

<b>Issue 11</b>	<b>Airth Housing Sites</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	<u>Chapter 4 Settlement Statements</u> Rural North (pages 38–39) <u>Appendix 1 Site Schedule</u> Housing – Rural North - Airth (page a1-07) <u>Proposals Map 3</u> Rural North	<b>Reporter:</b>
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number):</b>		
Airth Castle Hotel Ltd (00523) County Homes (01251) Mr David Jarvis (01194) Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614) Airth Parish Community Council (00189) Scottish Government (Historic Scotland) (00643) George Russell Construction Ltd (00313)		
<b>Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:</b>	The allocation of specific sites for housing in Airth, as identified in the Rural North Settlement Statement, and detailed in Appendix 1.	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><b><u>Allocated Housing Site H54 – Airth Castle South, Airth</u></b></p> <p><b>Airth Castle Hotel Ltd (00523/2001/001):-</b> Objection is made to the site at Airth Castle South (H54). It will have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of Airth Castle Hotel, will impact on the setting of Category 'A' listed buildings and a scheduled ancient monument, will conflict with an existing TPO designation, will have adverse traffic and flood risk impacts, and would have potential economic repercussions for the hotel business at Airth Castle Hotel. The site's effectiveness is challenged since land needed to access the site is in Airth Castle Ltd's ownership. A Supporting Statement (RD11.2), objection letter from Historic Scotland (RD11.3) and Land Ownership Plan (RD11.4) have been submitted in support of the representation.</p> <p><b>County Homes (01251/2001/001):-</b> The site at Airth Castle South (H54) is supported, and the conclusion of a Section 75 for planning application F/2004/0178 for the site is awaited.</p> <p><b><u>Allocated Housing Site H55 – The Glebe, Airth</u></b></p> <p><b>Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614/2001/007):-</b> Objection is made to the site at the Glebe, Airth (H55). The site is not within the control of the developer and its effectiveness is questioned. It is potentially at risk from flooding from a nearby burn and there is potential encroachment into the coastal floodplain. Ogilvie's site</p>		

at Eastfield, Airth could be introduced as an alternative to site H55.

**Mr David Jarvis (01194/2001/001);** Objection is made to the site at the Glebe, Airth (H55). Depending on the type of development proposed, there may be privacy issues for neighbouring houses. Primary school capacity is also of concern. If part ownership or local authority housing is permitted, this will have a significant impact on property values in the area.

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/004):-** The site at the Glebe, Airth (H55) is supported subject to the housing being low rise and the affordable units being located sensitively.

**Scottish Government (Historic Scotland) (00643/2001/009):-** The intention to provide strong structure planting at site H55 is welcomed. Planting to the north and west of this site would mitigate any impacts on views from The Pineapple which is listed in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

#### **Non Allocated Site – Eastfield Airth (MIR Ref AIR/B/04)**

**Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614/2001/001):-** A site at Eastfield, Airth should be allocating for housing development. The site is effective and deliverable in the short term and would not involve the release of any protected land or designated areas. Development will not impact on Airth Castle. There are no physical or access constraints, and its development will improve the southern boundary of the village. The Reporter recommended that the site be allocated for residential purposes at the Falkirk Council Local Plan Inquiry (CD12, pages 281-285).

#### **Non Allocated Site – Airth Mains Farm (MIR Ref AIR/B/02)**

**George Russell Construction Ltd (00313/2002/001):-** A site at Airth Mains Farm, Airth (MIR Reference AIR/B/02) should be allocated for housing. There is a shortfall of sites identified in the rural area. The Rural North area, and Airth in particular, has a record of successful development. This site is suitable and effective. The primary school constraint is recognised and can be addressed through a financial contribution. A masterplan has been prepared showing a capacity of 300 houses. A 100 bed care facility and sports and recreational facilities would also be provided. A Masterplan (RD11.1) supports this representation.

#### **Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

##### **Allocated Housing Site H54 – Airth Castle South, Airth**

**Airth Castle Hotel Ltd (00523/2001/001):-** Delete Proposal H54 Airth Castle South.

##### **Allocated Housing Site H55 – The Glebe, Airth**

**Mr David Jarvis (01194/2001/001); Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614/2001/007):-** Delete Proposal H55 (The Glebe, Airth).

**Non Allocated Site – Eastfield Airth (MIR Ref AIR/B/04)**

**Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614/2001/001):-** Insert additional site at Eastfield Airth for housing.

**Non Allocated Site – Airth Mains Farm (MIR Ref AIR/B/02)**

**George Russell Construction Ltd (00313/2002/001):-** Insert additional site at Airth Mains Farm, Airth (MIR Ref AIR/B/02) for housing.

