

<b>Issue 12</b>	<b>Other Rural North 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 - Torwood (page a1-08) <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 Parish Community Council (00189) Dalgrain Farming Partnership (01083) Mr James Scobie (00982) Mansell Construction Services Limited (00611) Mrs Sutherland (01234)		
<b>Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:</b>	The allocation of specific sites for housing in the Rural North area, with the exception of 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>Non Allocated Site – Dunmore Park (MIR Ref DUN/A/01)</u></b></p> <p><b>Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/002); Mrs Sutherland (01234/2002/002):-</b> Dunmore Park should be allocated for housing. Mrs Sutherland outlines that it has been a committed housing site by the Council for many years, and is the subject of an undetermined planning application which is 'minded to grant' subject to the conclusion of a Section 75 Agreement. This enabling proposal is linked to the restoration of Dunmore Park House (Category B Listed Building), so by its non allocation the future of the listed building is jeopardised.</p> <p><b><u>Non Allocated Site – Letham East (MIR Ref LET/B/01)</u></b></p> <p><b>Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/001):-</b> A site in Letham East (as per current Proposal of Application Notice) should be allocated for housing to prevent stagnation of the village and allow younger people to access housing in the village they were brought up in.</p> <p><b><u>Non Allocated Site – Newton Avenue, Skinflats (MIR Ref RUR/B/11)</u></b></p> <p><b>Dalgrain Farming Partnership (01083/2001/001):-</b> A site at Newton Avenue Skinflats should be allocated for housing, as there are no housing sites allocated in Skinflats in the plan period 2014-34. A new allocation would be sustainable, support the future well being of the village school and the economic viability of the</p>		

local businesses. No significant new road infrastructure is required.

**Non Allocated Site – South Alloa**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/003):-** The former Thermalite brownfield site in South Alloa should be utilised for development.

**Non Allocated Site – Glen Road, Torwood (MIR Ref TOR/B/04)**

**Mr James Scobie (00982/2001/001):-** Sites at Glen Road, Torwood (MIR reference TOR/B/04) should be allocated for housing. There is insufficient land for housing in the area. The site is effective, well located and will meet the need for executive housing and allow additional flexibility in the housing market. Infrastructure capacity for the development will be available in the short term. A Torwood Masterplan has been produced showing the sites in the context of wider development opportunities in Torwood (RD12.1) and a plan showing the division of the site into 12 plots (RD12.2).

**Non Allocated Site – East of A9, Torwood (MIR Ref TOR/B/05)**

**Mansell Construction Services Limited (00611/2001/001):-** A site to the east of the A9 at Torwood should be allocated for housing. There is insufficient land for housing in the area. The site will create a central core and improve the appearance of the village. It is an effective and deliverable site, with infrastructure capacity available in the short term. A Torwood Masterplan has been produced showing the sites in the context of wider development opportunities in Torwood (RD12.1). A location plan (RD12.5), indicative site layout (RD12.4) and letter from Mansell Homes (RD12.3) have also been submitted to support the representation.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

**Non Allocated Site – Dunmore Park (MIR Ref DUN/A/01)**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/002), Mrs Sutherland (01234/2002/002):-** Insert additional site at Dunmore Park for housing.

**Non Allocated Site – Letham East (MIR Ref LET/B/01)**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/001):-** Insert additional site at Letham East as a housing proposal.

**Non Allocated Site – Newton Avenue, Skinflats (MIR Ref RUR/B/11)**

**Dalgrain Farming Partnership (01083/2001/001):-** Insert additional site at Newton Avenue, Skinflats as a housing proposal.

**Non Allocated Site – South Alloa**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/003):-** Amend the plan to support development of the former Thermalite site at South Alloa.

**Non Allocated Site – Glen Road, Torwood (MIR Ref TOR/B/04)**

**Mr James Scobie (00982/2001/001):-** Insert additional site at Glen Road Torwood as a housing proposal.

**Non Allocated Site – East of A9, Torwood (MIR Ref TOR/B/05)**

**Mansell Construction Services Limited (00611/2001/001):-** Insert additional site east of the A9 as a housing proposal.

**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 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).

**Non Allocated Site – Dunmore Park (MIR Ref DUN/A/01)**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/002):-** Dunmore Park is identified as a housing opportunity in the current Local Plan (CD10, page 199, site H.RUR01). This reflected a long-standing proposal to restore the Category B listed Dunmore Park House with associated enabling housing development. Outline planning permission for the conversion of Dunmore Park to a hotel with conference and leisure facilities, golf course and associated housing development was first granted in the 1990s and was renewed on successive occasions until expiring in 2006. A new application for the restoration of Dunmore Park to 15 dwellings, conversion of stables to form 10 dwellings, and the erection of 45 additional houses was submitted in November 2006 (ref 06/1099/FUL). It had a 'minded to grant' decision in 2008, subject to a legal agreement relating to a financial contribution towards education improvements in the catchment area. The Section 75 agreement has never been signed, and the original developer no longer has an interest in the site.

