

**FALKIRK COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT ADDENDUM 2 -
PROPOSED PRE-INQUIRY MODIFICATIONS SUPPLEMENT: HILLEND
FARM, SLAMANNAN.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 came into force on 20 February 2006 and requires that all public plans, programmes and strategies in Scotland undergo a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment. This Act is now the implementing legislation for directive 2001/42/EC, known as the “strategic environmental assessment” or “SEA” Directive. The Directive was first transposed into Scots law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (Scottish Statutory Instrument No.258). The regulations apply to qualifying plans and programmes whose preparation began on or after 21 July 2004, and to those whose formal preparation began before this date but which had not been adopted, or submitted to a legislative procedure leading to adoption, by 21 July 2006. This environmental report addendum therefore is prepared under the regulations as opposed to the Act.
- 1.2 An Environmental Report accompanied the Falkirk Council Local Plan Finalised Draft (Deposit Version). The purpose of the Environmental Report was to describe the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan, including alternatives.
- 1.3 This addendum to the Environmental Report describes the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed pre-inquiry modifications to the Local Plan, in respect of Hillend Farm, Slamannan. The detailed changes to the Environmental report are contained in Appendix 1.

**2. LOCAL PLAN PROPOSED PRE-INQUIRY MODIFICATIONS
ADDENDUM**

- 2.1 In 2006, an area of the Slamannan Plateau to the west of the village was proposed as a Special Protection Area in order to protect the flock of Taiga bean geese which overwinter in this locality. SNH advised that there was potential for the housing proposal at Hillend to have a significant effect on the bean geese. In preparing a revised version of the Local Plan towards the end of 2006, the Council carried out an Appropriate Assessment of the Local Plan, as required by the Habitats Regulations. This identified adverse impacts on the pSPA arising from the Hillend housing proposals. Accordingly, in the Finalised Draft (Deposit Version) of the Local Plan, published in April 2007, the Hillend site was reduced in size to a small residual area which equates to that contained in the current adopted Rural Local Plan. The Council

identified alternative sites to the south and east of the village (H.SLA2, 4, 5 and 7) in order to deliver the Special Initiative for Residential led Regeneration.

- 2.2 Representations objecting to the omission of the larger Hillend Farm site (as contained in the March 2005 version of the local plan) were received from Persimmon Homes (Ref. 0098/169) and Mr James Kelly (Ref. 0105/185) in May 2007. In support of their objection, Persimmon Homes subsequently submitted a detailed appraisal of the effect of proposed development in relation to the bean geese and the pSPA. This study drew on updated survey data and highlighted the limited role which the Hillend Farm fields have played in recent times as a foraging or roosting area for the geese. It concluded that, provided certain mitigation measures were undertaken, the proposal would not adversely affect the bean geese. The study findings were referred to SNH for their consideration. SNH raised various issues with the study which were addressed in a revised version of the report. On 9 May 2008, SNH confirmed by letter that, having appraised the available information, they have concluded that the implementation of the housing proposals would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the pSPA.
- 2.3 With these concerns removed, the Council has decided to support the inclusion of the larger Hillend site for housing development in the Local Plan. The land was previously the Council's preferred location for growth in Slamannan and the objections of Persimmon Homes and Mr Kelly have been accepted.
- 2.4 The detailed pre-inquiry modification to the Local Plan to re-introduce the larger Hillend farm housing site highlights the mitigation measures which will need to be carried out as part of the development. The small-scale opportunity for business development at the Hillend Farm steading would also be reintroduced.
- 2.6 The following summary draws attention to the general type and nature of additional environmental effects of likely significance caused the proposed pre-inquiry modifications in respect of Hillend farm, Slamannan. Section 5 contains the detailed changes to the impact tables in the Environmental Report which arise as a result of the modifications.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF MODIFICATIONS SPECIFIC TO SETTLEMENTS

Rural South

- 3.1 Opportunity H.SLA1 "Hillend Farm" is a substantially increased housing allocation from the extent of H.SLA1 shown in the Falkirk Council Local Plan Finalised Draft (Deposit Version) April 2007. The site represents a large greenfield expansion so will potentially have negative

environmental effects on transport energy, biodiversity, air quality, water quality, land and soil, minerals and landscape. Detailed mitigation proposals have been proposed to avoid adverse impact on the integrity of the Slamannan Plateau pSPA and reduce negative environmental effects on biodiversity. A detailed flood risk assessment and drainage strategy will be required to mitigate negative effects on water quality. There is a need for a comprehensive landscape framework to integrate landscape into the setting of the village. The opportunity is in an area of flood risk but its development can potentially solve some existing flooding problems so a mixed environmental effect on water quality is recorded. Large scale development has potential to have a positive impact on liveability through improvement of local services and facilities, to maximise this positive benefit development must conform to a Council approved development framework.

