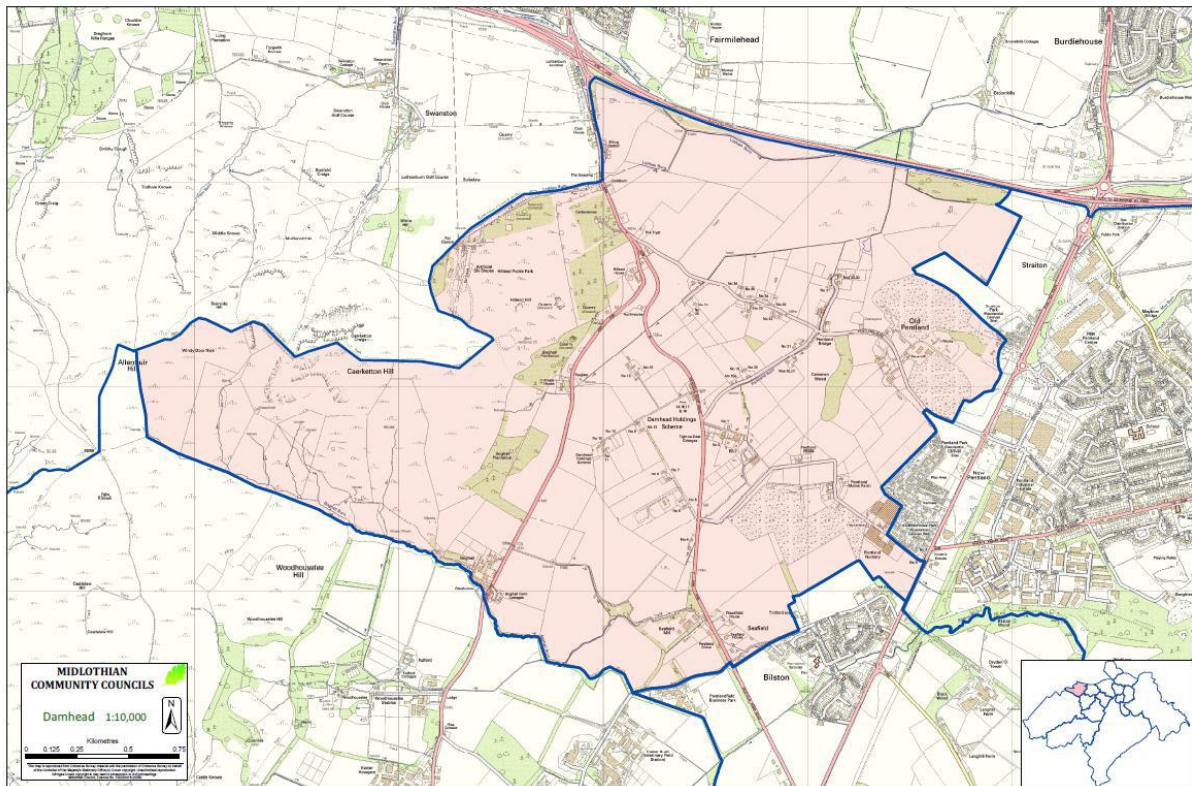
Damhead is approximately 7.5 km<sup>2</sup>. Within this there are 165 fields. Of these:

- 28.5% (47 fields) are less than 2 acres,
- 31.5% (52) are between 2 and 5 acres,
- 14.5% (24) are between 6-10 acres, and
- 14.5% (24) are between 11 and 20 acres.

So, 89% are fields of less than 20 acres, 74% being below 10 acres, with 60% being below 5 acres. In addition, a small percentage of land (0.6%, 5 fields) is between 21 and 30 acres, and 4.8% being larger than 31 acres.

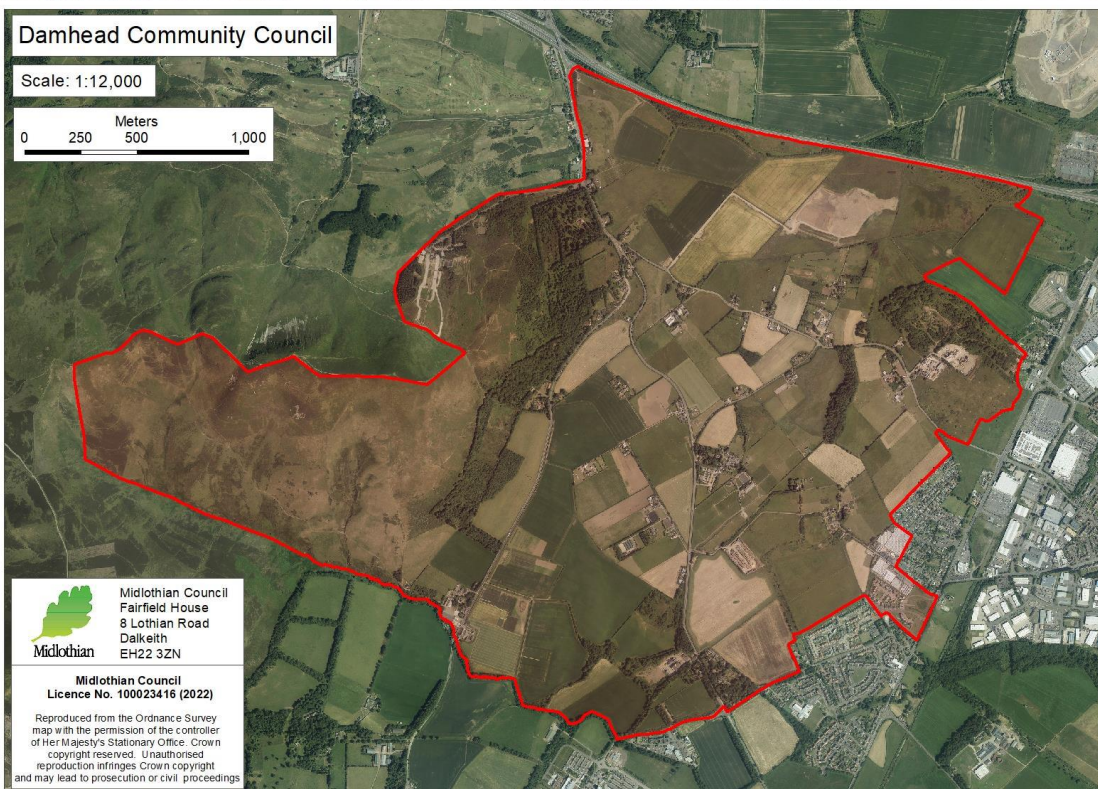
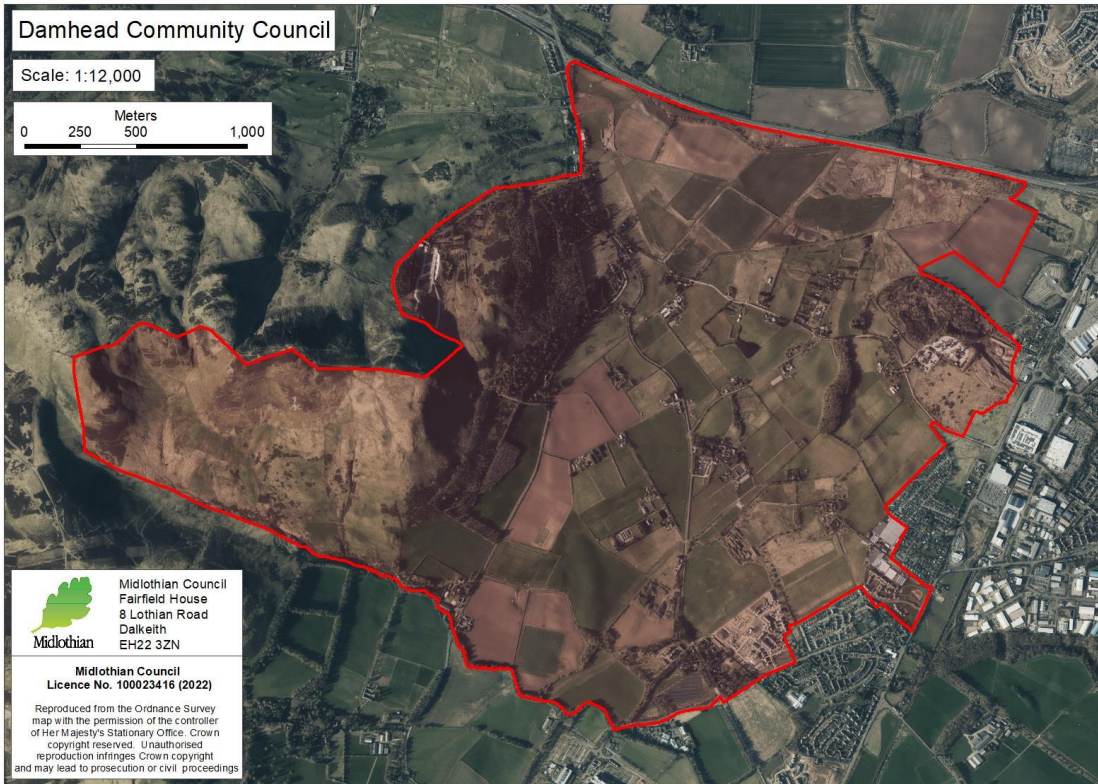
## Key maps giving a visual description of Damhead and District

This Local Place Plan encompasses the whole of Damhead and District Community Council. Map 1 shows Damhead and District community council boundary in pink.