When the Council came to review the general effectiveness of its housing land supply after the publication of the MIR, Dunmore Park was one of the sites which was considered to have little of prospect of implementation, and was therefore not included in the Proposed LDP. The proposal clearly has serious viability issues, as evidenced by its history of unimplemented consents, the lack of progress with the current application, and the lack of developer interest.

Although the Council considers that Dunmore Park should not be identified as a proposal in the LDP, the plan has introduced a revised Housing in the Countryside policy (CG03) which allows for limited enabling development to secure the restoration of historic buildings or structures (page 54). Supplementary Guidance (SG01) will give further supporting information and explanation to aid the interpretation of CG03. Therefore whilst Dunmore Park does not have a specific housing allocation in the LDP, the planning policy framework will provide support and guidance for any revised proposals for the listed building which may come forward in the future.

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

**Non Allocated Site – Letham East (MIR Ref LET/B/01)**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/001):-** The Council does not consider that the site at Letham East should be allocated for housing.

The issue of whether the small conservation village of Letham should expand was considered through the Falkirk Council Local Plan. In the deposit draft of the FCLP, there was no support for expansion of the village. However, objections seeking the allocation of two separate sites, at Letham West and Letham East were submitted, and the Council made a pre-inquiry change to the plan, allocating Letham West as its preferred site. Following the Inquiry, the Reporters endorsed Letham West, but with a reduced site area. Letham East was rejected (CD12, pages 296-302). Having considered the Reporters' recommendations, the Council decided that there was a need for further consideration of the most appropriate location for expansion of the village. Accordingly, a non site specific allocation was made in the FCLP, with the site to be determined through a subsequent SPG.

A draft SPG was issued in 2011 (CD95) and consultation with residents on possible sites was carried out. However, the exercise proved inconclusive in terms of the deliverability of sites, and community consensus and support. Given the difficulties in finding a satisfactory site, it was decided to reconsider the issue of the principle of growth through the LDP.

The proposed LDP has reverted to the position that growth should not be promoted in Letham. It is considered that no satisfactory site can be found which is sympathetic to the existing form of the village.

A Proposal of Application Notice for residential development on the East Letham site was submitted in 2011, but has not been taken forward to the application stage. No representation from a landowner or developer has been received to the non-inclusion of the site in the proposed LDP. It is therefore assumed that there is no current interest in developing the site.

The site at Letham East would represent a prominent extension of the village into the countryside. The development would not be well integrated with the village, but would be set apart on the east side of the road which runs past it. The carse landscape in this location has a very open aspect and there are no topographic or natural features that could reduce the impact of any development.

In addition, there is a lack of services locally in the village. Services in nearby Airth which are used by residents, such as the primary school, are subject to capacity issues.

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

**Non Allocated Site – Newton Avenue, Skinflats**

**Dalgrain Farming Partnership (01083/2001/001):-** The Council does not consider that the site at Newton Avenue, Skinflats should be allocated for housing. A slightly larger site in this location was considered at the Falkirk Council Local Plan Inquiry in 2009, and rejected by the Reporters (CD12, page 303).

The Council's strategy for housing in the Rural North area concentrates on growth in Airth, since it has the most comprehensive range of services. The village of Skinflats is not considered appropriate for significant expansion, largely because it is constrained by the coastal floodplain and by the green belt to the west, and because it has a limited range of community services.

A significant proportion of the site (approximately 30%), including its frontage with Newton Avenue, falls within the 1:200 year coastal flooding envelope as shown on the SEPA Indicative Flood Risk Map (CD96). Developing a greenfield site lying partly within the functional floodplain of the Forth Estuary would clearly be contrary to the SPP (CD01, paragraph 203).

The proposed LDP has amended the boundary of the green belt in this part of the Rural North area, which means the site no longer lies within the green belt. In the current Local Plan, the green belt extends eastwards to the Forth Estuary; in the proposed LDP it extends only as far as the A905, and the western edge of the village. This change is explained in Technical Report 6 (CD27, paragraph 10.3) and was primarily on the basis that the area to the east of the A905 makes no contribution to the primary aims of the green belt, and is any case largely undevelopable because of the coastal floodplain and its proximity to the Firth of Forth SPA. The purpose is not to indicate the area's future potential for development.

Notwithstanding the fact that it is not in the green belt, the site represents a significant extension of the village into the countryside. It is not a logical rounding off of the settlement form, and would be fairly exposed and visible in the flat carse landscape.

