

## PROFILE

- 15.1 Airth is situated in the northern part of the of the Council area and is its third largest village with a population of 1,575. The village is surrounded by agricultural land, Airth Castle and escarpment forming an impressive backdrop as approached from the south. There has been a settlement at Airth since the 12th/13th centuries, although the modern village dates from the 18th century onwards. Successive phases of development occurred in the 19th and early 20th century, with local authority housing in the 1950s, and most recently private development mostly to the south of the village centre and within the Castle grounds.
- 15.2 The previous Local Plan advocated a policy of growth in Airth as a key village for expansion with associated improvements to community facilities and infrastructure. This has been successful with the population increasing by over 50% and a number of improvements being made to the village including the installation of traffic calming and the erection of a community centre and health centre.

## KEY LOCAL ISSUES

- 15.3 The key issues for the village are:
- The role the village could play in contributing to Structure Plan housing requirements through further growth;
  - The need to continue to protect and enhance its outstanding built heritage; and
  - The need to protect and enhance woodland areas.

## LOCAL PLAN SUMMARY

- 15.4 The Local Plan proposes the following key provisions for Airth:
- Identification of opportunities for further extension of the village on the escarpment, and to the south of Airth Castle;
  - Extension of the Conservation Area to include North Church and Rosebank Cottage;
  - Enhancement of the Conservation Area;
  - Provision for a new health clinic for the village; and
  - Enhancement of the woodland environment around the village.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

### Environmental Enhancement

- 15.5 The key opportunities for enhancement are in the village centre and the Conservation Area. Small scale environmental improvements have been identified including tree planting and fencing at gap sites, hanging baskets and seating. The High Street, part of which is in the Conservation Area, would benefit from upgrading, whilst the crossroads at High St, Main St and Shore Road should be a priority for streetscape improvements. A study was commissioned to develop an enhancement programme and a project of streetscape improvements was completed in 2010.

### Built Heritage

- 15.6 The centre of the village is a Conservation Area and an Article 4 Direction is in place restricting permitted development rights. The Conservation Area is made up of a mixture of 18th century buildings and areas of later development including local authority housing built in the 1950's to harmonise with the older areas. There are a number of small vacant sites within the Conservation Area and Policy EQ12 supports their development subject to appropriate design. Following a review of the Conservation Area in 2000 the boundary has been extended northwestwards to include the North Church and Rosebank Cottage which are both listed, and southwestwards to include the western side of High Street. The Article 4 Direction will be extended to cover this area.
- 15.7 There are 9 listed buildings within the Conservation Area including the Mercat Cross. In addition there are 3 listed buildings associated with Airth Castle and 2 structures including the main entrance on the A905. All of the listed buildings except Airth Old Church are in active use. The carved stone at Airth Mains, the Mercat Cross and Airth Old Church are also scheduled ancient monuments and are afforded protection by Policy EQ16. Other sites of archaeological or historic interest contained within the Sites and Monuments Record are also afforded protection.
- 15.8 As noted above, following the recommendations of a consultancy study, the Council has been progressing the Airth Conservation Area Enhancement Project. Improvements to the High Street/Mercat Cross area was completed in 2010.

### Natural Heritage

- 15.9 The wooded policies associated with Airth Castle Estate are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. The woodland makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Airth and its enhancement and management is supported by EQ26. Part of the previous growth strategy for the village included the management of existing woodland through planning gain. This remains an outstanding element of the original planning gain package which requires to be implemented.
- 15.10 The abandoned opencast coal site at Waterslap has been partially restored and its further restoration will be considered in accordance with Policy EQ37.

### 15.11 Environmental Enhancement - Proposals and Opportunities

15.11.1	<b>EN.AIR01</b>	<b>Airth Conservation Area</b>
	<b>Opportunity:</b>	Conservation Area Enhancement
	<b>Agency:</b>	Falkirk Council
	<b>Comments:</b>	An enhancement project has been established to develop a range of improvements and explore funding sources. Possible planning gain contribution could be sought from new development. Opportunity for heritage interpretation/trail and supporting leaflets as part of enhancement. High Street/Mercat Cross enhancement completed in 2010.
15.11.2	<b>EN.AIR02</b>	<b>Airth Castle Policy Woodlands</b>
	<b>Opportunity:</b>	Woodland Management
	<b>Agency:</b>	Falkirk Council/Private
	<b>Comments:</b>	Use of planning gain resources to secure management of wooded policies. Further planning gain contribution could be sought from new development.

## SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

### Housing

- 15.12 Airth has grown rapidly in the last decade, reflecting the Council's strategy of promoting it as a key village for housing development. It is still considered to represent the best location for future growth in the Rural North area. The village has the best level of community facilities amongst the northern villages, and although there are some short term infrastructure issues, notably water and drainage, it is the most sustainable location for further longer term development.
- 15.13 Most of the recent development has been to the south of the existing village and on the escarpment behind Airth Castle. It is considered that development to the north of the existing development on the escarpment, and a further small development to the south of the castle, provides the best opportunity to round off the village.
- 15.14 Proposal H.AIR04 for up to 115 units is therefore identified as a major development opportunity to maintain development momentum in the village, for which a development brief and masterplan will be required.. Minimising potential adverse impact on the wider landscape will be crucial, and a detailed landscape and visual assessment, with mitigating measures, will be required. This may reduce the number of units and the height of development. Areas of the escarpment will require additional planting and a woodland management scheme. The western boundary runs along a farm access track where boundary planting must be introduced. Access for most of the site is likely to be taken via a roundabout onto the A905 at the northern entrance to the site, although the southern portion could be accessed from Castle View subject to an assessment of the A905/Castle View junction being carried out and the developer would be required to implement any necessary improvements. Pedestrian/cycle access should be maintained to the High St. This will be an important access route to the centre of Airth. An archaeological investigation may be required on part of the site. Proposal H.AIR03 is a further site for expansion which will require sensitive design. Appropriate developer contributions to community infrastructure, particularly education provision, and village enhancement will be required from the new sites, as will a proportion of affordable housing for H.AIR01 in accordance with Policy SC4. Phasing may have to take account of drainage and education capacity constraints.
- 15.15 **Housing - Proposals and Opportunities - Housing Land Audit Sites**

15.15.1	H.AIR01	Graham Terrace 1
	<b>Site Area:</b>	1.3 hectares
	<b>Capacity:</b>	30
	<b>Developer:</b>	Private
	<b>Status:</b>	Detailed Planning Permission
	<b>Comments:</b>	Village infill site. Detailed planning permission for 6 flats on front part of site. Possible planning gain contribution to woodland management and Conservation Area improvements.

15.16 **Housing - Proposals and Opportunities - Opportunities**

15.16.1	H.AIR02	Graham Terrace 2
	<b>Site Area:</b>	0.06 hectares
	<b>Capacity:</b>	3
	<b>Developer:</b>	Private
	<b>Status:</b>	Outline Planning Permission
	<b>Comments:</b>	Village infill site. Outline planning consent granted for residential development at former scout hall.

## 15.17 Housing - Proposals and Opportunities - New Allocations

15.17.1	<b>H.AIR03</b>	<b>Airth Castle South</b>
	<b>Site Area:</b>	0.8 hectares
	<b>Capacity:</b>	Approx 15 units
	<b>Developer:</b>	Private
	<b>Status:</b>	New Allocation
	<b>Comments:</b>	This site forms a rounding off of the southern boundary of the village, suitable for a sensitive development of high quality housing. Careful consideration required to minimise the impact of development on the setting of Airth Castle.
15.17.2	<b>H.AIR04</b>	<b>Castle View</b>
	<b>Site Area:</b>	11.1 hectares
	<b>Capacity:</b>	115
	<b>Status:</b>	New Allocation
	<b>Comments:</b>	The site provides an opportunity to maintain development momentum in the village. Appropriate developer contributions to community infrastructure, particularly education provision, and village enhancement will be required, as will a proportion of affordable housing in accordance with Policy SC4. A development brief and masterplan will be required to minimise potential adverse impacts on the landscape. This should include a detailed landscape and visual assessment, with appropriate mitigation measures.

### Recreation and Community Facilities

- 15.18 The Health Board identified funding for a Health Centre and this has now been completed on the former open space at Miller Place. Play equipment on the site was upgraded and relocated as a condition of the development.
- 15.19 The village is in the catchment area for Airth Primary School which has been refurbished and extended to make it a single stream school. Additional development will raise capacity issues and developer contributions will be required to fund education provision in the area.
- 15.20 Current provision for passive and active open space is adequate for the existing population. However, future housebuilding would result in provision falling below the Council standard and contributions will be required to open space in accordance with Policy SC13. Existing open space will be safeguarded.

## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

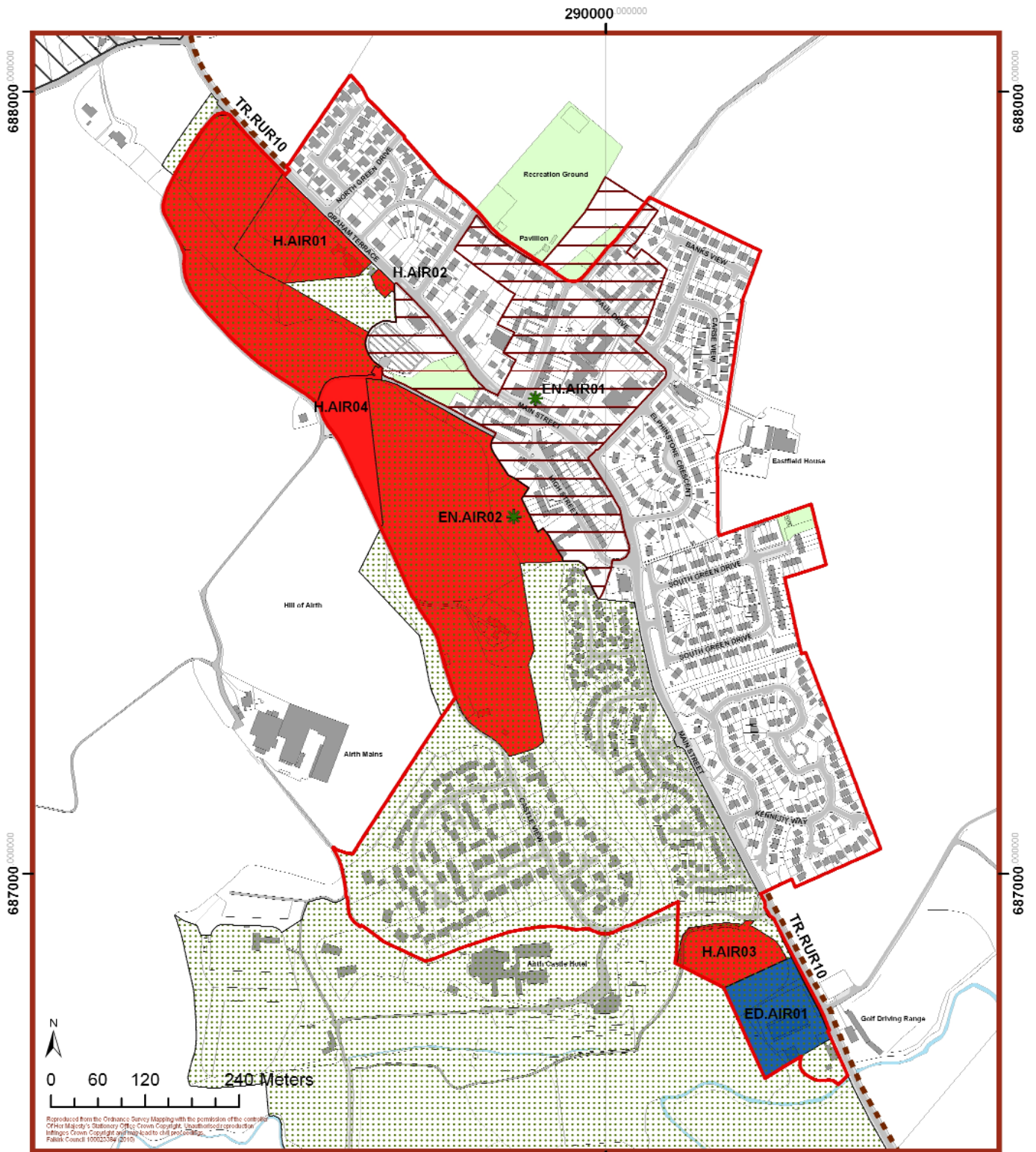
- 15.21 There are a number of retail units in the village which provide basic services for local users. Policy EP8 supports the retention of these uses in the village. The redevelopment of vacant units and sites will be supported.
- 15.22 Airth has a contribution to make to tourism in the Council area. The presence of Airth Castle Hotel, the proximity of Dunmore Pineapple and the opportunities at Dunmore Estate, and the village's history and heritage offer potential for further development. There is an opportunity for interpretation of Airth Conservation Area to encourage appreciation of this rich heritage.
- 15.23 The site allocated for business and industry in the previous local plan has not been developed. It is no longer considered appropriate to safeguard this site for business use. An alternative site to the south of Airth is considered a more acceptable location for business use, lessening traffic through the village and being closer to the Kincardine and Clackmannanshire Bridges. A small part of the site is currently used for storage and distribution.

### 15.24 Economic Development - Proposals and Opportunities

15.24.1	ED.AIR01	Main Street
	<b>Opportunity:</b>	Business/industrial use (class 4/6)
	<b>Site Area:</b>	1.2 hectares
	<b>Agency:</b>	Private
	<b>Comments:</b>	Planning application submitted for additional work units. The site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order and will require a landscape plan and additional boundary planting. Proposals should be of a scale as to minimise impact on the setting of Airth Castle.

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

- 15.25 Construction work was completed in 2008 on a new bridge over the Forth adjacent to the existing Kincardine Bridge to alleviate traffic congestion. This includes the grade separation of the Bowtrees roundabout, the upgrading of the A876 between here and the bridges to dual carriageway and a new roundabout at Higgsneuk.
- 15.26 Traffic calming has been carried out on the Main Street and additional work may be required in association with further development in the village.
- 15.27 The Airth Community Path Network has been developed which links into the Forth Coastal Path. A further opportunity has been identified for the development of a cycleway alongside the A905 (TR.RUR10) which would assist local cycle/pedestrian journeys as well as contributing to strategic path links around the Forth Estuary.
- 15.28 Further investment in drainage infrastructure will be required to enable development proposals to be implemented. Airth Waste Water Treatment Works is programmed by Scottish Water for upgrading in 2010 but in the meantime developers may be asked to fund network studies to establish the extent of any necessary upgrading works for drainage infrastructure and to contribute towards the costs of any upgrading works identified.







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## Key

### Policies

-  Village Limit (EQ19)
-  Conservation Areas (EQ12)
-  Tree Preservation Order (EQ26)
-  Open Space (SC12)
-  Historic Gardens & Design Landscapes (EQ18)

### Proposals & Opportunities

-  Environment
-  Housing
-  Economic Development
-  Path Proposals