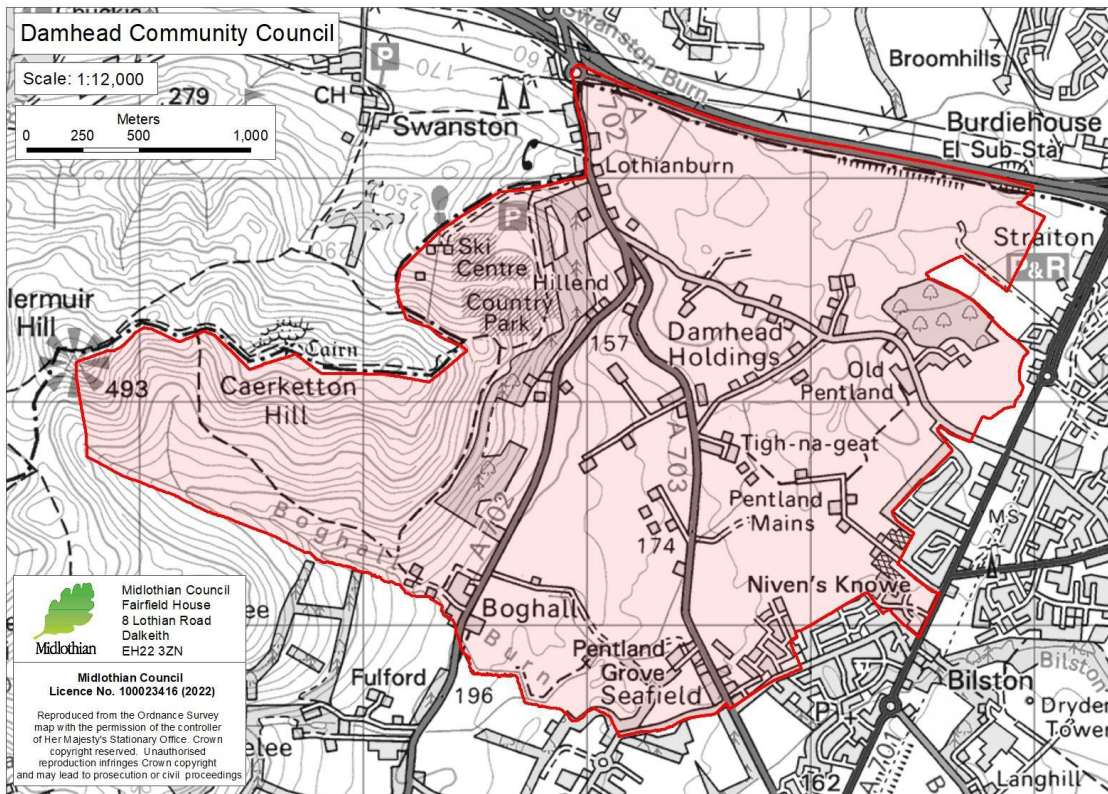


Maps 2 and 3 show aerial photographs of 2019 and 2021 respectively. These were taken at different times of year so show rather different features.

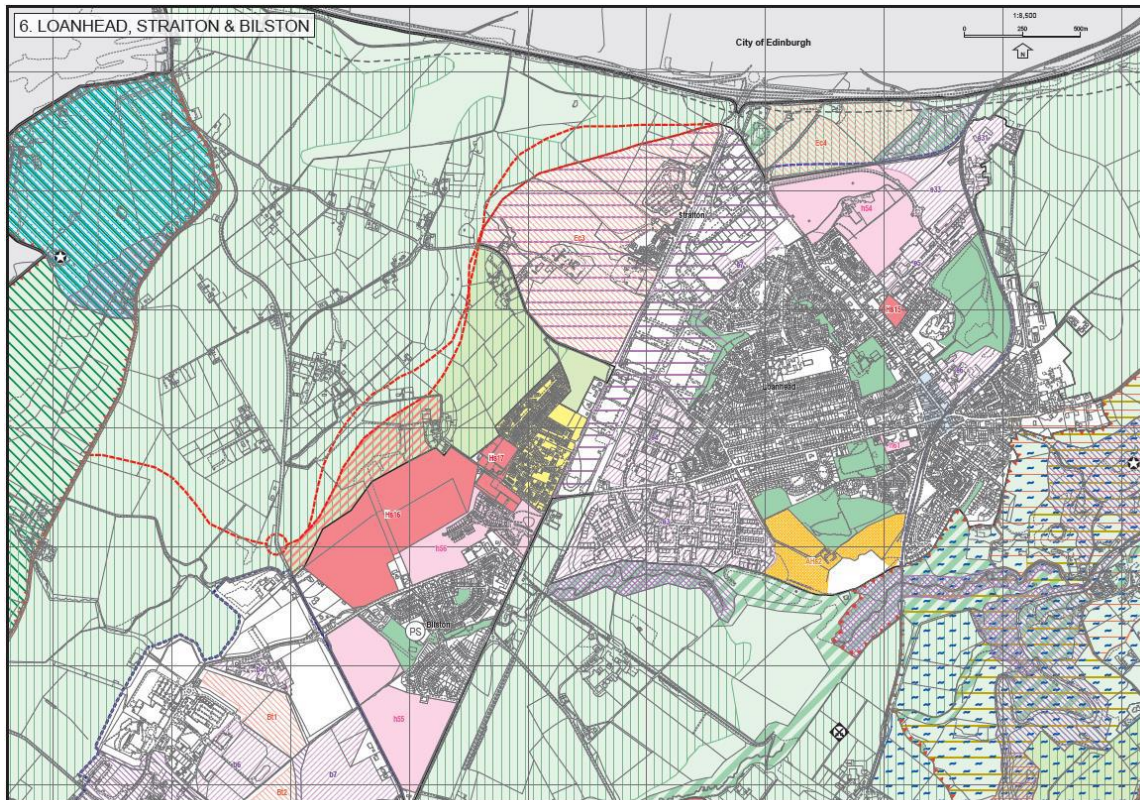




Map 4 shows a general map of the roads and houses in Damhead and District.



Map 5 shows the 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan of Loanhead, Straiton and Bilston which shows the main inhabited area of Damhead and District to the top left.

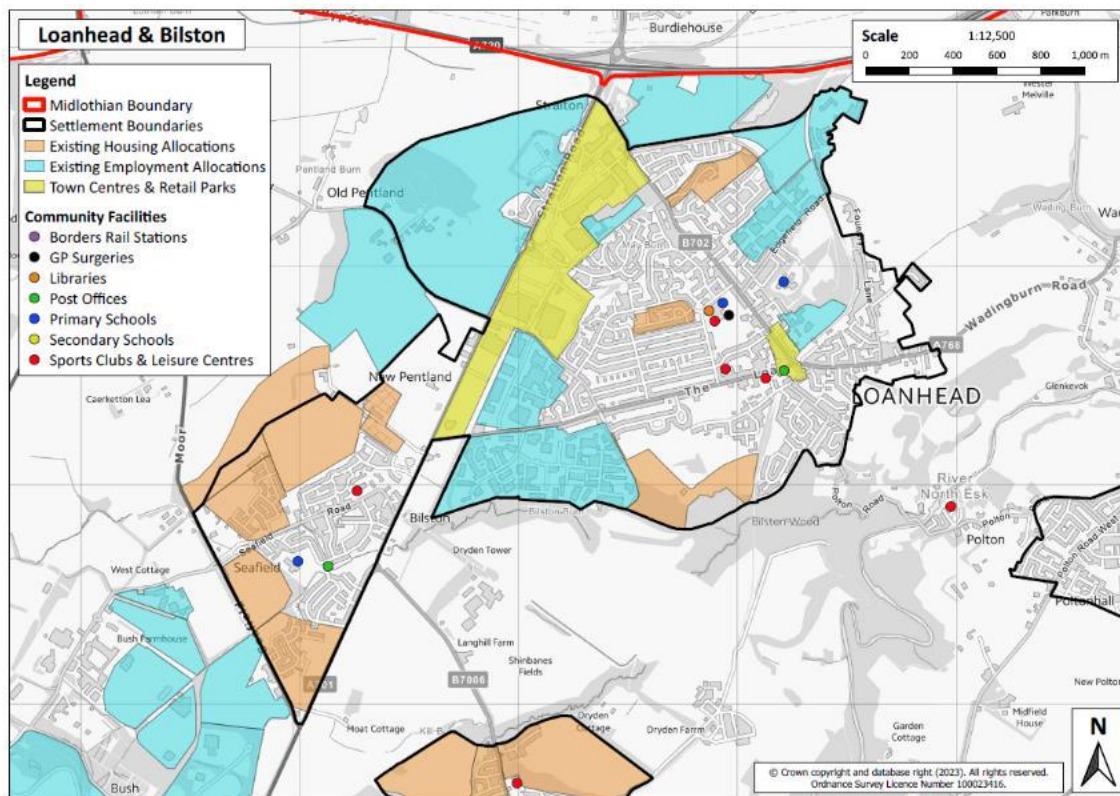


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Maps produced by Lovell Johns Ltd., Oxford, England.



Map 6 shows allocations and community facilities from the 2017 MLDP.



