



Agenda Item 10

**REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER MANUEL
BRICKWORKS SITE - MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
COMPRISING APPROXIMATELY 400 RESIDENTIAL
DWELLINGS, ASSOCIATED LOCAL RETAILING
AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES (CLASSES 1, 2
AND 3) AND APPROXIMATELY 29,000M2 TOTAL
GROSS AREA OF COMMERCIAL UNITS (10%
CLASS 4 : BUSINESS & 90% CLASS 6 : STORAGE/
DISTRIBUTION) AT LAND TO THE EAST OF
ALMONDHALL FARM, FALKIRK FOR CWC GROUP
- P/17/0792/PPP**

FALKIRK COUNCIL

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EAST OF ALMONDHALL FARM, FALKIRK FOR CWC
GROUP - P/17/0792/PPP

Meeting: PLANNING COMMITTEE
Date: 28 August 2019
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Local Members: Ward - Upper Braes

Councillor Gordon Hughes
Councillor James Kerr
Councillor John McLuckie

Community Council: No Community Council

Case Officer: Brent Vivian (Senior Planning Officer), Ext. 4935

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1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL / SITE LOCATION

- 1.1 The application is for a major development and seeks planning permission in principle for a mix of residential and commercial uses. The indicative breakdown is:-
- 400 dwellinghouses;
 - 29,000m² total gross area of business/employment (10% Class 3 and 90% Class 6); and
 - Local retailing and community facilities.
- 1.2 The application site extends to 30.24 hectares and consists of the former Steins Brickworks site to the west of Whitecross Village.

1.3 The following information has been submitted in support of the application:

- Design and Access Statement;
- Pre-Application Consultation Report;
- Indicative Masterplan drawings;
- Planning Supporting Statement;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Ecology and Biodiversity Report;
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Report;
- Transport Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Drainage Assessment Report;
- Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report;
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment;
- Archaeological Desk Based assessment;
- Noise Impact Assessment;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- PADHI Appraisal Report;
- Potential Improvements to Haining Road Plan; and
- Myrehead Road Design Option Plan.

1.4 The Pre-Application Consultation Report records the following:-

- The public event took the form of an exhibition which was held between 1pm and 8pm at the Power Station, Station Road, Whitecross on 8 July 2017;
- The event was attended by 41 members of the public;
- A total of 20 written comments were received;
- The proposals overall were well received. The main concerns were access and the suitability of the existing roads and nearby bridge over the railway, as well as capacity at the existing primary school;
- Positives mentioned were the provision of new housing and employment opportunities, which would provide long needed regeneration of the area. The proposals could also be the stimulus for further future investment such as local facilities within the area.

1.5 In addition, the applicant has proposed the following conditions to attach to any grant of planning permission in principle: -

- *Prior to occupation of the first house an active travel route to Whitecross Primary School is to be provided along Haining Road. The details of the active route to be submitted to and approved by Falkirk Council; and*
- *Prior to the construction of the 200th house, a detailed design of improvements to the carriageway and footway at Myrehead Road to be agreed with Falkirk Council and implemented.*

- 1.6 These proposed conditions relate to major infrastructure works which are considered necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. In these circumstances it is considered that a 'reasonable prospect of fulfilment' is an important factor to consider. Due to physical restrictions on Haining and Myrehead Roads, and the nature of the required works, third party land would be required. However, the necessary land has not been included within the application site, a detailed scheme for the works has not been submitted, and it is not known whether the applicant would be able to secure the land to implement the works (see also paragraphs 4.1, 4.2, 7a.23 and 7a.28 of this report).
- 1.7 As things stand at present, it is considered that there is a reasonable prospect that any grant of planning permission contingent upon these conditions would not, in effect, be able to be implemented or the development would stall before the 200th unit and without the provision of a suitable primary access to serve the proposed development.
- 1.8 More recently, the applicant has submitted drawings showing improvement works to Haining Road and Myrehead Road. However, the Council's Transport Planning and Roads Development Units have advised that these drawings do not meet their requirements for use of Myrehead Road as the main access to the site and for the provision of a suitable pedestrian and cycle route between the site and the existing village, including the primary school.

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The application has been called in by Councillor James Kerr and Provost William Buchanan for the following reasons: -
- To allow the Planning Committee to consider matters relating to the development plan allocation, masterplanning and impacts on infrastructure.
 - To allow the Planning Committee to give consideration and scrutiny in relation to the development plan allocation, policies and planning history.

3. SITE HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning application P/10/0188/PPP for residential and mixed use phased development for the Whitecross SIRR, including up to 1,500 residential units, community and enterprise facilities, transport and environmental infrastructure and employment space was approved as a minded to grant decision on 26 April 2011, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of a Section 75 Planning Obligation. The application was refused on 2 November 2015 owing to the Section 75 Planning Obligation not have been satisfactorily concluded within a reasonable timescale.
- 3.2 Planning application P/14/0360/FUL for erection of 200 residential units and associated roads, parking, open spaces, footpaths and SUDS was withdrawn on 13 July 2016.

- 3.3 Proposal of Application Notice PRE/2017/0007/PAN was received on 12 April 2017 for residential, commercial and industrial development. The Notice set out the proposals for community consultation and a Pre-Application Consultation Report accompanies this application (see paragraph 1.4).
- 3.4 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request PRE/2017/0028/SCREEN was received on 29 November 2017. The screening opinion was that an environmental impact assessment is not required and the potential impacts of the proposed development could be the subject of targeted assessments as required.
- 3.5 Planning application P/17/0797/PPP for development of land to the north of Crownerland Farm, Whitecross, for residential use and associated infrastructure was approved on 21 November 2018 as a Minded to Grant decision subject to the satisfactory conclusion of a Section 75 Planning Obligation. The planning obligation has not yet been concluded.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The Roads Development Unit have noted that current Scottish Government policy in terms of housing development is 'Designing Streets'. The Council complies with this policy and have adopted the 'National Roads Development Guide' (NRDG) with the 'Falkirk Council Addendum' as the standards they would expect to see in all new roads for housing and industrial/commercial development. Overarching this are the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), the Roads (Scotland) Act, 1984, the Security for Private Roadworks (Scotland) Regulations 1985 which all impact on all new roads and mitigation works on access roads to housing and industrial areas. These guidelines and legislation require the Council as the local roads authority to ensure that roads are safe for all road users.
- 4.2 The Roads Development Unit have advised that the scale and nature of the proposed development would raise road safety and connectivity issues if the existing rural road infrastructure was to be relied upon. It is understood that the applicant is unable to provide a new access to the A801 and, to date, nothing has been provided in design terms to give any comfort that a suitable access to the A803 via Myrehead Road is attainable. Access via Myrehead Road would require an upgrade to DMRB standards with direct access to the development, over a new full width railway crossing with an appropriate junction at the A803. In addition, the provision of an active travel route to link the site to the existing village is required but is constrained by physical restrictions on Haining Road and a need to acquire adjoining land to construct the necessary footpaths. No issues in principle have been identified with the internal street road design and layout as shown on the indicative masterplan.
- 4.3 The Roads Development Unit have noted that the applicant has considered two options for dealing with surface water discharge for the proposed development. While both options have the potential to increase flood risk, the option of continuing to use an existing off-site culvert in its current dilapidated condition to convey water to the Manuel Burn brings with it a number of potential issues that would not arise under the option of removing connection to the existing culvert and relying on new infrastructure to convey the surface water to the burn.

