

## Midlothian Local Development Plan – Call for Ideas

### Survey responses

What is the name of your site?

Question 5 - Site Name

Easter Bush / Midlothian Science Zone

Which one of the following settlements in Midlothian is your site within or closest to? Please select from the drop-down menu below.

Question 6 - Nearest Settlement

Bilston

### Site Area

Please provide the area of your site, in hectares.

If you do not already know this there are a number of ways you can calculate it, including:

- Using the [MLDP Proposals Map](#) - click on "Help" at the top right for instructions; or
- Online tools, such as "[CalcMaps](#)".

Please write the area of your site (in hectares) in the box below.

Question 7 - Site Area

255.90 hectares

### Type of Proposed Development

What is the type of development you are proposing? (Please select one option only, or "Mixed use" if you are proposing more than one type).

Housing Business and industry Retail/commercial Leisure/tourism related. Renewable energy Mixed use (please specify in the text box below) Other (please specify in the text box below)

Text box for further details on "Mixed use" and "Other" developments, if you selected them in the previous answer.

Question 8b - Text Box for "Mixed Use" and "Other" Proposals in 7a

Other: Business and Industry, including Education, Research and Agriculture

The Easter Bush campus is located eight miles to the south of Edinburgh city centre, near Penicuik, and is a key teaching and research facility for the University's College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, incorporating both The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute.

The estate also includes farming land which is currently utilised for teaching and the husbandry of livestock / grazing, and feedstock production, and should be considered as an intrinsic function of the campus. The extent of the estate constantly evolves to meet operational requirements and to deliver the right mix of facilities to deliver a high-quality learning environment and associated facilities across the region. It is important

that this is recognised in terms of the overall contribution and benefits that university activity and development can deliver, including the associated economic impact.

The built development of Easter Bush is currently allocated within the existing Local Development Plan as part of the Midlothian Science Zone. It is submitted that the full estate should be safeguarded as part of a campus allocation. This would protect the land from development that does not meet the needs of the University of Edinburgh's teaching and research focus.

### Size of Development

Please provide details on the size of your proposed development. For residential sites this should be the number of units, or square metres for all other uses.

For housing sites, please outline the proposed type, mix and tenure. If any type of affordable housing is proposed, please indicate the percentage of the total number of units that will be categorised as "affordable".

**Note:** the definition of "affordable housing" is "good quality homes that are affordable to people on low incomes. This can include social rented, mid-market rented, shared-ownership, shared-equity, housing sold at discount (including plots for self-build), self-build plots and low cost housing without subsidy".

### What is the size of your proposed development?

The full site area equates to approximately 255 hectares. This includes farmland area that is not currently allocated as part of Easter Bush within the Midlothian Science Zone. It is submitted that the full estate should be safeguarded as part of a campus allocation. This would protect the land from development that does not meet the needs of the University of Edinburgh's teaching and research focus.

### Site Control

Is the site under the control of the site promoter?

Question 10 - Site Under Control of Promoter? **Yes** No

If the site is not under the control of the site promoter, are the landowners aware of your proposal?

Question 11 - Landowners Aware? **Yes** No N/A - the site is under the control of the promoter

Is there a developer in place to take the site forward?

Question 12 - Developer in Place? **Yes** No

## Site Status

### Question 13 - Current Use for Site

What is the site currently used for? **Business and Industry, including Education, Research and Agriculture**

Are there existing buildings or structures on the site?

Question 14 - Existing Buildings on Site? **Yes** No

*If there are any existing buildings or structures on the site, are any of these listed buildings?*

Question 15 - Listed Buildings on Site? Yes **No** N/A (there are no existing buildings or structures on site)

## Site Contamination

Are you aware of any contamination on the site?

Question 17a - Site Contamination? Yes **No**

Question 17b - Details of Contamination N/A

## Coal Mining Risk Areas

[This map](#) from the Coal Authority provides details of mining activity, including "Development High Risk Areas".

Is the site in a "Development High Risk Area" shown on the Coal Authority map?

Question 18 - In Coal Mining Development High Risk Area? Yes **No**

## The Historic Environment

[This map](#) provides details on the historic environment. Please use it to answer the two questions below.

Are there any Scheduled Monuments on the site?

Question 19a - Schedule Monuments on Site? Yes (please provide details in the text box below) **No**

Question 19b - Details of Scheduled Monuments N/A

Is the site within any of the following: a Conservation Area, a Battlefield Inventory site, or a Garden and Designed Landscape? **No**

Question 20a - Site in Conservation Area, Battlefield or G&DL? **No**

## Site Access

**Question 21 - Site Access**

Please provide details on how the site will be accessed by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles?

**Question 22 - Location of New Access**

If new access will be required, particularly vehicular access, where will this be located?

**Question 23 - Own Land Used for Access?**

Do you control or own the land that will be needed to provide access by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles? Yes No

**Question 24 - Existing Public Transport**

Using the text box below, please describe what existing public transport provision (e.g. bus stop or rail station) is within 400m of the site?

**Site Servicing**

**Question 25a - Site Servicing Constraints?**

Are you aware of any site servicing constraints, for example water, drainage or power connections?