## 2.2 Engage with community and gather evidence

We sought as many relevant views as possible as follows by the following means:

- Neighbourhood Action Plan and survey used to develop it
- Updates and discussion at all community council meetings from initial notification of the requirement to develop a LPP. Discussions were written up as part of the minutes which were nominated and seconded at the subsequent meeting. Since Autumn 2023, the approved minutes have been made available through the DDCC website. There is an open invitation to Midlothian Councillors to attend our regular meetings and occasionally a councillor was present at meetings that discussed LPP proposals
- Initial discussion of the proposals at two in-person community council meetings
- Circulation of suggestions by email
- Climate action plan: on-line and paper-based survey (47 responses and good cross-section of ages), two face to face sessions and one on-line meeting
- Residents attended two drop-in sessions about NPF4

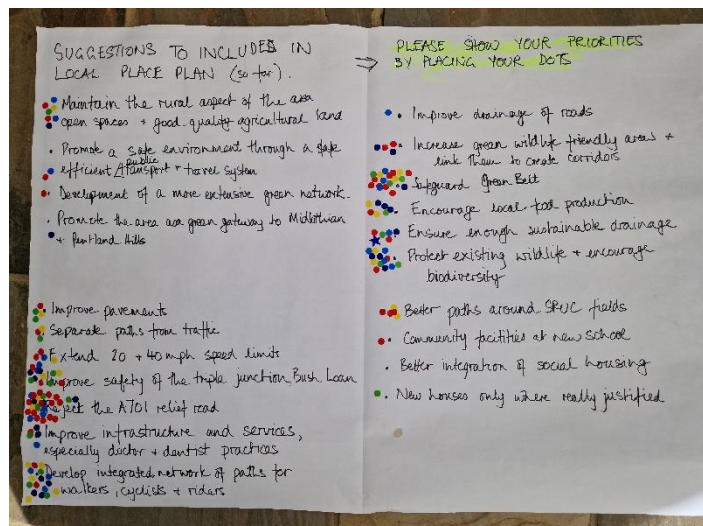
Proposals were considered at a summer gathering open to all residents on 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 2023. The proposed actions and maps showing all location specific suggestions from the gathering were further discussed and grouped on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A special meeting at Auchendinny Community Centre was held on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the overarching policy proposals that had been developed during November-January.

The level of engagement was sufficient to be confident that our Local Place Plan is an unbiased strong representation of our residents' opinions.



Location specific issues identified in August 2023 to be taken forward in Local Place Plan proposals (note there is no significance attached to the colour coding of the stickers).

Initial views on the issues taken forward from the Neighbourhood Plan (first block on left) and issues identified in meetings.



## **2.3 Outline proposed vision**

### 2.3.1 Vision for the Local Place Plan

**Our vision for the Local Place Plan is that it prompts constructive discussion of the way we would like our 'place' to develop over the next 10 years and articulates effectively the improvements we would like to see for the benefit not only of our own residents and future generations but also people visiting or travelling through Damhead and District.**

### 2.3.2 Key aims of the LPP

- **Promote and support a cohesive resilient community, which thrives and has a strong vibrant community spirit.**
- **Maintain rural aspects of the area, open spaces and the good quality agricultural land.**
- **Promote a safe environment through safe and efficient transport and travel options, and the development of a more extensive green network.**
- **Proactively build on the positive aspects of our local area to limit climate change and restore biodiversity.**
- **Support the development of local businesses that complement the land-based resources that make up our local area.**
- **Celebrate and recognise the unique heritage of the local area**

Our key aims were established during the development of our Neighbourhood Plan and revalidated during the development of the Local Place Plan. They have been used as the framework for all our proposed actions, overarching policy proposals and proposed amendments to MLDP1. A final table in Section 4 summarises Damhead and Districts proposals within this framework.

### 2.3.3 Principles used to develop the LPP

- All proposals will be considered
- Prioritisation will be made in an open transparent way
- Residents will be given sufficient opportunities to contribute towards the development of the LPP
- Consideration will be given to the wider environmental and social benefits not exclusive to Damhead and District residents
- Although the LPP covers a period of 10 years, consideration will be given to long-term threats

## 2.4 List/map/visualise proposed actions, initiatives or land uses

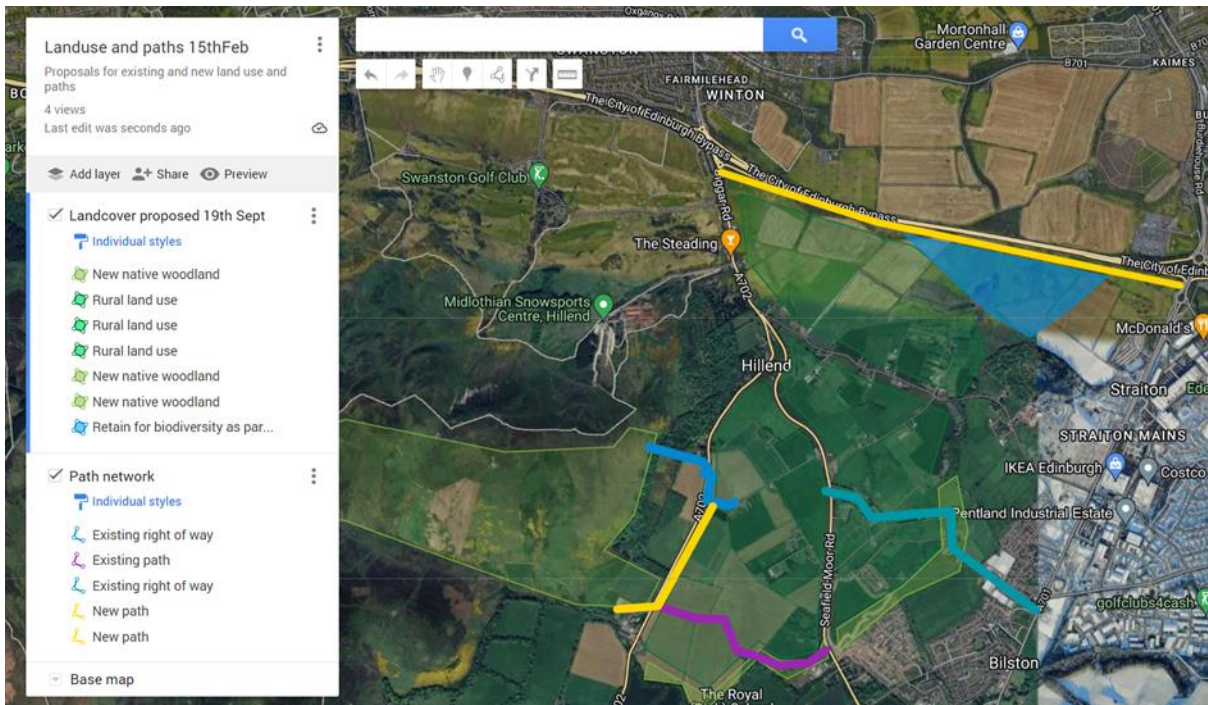
Table 2 lists our proposed actions, with the ones in bold text coming from our Neighbourhood Plan.

<b>Maintain the rural aspect of the area, its open spaces and good agricultural land</b>
<b>Promote a safe environment through a safe efficient public transport system</b>
<b>Develop a more extensive green network</b>
<b>Promote the area as a green gateway to Midlothian and the Pentland Hills</b>
Improve pavements
Separate paths from vehicular traffic
Extend 20 and 40mph speed limits
Improve the safety of the triple junction and the junction of Bush Loan and A702
Reject the A701 relief road
Improve infrastructure and services, especially doctors and dental practices
Develop an integrated network of paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
Improve the drainage of roads
Increase green wildlife-friendly areas and link them to create corridors
Safeguard the Green Belt
Encourage local food production
Ensure adequate sustainable drainage
Protect existing wildlife and promote biodiversity
Create better paths around SRUC fields
Include community facilities at the new secondary school
Improve the integration of social housing
Build new houses only where really justified



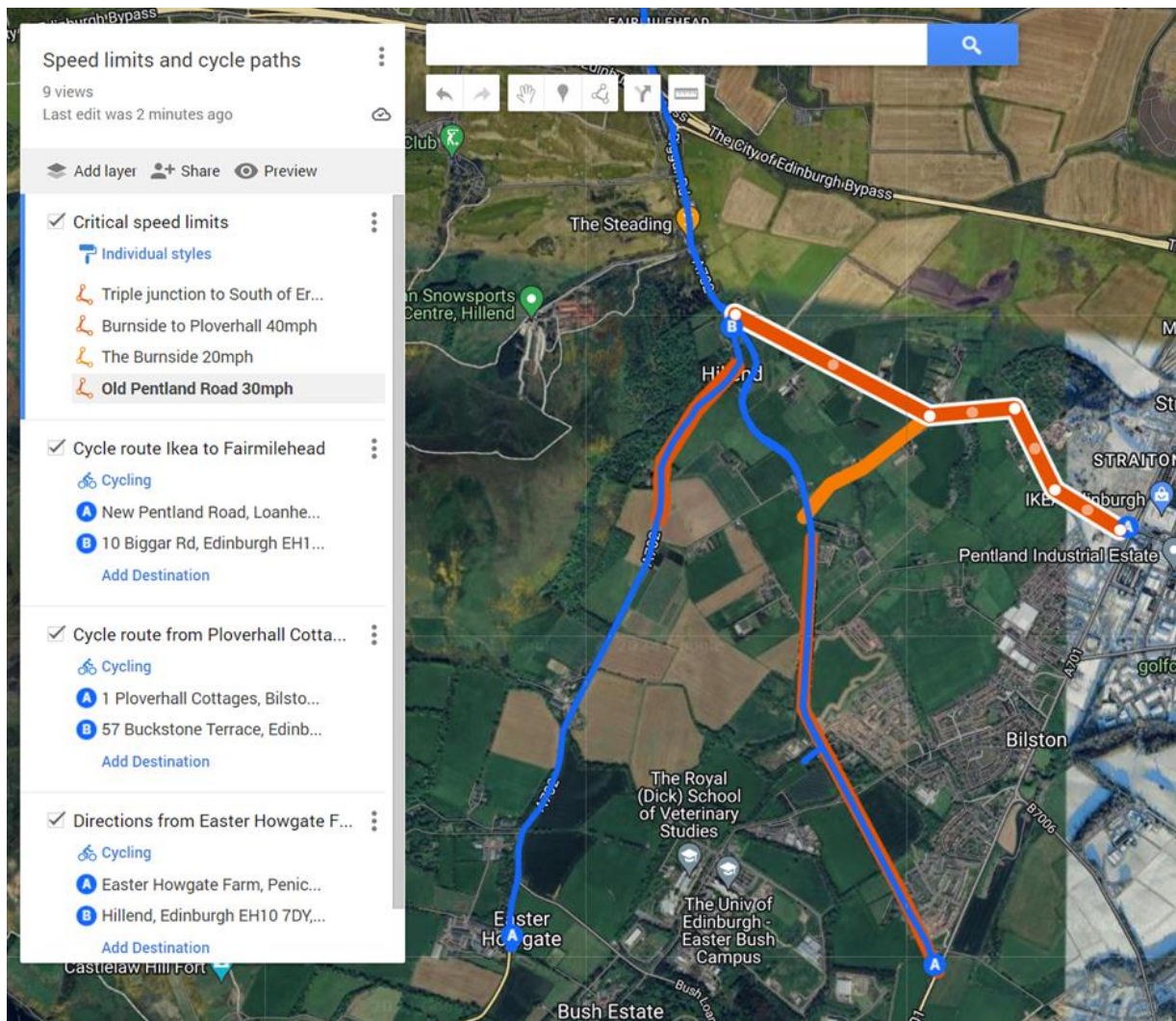
Map 7 shows the location of specific proposals to paths and cycle paths plus woodlands and the new biodiversity area that would make up part of the Damhead Nature Network (Policy Proposal 3).