- 4.4 The Environmental Protection Unit are satisfied that an adequate preliminary contaminated land risk assessment has been carried out. Additional information, for example, a Phase 2 intrusive site investigation, including gas monitoring and a revised Conceptual Site Model, would be required. The methodology used in the noise impact assessment is broadly acceptable. A more detailed noise impact assessment would be required at detailed planning stage. The submitted air quality assessment is acceptable. The proposed mitigation measures include a Dust Management Plan and Construction Method Statement.
- 4.5 The Transport Planning Unit have reviewed the submitted transport assessment and supporting information. The traffic flows, trip generation and trip distribution applied in the traffic modelling are considered to be acceptable and it is noted that the base flows produced by the Council have been used to assess the operation of the relevant junctions. It is noted that the modelling of the traffic signals on Myrehead Road at the railway bridge does not take account of the two private accesses on either side of Myrehead Road which are both signal controlled as part of the junction. These accesses would result in additional phases which could cause the signals to operate over capacity. In addition, the modelling of the Myrehead Road/A803 junction indicates that this junction would not operate at capacity all of the time. As a result, some improvements at the junction would be required. The concerns regarding access and connectivity highlighted above by the Roads Development Unit are supported. The applicant's modelling does not take into account concerns that Myrehead Road in its present form is not suitable as a primary access to the proposed development. A financial contribution would be required to fund diversion of the existing local bus service into the site. The upgrade works to Myrehead Road should include suitable pedestrian/ cycle facilities. A travel plan framework would be required for the whole site, as well as a travel pack for the residential element. However, it is likely that new residents wishing to use Polmont and Linlithgow train stations would be more inclined to drive to the stations to catch a train. There is severe pressure on car-parking at Polmont Station.
- 4.6 Scottish Water have no objection to the application, but highlight that this does not confirm that the proposed development can be serviced by their infrastructure. There is currently sufficient capacity at the Balmore Water Treatment Works to service the proposed development. However, further studies would be required to determine if the existing water network could adequately service the demands of the development, or if any mitigation/enhancement work is necessary. There is currently insufficient capacity at the Whitecross Waste Water Treatment Plant to service the proposed development. A Network Assessment would therefore be required. They have funding to invest in treatment works where certain criteria are met. According to their records, there are existing Scottish Water assets which run through the site.

- 4.7 The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) have no objection to the application on flood grounds. There should be no built development including land raising over the existing culvert or within the flow pathway of any surcharging manhole, and an appropriate buffer should be provided for maintenance. The Planning Authority should satisfy itself that the development would not lead to future declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to breaches of air quality objectives. West Lothian Council's Environmental Health Department should be consulted regarding possible impacts on the Linlithgow AQMA and any potential conflicts with their Air Quality Action Plan which may require mitigation. The Planning Authority should also satisfy itself that the proposed development is well linked to local amenities and public transport options are available for commuters, in order to support a pattern of development that reduces the need to travel and, as a consequence, reduces emissions from transport sources. The applicant is advised to explore opportunities to re-open the existing culverted watercourse through the site and possibly incorporate it into the site design. The Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) proposals are indicative at the moment, but would need to be designed in accordance with Sewers for Scotland (3rd edition) for eventual adoption by Scottish Water. The discharge from the SUDS would be authorised by General Binding Rule 10 of The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (CAR). A Construction Site licence under CAR may be required for water management given the size of the development site. There are a number of SEPA licensed sites within 2 kilometres of the proposed development. Avondale Landfill is the most likely of these sites to have impacts on the residents of the proposed development. The Planning Authority and the applicant should consider the impact that odour nuisance could have on the quality of life of those working and (especially) living at this site.
- 4.8 Children's Services have advised that a development at a scale of 400 dwellinghouses would contribute to capacity issues at Whitecross Primary School and Graeme High School and in respect of nursery provision. The proposed development would result in the need to extend Whitecross Primary School from the current 100 pupil capacity to a single stream school, and the need to significantly increase nursery provision. The pro-rata contribution rates set out in Supplementary Guidance SG10 'Education and New Development' would not be sufficient to meet the estimated costs of the required extension. A bespoke contribution is therefore required, which has been calculated at a rate of £4,800 per dwellinghouse and £1,850 per flat. The contribution for Graeme High School would be £2,100 per dwellinghouse and £1,050 per flat, in accordance with SG10. The total contribution required is therefore £6,900 per dwellinghouse and £2,900 per flat. The bespoke contribution for Whitecross Primary School would be acceptable under the scenario of one or both of the Whitecross applications being granted planning permission (references P/17/0792/PPP and P/17/0797/PPP). St Mary's RC Primary School and St Mungo's RC Primary School have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development.
- 4.9 Historic Environment Scotland have advised that the proposed development affects the setting of two scheduled monuments: Almond Castle; and Union Canal, River Avon to Greenbank.