Yes (please provide brief details in the text box below) No

There are a number of site constraints with regards to the Easter Bush / Midlothian Science Zone. These site constraints do not impact upon the suggested campus allocation for the University of Edinburgh.

Overcoming these infrastructure constraints will facilitate Midlothian Science Zone's current operation along with allowing future expansion, enhancements and protection of existing capacity being taking up by competing uses (e.g. housing allocations), including roads, power, water and drainage and heat networks.

Further details on these sites constraints are noted below, and should be considered as part of the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

A701 Relief Road – Junction Upgrades

The A701 Relief Road and associated A702 Link Road represent essential infrastructure necessary to support planned development in the A701 corridor, to ease congestion and critically, to support growth at the Easter Bush Estate. The scheme would unlock opportunities for economic development and allow the existing A701 to be converted into a more sustainable transport corridor.

Acknowledging that there remains a significant shortfall in funding, a bid to Scottish Government in autumn 2022 for an additional top-up contribution of £35M was unsuccessful.

The current proposal is to deliver a new junction at Bush Loan Road / A702 as a portion of the full A701 relief road in order to unlock the current embargo on developments at Easter Bush, pending funding approval for the wider relief road

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project. The City Deal Growth Project Funding has been allocated to this portion of the wider project and Transport Scotland confirmation confirming the lifting of the Planning Embargo is in discussion.

Midlothian Council have indicated that a planning application for the Bush Loan Road / A702 junction would be submitted in November 2023 with a construction completion date in 2025. The delivery of this infrastructure will be of benefit to the University's long term ambitions to the Easter Bush campus and to support further investment in the Midlothian Science Zone, along with Midlothian Council's ambition for the upgrade to be undertaken.

It is of critical importance that the University and its partners in the MSZ can have confidence in capacity delivered in terms of roads and infrastructure improvements specific to their future requirements, and to accommodate and deliver investment and development in facilities, without being constrained by the subsequent introduction of other land uses that could take up this capacity.

### Sustainability

The University of Edinburgh has committed to become zero carbon by 2040. The University is now looking to the future and is seeking solutions to further the estate, and are exploring further opportunities to learn from and develop renewable power, both on and off campus.

The University are considering a campuswide energy masterplan, including exploring extending the HV ring and possibilities for the recently energised solar farm, its future connection to existing campus, and future development considerations as well as investigating other emerging energy saving technologies. The University already work and engage with Midlothian Council with regards to developing initiatives around district heating and power schemes. Collaboration with neighbouring occupiers is required and fostering partnerships with the college on sustainability targets, as well.

Improvements to the SUDS and landscaping on site also presents an opportunity to explore opportunities for biodiversity enhancements across the estate.

The University has historically worked well with Midlothian Council on achieving these successful site wide initiatives that benefit the operation of the existing site, but also the local community. It is considered that this relationship should continue, in order to benefit Midlothian.

### **Flood Risk**

**[This map](#) from SEPA (the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) provides details on potential flood risk.**

## Question 26 - Flood Risk?

Is any part of the site at risk from surface water or river flooding according to the SEPA flood risk maps?

Yes No

[Flood Risk & Drainage](#)

The University are developing a site wide SUDS and drainage strategy to reinforce the existing drainage connections given existing pressures on the drainage network, which is acknowledged at present to be a constraint of future development at the estate. The University are looking to engage with Scottish Water to develop a strategy for the site in the context of other committed and proposed developments in the area.

The review of drainage and SUDS across the campus also presents a wider opportunity to review landscaping and travel routes across the wider site, delivering linked benefits including for biodiversity beyond the drainage capacity enhancements.

## The Natural Environment

### Question 28 - Environment of Site

Using the text box below, please provide information on what natural features and habitats are present on site. For example trees, hedgerows, grassland, open water?

The University of Edinburgh are supportive of nature based enhancements for biodiversity and wellbeing within the site campus.

The Easter Bush campus extends beyond the allocations within the adopted LDP, with the surrounding farmland forming an important part of the teaching and research of the University. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss a bespoke allocation for university farmland within this LDP. The farming land should be considered as part of the wider university estate as it is an intrinsic function of the university's operations in Midlothian

A large proportion of the land is used for agricultural purposes (equine and sheep flock grazing). A land ownership plan is submitted as part of this Call For Sites. This indicates the large areas of land within the vicinity of the Easter Bush Campus, that should be safeguarded for development as part of the University Campus.

[Farm Strategy](#)

Easter Bush estate also includes farming land which is currently utilised for teaching

and the husbandry of livestock / grazing, and should be considered as an intrinsic function of the campus.

The research function of the Easter Bush campus capitalises on a wide range of expertise in farm animal production, health and welfare including infectious diseases and zoonosis, vaccines, genetics and genome editing, imaging, radiology, medicine, surgery and critical care for which the protection of farmland is essential.

In direct relation, both the farm sites have residential properties either tied to staff and students and / or leased and used by farm staff. A review of the residential accommodation is being progressed by the University, highlighting required improvements and accommodation requirements for students and farming staff.