Map 7



Map 8 shows the location of new cycle paths and reduced speed limits.

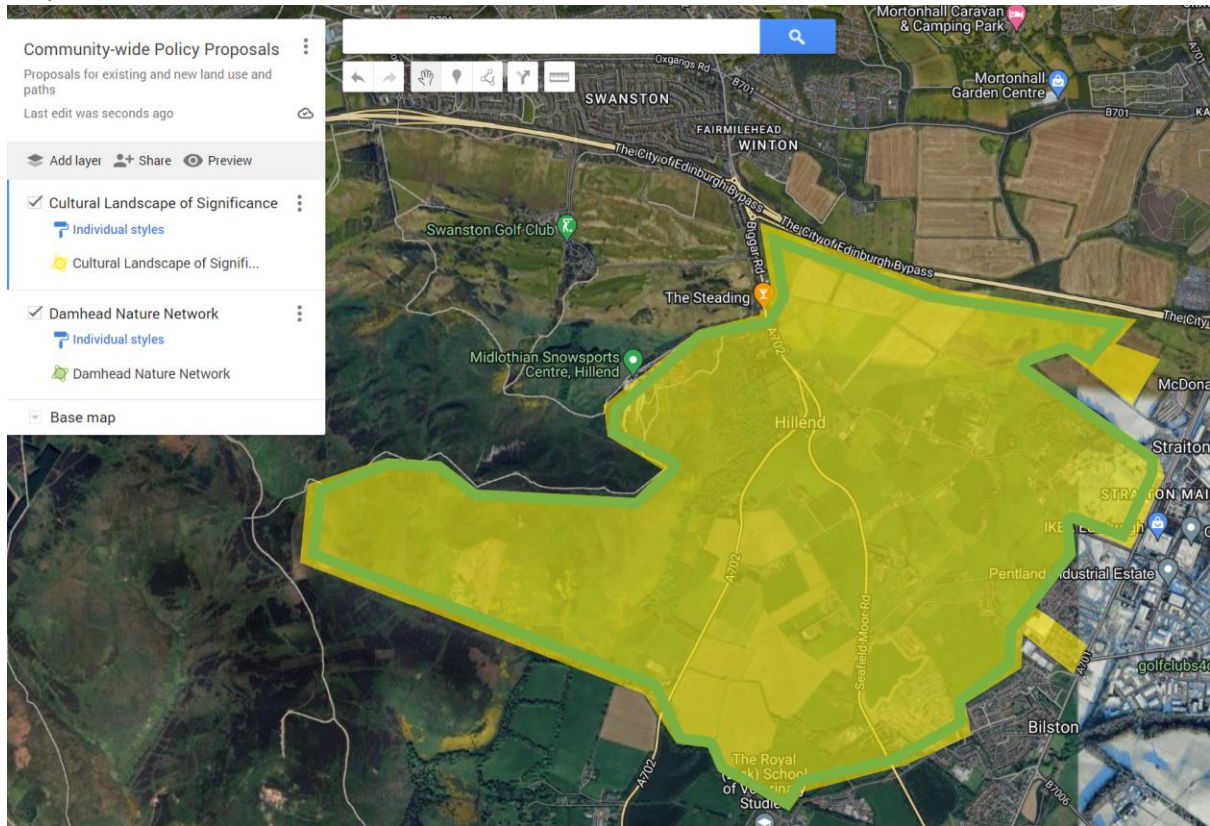
Map 8.





Map 9 shows the community-wide proposals for a Cultural Landscape of Significance (Policy Proposal 2) and Damhead Nature Network (Policy Proposal 3)

Map 9



## 2.5 Grouping proposals for action.

All proposals from community council meetings, the main suggestions from the survey held to form the Climate Action Plan and relevant proposals from our Neighbourhood Plan (bold font) were listed and grouped at an in-person meeting open to all residents on 19<sup>th</sup> August. These are listed in order in Table 3. The actions have been grouped and colour coded to show their relative importance with red showing the most acute action and the pale yellow showing actions that are important to our community but less critical.

Table 3. Grouping of our proposed actions.

<b>Proposal</b>
<b>Reject the A701 relief road</b>
<b>Safeguard the Green Belt</b>
<b>Develop an integrated network of paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders</b>
<b>Improve the safety of the triple junction and the junction of Bush Loan and A702</b>
Protect existing wildlife and promote biodiversity
Maintain the rural aspect of the area, its open spaces and good agricultural land
Encourage local food production
Ensure adequate sustainable drainage
Extend 20, 30 and 40mph speed limits
Improve infrastructure and services, especially doctors and dental practices
Create better paths around SRUC fields
Improve pavements
Increase green wildlife-friendly areas and link them to create corridors
Promote a safe environment through a safe efficient public transport system
Separate paths from vehicular traffic
Build new houses only where really justified
Develop a more extensive green network
Promote the area as a green gateway to Midlothian and the Pentland Hills
Improve the drainage of roads
Include community facilities at the new secondary school
Improve the integration of social housing

## **2.6 Overarching policy proposals.**

### **POLICY PROPOSAL 1: the inclusion in the next Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP2) of a Damhead Dispersed Settlement Statement.**

**Background** - The current Local Development Plan ignores Damhead. Proposals for road realignment, housing schemes, mixed uses and retail etc. are all presented in Settlement Statements for Bilston, Straiton and Loanhead, in which the proposals that affect Damhead in huge ways are presented as beneficial to those other communities. **Damhead must be represented in the MLDP2 with its own Dispersed Settlement Statement that summarises the uniqueness of Damhead, its vibrancy, active community and our aspirations.** Damhead matters in Midlothian terms.

### **POLICY PROPOSAL 2: Recognition of the Designation of the Damhead and District area as Cultural Landscape of Significance in Midlothian and inclusion in the next MLDP2.**

**Background** - Damhead is unique in terms of Midlothian and beyond. It should be considered as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). Possibly as an extension to the existing Pentland Hills Special Landscape Area, but certainly with its own Statement of Importance. ***“Statement of Importance Pentland Hills Special Landscape Area: The Pentland Hills form the key focus of this SLA. The adjacent upper section of the North Esk valley – which comprises the setting for the designed landscapes of Penicuik House and Newhall – and the open and expansive moss of Auchencorth, provide strong contrasts with the hills and contribute to the richness of the overall composition. This landscape is highly scenic, and the more visually prominent Pentland Hills form an essential part of the setting to both Midlothian and Edinburgh. The Pentland Hills are a highly valued recreational resource and are designated as a Regional Park, which encourages public access to them.*”**

Policy Proposal 2 is supported by the following quotes from Midlothian planning documents:

*“Midlothian's countryside is an area of natural beauty valued by many people as providing opportunities for outdoor recreation. However, Midlothian's close proximity and ease of access to Edinburgh means that development is commuter-based and the whole of the county falls into the category of a pressurised area for housing development in terms of Scottish Planning Policy.”*

*“The Green Belt has an important role in protecting the landscape setting, character and identity of the City and the settlements of Midlothian and preventing coalescence. By protecting the setting and identity of the Midlothian towns, the Green Belt has provided the additional benefit of ensuring that residents have access to the natural beauty of the countryside and the outdoor recreation value it provides. This role will be reinforced through the development of the Midlothian Green Network which will both preserve and enhance the county's rural assets and better connect the countryside with Midlothian's settlements.”*

*“The Council is keen to maintain the distinctiveness of Midlothian's landscape character, and its diversity, but also recognises the need to give particular protection to certain areas considered to be of outstanding local landscape value. These are identified as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) which are sensitive to development, both within and outside their boundaries, that could potentially damage their distinctive qualities.”*

### **POLICY PROPOSAL 3: recognition of the Damhead Nature Network (DNN) and inclusion in the next MLDP2**

**Background** - The Damhead Nature Network exists. Looking ahead the DNN will continue to act as a basis for maintaining, managing and enhancing our local biodiversity and to do so as our part in Scotland's ambition to develop such networks locally and regionally.