- 4.10 Falkirk Community Trust, Museum Services, have advised that the industrial site of the brickworks is of some historic interest, being one of the first brick manufactories to use tunnel kilns. It was also served by a branch line railway. However, these features are no longer a significant part of the landscape within the development area. Almond or Haining Castle is a nationally important monument and its setting, as well as the associated stratigraphy need to be retained. The proposal shows the castle standing in an open park setting which would preserve the archaeologically sensitive areas. The landscaping here must be undertaken in a sensitive manner that respects the early levels and should be monitored by an archaeologist. There is also an urgent need to stabilise the remains, and a conservation plan is required.
- 4.11 Scottish Natural Heritage consider that the most effective approach to good place-making is to produce an overarching development framework for an area, based on consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The current proposal does not fully accord with this approach, or fully with the landscape strategy of the earlier masterplan. The proposal is effectively a piecemeal rather than joined up approach to development. Any proposal for the Whitecross Strategic Growth Area should be part of a wider development framework. A revised Badger Protection Plan is required, in order to avoid offences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1991. Further consideration of bats and their roosts would be required if any works could impact on trees that have been identified as potentially harbouring bats or bat roosts. Further pre-construction protected species surveys would be required, as recommended in the ecological appraisals carried out to date.
- 4.12 The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotsway) have advised that the National Catalogue of Rights of Way (CROW) shows routes CF23, CF25 and CF184 as being affected by the proposed development. In addition, CF118 appears to lie immediately outside of the application boundary. It is understood that all of the identified rights of way are also designated as Core Paths. It is expected that any detailed planning application would address all of the identified rights of way affected by the development proposal.
- 4.13 The Health and Safety Executive do not advise, on safety grounds, against the granting of planning permission.
- 4.14 Shell UK have no comment to make on the application. The developer should contact Shell UK prior to any excavations in order to preserve the integrity of the Shell North Western Ethylene Pipeline (NWeP).
- 4.15 Transport Scotland have advised of conditions to attach to any grant of planning permission. They include the carrying out of improvement works to M9 Junction 4 (Lathallan Roundabout) in accordance with approved details, or the payment of a financial contribution in lieu of physical works.

- 4.16 West Lothian Council note that the village of Whitecross is within easy reach of Linlithgow via the local road network. They consider that this raises legitimate concerns about the potential impacts of the proposed development for the town of Linlithgow, despite it being located within the administrative area of Falkirk Council. It is not unreasonable to assume that there will be additional pressure on leisure and retail facilities in Linlithgow Bridge and Linlithgow town centre, which will have the potential to exacerbate the volume of local traffic and pressure for parking. Furthermore, the 29,000 sq.m. of commercial development proposed primarily for Class 6 Storage and Distribution usage suggests that there could also be an increase in various forms of commercial and freight vehicular movements. In addition, potential impacts on educational infrastructure in Linlithgow continue to be a concern, and it is therefore important that sufficient educational infrastructure provision has been identified by Falkirk Council to accommodate the proposal. Transportation and education concerns were raised by West Lothian Council in connection with the previous planning applications for the larger Manuel Brickworks site and in response to the consultative development plan of Falkirk Council. West Lothian Council is satisfied that it has been afforded an opportunity to comment on the proposals and is content for due process to take its course. West Lothian Council's Environmental Health Officer has no comment to make on the submitted air quality assessment.
- 4.17 Police Scotland have advised that appropriate security measures must be considered during the construction phase. There continues to be a high risk of metal thefts throughout Scotland. It is recommended that consideration be given at the earliest possible stages to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- 4.18 NHS Forth Valley have advised that the Council's Supplementary Guidance for healthcare and new housing development (SG11), dated 2 November 2015, is outdated and cannot be relied upon. The SG indicates that there is a surplus capacity of 1,032 spaces at the local health centre (Polmont Park), whereas NHS Forth Valley have advised that the latest information from the Practices concerned shows that there are capacity issues at this location. The Health Centre at Meadowbank also brings its own challenges, in that expansion of the site would not be possible given tight site constraints. The additional space required to facilitate a greater number of patients would therefore potentially require a new site.
- 4.19 The Coal Authority concur with the recommendations of the coal mining risk assessment; that coal mining legacy poses a risk to the proposed development and intrusive site investigations should be undertaken prior to development. They have no objection to the application subject to conditions to secure identification of the precise location of the mine entry (adit) and its zone of influence, definition of suitable 'no build' zones, and suitable treatment of the mine entry.

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- 5.1 There is no community council for the Whitecross area.

6. PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 In the course of the application, 2 representations were received consisting of one objection and one neutral representation. The salient issues are summarised below:-

Traffic / Road Safety

- The narrow streets of Whitecross village or past Campbell's and over the railway bridge cannot carry the proposed additional traffic;
- It proves difficult to pass certain vehicles and pedestrians going to / from Campbell's have to walk on the carriageway;
- The current C-road infrastructure is not suitable or capable for the vehicles associated with 400 dwellinghouses, with there being little scope for adding street lighting and footpaths, far less for widening the road itself;

Ecology

- The Manuel Burn is one of the principle spawning tributaries on the Avon for salmon;
- How will the developer ensure that water quality is not damaged by silt during construction and that adequate measures are in place to prevent both hydrocarbons and other pollutants entering the burn, to the detriment of the fish population?;
- Would the applicant be prepared to contribute to the River Avon Federation's sponsoring of a 'Trout in the Classroom' programme at Whitecross Primary School? Trout fly are released by the school children in the Manuel Burn near the school and the burn is subsequently electro-fished to show the pupils how the fish have thrived;
- The ecology report makes no mention of fish or the returning migratory species; and
- There are inaccuracies in the ecology report as the River Avon Federation have detailed records of otter holts and locations of signs in the area. They also have records of Japanese Knotweed along the Avon and its tributaries, and Himalayan Balsam is extensive along the canal.

7. DETAILED APPRAISAL

Under section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the determination of planning applications for local and major developments shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Accordingly,

7a The Development Plan

- 7a.1 The Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 16 July 2015. It includes a number of supplementary guidance documents which also have statutory status as part of the Development Plan. The proposed development was assessed against the following policy or policies:

Local Plan Policies

7a.2 The application site lies within the village limits for Whitecross as defined in the LDP. It forms part of a site allocated for mixed use (M14). M14 is one of the Council's Strategic Growth Areas. The eastern portion of the application site lies within a Pipeline Consultation Zone.

7a.3 Whitecross village lies within the Rural South area of the Falkirk district. This area comprises the countryside and 12 villages to the south of the Forth and Clyde Canal. The settlement statement for Rural South indicates:-

'A new settlement at Whitecross (M14), based on the former Manual Works, will continue to be promoted. This will comprise 1500 houses, a new access off the A801 and upgrade of Myrehead Road, new employment land and community facilities, including a new school.'

