West Lothian Council

Appendix A

Briefing paper on Winchburgh station

1 The Winchburgh Development Initiative

1.1 West Lothian plays an important role in the delivery of the Scottish Government's housing and sustainable economic development strategies. The West Lothian Local Plan, which seeks to implement the requirements of the Edinburgh and the Lothian Structure Plan 2015, supports a sustained level of growth with up to 25,000 new houses in the district. Around 12,000 of the new houses are likely to be in three Core Development Areas (CDAs): Armadale; Livingston and the Almond Valley; and Winchburgh/East Broxburn/Uphall.

1.2 The Winchburgh Development Initiative will see the creation of 3,450 dwellings, up to 6,000 new jobs and two co-located secondary schools, which together will provide education facilities for 2,400 pupils. There will also be five streams of primary school and a new town centre with a supermarket. The development is expected to take around 15 years to complete, by which time, the current population of approximately 2,600 will have risen to over 10,000 approaching a population similar to that of Linlithgow.

1.3 A masterplan and associated transport assessment for the Winchburgh development were published in 2005. Outline planning permission for the entire site has been approved subject to legal agreement based on the masterplan layout. Detailed planning applications for the first phases of development are expected early in 2012.

1.4 The East Broxburn CDA just to the south of Winchburgh will provide a further 2,000 dwellings and associated amenities; it can be assumed that a significant percentage of journeys to and from East Broxburn will travel through Winchburgh.

2 Transport challenges and opportunities

2.1 Current transport links to/from Winchburgh area are entirely via class A and B roads, which towards Edinburgh link into the city's already congested road approaches (A89, M9, B9080). Limited public transport is provided by bus services.

2.2 The masterplan acknowledges the need for significant transport improvements in order to ensure the functionality and sustainability of the development. It, therefore, includes the key transport requirements of a new motorway junction on the M9, a rail station with up to 500 parking spaces, a bus park and ride facility with up to 500 parking spaces, and enhanced bus services.

2.3 Fundamental changes to the population size and mix of employment and education such as are proposed for Winchburgh, are likely to have the effect of changing travel patterns and increasing trip rates by more than a percentage uplift based upon the population growth. A transport assessment produced in support of the outline planning application in 2005, estimates that the completed Winchburgh development will generate the following external trips at peak periods:

	Attracted (Inbound)	**Generated (Outbound)**
a.m. peak (0800 – 0900)	4,375	3,527
p.m. peak (1700 – 1800)	3,925	3,581

Based on census data, which gives the current travel pattern for the village, the flow corridors are forecast to be:

Destination	**%age Distribution**	**E&G Rail Corridor**	**Local**	**Other**
Winchburgh (i.e. internal)	16		✓	
Broxburn	11		✓	
Edinburgh City	**31**	✓		
Linlithgow	**3**	✓		
M9 Corridor and North	16			✓
Glasgow City	**3**	✓		
South and West of Winchburgh	18			✓
Other	2			✓

2.4 With only 16% of the trips being internal to Winchburgh, the majority of these journeys will impact on the surrounding road network.

However, the data also shows that the Edinburgh - Linlithgow - Glasgow rail corridor enjoys at least 37% (Edinburgh 31%, Linlithgow 3%, and Glasgow 3%) of the forecast trips. This

share is likely to be even greater since the line also serves some of the 'M9 Corridor and North' stations including Stirling, Dunblane and Perth.

This offers a unique opportunity to transfer journeys from the private car to public transport, particularly rail.

3 The need for a station at Winchburgh

3.1 Taking into account the above trip forecasts, an expected public transport share of 20% of journeys and the estimated minimum distribution of 37% of journeys being on the Edinburgh - Linlithgow - Glasgow rail corridor, it is expected that the potential for rail trips in the peaks is:

	Attracted (Inbound)	**Generated (Outbound)**
a.m. peak (0800 – 0900)	324	261
p.m. peak (1700 – 1800)	290	265

3.2 These peak flow figures support an initial assessment that there would be an estimated 1,800 to 2,000 passengers on weekdays. If the potential traffic from East Broxburn and the surrounding area is taken into account and added to these figures, it can reasonably be assumed that the Winchburgh development will generate 3,500 journeys every week day and 2,200 every weekend day totalling in the order of 1,150,000 rail passenger journeys per year. These numbers are very similar to Linlithgow station which has the same immediate catchment (c14,000) and road network links.

3.3 The predicted journey time between Winchburgh and Edinburgh Waverley by rail is 16 minutes. This compares very favourably with 40 minutes by bus and 30 minutes by car, especially since the latter modes are likely to get caught up in traffic congestion. Use of rail into central Edinburgh (and Glasgow) is likely to be highly attractive to travellers and, at the same time, will make a positive contribution to the Scottish Government's environmental, economic and congestion targets.

3.4 For these reasons, the re-opening of the rail station at Winchburgh has been an integral part of the planning policy for the Winchburgh development for many years. It has been included in the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015, the West Lothian Local Plan, the Regional Transport Strategy for Southeast Scotland and the SEStran Strategic Development Action Plan. A station at Winchburgh would cater for the travel demands that the enlarged community will generate by providing fast and frequent connections across Scotland's central belt and especially to the principal cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

3.5 Unlike Linlithgow, Winchburgh station also has the potential to act as an important transport interchange for the surrounding area. Due to its location in the M9 corridor upstream from Newbridge, the station is well placed to take cars off the motorway and to reduce traffic on the city approach roads and within the city itself. Linlithgow station cannot fulfil this function to the same extent because of site restrictions and limited parking. There is a further risk that if no station is provided at Winchburgh, west-bound traffic, which accounts for over 6% of all outbound travel, will come to Linlithgow by car adding to the existing parking problems in the town.