In the 7.5 km<sup>2</sup> that makes up the Damhead area there are:

- Uplands, rolling fields, and lowland fields with the best soils - brown forest soil.
- Around 165 small fields (74% less than 10 acres in size). A huge potential wildlife space e.g. up to 660 wildlife field corners and many wildlife margins.
- 0.75km<sup>2</sup> of woodland, scrub and plantation (10% of the Damhead area)
- Straiton Bing as one of the few self-seeded, regenerated woodland - Straiton Bing
- 13.2 km of roadside verge habitat, essential reservoir refuge for wildflowers and insects
- 31 km of hedgerows, including 13.2 km of roadside hedges, essential for mammals, birds and insects
- One 1-acre wildflower meadow managed for wildlife and wildflower seeds
- Two orchards
- 11km of paths linking Damhead and the settlements along the A701 with the Pentland Hills.
- 12.7km of streams (Boghall (a tributary of the River North Esk), Lothian and Pentland, another unnamed)
- Two ponds
- 75 acres of wetland meadows. The larger 42-acre meadow was identified as a Potential Listed Wildlife Site in the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Nature Conservation Strategy for the Edinburgh Greenbelt (but destroyed by development).
- Around 2 km<sup>2</sup> of upland habitat
- Areas of lowland rough pastures and grasslands - home to mammals, ground nesting birds, amphibians and many insects
- Territories for mammals (family of otters seen in 2020), birds (included protected species and Red/Amber listed birds with High BTO Alerts)

Map 10 shows woodlands, plantations and scrub in green; hedgerows in orange; and streams in blue.



The network at the moment is sustained by a community of people that care passionately about their home bioregion that is Damhead. With clear commitment, respect and care for the area expressed in the communities Neighbourhood Action Plan and Local Place Plan.

#### **POLICY PROPOSAL 4: Straiton Bing to be designated as a Cultural Landscape Feature and Core Biodiversity Area and inclusion in the next MLDP2**

**Background** - For the last 35 years, since the 1998 Straiton Bing Strategy, Damhead has recognised the value of our local Bing. An action in our 2015-2030 Neighbourhood Action Plan is “Local interest in community ownership of land - Register an interest in relevant land, e.g. the Straiton Bing“. The Damhead community now declares the Straiton Bing as an important Landscape Feature in Midlothian (last remaining bing) and will explore the designation of the Straiton Bing. We also declare it as a Core Area of biodiversity.

#### ***2.7 Damhead and District Community Charter***

Damhead and District Community Council is exploring the proposition of establishing a Community Charter. **We propose that in due course the Damhead Community Charter is recognized and informs proposed developments, Environmental Impact Assessments and other assessments that may affect Damhead and District.** An outline of the charter is shown in Annex 1.



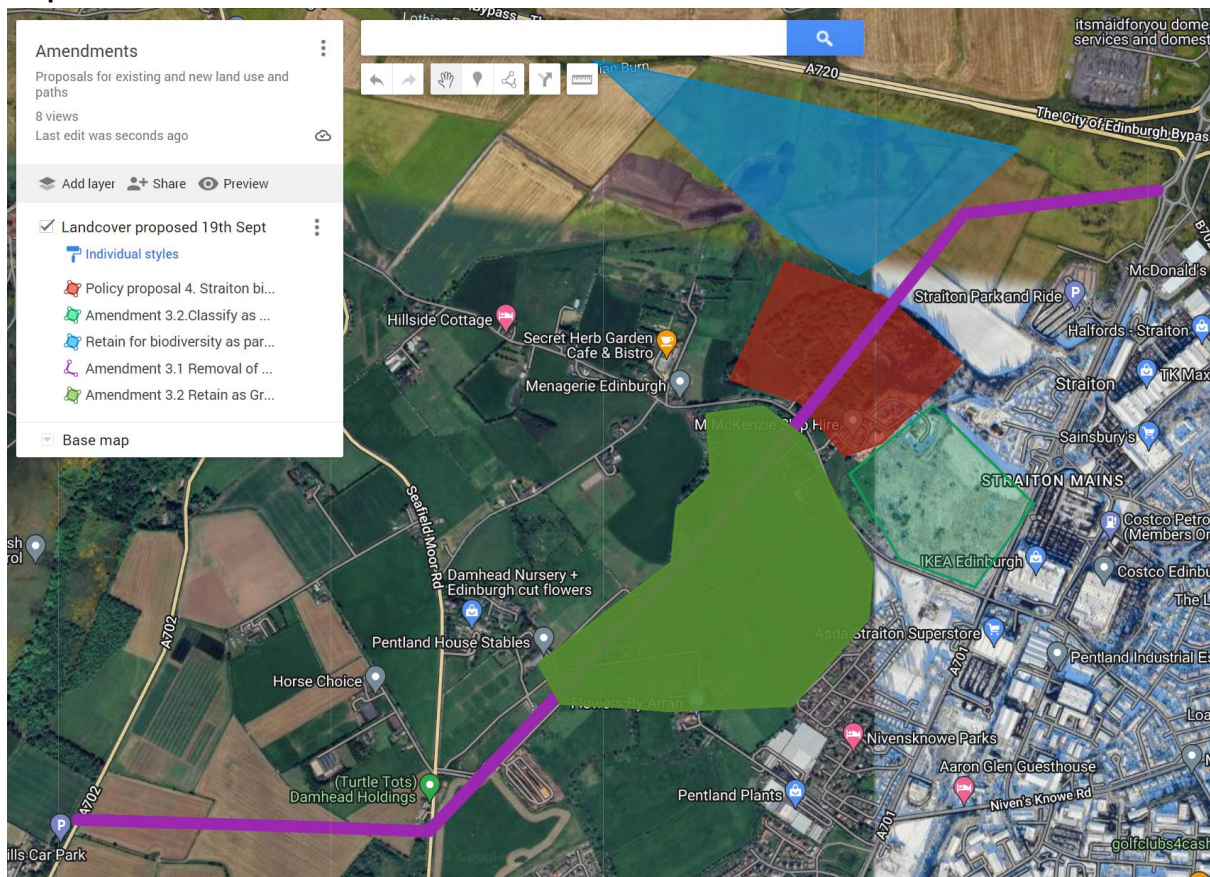
### 3. Amendments to MLDP 2017 (see Map 11)

**Amendment 3.1: Our community urges that the 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan is amended to remove the A701 relief road**

**Our community is unanimous in its opposition to the A701 relief road for the following reasons:**

- It will seal agricultural ground, including some highly productive land
- It will encourage vehicular traffic, the vast majority of which will use fossil fuel therefore will add to climate change
- It will not address the main hold up to traffic flows in the area, namely the triple junction
- It will split our small community
- It is likely to adversely affect the wildlife and biodiversity of the area.

**Map 11**



**Amendment 3.2: Classification of area MX1 (Pentland Studios) to be changed**

In the MLDP (2017) this area is shown as MX1 - for the proposed 'film studios with mixed retail, office, commercial, hotel, gas and heat power plant, film school, student accommodation, earth station, associated infrastructure and car parking'.

Proposal MX1 is covered by several MLDP (2017) Policies: ENV1 - Protection of the Green Belt, ENV4 - Prime Agricultural Land, Film/TV Studios, and TRAN2 - Transport Network Interventions - Road



Safeguards. In addition, the area of Mx1 (Pentland Studios) that lies to the North of Old Pentland Road is covered by MLDP (2017) Policies - Film/TV Studios, TRC2 - Location of new retail and commercial leisure facilities, STRAT 5 - Strategic Employment Land Allocations, and ENV 1 - Protection of Green Belt.

DDCC notes that these developments are no longer going ahead.

The MLDP (2017) states *'that the designations of Greenbelt/Countryside/Prime Agricultural Land on the southern site will remain until that part of the site is fully developed'*. As these designations still stand and there is no mention of use of this land for other future development, such as housing, **we object to the MLDP site Mx1 (Pentland Studios) from being taken into MLDP2 under another form of development, e.g. housing, retail, leisure facilities, or strategic employment land. The Damhead Local Place Plan proposes the following amendments to be included in the MLDP2:**

- 1. the current status of this land, covered by Proposal Mx1, as Greenbelt (ENV 1)/Countryside/ and Prime Agricultural Land (ENV 4) will remain and the land is not scheduled for other forms of development.**
- 2. the northerly part of Mx1 is scheduled as DEV 8 - Open Spaces (Outside Settlements) with the scrub areas scheduled as And ENV 14 Regionally and Locally important Nature Conservation Sites as part of the Damhead Nature Network.**

The area covered by MLDP (2017) area Mx1 (Pentland Studios) is now included in the Damhead and District Local Place Plan as: Rural Land Use (with a description of) 'Agriculture, livestock, horticultural, wildlife management, equestrian and other rural land-based businesses' or 'Native tree cover restoration for CO2 uptake, climate resilience and flood mitigation'.

### ***Amendment 3.3: Classification of area Ec3 (West Straiton) to be changed***

In MLDP (2017) the area covered by the Straiton Bing and grassland / scrub area to the north and north-west of the Park and Ride is shown as Ec3 - *"the site is allocated for a mixed use development to form a Midlothian Gateway. The site must be master planned...Acceptable uses could include retail, hotel, office, commercial leisure and housing. Development is, however, dependent on the construction of the A701 Relief Road'*. It is covered by MLDP (2017) Proposals/Policies TRC2 - Location of new retail and commercial leisure facilities, and STRAT 5 - Strategic Employment Land Allocations.