7a.4 The LDP sets out strategic growth area guidance for M14. This guidance includes the following:-

- Overall aim is to create a vibrant, mixed use new community, which integrates well with the existing village and surrounding countryside and regenerates the former Manual Works site;
- Overall scale of 1500 houses, including a full range of housing types and tenures;
- At least 12 hectares of employment land, phased appropriately in conjunction with residential development;
- New primary access required via a roundabout on the A801. Upgraded Myrehead Road to provide secondary access, with various other improvements and traffic management measures as required;
- Sustainable transport measures, including a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes and enhancement of bus services;
- Consideration to be given to transport impacts within West Lothian Council area and appropriate mitigation, in consultation with West Lothian Council;
- Appropriate range of community facilities, including a new two stream primary school and new local centre;
- Clear urban design strategy required;
- Sustainable energy use to be embedded in the development;
- Full landscape and greenspace strategy required encompassing the provision/upgrading of open space, a comprehensive landscape framework to integrate the new development into its surroundings and exploitation of green network opportunities in and adjacent to the site;
- Existing woodland, hedgerows and other locally important habitats to be retained where possible, especially Haining Wood, which requires a Management Plan;
- Protection and enhancement of Almond Castle and its setting required;
- The setting and amenity of the Union Canal to be safeguarded;
- Land to be safeguarded for an extension to Muiravonside cemetery;
- Whitecross Waste Water Treatment Works will require upgrading;
- Provision of two stream Primary School, phased appropriately, together with contributions to denominational high school provision;
- Transport contributions, including a contribution for the upgrading of Junction 4 of the M9 and public transport contributions;
- Contributions to village enhancements, notably upgrading of the main central road junction and the existing recreational ground; and

- 15% affordable housing requirement, including an appropriate range of affordable housing types/mechanisms.

7a.5 Policy HSG01 - Housing Growth states:-

1. *The Council will aim to achieve an average housing growth of 675 dwellings per year across the Council area over the Plan period, and will ensure that a five year effective land supply is maintained;*
2. *The Council will monitor and update the effective housing land supply figures annually to make sure that a minimum five year supply is maintained at all times. If this Housing Land Audit process identifies a shortfall in the effective land supply, the Council will consider supporting sustainable development proposals that are effective, in the following order of preference:*
 - *Urban Capacity sites*
 - *Additional brownfield sites*
 - *Sustainable greenfield sites**In doing so, account will be taken of other local development plan policies and of any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.*
3. *The overall scale of housing allocations in each settlement area to meet the target level of growth, including flexibility, will be as shown in Figure 3.1.*
4. *The specific sites where new housing will be promoted are listed in the Settlement Statements, and detailed in the Site Schedule in Appendix 1.*
5. *The locations for most significant growth are identified as Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs). Within these areas, the preparation of development frameworks, masterplans and briefs, as appropriate, and the co-ordination of social and physical infrastructure provision, will be a particular priority. Site requirements are set out in Appendix 2.*

7a.6 Mixed use site M14 (Whitecross) is specifically promoted in the LDP as a site to contribute towards the target level of housing growth of 675 dwellings per year over the Plan period (2014 to 2024).

7a.7 M14 is identified as a strategic growth area in the LDP. Under part 5 of the policy an overall masterplan is required for M14, as well as a co-ordinated approach to social and physical infrastructure provision. The application is not supported by an overall masterplan for M14, and there is no information on the total content and layout of M14, the infrastructure required to support the overall scale of development, and how this would be delivered. As detailed above, the vision under the LDP is to create a vibrant new mixed use community, including up to 1,500 houses. While the application provides for significant new housing and business/employment land, it cannot achieve the overall vision or deliver many of the key requirements set out in the LDP, such as the scale of new residential development, a new access to the A801, a new primary school, new community and recreational facilities, and a new local centre. Within this context, the application represents piecemeal and unco-ordinated development within M14 and is not a sustainable approach to achieving the M14 vision. The application is therefore contrary to this policy.

7a.8 Policy HSG02 - Affordable Housing states:-

New housing developments of 20 units and over will be required to provide a proportion of the units as affordable or special needs housing as set out in Figure 5.1. The approach to provision should comply with Supplementary Guidance SG12 "Affordable Housing".

Figure 5.1 - Affordable Housing Requirements in Settlement Areas

Proportion of total site units required to be affordable

Larbert/Stenhousemuir, Polmont Area, Rural North and Rural South - 25%

Bo'ness, Bonnybridge/Banknock, Denny, Falkirk and Grangemouth - 15%

- 7a.9 The affordable housing requirement for the site is 25%. This equates to 100 units based on an indicative number of 400 units. The details of the affordable housing provision could be secured in a Section 75 Planning Obligation attached to any grant of planning permission, having regard to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance SG12 'Affordable Housing'.

7a.10 Policy HSG04 - Housing Design states:-

The layout, design and density of the new housing development should conform with any relevant site-specific design guidance, Supplementary Guidance SG02 'Neighbourhood Design' and the Scottish Government's policy on 'Designing Streets'. Indicative site capacities in the site schedules may be exceeded where a detailed layout demonstrates that a high quality design solution, which delivers the requisite level of residential amenity, has been achieved.

- 7a.11 The submitted masterplan drawings provide a broad picture of the land uses, layout, principal streets, green network and SUDS features. The masterplan is indicative at this stage but the more detailed proposals would be expected to comply with the broad principles of the masterplan. The detailed design, layout and density would be considered at detailed planning stage, having regard to the Council's Supplementary Guidance SG02 'Neighbourhood Design' and the Scottish Government's policy on 'Designing Streets'.

7a.12 Policy INF01 - Strategic Infrastructure states:-

The Council will promote or support the provision of strategic infrastructure as identified on Map 3.2, listed in the Settlement Statements, and detailed in the Site Schedule in Appendix 1. The delivery of these projects will be through a range of agencies, in partnership with Falkirk Council. The Council and other partner organisations will explore traditional and innovative funding mechanisms to deliver infrastructure improvements, notwithstanding the continuing role of developer contributions as set out in supporting policies and supplementary guidance.

- 7a.13 The vision for a new large-scale mixed use community at Whitecross requires the provision of new or upgraded strategic infrastructure in the Whitecross area. These strategic items are upgrade of the M9 Junction 4 Lathallan Interchange, a new primary school, and upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Works.

