

<b>Issue 16</b>	<b>Falkirk Economic Development Sites</b>	
<b>Development plan reference:</b>	<u>Chapter 4 Settlement Statements</u> Falkirk (pages 30 - 31) <u>Appendix 1 Site Schedule</u> Economic Development – Falkirk (page a1-15,16,19) Green Network (page a1-24) <u>Proposals Map 2</u> Falkirk, Larbert & Stenhousemuir	<b>Reporter:</b>
<b>Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number):</b>		
Scottish Canals (00516) Scottish Government (Historic Scotland) (00643) Network Rail (00493) Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council (00440)		
<b>Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:</b>	The allocation of specific sites for business use in Falkirk, as identified in the Falkirk Settlement Statement, and detailed in Appendix 1.	
<b>Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):</b>		
<p><b><u>Allocated Economic Development Site ED03 – Falkirk Gateway</u></b></p> <p><b>Scottish Canals (00516/2001/006):-</b> The Falkirk Gateway site (Proposal ED03) should be developed taking account of its canal-side setting and should provide a contribution towards canal-related improvements and/or facilities and utilise the opportunity for surface water to drain into the canal if appropriate.</p> <p><b><u>Allocated Economic Development Site ED08 – Rosebank Distillery, Falkirk</u></b></p> <p><b>Scottish Canals (00516/2001/005):-</b> Proposal ED08 (Rosebank Distillery) should be considered as a mixed use opportunity. Whilst Scottish Canals are currently progressing conversion proposals for the site which would tie in with the uses indicated in the LDP, other uses may have to be considered if the scheme does not materialise.</p> <p><b><u>Allocated Economic Development Site ED26 – Lochlands Industrial Estate</u></b></p> <p><b>Scottish Government (Historic Scotland) (00643/2001/10):-</b> Objection is made to the allocation of site ED26 (Lochlands Industrial Estate) for development. It is located within a scheduled monument and development here would have the potential for a direct adverse impact on the scheduled Lochlands Roman camps. In Historic Scotland's view, this would be contrary to the Scottish Government's policy for the historic environment. Historic Scotland provided evidence to the Falkirk Council Local Plan Inquiry against the allocation of this land for industrial use (RD16.1-16.7). The Reporter's recommendation to exclude this site from the</p>		

plan was accepted. The LDP or the SEA Environmental Report does not give a clear indication of any changes since the existing Local Plan was adopted in 2010 which would justify inclusion of this site. There is no clear basis to demonstrate its inclusion as a local business site outweighs national policy for the historic environment.

**Network Rail (00493/2001/001):-** Network Rail is concerned that the site ED26 can be accessed at the north end of Lochlands Loan where the road passes under Larbert Viaduct round a tight bend. Network Rail consider that the risk of bridge strike from heavy goods vehicles is a considerable constraint on the development of the site as it could affect the safe operation of the railway. Network Rail suggest that reference to the need to mitigate against bridge strike is included in Appendix A Site Schedule and in the Action Plan.

**Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council (00440/2001/015):-** Consideration should be given as to what effect the proposed extension to Lochlands Industrial Estate (ED26) may have on the Larbert area.

**Non Allocated Site – Falkirk Wheel (MIR Ref FAL/A/22)**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/001):-** The Falkirk Wheel site, although identified as a Tourism Node in the Spatial Strategy, should be recognised in the LDP as a opportunity for further expansion of activities. It should have a large blue star on the Proposals Map to recognise this, and reference should be made to this site being a part of the Falkirk Canal Corridor, and linked to Proposal M06 (Portdownie).

**Green Network Proposal GN09 - Helix**

**Scottish Canals (00516/201/002):-** The Helix project should be recognised in the LDP as a future leisure/tourism opportunity. It should have a large blue star on the Proposals Map to recognise this, and reference should be made to the site being a part of the Falkirk Canal Corridor.

**Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

**Allocated Economic Development Site ED03 – Falkirk Gateway**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/006):-** Amend site comments associated with Proposal ED03 (Falkirk Gateway) to make reference to the scope for developer contributions to canal improvements and surface water discharge into the canal if appropriate. Make refernce to site being part of

**Allocated Economic Development Site ED08 – Rosebank Distillery, Falkirk**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/005):-** Amend Proposal ED08 (Rosebank Distillery) from an economic development proposal to a mixed use proposal.

**Allocated Economic Development Site ED26 – Lochlands Industrial Estate**

**Scottish Government (Historic Scotland) (00643/2001/010):-** Delete Proposal ED26 (Lochlands Industrial Estate).

**Network Rail (00493/2001/001):-** Amend proposal ED26 by supplementing site requirements to include mitigation against bridge strike.

**Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council (00440/2001/015):-** Amend ED26 Lochlands Industrial Estate to reflect any potential impact on the Larbert area.

**Non Allocated Site – Falkirk Wheel (MIR Ref FAL/A/22)**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/001):-** Insert the Falkirk Wheel as an economic development opportunity, denoted by a star, and include this as part of the Falkirk Canal Corridor SGA, with reference to the linkage to Proposal M06 (Portdownie).

**Green Network Proposal GN09 - Helix**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/002):-** Insert the Helix as an economic development opportunity, denoted by a star, and include this as part of the Falkirk Canal Corridor SGA.

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

**Allocated Economic Development Site ED03 – Falkirk Gateway**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/006):-** The Falkirk Gateway site bounds the Forth & Clyde Canal at its northern end, and the Council recognises that the masterplan for the Gateway will need to address opportunities for enhancement of, and linkages to, the canal. The previous masterplan for the Falkirk Gateway, prepared by MacDonald Estates to support an outline planning application for the site, included a new marina basin with associated canalside development. This was encouraged and supported by the Council. However, the development proposal did not proceed.

The Council still considers it important that the Falkirk Gateway site addresses the development and design opportunities presented by the canal, as required by LDP Policy D14 (Canals, page 68). This would be an essential component of the masterplan. However, any contributions to canal infrastructure, particularly the creation of waterspace, will have to be tempered by financial realism, bearing in mind the wider development costs of developing the Gateway. If secured through a planning obligation, any contributions would have to comply with the terms of Circular 03/2012 (CD06). In terms of utilising the canal as a surface water outlet, this is not something the LDP could reasonably insist upon.

In the light of the above, if the Reporter is minded to recommend that the plan be amended to make reference to the need to take account of the canal in the masterplanning of the Falkirk Gateway, the Council would not take issue with this. However, with regard to references to financial contributions or insistence on using the canal as a surface water outlet, the Council does not agree to modify the plan in response to these elements of the representation.

**Allocated Economic Development Site ED08 – Rosebank Distillery, Falkirk**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/005):-** The site of the former Rosebank Distillery was originally identified in the Falkirk Local Plan in 2000, and a planning brief was approved for the site in 2001 (CD101). The site was a mixed use site, with housing permitted as part of the mix. However, there was a strong emphasis on the economic development and tourism potential of the site, given its strategic location on the canal and on the main road into Falkirk from the west. The housing element of the site was subsequently built out in the form of 72 flats on the north eastern part of the site. The priority for the remaining area, comprising the B-listed former distillery buildings, is to generate economic activity, and any further housing element is likely to dilute this. The conversion of the distillery buildings for residential use may, in any case, be difficult without very substantial interventions to the external fabric, thus compromising their character.

For this reason, the site is included in the Proposed LDP as an economic development site, with the specified uses being business/leisure/ tourism. The current proposal by Arran Breweries for the conversion and re-use of the buildings is consistent with this. The Council therefore does not agree to modify the plan in response to the representation.

#### **Allocated Economic Development Site ED26 – Lochlands Industrial Estate**

**Scottish Government (Historic Scotland) (00643/2001/010):-** The Council considers that site ED26 (Lochlands Industrial Estate) represents an appropriate new opportunity for business development, as an extension to the existing industrial estate. It is acknowledged that the site lies within a scheduled ancient monument, and is opposed by Historic Scotland. The site is currently within the green belt, and the intention is that the green belt boundary would be adjusted to remove it from the green belt. It is also acknowledged that the site was previously opposed by the Council at the Falkirk Council Local Plan Inquiry in 2009, a stance which was upheld by the Reporter (CD12 pp180 – 181).

The site was subject to a representation by the owner at the pre-MIR stage of the LDP. It was included as a preferred site within the MIR. The owners' intention is understood to be to build small workshop units on the site. Lochlands Industrial Estate is a well located, successful and well occupied business location, and further provision here would bring local economic benefits which the Council now considers, in this instance, would outweigh any detriment to the historic environment. A full archaeological assessment of the site would be carried out, and development would be designed to avoid those areas of the site most likely to have significant intact archaeology. Where development was permitted, archaeological excavation and recording would be undertaken, covered by appropriate conditions. The Council therefore does not agree to modify the plan in response to the representation.