This area is important for biodiversity, landscape, and woodlands. The Straiton Bing was identified as a 'Key Site' in the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2006). The Damhead Straiton Bing Community Vision, 1998 states 'This represents a unique opportunity to preserve and restore a site with a rich historical past in a way which complements its rural setting'. The Damhead and District Neighbourhood Action Plan (2015) also recognised the Bing's value as part of 'green spaces...natural resources and nature reserves', which 'provide green spaces to relax, observe nature and the landscape within the community'.

The Straiton Bing is included in the Damhead Local Place Plan under the Damhead-wide proposal for the Damhead Nature Network. The bing forms a 'Core Biodiversity Area' of the Network, which joins sites and essential features, providing biodiversity abundance and resilience and as well as recognising that no site is special on its own, but needs the wider landscape to fulfill its value for biodiversity. For instance, the scrub and rough grassland areas (also covered by MLDP (2017) Ec3) are home to many species of wildlife. The scrub that has grown is a type of habitat that is now

recognized as hugely important as refuge habitat for wildlife, yet one under constant threat through land reclamation, tidying and development. The Straiton Bing is also covered by Damhead LPP POLICY PROPOSAL 4: Straiton Bing to be designated as a Cultural Landscape Feature and Core Biodiversity Area and inclusion in the next MLDP2

**We object to the MLDP (2017) area Ec3 (West Straiton) being taken into MLDP2 under any form of development and propose that:**

- **this land is allocated as a mixture of ENV14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites (The land should remain open for wildlife, rural land uses and not scheduled for other forms of development), DEV8 - Open Spaces (outside Settlement Area), and ENV 1 (Green Belt)**

#### ***4. Summary table of aims, proposed actions, proposed policies and proposed amendments***

The following table (Table 4) shows the linkages between our key LPP aims (see 2.3.2), actions (see Table 2), our policy proposals (see 2.6) and our proposed amendments to MLDP2017 (see 3). The table also places our actions, policy proposals and proposed amendments within the context of the relevant policies and proposals in the MLDP2017.

Please note that the content of the second and third key aim is split over two pages.

**Aim - Promote and support a cohesive resilient community, which thrives and has a strong vibrant community spirit.**

The Priority Actions	Relevant LPP Proposal	Relevant LPP Proposal and additional comment)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies
Improve infrastructure and services, especially doctors and dental practices	<b>PROPOSAL 1: the inclusion in the next Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP2) of a Damhead Dispersed Settlement Statement.</b>	We wish that Midlothian Council and the MLDP 2 in due course recognise the Damhead Community Charter, which is being explored at the time of LPP submission, as Material Consideration to inform proposed developments, environmental and other assessments that may affect Damhead and District	ENV 17 - Air Quality (included further assessment either as part of environmental impact assessment or separately to identify air quality impacts and will refuse planning permission (or seek mitigation) where development proposals cause unacceptable air quality or dust impacts)	ENV 18 - Noise (includes Where new developments with the potential to create significant noise are proposed, these may be refused or modified.		
Include community facilities at the new secondary school	<b>PROPOSAL 1: the inclusion in the next Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP2) of a Damhead Dispersed Settlement Statement.</b>					
Improve the integration of social housing			DEV 3 - Affordable and Specialist Housing			
Community Energy	We wish that Midlothian Council and the MLDP 2 take recognition - that Damhead will explore the development of a community wide energy project covering heat efficiency, microgeneration (including solar meadow or community turbine). See also our Neighbourhood Action Plan and draft Community Climate Action Plan. will seek support from the Midlothian LHSS (Local Heat and Energy Strategy).		NRG 1 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Projects (including biomass, solar, heat pumps, energy storage, microgeneration will be permitted provided any proposal will not cause unacceptable significant adverse effects on ....natural heritage, Green Belt, Pentland Hills, prime agricultural farmland or residential properties)	NRG 2 - Wind energy (all wind energy proposals will be assessed against requirements of NRG 1	NRG 3 - Energy Use and Low/Zero Carbon Generating Technology	

**Aim - Maintain rural aspects of the area, open spaces and the good quality agricultural land.**

The Priority Actions (numbers relate to Table 3)	Relevant LPP Proposal	Relevant LPP Proposal and additional comment)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies (Policies marked in red will have negative impact on the Damhead area and its LPP)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies (Policies marked in red will have negative impact on the Damhead area and its LPP)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies (Policies marked in red will have negative impact on the Damhead area and its LPP)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies
#1. Reject the A701 relief road	<b>PROPOSED AMENDMENT:</b> Damhead LPP proposes an amendment to MLDP (2017) Proposals/Policies TRAN2 - Transport Network Interventions - Road Safeguards. Impacts on ENV 1 - Green Belt; ENV 4 - Prime Agricultural Land; ENV 14 (Regionally & Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites; ENV 17 - Air Quality and ENV 18 - Noise		TRAN 2 - Transport Network Interventions - Road Safeguards (includes A701 Corridor, A701 Relief Road) and STRAT 3 (Strategic Housing Land Allocations - Longer Term Safeguarding), (includes A701 Corridor Strategic Development Area. Linked Policies that could help alleviate need for the A701 Relief Road. TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel (less car commuting investment in active travel options), STRAT 5 - Strategic Employment Land Allocations (to recognise Damhead as location of significant rural based jobs)	If A701 Relief Road goes ahead impact of Removal of ENV 1 (Protection of Green Belt), significant loss of remaining ENV 4 (-Prime Agricultural Land), especially LCA 2 in Damhead, ENV 14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites	ENV 17 - Air Quality (included further assessment either as part of environmental impact assessment or separately to identify air quality impacts and will refuse planning permission (or seek mitigation) where development proposals cause unacceptable air quality or dust impacts). ENV 18 - Noise (includes Where new developments with the potential to create significant noise are proposed, these may be refused or modified.	

#2. Safeguard the Green Belt	<b>PROPOSAL: Damhead LPP proposes an Amendment to MLDP (2017) Proposals Mx1 and Ec3</b>		<b>MLDP (2017) Proposal Mx 1 (Film/TV Studios) South of Old Pentland Road . Covered by following MLDP (2017) Policies that will impact Damhead : TRAN 2 (Transport Network Interventions - Road Safeguards) STRAT 3 (Strategic Housing Land Allocations - Longer Term Safeguarding), Loss of ENV 1 (Protection of Green Belt), ENV 4 Loss of Prime Agricultural Land (LCA 2).</b>	<b>MLDP (2017) Proposal Mx 1 Film/TV Studios North of Old Pentland Road. Covered by following MLDP (2017) Policies that will impact on Damhead:TRC 2 (Location of New Retail and Commercial Leisure Facilities), STRAT 5 (Strategic Employment Land Allocation). Loss of DEV 8 (Open Space Outside Settlement Areas). Loss of ENV 14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites (Grassland/scrub).</b>	<b>MLDP (2017) Proposal Ec3. Covered by following MLDP (2017) polices that will impact Damhead: TRC 2 (Location of new Retail and Commercial Leisure Facilities) and STRAT 5 (Strategic Employment Land Allocations). Removal of ENV 1 (Protection of Green Belt), Loss of ENV 14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites (Straiton Bing significant Midlothian self generated Woodland Grassland/Scrub).</b>	ENV 1 (Protection of the Green Belt), ENV 4 (Prime Agricultural Land), ENV 14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites, RD 1 (Development in the Countryside) (only permitted if required for the furtherance of agriculture (included diversification), horticulture, forestry countryside recreation or tourism). VIS 1 (Tourist Attractions), VIS 2 (Tourism Accommodation), Dev 8 (Open Spaces (Outwith Settlement Areas).
#6. Maintain the rural aspect of the area, its open spaces and good agricultural land	<b>PROPOSAL 2: Recognition of the Designation of the Damhead and District area as Cultural Landscape of Significance in Midlothian and inclusion in the next MLDP2.</b>	Damhead wishes to see the protection of remaining Green Belt and Prime Agricultural Land and proposes amendments regarding Mx1 and Ec3	<b>MLDP (2017) Proposals Mx 1 (Film/TV Studios) and Ec3 and covered by MLDP (2017) Policies will impact Damhead : TRAN 2 (Transport Network Interventions - Road Safeguards)), STRAT 3 (Strategic Housing Land Allocations - Longer Term Safeguarding), STRAT 5 (Strategic Employment Land Allocations), TCR2 ( Location of New Retail and Commercial Leisure Facilities).</b>	ENV 1 (Protection of Green Belt), ENV 4 (Prime Agricultural Land)	RD 1 - Development in the Countryside (only permitted if required for the furtherance of agriculture (included diversification), horticulture, forestry countryside recreation or tourism). VIS 1 - Tourist Attractions, VIS 2 - Tourism Accommodation	DEV 8 - Open Spaces (Development would not be allowed in these areas (open spaces) that would result in a permanent loss of open space, diminish the quality, amenity or biodiversity of the open space or otherwise undermine the value of open space as part of the Midlothian Green Network)
#16 Build new houses only where really justified			DEV 1 - Community Identity and Coalescence. MLDP 2017 guidance is provided via Settlement Statements. Damhead does not yet have one. See Proposal 1	DEV 5 - Sustainability in New Development. (Building in harmony with the site, fostering and maintaining biodiversity, facilitating accessibility and adaptability, addressing sustainable energy)	RD 1 - Development in the Countryside (includes housing only permissible where it is required for the furtherance of an established countryside activity). RD 2 - Low Density Rural Housing (no more than 2 units permitted at each site).	