7a.14 Policy INF02 - Developer Contributions to Community Infrastructure states:-

Developers will be required to contribute towards the provision, upgrading and maintenance of community infrastructure where development will create or exacerbate deficiencies in, or impose significantly increased burdens on, existing infrastructure. The nature and scale of developer contributions will be determined by the following factors:

- 1. Specific requirements identified against proposals in the LDP or in development briefs;*
- 2. In respect of open space, recreational, education and healthcare provision, the general requirements set out in Policies INF04, INF05 and INF06;*
- 3. In respect of physical infrastructure any requirements to ensure that the development meets sustainability criteria;*
- 4. In respect of other community facilities, any relevant standards operated by the Council or other public agency; and*
- 5. Where a planning obligation is the intended mechanism for securing contributions, the principles contained in Circular 3/2012.*

In applying the policy, consideration of the overall viability of the development will be taken into account in setting the timing and phasing of payments.

7a.15 The specific infrastructure requirements for M14 are detailed in the LDP. They include provision of a new primary access to the A801, upgrade of Myrehead Road (to provide a secondary access), sustainable transport measures, a new two stream primary school, a new local centre, protection and enhancement of Almond Castle, an extension to Muiravonside Cemetery, upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Works, upgrade of Junction 4 of the M9, and enhancement works to the existing village. As explained above, the current approach is unable to deliver many of the key requirements set out in the LDP.

7a.16 Policy INF04 - Open Space and New Residential Development states:-

Proposals for residential development of greater than 3 units will be required to contribute to open space and play provision. Provision should be informed by the Council's open space audit, and accord with the Open Space Strategy and the Supplementary Guidance SG13 on 'Open Space and New Development', based on the following principles:

- 1. New open space should be well designed; appropriately located; functionally sized and suitably diverse to meet different recreational needs in accordance with criteria set out in Supplementary Guidance SG13 'Open Space and New Development'.*

2. Where appropriate, financial contributions to off-site provision, upgrading, and maintenance may be sought as a full or partial alternative to direct on-site provision. The circumstances under which financial contributions will be sought and the mechanism for determining the required financial contribution is set out in Supplementary Guidance SG13 'Open Space and New Development'.

3. Arrangements must be made for the appropriate management and maintenance of new open space.

7a.17 The submitted masterplan includes a green network which could potentially contribute towards the active and passive open space requirements for the proposed development. The 'green areas' includes existing and proposed new woodland, open space, landscaped areas and a green buffer zone. The requirements for open space are set out in the Council's Supplementary Guidance SG13 'Open Space and New Development'. Open space provision would be considered further at detailed planning stage. It is anticipated that a proportion of the overall requirement would be met by the payment of a financial contribution towards improving local open space facilities, such as the existing recreational ground at Vellore Road, but this would be confirmed at detailed planning stage.

7.a.18 Policy INF05 - Education and New Housing Development states:-

Where there is insufficient capacity within the catchment school(s) to accommodate children from new housing development, developer contributions will be sought in cases where improvements to the school are capable of being carried out and do not prejudice the Council's education policies. The contribution will be a proportionate one, the basis of which is set out in Supplementary Guidance SG10 'Education and New Housing Development'. Where proposed development impacts adversely on Council nursery provision, the resourcing of improvements is also addressed through the Supplementary Guidance.

In circumstances where a school cannot be improved physically and in a manner consistent with the Council's education policies, the development will not be permitted.

7a.19 A financial contribution of £6,900 per dwellinghouse and £2900 per flat would be required towards improving capacity at Whitecross Primary School, Graeme High School, and the school nursery. The contribution for the primary school reflects a bespoke approach, as the contribution rates set out in the Council's Supplementary Guidance SG10 'Education and New Development' would not be sufficient to meet the estimated cost of the new extension. The contribution would be secured in a Section 75 Planning Obligation attached to any grant of planning permission.

7a.20 Policy INF06 - Healthcare and New Housing Development states:-

In locations where there is a deficiency in the provision of health care facilities identified by NHS Forth Valley, developer contributions will be sought to improve the quantity and quality of such provision commensurate with the impact of the new development. The approach to the improvement of primary healthcare provision will be set out in Supplementary Guidance SG11 'Healthcare and New Housing Development'.

7a.21 The catchment health centre (Polmont Park) is identified in SG11 'Healthcare and New Housing Development' as having a surplus capacity of 1,032 spaces, after factoring in the estimated 661 patients generated by the additional housing allocations in the area. However, Whitecross was not factored into these figures. This may have been because of an assumption that the original Whitecross Masterplan would include its own health clinic to meet the needs of the new settlement. The advice from NHS Forth Valley is that SG11 is out of date as there is currently a capacity issue at Polmont Park.

7a.22 Policy INF07 - Walking and Cycling states:-

1. The Council will safeguard and promote the development of the core path network. Where appropriate, developer contributions to the implementation of the network will be sought.
2. New development will be required to provide an appropriate standard of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, including cycle parking, which complies with current Council guidelines and meets the following criteria:
 - Where appropriate, infrastructure supporting the two modes of walking and cycling should be combined and support objectives in agreed Travel Plans helping to support active travel;
 - Pedestrian and cycle facilities in new developments should offer appropriate links to existing networks in surrounding areas, in particular to facilitate school journeys and provide connections to public transport, as well as links to other amenities and community facilities;
 - The surfacing, lighting, design, maintenance and location of pedestrian and cycle routes should promote their safe use. Particular emphasis should be given to the provision of suitable lighting, and the provision of suitably designed and located crossing facilities where routes meet the public road network;
 - Where practical, no pedestrian route should be obstructed by features that render it unsuitable for the mobility impaired.

7a.23 The development would be required to provide an appropriate standard of pedestrian and cycle facilities within the site. Appropriate links to existing networks in the area would also be required, as well as safeguarding of the existing rights of way/ Core Paths which lie within the site. A management plan would be required for Haining Wood, which would need to consider the upgrade and maintenance of the existing path network within the woodland area.

7a.24 Policy INF08 - Bus Travel and New Development states:-

1. *New development will be required to provide appropriate levels of bus infrastructure or suitable links to existing bus stops or services, as identified within travel plans, taking account of the 400m maximum walking distance required by SPP. This provision will be delivered through direct funding of infrastructure and/ or the provision of sums to support the delivery of bus services serving the development.*
2. *Bus infrastructure should be provided at locations and to phasing agreed with the Council, and designed in accordance with the standards set out in current Council guidelines.*
3. *New development, where appropriate, should incorporate routes suitable for the provision of bus services. Bus facilities within new developments should offer appropriate links to existing pedestrian networks in surrounding areas. Alternatively, new development should be linked to existing bus infrastructure via pedestrian links as described in Policy INF07.*

7a.25 The existing local bus service provides access to Polmont/Falkirk and Linlithgow and is routed along the B825, Manuel Terrace and Vellore Road. The nearest bus stops for this service are more than 400 metres walking distance from a large part of the site and a financial contribution would be required to fund an extension to the service so it diverts into the application site. Appropriate bus infrastructure within the site to support the service would also be required. In addition, suitable pedestrian facilities along Myrehead Road to the A803 should be provided so there is an opportunity for the new residents/ employees to access the Edinburgh express service.