**Summary of responses (including reasons) by planning authority:**

As background to the Council's response on this issue, the general approach to the allocation of housing sites in the Rural North (which includes Airth) is outlined in Appendix 2 of Technical Paper 3 (Revised): Housing Requirements and Provision (CD22, pages 27-28). An update to the existing housing land supply figures in Figure 3.1 of the Proposed LDP, informed by the 2012/2013 Housing Land Audit, has also been undertaken (CD23).

**Allocated Housing Site H54 – Airth Castle South, Airth**

**Airth Castle Hotel Ltd (00523/2001/001):-** The Council considers that H54 (Airth Castle South) represents an appropriate site for residential development. It is allocated as a housing site in the current Local Plan for approximately 15 units (CD10, page 208, site H.AIR03), and is being carried over into the LDP. A larger site, for 25-30 houses, was considered at the previous Local Plan Inquiry (CD12, page 288). The Reporters recommended that this larger site be removed from the Local Plan. Subsequently, the Council decided instead to retain the site, but to reduce it in scale to only the northern part, with a reduced capacity, to minimise impact on the Category A listed Airth Castle and Old Airth Parish Church. The site is subject to a planning application for residential development which was originally submitted in 2004 (F/2004/0178). Following the conclusion of the Local Plan process in 2010, the boundary of the application was amended in line with the plan, and was subject to further consultation. The application now has a 'minded to grant' decision subject to the conclusion of legal agreement relating to education contributions at Airth Primary School and St Mungo's RC High School.

The extent of H54 is the same as the existing Local Plan site. It is a small site which is tucked behind the industrial area and will be nestled within the existing trees, essentially infilling the area adjacent to the A905 between the industrial estate and Castle View. It will not spread into the more exposed open carseland beneath Airth Castle. The potential impact on the setting of Airth Castle and Airth Old Church is therefore considered to be minimal, as is any impact on the amenity of the hotel. Historic Scotland have offered no objection to the substantially reduced site. This was made clear through their consultation response to planning application F/2004/0178 (CD93). This supersedes the Historic Scotland letter submitted by Airth Castle Hotel (RD \*\*) which responds to the previous larger scale site. It is therefore not relevant to the assessment of site H54 allocated in the Proposed LDP.

It is not accepted that H54 conflicts with the TPO designation. Whilst the site is

covered by a TPO, the trees are outwith the site boundary and will form a landscape setting for the housing site. The detailed design would need to take account of the trees and woodland surrounding the site. However there will be no direct tree felling required within the site boundary.

Transport and flood risk issues have been considered with through the planning application, and no major issues have arisen. The revised application boundary is outwith the 1:200 year flood envelope associated with the Pow Burn.

Airth Castle Hotel Ltd states that the effectiveness of the site is compromised by the fact the developer does not have ownership of the site access. This is new information which the Council was not previously aware of, and it is accepted that this could have an impact on the effectiveness of the site. However, whilst there are clearly issues to be resolved around access, that position may change within the life of the LDP. There is continued support for the allocation of this site by the proposed developer, County Homes.

For these reasons, the Council does not agree to modify the plan in response to this representation.

#### **Allocated Housing Site H55 – The Glebe, Airth**

**Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614/2001/007); Mr David Jarvis (01194/2001/001):-** The Council considers that H55 (The Glebe, Airth) represents an appropriate site for residential development. The site, has been subject to a site assessment (CD21, site ref AIR/B/03) and was included in the MIR as a preferred site.

In relation to concerns regarding potential house types and privacy issues, such concerns can be dealt at the detailed planning application stage. There is no reason why a layout cannot be achieved which will respect the privacy and amenity of adjacent residents.

In order to meet housing need and ensure mixed communities, the Council seeks a proportion of affordable housing from private housing sites. In the Rural North area, 25% of the site units are required to be affordable. This 25% affordable housing requirement applies to H55, but details of the type and tenure of the affordable housing will only be confirmed at the planning application stage. Perceived concerns over impact on house values from the introduction of particular forms of tenure are not a proper planning consideration.

Primary school capacity may require to be enhanced in Airth to accommodate existing commitments, however this will depend on the phasing of allocated sites coming forward (CD25, paragraph 6.25). Although this site may increase the risk of extended capacity being required in the short to medium term, the core capacity of the school is expected to be sufficient longer term. The site comments on the H55 in Appendix 1 (page a1-07) note that developer contributions will be required for catchment education capacity enhancements.

The Council consider that the site will be effective in the period 2014-2024. Ogilvie Homes question its effectiveness on the basis that the site is not within the control of the developer. Whilst there is no nominated developer at present, the site is in the ownership of a landowner (Church of Scotland Trustees) who wishes

to promote it for development. It therefore meets the ownership criteria for effectiveness set out in PAN 2/2010 which states that the site should be 'in the ownership or control of a party who can be expected to develop it or to release it for development' (CD07, paragraph 55).