**Aim - Promote a safe environment through safe and efficient transport and travel options, and the development of a more extensive green network**

The Priority Actions (numbers relate to Table 3)	Relevant LPP Proposal	Relevant LPP Proposal and additional comment)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies
#17. Develop a more extensive green network	<b>PROPOSAL 2: Recognition of the Designation of the Damhead and District area as Cultural Landscape of Significance in Midlothian and inclusion in the next MLDP2.</b>	MLDP (2017) identifies Strategic green network connections (Table 5.2, page 45). Damhead could make more of presenting itself as a potential and significant part of the Midlothian Green Network, stretching East West and linking other communities to the Pentland Hills Regional Park. It would help in getting our integrated path network more established.	ENV 2 - Midlothian Green Network	DEV 8 - Open Spaces (Development would not be allowed in these areas (open spaces) that would result in a permanent loss of open space, diminish the quality, amenity or biodiversity of the open space or otherwise undermine the value of open space as part of the Midlothian Green Network)	DEV 9 - Open Space Standards (The Council will assess applications for new development against the open space standards. ....Planning conditions will apply to ...natural and semi natural greenspace)	
#3. Develop an integrated network of paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders	<b>See proposals on our LPP maps</b>		TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development			
#4. Improve the safety of the triple junction and the junction of Bush Loan and A702	<b>See proposals on our LPP maps</b>		TRAN 2 - Transport Network Intervention (includes 'A702/A703 Damhead - required in connection with the development strategy of this plan (MLDP (2017)) Also includes A702 link with associated new junctions			

#9. Extend 20, 30 and 40mph speed limits	See proposals on our LPP maps		TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development			
#11. Create better paths around SRUC fields	See proposals on our LPP maps		TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development			
#12. Improve pavements			TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development			
#14. Promote a safe environment through a safe efficient public transport system			TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development			
#15. Separate paths from vehicular traffic			TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development			
#19. Improve the drainage of roads			TRAN 1 - Sustainable Travel, IMP 1 - New Development and DEV 6 - layout and design of new development	ENV 9 Flooding (includes Flood Risk Assessments of developments, functional flood plain will be protected, surface runoff, sustainable drainage		

**Aim - Proactively build on the positive aspects of our local area to limit climate change and restore biodiversity.**

The Priority Actions (numbers relate to Table 3)	Relevant LPP Proposal	Relevant LPP Proposal and additional comment)	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies	MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies
#5. Protect existing wildlife and promote biodiversity	<b>PROPOSAL 3: recognition of the Damhead Nature Network (DNN) and inclusion in the next MLDP2</b>		ENV 14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites (includes development which could affect the conservation interest of	ENV 11 - Woodland, Trees and Hedges (includes prevention of damage to woodland, groups of trees, semi natural woodland, veteran trees, and hedges	ENV 15 - Species and Habitat Protection and Enhancement ENV 18 - Noise (includes Where new developments with the potential to create	
#8. Ensure adequate sustainable drainage	Damhead has a vision and ambitions to tackle climate change, and to live in a thriving, low carbon, resilient and sustainable local community (extracted from our NAP & CAP)		ENV 9 Flooding (includes Flood Risk Assessments of developments, functional flood plain will be protected, surface runoff, sustainable drainage systems)			
#13. Increase green wildlife-friendly areas and link them to create corridors	<b>PROPOSAL 3: recognition of the Damhead Nature Network (DNN) and inclusion in the next MLDP2</b>		ENV 14 - Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites	ENV 15 - Species and Habitat Protection and Enhancement (includes		

**Aim - Support the development of local businesses that complement the land-based resources that make up our local area.**

<b>The Priority Actions (numbers relate to Table 3)</b>	<b>Relevant LPP Proposal</b>	<b>Relevant LPP Proposal and additional comment)</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>
#7. Encourage local food production	<b>PROPOSAL: To promote land based rural, diversification and food growing businesses in keeping with the nature of land, the soil and the landscape.</b>	<b>PROPOSAL 2: Recognition of the Designation of the Damhead and District area as Cultural Landscape of Significance in Midlothian and inclusion in the next MLDP2.</b>	RD 1 - Development in the Countryside (only permitted if required for the furtherance of agriculture (included diversification), horticulture, forestry countryside recreation or tourism). VIS 1 - Tourist Attractions, VIS 2 - Tourism Accommodation			

**Aim - Celebrate and recognise the unique heritage of the local area**

<b>The Priority Actions (numbers relate to Table 3)</b>	<b>Relevant LPP Proposal</b>	<b>Relevant LPP Proposal and additional comment)</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>	<b>MLDP 2017 relevant Proposals and Policies</b>
#18 Promote the area as a green gateway to Midlothian and the Pentland Hills	<b>PROPOSAL 2: Recognition of the Designation of the Damhead and District area as Cultural Landscape of Significance in Midlothian and inclusion in the next MLDP2.</b>	<b>PROPOSAL 4: Straiton Bing to be designated as a Cultural Landscape Feature and Core Biodiversity Area and inclusion in the next MLDP2</b>	ENV 6 - Special Landscape Areas (includes Pentland Hills Regional Park), ENV 7 - Landscape character. RD 3 - Pentland Hills Regional Park. VIS 1 - Tourist Attractions. VIS 3 - Midlothian Snowsports Centre	ENV 16 - Vacant, Derelict and Contaminated land		



## 5. Annexes

### 5.1. Annex 1. Rationale and draft outline of a Damhead and District Community Charter.

In support of our Local Place Plan, we wish to make known that we, the Damhead and District Community Council, in discussion and fullest engagement with our community will produce a Charter to set out our “Cultural Heritage” for the purposes of providing material considerations for the assessment of development, planning proposals (including implementation of MLDP2) and for Environmental Impact Assessments pertaining to any part of Damhead and District.

Through the Charter, we will declare ‘our Cultural Heritage to be the sum-total of the local tangible and intangible assets that are fundamental to the health and well-being of our present and future generations. These constitute an inseparable ecological and socio-cultural fabric that sustains life, and which provides us with the solid foundations for building and celebrating our homes, families, community and legacy within a healthy, diverse, beautiful and safe natural environment.

Thus, our proposed Charter pertains to any development within our territory which impacts on our Cultural Heritage and, as the Charter is a direct expression from the community, must be considered a material consideration in planning processes and decision-making, as a factor for impact assessment under environmental legislation, and must be given equal weight to other factors in the evaluation of whether development is sustainable.

Collectively, our Assets include:

- ❖ · our goal of a clean and safe environment, and our achievements to date;
- ❖ · our children and that which promotes their wholesome development;
- ❖ · our homes as our sanctuary and investment;
- ❖ · the resilience and continuity of our community;
- ❖ · the diversity and stability of our local Ecosystem;
- ❖ · our natural resources and our aspiration for them to be used sustainably;
- ❖ · our food security;
- ❖ · our restorative countryside;
- ❖ · our beautiful views;
- ❖ · our central location;
- ❖ · our vision of a truly sustainable local economy, and our achievements to date;
- ❖ · our local historical and natural attractions;
- ❖ · our reputation;
- ❖ · our goal of shared mutual trust and respect with our elected representatives and third parties;
- ❖ · the life-enhancing qualities which our Assets bring forth;
- ❖ · a collective commitment to sustaining and improving all of the above.

If Cultural Heritage is harmed, then life is diminished. Our Cultural Heritage and its constitutive Assets underpin qualities which not only sustain us, but also all other beings with whom we share our territory’.

## **5.2 Annex 2. Statement supporting submission of Damhead and District Local Place Plan to Midlothian Council including Information Notice.**

### INTRODUCTION

This statement accompanies the submission of Damhead and District Local Place Plan to Midlothian Council. It has been prepared in accordance with 'LOCAL PLACE PLANS Midlothian Council Information and Guidance' plus feedback from planning officers on the draft plan submitted in October 2023.

The Plan covers all of Damhead and District Community Council. Damhead and District is a mosaic of varying physical features in a rural setting. The city bypass forms the northern boundary, the Pentland Regional Park the western side, Straiton and Bilston to the east and Boghall Burn to the south. Damhead and District is scattered across the A702, Old Pentland Road and A703 and is home to a unique community with the best of both countryside and city living. It is surrounded with scenic woodland, paths, cycle networks and holdings that are attractive to both residents and visitors. A map of the Community Council area can be seen in the Plan.

Our LPP has been developed to guide our community in how our immediate area develops and how to respond to proposals in neighbouring communities as well as the wider Midlothian and Edinburgh Local Authorities. Because it is generated following widespread consultation within Damhead and District, the LPP provides us with a sound basis for new initiatives. It also gives us clear guidance on how to respond to new proposals that affect our residents. The process of developing the LPP has been designed to clarify views about our future. The LPP as a reference document will strengthen community cohesion and capability.

#### Key aims of the LPP

- Promote and support a cohesive resilient community, which thrives and has a strong vibrant community spirit.
- Maintain rural aspects of the area, open spaces and the good quality agricultural land.
- Promote a safe environment through safe and efficient transport and travel options, and the development of a more extensive green network.
- Proactively build on the positive aspects of our local area to limit climate change and restore biodiversity.
- Support the development of local businesses that complement the land-based resources that make up our local area.
- Celebrate and recognise the unique heritage of the local area.

This statement contains the following sections:

1. Contact details for the Community Council.
2. Evidence of meeting the requirements for consulting on the Local Place Plan.
3. Statement explaining regard given to the Local Development Plan and National Planning Framework in preparing the Local Place Plan.
4. Explanation of the Community Council's view of the level and nature of support for the Local Place Plan.