7a.26 Policy INF10 - Transport Assessments states:-

1. *The Council will require transport assessments of developments where the impact of the development on the transport network is likely to result in a significant increase in the number of trips, and is considered likely to require mitigation. The scope of transport assessments will be agreed with the Council and in the case of impact on trunk roads, also with Transport Scotland.*
2. *Transport assessments will include travel plans and, where necessary, safety audits of proposed mitigation measures and assessment of the likely impacts on air quality as a result of proposed development. The assessment will focus on the hierarchy of transport modes, favouring the use of walking, cycling and public transport over use of the car.*
3. *The Council will only support development proposals where it is satisfied that the transport assessment and travel plan has been appropriately scoped, the network impacts properly defined and suitable mitigation measures identified.*

7a.27 The Transport Planning Unit have reviewed the submitted transport assessment and supporting information and are satisfied with the traffic flows, trip rates and trip distribution applied in the traffic modelling. However, there are identified or potential capacity issues at the traffic signals on Myrehead Road at the railway bridge and at the Myrehead Road/A803 junction. In addition, the traffic modelling does not take into account concerns that Myrehead Road in its present form is not suitable as a primary access to serve the proposed development.

7a.28 In addition, the transport assessment is deficient in its consideration of walking and cycling as statutory design proposals have not been submitted for the provision of suitable pedestrian/ cycle connections including to the existing village and to the A803 express bus service.

7a.29 Policy INF12 - Water and Drainage Infrastructure states:-

1. *New development will only be permitted if necessary sewerage infrastructure is adopted by Scottish Water or alternative maintenance arrangements are acceptable to SEPA.*
2. *Surface water management for new development should comply with current best practice on sustainable urban drainage systems, including opportunities for promoting biodiversity through habitat creation.*
3. *A drainage strategy, as set out in PAN61, should be submitted with planning applications and must include flood attenuation measures, details for the long term maintenance of any necessary features and a risk assessment.*

7a.30 The foul water from the site is proposed to drain to the existing foul drainage system. Scottish Water have advised that there is currently insufficient capacity at the Whitecross Waste Water Treatment Plant to service the proposed development. A Network Assessment would therefore be required and funding is available to invest in treatment works where certain criteria are met.

7a.31 Surface water management for the proposed development would reflect sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) principles and include attenuation by means of filter drains/ swales and conveyance to basins/ ponds. Discharge of surface water would be to the Manuel Burn and two options have been considered in terms of conveyance of the water to the outfall. One option is to continue to use an existing off-site culvert in its current dilapidated condition to convey water to the Manuel Burn (with use of a new overflow culvert in the event of blockage of the culvert downstream), while the other option is to remove the connection to the existing culvert and rely entirely on new infrastructure to convey the surface water to the burn. While both options have the potential to increase flood risk downstream, the former option carries a number of other risks including the potential to exacerbate the integrity of the existing structures, sewer adoptability issues, and the potential for disruption to the new development and increase in flood risk (due to a reduction in capacity at the site) if remedial works to the structures were required. The options for discharge would need to be considered further at detailed planning stage.

7a.32 Policy BUS01 - Business and Tourism states:-

1. *The Council will promote the Strategic Business Locations (SBLs) and National Developments identified on Map 3.3 as the priority areas for economic development. Development of the site specific elements of the SBLs, as listed in the Settlement Statements and detailed in the Site Schedule in Appendix 1, will be to high standards of design in accordance with a development brief or masterplan for each location approved by the Council, to ensure a comprehensive and sensitive approach to site planning.*
2. *Other local sites for new local business and industrial development listed in the Settlement Statements and detailed in the Site Schedule will be safeguarded for the employment use specified for each site.*
3. *The Council will give priority to the development of tourism proposals which support the themes/networks and strategic nodes identified in Figure 3.2 and Map 3.4. Proposals will be supported which:*
 - *complement the existing pattern of development;*
 - *are of a quality which enhances the image and tourism profile of the area;*
 - *comply with other LDP supporting policies.*

7a.33 The application site lies with mixed use allocation M14 which forms part of the Eastern Gateway Strategic Business Location under the LDP. Strategic Business Locations are the priority areas in the Falkirk Council area for economic development. The site requirements for M14 specifically include employment land which the application provides for (10% Class 4 and 90% Class 6). The proposed land uses have been subject to a comprehensive master-planning exercise and the location of the uses, to address the constraints imposed by pipelines in the area, is understood (see below).

7a.34 Policy BUS05 - Major Hazards and Pipelines states:-

1. *Proposals within Major Hazard and Pipeline Consultation Zones as defined by the HSE and shown on the Proposals Map will be assessed in relation to the following factors:*
 - *The increase in the number of people exposed to risk in the area;*
 - *The existing permitted use of the site or buildings;*
 - *The extent to which the proposal may achieve regeneration benefits, which cannot be secured by any other means; and*
 - *The potential impact on existing chemical and petrochemical sites and pipelines.*

2. *The Council will give careful consideration to applications for hazardous substances consent (HSC) that would extend major hazard distances within the urban area, to balance the desirability of growth and development at nationally important clusters of industries handling hazardous substances with the possibility of prejudice to the development of sites allocated in the LDP. Applications for HSC should demonstrate that off-site constraints have been minimised as far as possible through the optimum location and method of storage, and by ensuring that the quantity/type of materials applied for is specifically related to operational needs.*
3. *The revocation of HSC consents where the use on the site has ceased will be pursued.*
4. *The preferred location for new pipelines will be in existing Pipeline Consultation Zones.*

7a.35 The eastern portion of the site lies within the consultation zones for a high pressure gas pipeline and an ethylene pipeline. The affected part of the site is mainly within the outer zones of the consultation distances. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not advise against the granting of planning permission, based on the indicative masterplan. The masterplan has been designed to ensure that the level of risk is acceptable with respect to the methodology applied by the HSE. There is no housing proposed within any of the consultation zones and no buildings are proposed within the inner zone. There are no particular restrictions on industrial/commercial development within the middle or outer zones. Any subsequent detailed applications would be subject to consultation with HSE.