The site does not have a history of flooding and its boundaries avoid the coastal floodplain (CD94). The final form of development will take account of assessment of flood risk from the nearby burn to the north and any risk of encroachment onto the coastal floodplain.

A site at Eastfield is being promoted as a straight replacement for site H55 by Ogilvie Homes. The Council does not support this view, and this site is preferred to the alternative of growth at the southern end of the village. The Glebe represents the northward expansion of the village along the A905, which matches the extension planned by the existing commitment to the west of the A905, thereby rounding off the northern edge of the village. The justification for not allocating Eastfield can be found below.

For these reasons, the Council does not agree to modify the plan in response to this representation.

#### **Non Allocated Site – Eastfield Airth (MIR Ref AIR/B/04)**

**Ogilvie Homes Ltd (00614/2001/001):-** The Council does not consider that the Eastfield site should be allocated for housing. The site was subject to site assessment (CD21, site ref AIR/B/04) and was identified in the MIR as a non-preferred site. A substantially larger site at Eastfield, was considered at the previous Falkirk Council Local Plan Inquiry in 2009 (CD12, page 281). This larger site, which wrapped around the eastern side of the village, was rejected for issues relating to size, landscape impact, its location within the coastal floodplain and the creation of appropriate village boundaries. However the Reporter recommended that the south-western most corner of the site be allocated for housing (the same site which is the subject of this representation). The Council, however, decided not to accept this recommendation and it remains unallocated, and outwith the Village Limit in the current Local Plan.

The Council's preferred locations for expansion in Airth are the committed sites of H52, H53 and H54, augmented by a new site at the Glebe (H55). These are considered to be the best locations for rounding off the village, and provide a substantial level of growth in the village for the initial period of the plan. The Eastfield site would constitute a significant further southward extension of the village along the east side of Main Street which would be unsympathetic to the character of the village, and the maintenance of a compact village form.

School capacity is a significant issue in Airth, in terms of both Airth Primary School and Larbert High School, so it is therefore considered desirable to limit any further growth of the village. The situation with regard to the primary school is outlined in the school capacity update (CD25, paragraph 6.25). The addition of this site, capable of accommodating 40 units, would further increase the likelihood of a permanent extension to the school being required. The situation at Larbert High School is that an extension to capacity will be created at the nearby Carronrange school to cope with existing severe capacity pressures, but that this

will not create sufficient new capacity for significant additional housing growth (CD25, paragraph 6.20).

For these reasons, the Council does not agree to modify the plan in response to this representation.

**Non Allocated Site – Airth Mains Farm (MIR Ref AIR/B/02)**

**George Russell Construction Ltd (00313/2002/001):-** The Council does not consider that the Airth Mains Farm site should be allocated for housing. The site was subject to site assessment (CD21, site ref AIR/B/02) and was identified in the MIR as a non-preferred site.

The Council's preferred locations for expansion in Airth are the committed sites of H52, H53 and H54, augmented by a new site at the Glebe (H55). These are considered to be the best locations for rounding off the village, and provide a substantial level of growth in the village for the initial period of the plan. They fit with the Council's strategy for the Rural North area of focusing development activity in Airth within the constraints of the available infrastructure.

The Airth Mains Farm site is very large, capable of accommodating approximately 300 housing units. It would represent a huge further expansion of a village to the west, which would be totally out of the scale with the existing village, and cannot be justified in terms of meeting housing land requirements.

The site is not favoured in landscape terms, as it lies above Airth on the highest point of an exposed escarpment above the village so would have a major visual impact on views from north-westerly and northerly directions. In terms of sustainability, the site has relatively poor access to transport and local services.

School capacity is a significant issue in Airth, in terms of both Airth Primary School and Larbert High School, so it is therefore considered desirable to limit any further growth of the village. Airth Primary School is subject to capacity pressures (CD25, paragraph 6.25), and since it is on a physically constrained site simply, it could not accommodate growth of this scale. A new school would be likely to be required, and it is unlikely that this could be funded by a development of just 300 units. The situation at Larbert High School is that an extension is planned to cope with severe capacity pressures, but that this will not create sufficient new capacity for significant additional housing growth (CD25, paragraph 6.20). George Russell Construction has indicated that any education constraints can be addressed through a financial contribution. However, given the scale of development, there are no practical and affordable solutions to the capacity issues which would arise.

There are likely to be a variety of other infrastructure issues with a development of this scale, not least the capacity of the local waste water treatment works.

For these reasons, the Council does not agree to modify the plan in response to this representation.

**Reporter's conclusions:**

<b>Reporter's recommendations:</b>