5. Statement explaining how the Local Development Plan should be amended.

### **Section 1. CONTACT DETAILS**

Constance Newbould (Chair); [REDACTED]

Helen McKay (Treasurer); [REDACTED]

### **Section 2. MEETING CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

The draft Local Place Plan was emailed on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to: each Midlothian Councillor for our Community Council area and adjoining Community Councils.

Those two emails constituted the Information Notices required to comply with Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. Copies are attached to this statement as Appendix 1 and 2.

The following Councillors were emailed the Information Notice: Councillors Pauline Winchester, Kelly Parry, Russell Imrie and Colin Beattie.

The adjoining Community Councils (CCs) which received the Information Notice were: Loanhead, Roslin and Bilston, Penicuik, and Fairmilehead Community Councils.

Relevant neighbouring institutions and organisations were contacted: the Scottish Wildlife Trust (via website), the Friends of the Pentlands (Andrew Marsden), Pentland Hills Regional Park (general email address), Snowsports Centre (general email address), Police Scotland (Susan Pearson), and Forest Research (Chris Quine).

### **Section 3. REGARD GIVEN TO EXISTING PLANS**

In preparing the Local Place Plan, the community had regard to the following plans:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017
- The Single Midlothian Plan
- Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030
- Damhead and District Climate Action Plan

### **Section 4. SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL PLACE PLAN**

The community engagement process used to develop the Local Place Plan, along with the levels of participation, is explained in section 2.2 of the Plan. The Community Council is satisfied that the Local Place Plan provides an accurate and evidence-based view of local residents and should be treated as representing 'the voice of the people'.

### **Section 5. AMENDMENTS TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Local Place Plan proposes some changes to the current local planning and policy framework. These are listed and explained in Section 3 of the Local Place Plan, together with reasons for the proposed changes.

## Appendix 1.

Dear Councillors,

I am contacting you on behalf of Damhead and District Community Council. We have been working on a Local Place Plan for our Community Council area, involving community engagement over many months. We have now prepared a draft Local Place Plan. We sincerely believe that many of our proposals benefit not only our own community but also our neighbouring communities and the wider region so we ask that you respond with any positive as well as negative comments.

To comply with Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021, we are legally required to send each Midlothian Councillor for our Community Council area the following information:

The Plan covers all of Damhead and District Community Council. Damhead and District is a mosaic of varying physical features in a rural setting. The city bypass forms the northern boundary, the Pentland Regional Park the western side, Straiton and Bilston to the east and Boghall Burn to the south. Damhead and District is scattered across the A702, Old Pentland Road and A703 and is home to a unique community with the best of both countryside and city living. A plan showing the subject area is contained in the draft plan.

Our LPP has been developed to guide our community in how our immediate area develops and how to respond to proposals in neighbouring communities as well as the wider Midlothian and Edinburgh Local Authorities. Because it is generated following widespread consultation within Damhead and District, the LPP provides us with a sound basis for new initiatives. It also gives us clear guidance on how to respond to new proposals that affect our residents.

Key aims of the LPP are:

- Promote and support a cohesive resilient community, which thrives and has a strong vibrant community spirit.
- Maintain rural aspects of the area, open spaces and the good quality agricultural land.
- Promote a safe environment through safe and efficient transport and travel options, and the development of a more extensive green network.
- Proactively build on the positive aspects of our local area to limit climate change and restore biodiversity.
- Support the development of local businesses that complement the land-based resources that make up our local area.
- Celebrate and recognise the unique heritage of the local area

Within each aim we have grouped our proposed actions (Table 3), including location-specific proposals (Maps 7, 8, and 9). These in turn have been organised into four overarching policy proposals:

- POLICY PROPOSAL 1: the inclusion in the next Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP2) of a Damhead Dispersed Settlement Statement.
- POLICY PROPOSAL 2: Recognition of the Designation of the Damhead and District area as Cultural Landscape of Significance in Midlothian and inclusion in the next MLDP2.



- POLICY PROPOSAL 3: recognition of the Damhead Nature Network (DNN) and inclusion in the next MLDP2
- POLICY PROPOSAL 4: Straiton Bing to be designated as a Cultural Landscape Feature and Core Biodiversity Area and inclusion in the next MLDP2

We have three significant amendments to MLDP2017 which are illustrated in map 10.

- Our community urges that the 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan is amended to remove the A701 relief road.
- Classification of area MX1 (Pentland Studios) to be changed
- Classification of area Ec3 (West Straiton) to be changed

If you have comments on the proposed Local Place Plan, please email them to [REDACTED] within 28 days, and by 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at the latest. The above information comprises the 'information notice' to which the Regulations refer.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Constance Newbould, Chair

Damhead and District Community Council

## Appendix 2.

Dear Fellow Community Councillors,

I am contacting you on behalf of Damhead and District Community Council. We have been working on a Local Place Plan for our Community Council area, involving community engagement over many months. We have now prepared a draft Local Place Plan. We sincerely believe that many of our proposals benefit not only our own community but also our neighbouring communities and the wider region so we ask that you respond with any positive as well as negative comments.

To comply with Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021, we are legally required to send each adjoining Community Council the following information:

The Plan covers all of Damhead and District Community Council. Damhead and District is a mosaic of varying physical features in a rural setting. The city bypass forms the northern boundary, the Pentland Regional Park the western side, Straiton and Bilston to the east and Boghall Burn to the south. Damhead and District is scattered across the A702, Old Pentland Road and A703 and is home to a unique community with the best of both countryside and city living. A plan showing the subject area is contained in the draft plan.

Our LPP has been developed to guide our community in how our immediate area develops and how to respond to proposals in neighbouring communities as well as the wider Midlothian and Edinburgh Local Authorities. Because it is generated following widespread consultation within Damhead and District, the LPP provides us with a sound basis for new initiatives. It also gives us clear guidance on how to respond to new proposals that affect our residents.

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If you have comments on the proposed Local Place Plan, please email them to [REDACTED] within 28 days, and by 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at the latest. The above information comprises the 'information notice' to which the Regulations refer.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Constance Newbould, Chair

Damhead and District Community Council

### **5.3 Annex 3. Statement of level of community support**

We sought as many relevant views as possible as follows by the following means:

- Neighbourhood Action Plan and survey published in 2015 following widespread community consultation
- Updates and discussion at all community council meetings from initial notification of the requirement to develop a LPP. Discussions were written up as part of the minutes which were nominated and seconded at the subsequent meeting. The approved minutes have been made available through the DDCC website. There is an open invitation to Midlothian Councillors to attend our regular meetings and occasionally a councillor was present at meetings that discussed LPP proposals
- Initial discussion of the proposals at two in-person community council meetings
- Circulation of suggestions by email
- Climate action plan: on-line and paper-based survey (47 responses and good cross-section of ages), two face to face sessions and one on-line meeting
- Residents attended two drop-in sessions about NPF4

Following initial discussion at our community council meetings, proposals were considered at a summer gathering open to all residents on 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 2023. The proposed actions and maps showing all location specific suggestions from the gathering were further discussed and grouped on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A special meeting at Auchendinny Community Centre was held on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the overarching policy proposals that had been developed during November-January.

Finally, all residents, Midlothian Councillors for our Community Council area, and adjoining Community Councils as well as interested organisations and institutes were given 28 days from 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to review the final draft.

By comparison with Midlothian's large Community Councils the numbers attending our regular meetings might seem small (10-20) but this does represent a significant proportion of our members. Consultations to develop the Neighbourhood Plan and the Climate Action Plan involved between 40-50% residents and approx. 25% residents respectively. This included some younger residents, who would not normally join the community council meetings, attending events to contribute towards the development of our proposed actions.

**We conclude that the level of engagement was sufficient to be confident that our Local Place Plan is an unbiased strong representation of our residents' opinions.**



#### 5.4 Annex 4. Consultation report

Community consultation on the draft Local Place Plan ran from 18<sup>th</sup> February until 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024. People were contacted by email which included the LPP statement (see Annex 2) and invited to comment by email. The full list of consultees is shown in Section 2 of Annex 2. A link to the full draft LPP was circulated by email so that the full draft Plan could be download if they wished.

Formal email responses were limited. They are summarised below.

Comment <i>Quote or summary</i>	Source	Response
	email	
<p><i>Withdraw our business name from the document (Page 6, 1.3.1 General and Page 9, Table 1).</i></p> <p><i>I'll have to object to the sections of the DD Local Place Plan that prevent development of the area, they are listed below:</i></p> <p><i>2.4 Table 2 "Safeguard the Green Belt"</i></p> <p><i>2.5 Table 3 "Safeguard the Green Belt"</i></p> <p><i>Table 4 Page 25 #2 "Safeguard the Green Belt" and "#6 Maintain the Rural Aspect of the area", specifically <b>MLDP 2017 DEV 8 and ENV 1 &amp; 4.</b></i></p> <p><i>We are totally supportive of the road improving the drainage and safety, Old Pentland Road becoming a 30 mph zone and improving the triple junction for safety - i.e. MLDP 2017 DEV 5, TRAN 1 &amp; 2 and ENV 5 - but I can't put our name to this plan in any capacity.</i></p>		<p>All references to this business have been removed.</p> <p>We have retained the text calling for safeguarding of the Green Belt because Damhead and District community has overwhelmingly and continually called for the greenbelt to be protected; for traffic safety to be improved (including the lowering of speed limits); and for objections to be made to the large scale planning developments we have seen recently (such as the Film Studios, and the current proposals for approx. 300 houses on that same site on Old Pentland Road).</p>

Despite the one formal objection to the plan's strong support for retention of the Green Belt, the general lack of feedback is taken as a sign that our community has been thoroughly engaged with the development of the Local Place Plan (and our Neighbourhood Plan) and is strongly supportive of the proposals it contains.