7a.36 Policy GN01 - Falkirk Green Network states:-

1. *The Council will support the Central Scotland Green Network in the Falkirk area through the development and enhancement of a multi-functional network of green components and corridors as defined in Map 3.5.*
2. *Within the green network, biodiversity, habitat connectivity, active travel, recreational opportunities, landscape quality, placemaking, sustainable economic development and climate change adaptation will be promoted, with particular reference to the opportunities set out in the Settlement Statements, and detailed in the Site Schedule in Appendix 1.*
3. *New development, and in particular the strategic growth areas and strategic business locations, should contribute to the green network, where appropriate, through the integration of green infrastructure into masterplans or through enabling opportunities for green network improvement on nearby land.*

7a.37 The site lies within a strategic growth area. New development within strategic growth area is expected to contribute to the green network. The submitted masterplan includes extensive 'green' areas, focused on retention of existing woodland, augmented by new landscaping and open space.

7a.38 Policy GN02 - Landscape states:-

1. *The Council will seek to protect and enhance landscape character and quality throughout the Council area in accordance with Supplementary Guidance SG09 'Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations'.*
2. *Priority will be given to safeguarding the distinctive landscape quality of the Special Landscape Areas identified on the Proposals Map.*
3. *Development proposals which are likely to have a significant landscape impact must be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment demonstrating that, with appropriate mitigation, a satisfactory landscape fit will be achieved.*

7a.39 The site is located within the Manuel Farmlands Local Landscape Character Area as defined in the Council's Supplementary Guidance SG9 'Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations'. This landscape type is sensitive to any development that is poorly screened or designed, particularly over the higher ground, due to the potential for visibility over the wider area.

7a.40 The submitted landscape and visual impact assessment concludes that the potential for extensive adverse landscape and visual effects is very limited, due to the existing character and enclosed/well screened nature of the site. Furthermore, the effects would be further reduced by the design of the proposals and the landscape mitigation integral to the masterplan. There would also be localised benefits arising from redevelopment of the cleared post-industrial site. The content and conclusions of the landscape and visual impact assessment are considered to be reasonable.

7a.41 Policy GN03 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity states:-

The Council will protect and enhance habitats and species of importance, and will promote biodiversity and geodiversity through the planning process. Accordingly:

1. *Development likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites (including Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and Ramsar Sites) will be subject to an appropriate assessment. Qualifying features of a Natura 2000 site may not be confined to the boundary of a designated site. Where an assessment is unable to conclude that a development will not adversely affect the integrity of the site, development will only be permitted where there are no alternative solutions, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. These can be of a social or economic nature except where the site has been designated for a European priority habitat or species. Consent can only be issued in such cases where the reasons for overriding public interest relate to human health, public safety, beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or other reasons subject to the opinion of the European Commission (via Scottish Ministers).*

2. *Development affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the overall objectives of the designation and the overall integrity of the designated area would not be compromised, or any adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance.*
3. *Development likely to have an adverse effect on European protected species, a species listed in Schedules 5, 5A, 6, 6A and 8 of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), or a species of bird protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that a species licence is likely to be granted.*
4. *Development affecting Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites (as identified in Supplementary Guidance SG08 'Local Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites'), and national and local priority habitats and species (as identified in the Falkirk Local Biodiversity Action Plan) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the overall integrity of the site, habitat or species will not be compromised, or any adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of substantial local importance.*
5. *Where development is to be approved which could adversely affect any site or species of significant nature conservation value, the Council will require appropriate mitigating measures to conserve and secure future management of the relevant natural heritage interest. Where habitat loss is unavoidable, the creation of replacement habitat to compensate for any losses will be required, along with provision for its future management.*
6. *All development proposals should conform to Supplementary Guidance SG05 'Biodiversity and Development'.*

7a.42 A number of ecological surveys were carried out in late 2017. The survey area was found to comprise a mix of habitats, the majority of which are typically associated with a disturbed former industrial site. In addition, there is a mix of woodland types, ranging from newly established semi-natural areas to plantations and areas of long established ancient woodland. Haining Wood is an ancient semi-natural woodland of regional importance.

7a.43 There was evidence of the presence of badger within the survey area, as well as a number of trees and structures with features that could provide suitable roost sites for bats, the most important of which is Almond Castle. The site comprises a mix of habitats that are suitable for great-crested newts, reptiles and nesting birds. However, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the proposed development area provides important habitat for great-crested newts. Water vole and otter may be present on the section of the Union Canal adjoining the site and otter may also occasionally make use of the Manuel Burn as a foraging site. Updated species surveys would be required prior to construction.

7a.44 The ecology report recognises the potential for enhancement of the nature conservation value adjacent to the proposed development, along with some limited scope for habitat creation within the development. In addition, the report considers that the masterplan takes into account the nature conservation designations and largely avoids direct impacts on the Union Canal (a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) and Haining Wood (a Wildlife Site).

7a.45 Policy GN04 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows states:-

The Council recognises the ecological, landscape, economic and recreational importance of trees, woodland and hedgerows. Accordingly:

- 1. Felling detrimental to landscape, amenity, nature conservation or recreational interests will be discouraged. In particular ancient, long-established and semi-natural woodlands will be protected as a habitat resource of irreplaceable value;*
- 2. In an area covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or a Conservation Area, development will not be permitted unless it can be proven that the proposal will not adversely affect the longevity, stability or appearance of the trees. Where necessary, endangered trees and woodlands will be protected through the designation of further TPOs;*
- 3. Development which is likely to affect trees should comply with Supplementary Guidance SG06 'Trees and Development', including the preparation where appropriate of a Tree Survey, Constraints Plan, and Tree Protection Plan. Where development is permitted which will involve the loss of trees or hedgerows of amenity value, the Council will normally require replacement planting appropriate in terms of number, size, species and position;*
- 4. The enhancement and management of existing woodland and hedgerows will be encouraged. Where the retention of a woodland area is integral to a development proposal, developers will normally be required to prepare and implement an appropriate Management Plan; and*
- 5. There will be a preference for the use of appropriate local native species in new and replacement planting schemes, or non-native species which are integral to the historic landscape character.*

7a.46 The submitted tree survey and arboricultural report identifies extensive tree cover in the northern part of the site, comprising an area of mixed plantation woodland, developing scrub and occasional individual trees. In addition, there is an area of well developed natural woodland along the eastern boundary (a former railway line). Immediately to the north-east of the site is Haining Wood, an area of ancient semi-natural woodland. This woodland contains some good specimens of coppiced oak. The application site, itself, has no individual specimens of any significance. The majority of the existing woodland areas would be retained. This is shown on the Tree Protection Plan accompanying the application. Developing scrub along the western boundary adjacent to Haining Wood would be affected by the proposed development. Enhancement of the existing woodland area and creation of new habitat, as well as the provision of an effective management regime, would more than compensate for the affected areas.