**Network Rail (00493/2001/001):-** The site, in common with the existing industrial estate, can be accessed from either end of Lochlands Loan. The northern end involves passing through the viaduct and under the railway line. Considering the scale of industrial uses already present at Lochlands, and the relatively small increase in additional traffic arising from the new site, the increased risk of bridge strike is commensurately small, and does not merit specific mention of the issue in the site comments. The Council therefore does not agree to modify the plan in response to the representation.

**Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council**

**(00440/2001/015):-** The development of site ED26 is unlikely to have any significant effects on the community of Larbert. Visual impacts arising from the proposal will be subject to mitigation through an appropriate planting scheme.

**Non Allocated Site – Falkirk Wheel (MIR Ref FAL/A/22)**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/001):-** The Falkirk Wheel site is currently allocated as an economic development opportunity for leisure, tourism and business in the Falkirk Council Local Plan (CD10, Opportunity ED.FAL13, page 148). The area of the opportunity extends to 18 hectares, covering the existing facilities at the Wheel, as well as substantial areas of woodland and grassland which frame the developed areas of the attraction. The site was indicated as a committed site in the MIR.

Scottish Canals has not indicated that it has any plans for further major development in the wider area of ED.FAL13. The visitor attraction has been expanded in an incremental way since its opening in 2001, with an extension to the visitor centre, a facilities building and play areas for children. This has all been located in a fairly tight area around the basin. The future focus for significant new canal related development is to the west at Portdownie (site M06). In the absence of any clear view on the nature or extent of further development at the Wheel, it is no longer identified as a specific development proposal in the Proposed Plan. It is, nonetheless, identified as a key tourism node in the Spatial Strategy (Figure 3.2 and Map 3.4, pages 17-18). Priority is given in Policy BUS01(3) (page 15) to the development of tourism proposals which support the role of such nodes. This, combined with the fact that the Falkirk Wheel site is within the Urban Limit, provides a supportive context for any further proposals which may come forward over the period of the plan.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council recognises the critical importance of the Wheel to the growing tourism industry in the area, and the need to maintain its vitality and viability. Highlighting the potential for future enhancement through a symbolic proposal as suggested by Scottish Canals could have some merit. Therefore if the Reporter is minded to recommend that the plan be amended to take account of this representation, the Council would not take issue with this.

The representation also seeks reference to the Falkirk Wheel as being part of the Falkirk Canal Corridor Strategic Growth Area. The Strategic Growth Areas specifically relate to residential growth, and so it would not be appropriate to include the Falkirk Wheel as part of the SGA. The Wheel's importance as a key part of the canal network is captured in the Business section of the Spatial Strategy, as noted above.

**Green Network Proposal GN09 - Helix**

**Scottish Canals (00516/2001/002):-** The Helix project is a major lottery funded project to transform the landscape between Falkirk and Grangemouth, with the major elements being the creation of the Helix Park, a new canal hub featuring Kelpie structures, a new stretch of canal facilitating better access to the Forth and Clyde Canal from the River Forth, and a network of new path routes (CD102).

These principal elements will be completed by early 2014. The Helix will be a further major tourism attraction for the area.

The Council recognises that there will be continuing opportunities to develop the Helix over the period of the LDP. It has chosen to express this within the Proposed LDP as green network Proposal GN09, which extends across the entire length of the Helix from Langlees in the north west to Polmont in the south east (Proposals Maps 2 and 5). The focus is on further landscape enhancement and path improvements (Appendix 1, page a1-24). The Helix, along with the adjacent Falkirk Gateway, is also identified as a key tourism node in the Spatial Strategy (Figure 3.2 and Map 3.4, pages 17-18). Priority is given in Policy BUS01(3) (page 15) to the development of tourism proposals which support the role of such nodes. This provides a supportive context for any further proposals which may come forward over the period of the plan, although it should be noted that the Helix is within the green belt, and proposals would have to comply with green belt policy. The Council's preferred location for further significant tourism development in the vicinity (hotels etc) would be at the Falkirk Gateway site (Proposal ED03).

The Council considers that Proposal GN09 and Policy BUS01 provide appropriate context and support for future opportunities, and is preferable to the identification of a specific economic development proposal, implying significant additional built development.

The representation also seeks reference to the Helix as being part of the Falkirk Canal Corridor Strategic Growth Area. The Strategic Growth Areas specifically relate to residential growth, and so it would not be appropriate to include the Helix as part of the SGA. The Helix's importance as a key part of the canal network and is captured in the Business section of the Spatial Strategy, as noted above.

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

**Reporter's conclusions:**

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**Reporter's recommendations:**

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