The approach to the operation of the wider farming elements of the estate is subject to ongoing review and scrutiny in terms of alignment with the operation of the Easter Bush Estate functions. This needs to consider connectivity to the campus, and any sensitivities in terms of key access routes to the campus from farmland in the context of new and emerging development proposals and in support of future research and teaching initiatives. The approach also needs to consider ongoing maintenance and major replacement works across the farming estate, and to establish long term spending associated to the lifecycle of the farms to shape future strategy.

These facilities are essential assets in the context of the Easter Bush operations, and it will be important to reflect on the outcomes of this exercise in the context of how these assets are presented in the forthcoming LDP2.

## Soils

We will use [these maps](#) to identify if a site contains peat soils or is on prime agricultural land.

If you have any additional information about soil quality on the site, please write it in the text box below.

**Question 29 - Additional Info on Soils**

## Community Facilities

Consider the site in relation to the proximity of the following community facilities:

- GP surgery
- NHS dentist
- Schools
- Shop selling food
- Community centre or other similar facility
- Bus stop
- Equipped play space

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## Question 30 - Community Facilities

Using the text box below, please provide information on the proximity of these facilities to the site.

NPF4 formalises the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods in policy terms, defined as a method of achieving connected and compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that all people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle (within approx. 800m) of their home.

The University of Edinburgh support the promotion of 20 minute walkable neighbourhoods and consider that they play an important role in realising the Council's ambition. The provision of 20 minute neighbourhoods therefore facilitates the ability for Midlothian Council to meet other policy targets, within their policies for sustainable development, green / blue network, biodiversity and active travel. There are significant opportunities at the Easter Bush campus to create a quality place which functions as a 20-minute neighbourhood anchored by the existing teaching, vet practice, research and development uses and demonstrated by the University's support in delivering the ongoing Beeslack School replacement project with associated playing pitches

It is considered that any updated policy / allocation relating to the site should encourage appropriate ancillary uses which would contribute to the creation of a 20 minute neighbourhood at the Easter Bush campus, including but not limited to uses such as, banking, convenience retail, healthcare services, and leisure opportunities. Integration and where appropriate shared facilities with the wider MSZ facilities should be a key consideration for this.

We would also welcome further discussion around the need and demand for student accommodation within the campus, particularly for postgraduate students, and how best to seek to incorporate this within the wider area.

Another key aspect of the creation of a 20-minute neighbourhood would be promoting active travel and health and wellbeing, which could be fully considered within any update to the masterplan. The LDP presents an opportunity to consider how existing active travel links can be enhanced and expanded and to encourage wider integration beyond the university campus.

## Development Timescales

### Question 31 - Development Timescales

**Using the text box below, please provide potential timescales for the development of the site and evidence to support this view.**

The development timescales will be largely influenced by the allocation of land within the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

The existing allocations in the LDP creates a positive planning policy framework for further research and development uses across the site. The references to the Bush Framework Masterplan within the LDP are also useful in this regard.

Currently the existing patchwork of allocations creates a potentially confusing baseline policy position where a number of existing policies (particularly ECON 2, STRAT 1 AND STRAT 5) guide the principle of further development on the site. It is considered that the rationalisation of the existing allocations would be beneficial to delivering further growth and investment in the area.

It is considered at this stage that such an allocation could be supported by a specific place-based policy for either the wider Midlothian Science Zone area or specifically related to the University's interests. This would allow the wider estate to be considered in a more holistic manner, consistent with the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods promoted by NPF4.

We would also welcome a review of the boundaries of the Midlothian Science Zone within the context of the University's interests, particularly in relation to farming land.

Whilst the existing references to the Bush Framework Masterplan are useful and welcomed, it is acknowledged that this document is now significantly dated and it may not therefore be appropriate for this to be continued within the next LDP. We would therefore welcome further discussions with Midlothian Council on preparing an update to the masterplan, taking into account developments on site since its preparation and updates to planning policy. It is considered that this would be beneficial in informing the allocations and policy approach suggested above.

The main priorities for this site allocation submission are as follows:

- Clarity of policy designations and allocations.

- Definition of Midlothian Science Zone and University of Edinburgh Easter Bush Campus Boundaries.

- Acknowledgement of wider agricultural and grazing uses and their critical relation to the Easter Bush Campus.

- Overcoming infrastructure constraints to facilitate Midlothian Science Zone expansion, including capacity, future enhancements and protection of existing and future capacity being taken up by competing uses (e.g. housing allocations), including roads, power, water and drainage and heat networks. Collaboration with Midlothian on wider district heat and power networks.

- Interaction with wider Midlothian Science Zone stakeholders to agree shared objectives and initiatives, building on opportunities collaboration and combined marketing of opportunities in the area. As stated previously, in the representation, the University is supportive of enhanced collaboration with Midlothian Council, on these matters.

- Nature based enhancements for biodiversity and wellbeing.

- Access and permeability through and beyond the Midlothian Science Zone, promoting links to active travel and green networks in the region.

- Support for the creation of a 20 minute neighbourhood at Easter Bush Campus / Midlothian Science Zone to create a quality place which functions as a 20-minute neighbourhood anchored by the existing teaching, research and development uses.