- 3.2 Opportunity ED.SLA1 is a new, small scale business and industrial opportunity which may include the re-use of steadings at Hillend Farm. As the scale of the opportunity is unknown at present there will be an uncertain environmental effect on transport energy and air quality and potentially negative environmental effects on land and soil due to greenfield land-take. Potentially positive environmental effects are predicted for liveability as the provision of business and industrial land could help to reduce the need to commute and sustain new growth within the village.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Following approval by the Council of the proposed pre-inquiry modifications in respect of Hillend Farm Slamannan they are being sent to the consultation authorities together with this addendum to the environmental report for additional comment.
- 4.2 After the Local Plan Inquiry and the publication of the Reporter's recommendations, the Council will publish and advertise a final set of modifications, which will include any of the pre-inquiry modifications which have been confirmed by the Inquiry process. This will offer the consultation authorities further opportunity to comment
- 4.3 Following the final modifications stage, the Council will publish the final version of the Environmental Report, which will incorporate all the relevant modifications and assessment of those modifications.

APPENDIX 1: CHANGES TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

5. SCORING MATRICES

SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT

RURAL

Settlement Policy Approach Description

Delete 2nd bullet point and replace with:

Major expansion identified for Slamannan.

Settlement Policy Options/Alternatives Considered

Housing

Delete 3rd paragraph and replace with:

" At Slamannan a large scale expansion option was initially rejected at Hillend Farm as it was considered that it would have an adverse impact upon the integrity of the Slamannan Plateau pSPA by virtue of impact upon the local bean geese flock which are the pSPAs qualifying interest. Following comprehensive further study and identification of detailed mitigation proposals it was concluded that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of the pSPA caused by the large scale expansion at Hillend farm and this option was chosen in addition to other sites to the south of the settlement."

SLAMANNAN

PROPOSAL	STATUS/ BACKGROUND	ENVIRONMENTAL STOCK CRITERIA										COMMENTARY & RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY SUCCESS FACTORS/ MITIGATION
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		Transport Energy	Built Energy	Biodiversity	Air Quality	Water Quality	Land & Soil	Minerals	Landscape Etc	Liveability	Cultural Heritage		
H.SLA1 Hillend Farm. Housing	Part of SIRR New Allocation	X	=	? X	X	X √	X	X	X	√	=	Large greenfield land release giving negative impacts on transport energy, land/soil, minerals and landscape (adjacent to AGLV). Potential biodiversity impacts due to possible disturbance to nearby Bean. Significant flooding issues associated with the site, but with potential for a solution to improve the existing situation.	Development Framework will guide whole SIRR. Masterplan is required for the housing proposal. Flooding /drainage issues will need to be addressed through comprehensive flood risk assessment and drainage strategy. Need for a comprehensive landscape framework to integrate into landscape setting of village. Detailed mitigation is proposed to avoid potential adverse impact on the integrity of the Slamannan Plateau pSPA.
ED.SLA1 Hillend Farm Business/ industrial use		?	=	=	?	=	? X	=	=	?√	=	Proposal may include reuse of farm steadings, but is also likely to involve greenfield landtake. The provision of business and industrial land could help to reduce the need to commute and sustain new growth within the village.	The business and industrial land should be well integrated into the new development and be of a high quality that contributes to overall townspace value, thereby mitigating impact on the landscape.

SUMMARY OF IMPACT

The large expansion proposed for Slamannan is due to its designation as a SIRR through the Structure Plan Alteration. This recognises the fact that the village, while remote, has the widest range of services and the greatest regeneration potential in the Rural South area. The proposed greenfield expansions to the north and south of the town have a range of negative or potentially negative environmental effects, in terms of transport energy, biodiversity, land/soil, minerals and landscape. A masterplanned approach to expansion which conforms to a Council approved Development Framework should allow mitigation of some of these effects together with enhanced positive effects on liveability.