

# FALKIRK

## Local Development Plan



## Technical Report 2 (Revised): Site Assessment

April 2013



**Falkirk Council**

# Falkirk Local Development Plan

## Technical Report 2 (Revised)

### Site Assessment

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In order to assist in the identification of preferred development options within the Main Issues Report (MIR) of the Falkirk Local Development Plan, and to inform the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the MIR, the Council undertook a site assessment exercise in 2011.
- 1.2 The assessment was applied to potential new development sites which formed 'expressions of interest' arising out of the Sites and Issues Consultation undertaken in 2010, and also to other candidate sites which have been identified by the Council as being worthy of consideration. These included some sites which were promoted, but ultimately rejected, through previous Local Plan processes.
- 1.3 The assessment was not applied to existing committed sites within the current Falkirk Council Local Plan, except where a different use was sought on a committed site (e.g. business/residential mixed use proposed on a site exclusively for business use in the Local Plan). The Local Plan was adopted as recently as December 2010, and these sites have been assessed and validated through that process. Accordingly, it was not considered best use of resources to carry out a full audit of these sites. The intention was generally to carry these sites forward into the new LDP, although subsequently they have been subject to an assessment of effectiveness, and a small number have not been carried through.
- 1.4 Following the publication of the Main Issues Report, a number of additional sites were put forward through the consultation process. These sites were also subject to assessment. This revised version of the Site Assessment includes these further sites, and provides a basis for the Council's consideration of allocations of land for development in the Proposed Plan.
- 1.4 The assessment comprised 7 infrastructure and accessibility criteria, and 8 environmental criteria. The environmental criteria were chosen to ensure that the requisite information was available for the purposes of the SEA. In addition, a summary assessment was included to summarise the salient factors and explain the decision as to whether to include the site in the Proposed Plan..
- 1.5 Information for the assessment has come from a variety of sources, mainly but not exclusively, held within the Council. The nature and source of the information collated within each criterion is summarised below.

#### 2. Infrastructure and Accessibility Criteria

- 2.1 **Accessibility.** This assesses the accessibility of sites by sustainable modes of transport. Accessibility to the local catchment primary school, the nearest centre in the shopping hierarchy, the nearest bus stop and the nearest rail station are used as indicators, with accessibility standards below being applied.

Local Services	High	Moderate	Low
Primary School	0 – 800m	800 – 1600m	1600m
Local/ District Centre	0 – 800m	800 – 1600m	1600m
Public Transport	Reasonable	Not Reasonable	
Bus Stops	0 – 400m	400m +	
Railway Station	0 - 1600m	1600m +	

- 2.2 **Vehicular Access.** This assesses the ability of the site to be accessed safely and in accordance with the Council's roads design standards. This information has been provided by the Roads Development and Flooding Unit.
- 2.3 **Road Network Capacity.** This assesses capacity issues in the strategic or local road network which would arise from the development of the site. This information has been provided by the Transport Planning Unit, and has been informed by previous transport modelling, transport corridor studies, transport assessments for particular developments and an overall qualitative assessment of likely network issues.
- 2.4 **Water/Drainage Constraints.** This provides information on available capacity in the relevant waste water treatment works (WWTW) and water treatment works (WTW) using Scottish Water's on-line asset capacity finder, and information shared at regular liaison meetings between the Council and Scottish Water.
- 2.5 **Major Hazard Constraints.** This identifies whether the site is affected by consultation zones associated with major hazards or pipelines and, where appropriate, indicates the likely extent of any constraint based on PAHDI rules.
- 2.6 **Education Capacity.** This identifies and discusses any capacity pressures within the catchment schools relating to the site, and how these would be affected by development of the site. It is based on school roll projections and other data provided by Education Services.
- 2.7 **Community Infrastructure.** This assesses the general availability of other community infrastructure (e.g. sport and recreation facilities, healthcare, open space) in the relevant settlement and neighbourhood, and any issues of capacity and/or accessibility which the development of the site may present.
3. **Environmental Criteria**
- 3.1 **Green Belt.** This identifies whether the site lies within the current green belt and, if so, what impact its development may have on the green belt and its objectives in that locality.
- 3.2 **Green Network/Open Space.** This assesses how the site interfaces with the strategic green network as identified and discussed in the Green Network Technical Paper, or any more local green corridors which contribute to biodiversity, landscape, active travel, flood management etc. The potential impact of the site on the green network, including any positive contribution which the site could make to it, are highlighted. Where the site serves any open space function this is also assessed.

- 3.3 **Landscape/Townscape.** This assesses the landscape character of the site, with reference to which landscape character unit (LCU) it falls within in the area's Landscape Character Assessments, and the landscape impacts which would result from its development, including discussion of potential mitigation. This information has been provided by landscape architects within the Planning and Environment Unit. Comments are also offered on any townscape considerations, either impacts on the existing townscape, or townscape issues which would have to be addressed in development of the site.
- 3.4 **Ecology.** This assesses any ecological impacts likely to arise as a result of development of the site, with reference to any European, national or locally designated sites, protected species, or LBAP habitats or species, which may be affected, and includes discussion of potential mitigation. This information has been provided by the Biodiversity Officer.
- 3.5 **Historic Environment Impacts.** This assesses any impacts on historic environment features likely to arise as a result of the development of the site.
- 3.6 **Flood Risk/Water Quality.** This identifies the nature and extent of any flood risk issues, and requirements for flood risk assessment. This is based on information provided by SEPA and the Roads Development and Flooding Unit in the Council. Information on water quality issues has been provided by SEPA.
- 3.7 **Land/Soil.** This identifies whether the site is prime agricultural land, whether it contains rare or carbon rich soils, or whether it is likely to be contaminated, offering the potential for remediation as a result of development.
- 3.8 **Air Quality/Noise/Odour.** This identifies whether there are any air quality issues associated with the site, with particular reference to any air quality management areas in the vicinity. It also highlights any likely noise or odour problems which development is likely to experience, or give rise to, in relation to neighbouring uses.

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