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

### **Non Allocated Site – Themalite Site, South Alloa**

**Airth Parish Community Council (00189/2001/003):-** Airth Parish Community Council's support for development of the former Thermalite site at South Alloa is consistent with the Council's approach in the proposed LDP.

The site is currently a vacant, brownfield site, but is not subject to any current development interest that the Council is aware of. The Council would support, in principle, proposals for its redevelopment. This is reflected in the fact that the site is included within the Village Limit of South Alloa, allowing appropriate alternative uses to come forward, subject to detailed policy considerations. The site does not have a specific land use designation in the proposed LDP. This does not constrain future development, but allows flexibility as to future options.

South Alloa is a small settlement with a number of constraints, including flood risk

and lack of mains sewer connection. Development proposals coming forward would need to be assessed carefully against the relevant policies contained in the proposed LDP.

For these reasons, the Council considered that its treatment of the site in the proposed LDP is appropriate, and does not agree to modify the plan in response to this representation.

#### **Non Allocated Site – Glen Road, Torwood (MIR Ref TOR/B/04)**

**Mr James Scobie (00982/2001/001):-** The Council does not consider that the two sites at Glen Road, Torwood (1A and 1B on the Masterplan accompanying the representation) should be allocated for housing. The site was subject to site assessment (CD21, site ref. TOR/B/04) and was identified in the MIR as a non-preferred site.

The Council's strategy for housing growth in the Rural North area primarily concentrates on Airth since it has the most comprehensive range of services. Limited growth is also supported at Torwood with two small allocations - H56 (Former Torwood School) and H57 (McLaren Park).

Torwood is not a suitable location for further significant growth in the Rural North area, and the allocated sites at H56 and H57, providing scope for some 25 units, are considered to provide ample opportunity for further housing in this small community. There are no local community services within the village, so it is not considered a sustainable location to promote further housing growth. The closest community facilities are located in Larbert over 2 km away. Any new housing sites in the Rural North area would contribute to an already pressurised situation at catchment schools at both primary and secondary level (CD25). Whilst an upgrade to Torwood Waste Water Treatment Works is being procured by Scottish Water to provide extra capacity by 2015, it is understood that this work will only increase capacity to cope with the two existing committed sites in the village (see also Issue 22, proposal INF16).

In landscape terms, both sites have a strong woodland character, which form part of the wider woodland setting of Torwood. This woodland character would be eroded by the proposed developments. The two sites are considered to be significantly larger than could be reasonably described as infill opportunities.

The southern site (1B) has been subject to previous planning applications for housing. All previous applications have been refused by the Council. One of these refusals was subject to an appeal in 2010 (CD97). In deciding to dismiss the appeal, the Reporter was not persuaded that the site could be described as infill development, and considered its development would significantly alter the woodland character and its contribution to the setting of Torwood.

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

#### **Non Allocated Site – East of A9, Torwood (MIR Ref TOR/B/05)**

**Mansell Construction Services Limited (00611/2001/001):-** The Council does

not consider that the site east of the A9, Torwood should be allocated for housing. The site was subject to site assessment (CD21, site ref. TOR/B/05) and was identified in the MIR as a non-preferred site.

The Council's strategy for housing growth in the Rural North area primarily concentrates on Airth since it has the most comprehensive range of services. Limited growth is also supported at Torwood with two small allocations - H56 (Former Torwood School) and H57 (McLaren Park).

Torwood is not a suitable location for further significant growth in the Rural North area, and the allocated sites at H56 and H57, providing scope for some 25 units, are considered to provide ample opportunity for further housing in this small community. There are no local community services within the village, so it is not considered a sustainable location to promote further housing growth. The closest community facilities are located in Larbert over 2 km away. Any new housing sites in the Rural North area would contribute to an already pressurised situation at catchment schools at both primary and secondary level (CD25). Whilst an upgrade to Torwood Waste Water Treatment Works is being procured by Scottish Water to provide extra capacity by 2015, until this is undertaken there are severe limitations in sewerage infrastructure capacity.

In landscape terms, the proposed site is not a natural extension to the village of Torwood as it is bisected by the busy A9. The proposed site is predominately flat grazing land, so if developed would have a major landscape impact from the west. The site is located to the east of the A9 which is subject to the national speed limit, and in close proximity to the M876 accesses, it is therefore likely that any development of this site will have implications for the road network. A Transport Assessment would be required to investigate the impact of this development. Flood risk is also a potential issue at this site, as there are existing watercourses within and in close proximity to the site. A Flood Risk Assessment would therefore be required.

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

**Reporter's conclusions:**

--

**Reporter's recommendations:**

--