3.6 Demand forecast for rail travel indicates that a service of four trains per hour (as for Linlithgow) should be provided at Winchburgh, a service level that accords with the inter-urban nature of the Edinburgh - Linlithgow - Glasgow route. Furthermore, the proposed Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) service of two non-stopping trains between Edinburgh and Glasgow and four serving the principal intermediate station, including Winchburgh, reflect the fact that approximately 66% of journeys on the line are to/from intermediate stations and only 34% are end to end trips.

4 The delivery of Winchburgh station

4.1 Winchburgh was served by a passenger rail station up until 1930. A key element of the masterplan is to reintroduce a railway station at its original site just north of the tunnel right in the heart of the new community.

4.2 Although neither Network Rail nor FirstScotrail registered any objections which could not be resolved when the station at Winchburgh was first proposed, Transport Scotland was categorically opposed to its construction. Since then, the council has succeeded in convincing Transport Scotland of the merits of a developer-funded station and, in November 2011, the council received confirmation from Transport Scotland that planning permission for a railway station at Winchburgh can be granted. The following condition has been agreed with Transport Scotland:

Condition: Delivery of the indicative Winchburgh rail station, as shown on the Masterplan, will be dependent on an appraisal and business case being submitted by the applicant and agreed by the planning authority in consultation with Transport Scotland. The railway station shall not be constructed until such time that all the necessary consents have been granted by Transport Scotland.

Reason: To ensure that a rail station at Winchburgh only progresses if Transport Scotland is satisfied that the appraisal and business case is proven and does not conflict with any other rail project.

4.3 The new, enlarged Winchburgh community sits astride the current Edinburgh – Linlithgow - Glasgow Queen Street (High Level) railway line and is, therefore, well located to be served by passenger trains. While the village lost its railway station in 1930, its reinstatement in modern form and to current standards does not present any physical or technical challenges.

4.4 The design and construction of the platforms, shelters, track crossings, access road and car park will be fully funded by the developer. Operational costs will fall to Network Rail and the Scotrail franchisee but are likely to be small compared with the expected revenue generated by the station. It is most likely that a station at Winchburgh will have a significant positive net effect on Edinburgh/Glasgow rail revenues. Assuming an average single fare of £3 to £4, the annual revenue could reach £3m to £4m by far off-setting the estimated operating costs of £47,000 per annum. Station operating cost such as cleaning, lighting, security and ticketing systems for unmanned stations are also relatively insignificant.

4.5 The upgrade of the Winchburgh rail junction as part of the EGIP works requires land from the proposed Winchburgh Development Initiative. A footprint for this was identified in the masterplan when the Edinburgh Airport Rail Link was still being pursued. The developer, Regenco (Winchburgh) Ltd., has expresses a strong interest in working with Network Rail to ensure joined-up planning of the two projects. The developer acknowledges that one solution may be to provide for the station east of Winchburgh Junction on the line to the Dalmeny Chord rather than the existing mainline. The planning permission will allow for this as an option.

4.6 A group of interested stakeholders comprising Network Rail, Transport Scotland, West Lothian Council, SEStran and Scotrail, has been meeting on a regular basis since 2007 to discuss ongoing transport assessment work and emerging opportunities. The most recent assessment, the 'Appropriate Appraisal', which was informed by Transport Scotland's multi-modal Forth Regional Modal provides further justification for the motorway junction and was able to predict significant usage levels for both the rail station and the park and ride facility.

4.7 EGIP provides a unique opportunity to programme the construction of the Winchburgh station without disrupting Edinburgh - Linlithgow - Glasgow services and passengers, and without impacting on revenue and user confidence. Being developer funded, the construction cost of Winchburgh station would be minimised if it was built as part of the EGIP project offering Best Value to the Scottish Government, the rail industry, the developer and the tax payer.

4.8 The current review of the timetabling for the Edinburgh - Linlithgow - Glasgow line provides an opportunity to establish and include a suitable stopping pattern for Winchburgh station. There may also be an opportunity to relocate some of the Edinburgh Park stops to Winchburgh once the Edinburgh tram and Edinburgh Gateway Station are operational.

5 The way forward

5.1 West Lothian Council officers have been in discussion with Transport Scotland and the developer to reach an agreement on the construction of the station. This has resulted in Transport Scotland giving their consent to grant planning permission for a railway station at Winchburgh.

5.2 Funding for the construction of the station will be secured from the developer and the construction of the station at its former site does not present any physical or technical

challenges. A Section 75 agreement has been agreed and sent to the developer for signing. The applicant has indicated that the signed document will be returned in late January or early February 2012.

5.3 In order to ensure that the station is delivered in accordance with Best Value principles and without disrupting the services and passengers on the Edinburgh - Linlithgow - Glasgow line, Winchburgh station needs to be constructed as integral part of the EGIP project. The inclusion of this element in the EGIP contract requires the support and a directive from Scottish Ministers.

5.4 If not planned, constructed and opened in the same timeline as EGIP, it is very likely that the costs of providing a station at Winchburgh will increase significantly and is, therefore, unlikely to be fully funded by the developer. Consequently, the opportunity to re-open Winchburgh station will be lost for the foreseeable future.

5.5 Once Scottish Ministers have instructed Transport Scotland to construct Winchburgh station as part of EGIP, West Lothian Council officers will agree the details with Transport Scotland and the developer, and help to progress the project for completion by 2016.