7a.47 Policy GN05 - Outdoor Access states:-

The Council will seek to safeguard, improve and extend the network of outdoor access routes, with particular emphasis on the core path network, and routes which support the development of the Green Network. When considering development proposals, the Council will:

- 1. Safeguard the line of any existing or proposed access route affected by the development, and require its incorporation into the development unless a satisfactory alternative route can be agreed;*
- 2. Seek to secure any additional outdoor access opportunities which may be achievable as a result of the development; and*
- 3. Where an access route is to be temporarily disrupted, require the provision of an alternative route for the duration of construction work and the satisfactory reinstatement of the route on completion of the development.*

7a.48 The proposed development affects a number of rights of way/Core Paths which would need to be safeguarded and satisfactorily incorporated into the development. This would include satisfactory arrangements during the construction period. The proposal also provides an opportunity for improvements to the existing outdoor access network, including Haining Wood.

7a.49 Policy D01 - Placemaking states:-

The following locations are regarded as key opportunities for placemaking within the area, within which there will be a particular emphasis on high quality design and environmental enhancement:

- 1. Strategic Housing Growth Areas & Business Locations*
- 2. Town and Village Centres*
- 3. Town Gateways and Major Urban Road Corridors*
- 4. Canal Corridor*
- 5. Central Scotland Green Network*

7a.50 The proposed development lies within a strategic growth area. As such, the proposal provides a key opportunity for place-making within the local area. The submitted masterplan reflects a landscape-led approach to place-making as it retains the existing woodland which provides extensive screening and a sense of containment. The masterplan principles would be expected to inform the detailed design proposals in order to achieve design quality and successfully integrate the development into its surroundings. However, there are concerns at the prospect of housing which is physically isolated, poorly connected and exposed to dis-amenity from a derelict neighbouring brownfield site if an initial phase of housing was taken forward and given the likelihood of a slow take-up of the business land. This concern is reinforced by the applicant's suggested planning condition to allow up to 200 dwellinghouses prior to implementation of improvement works to Myrehead Road and our concern that a reasonable prospect of implementation of the infrastructure works has not been demonstrated.

7a.51 Policy D03 - Urban Design states:-

New development should create attractive and safe places for people to live, work and visit. Accordingly:

1. *Development proposals should conform with any relevant development framework, brief or masterplan covering the site. Residential proposals should conform with Supplementary Guidance SG02 'Neighbourhood Design';*
2. *The siting, density and design of new development should create a coherent structure of streets, public spaces and buildings which respects and complements the site's context, and creates a sense of identity within the development;*
3. *Street layout and design should generally conform with the Scottish Government's policy document 'Designing Streets';*
4. *Streets and public spaces should have buildings fronting them or, where this is not possible, a high quality architectural or landscape treatment;*
5. *Development proposals should include landscaping and green infrastructure which enhances, structures and unifies the development, assists integration with its surroundings, and contributes, where appropriate, to the wider green network;*
6. *Development proposals should create a safe and secure environment for all users through the provision of high levels of natural surveillance for access routes and public spaces; and*
7. *Major development proposals should make provision for public art in the design of buildings and the public realm.*

7a.52 The submitted masterplan provides a broad picture of land use, layout, principal streets, green network and SUDS features. The indicative grid layout is considered to create a coherent and permeable structure, offering frontages onto streets and open spaces. The rationale for splitting the site into separate residential and commercial/employment areas, and the location of these uses, to address the pipeline hazard constraints, is understood. The provision of public art and public realm aspects could be considered at detailed planning stage.

7a.53 Policy D04 - Low and Zero Carbon Development states:-

1. *All new buildings should incorporate on-site low and zero carbon-generating technologies (LZCGT) to meet a proportion of the overall energy requirements. Applicants must demonstrate that 10% of the overall reduction in CO₂ emissions as required by Building Standards has been achieved via on-site LZCGT. This proportion will be increased as part of subsequent reviews of the LDP. All proposals must be accompanied by an Energy Statement which demonstrates compliance with this policy. Should proposals not include LZCGT, the Energy Statement must set out the technical or practical constraints which limit the application of LZCGT. Further guidance will be contained in Supplementary Guidance SG15 'Low and Zero Carbon Development'. Exclusions from the requirements of this policy are:*

- *Proposals for change of use or conversion of buildings;*
 - *Alterations and extensions to buildings;*
 - *Stand-alone buildings that are ancillary and have an area less than 50 square metres;*
 - *Buildings which will not be heated or cooled other than by heating provided solely for the purpose of frost protection;*
 - *Temporary buildings with consent for 2 years or less; and*
 - *Where implementation of the requirement would have an adverse impact on the historic environment as detailed in the Energy Statement or accompanying Design Statement.*
2. *The design and layout of development should, as far as possible, seek to minimise energy requirements through harnessing solar gain and shelter;*
 3. *Decentralised energy generation with heat recycling schemes (combined heat and power and district heating) will be encouraged in major new developments, subject to the satisfactory location and design of associated plant. Energy Statements for major developments should include an assessment of the potential for such schemes.*

7a.54 The use of low and zero carbon technologies would need to be addressed at the detailed planning stage, in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Guidance SG15 'Low and Zero Carbon Development'.

7a.55 Policy D08 - Sites of Archaeological Interest states:-

1. *Scheduled ancient monuments and other identified nationally important archaeological resources will be preserved in situ, and within an appropriate setting. Developments which have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments or the integrity of their setting will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances;*
2. *All other archaeological resources will be preserved in situ wherever feasible. The Council will weigh the significance of any impacts on archaeological resources and their settings against other merits of the development proposals in the determination of planning applications; and*
3. *Developers may be requested to supply a report of an archaeological evaluation prior to determination of the planning application. Where the case for preservation does not prevail, the developer shall be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and publication, in advance of development.*

7a.56 The Union Canal (River Avon to Greenbank) scheduled monument adjoins part of the application site to the south. The Almond Castle scheduled monument lies within the site. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) have withdrawn their objection to the application

7a.57 Policy D14 - Canals states:-

The Council, in conjunction with Scottish Canals and other key partners, will seek to promote the sustainable development of the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals as a major recreational, tourism and heritage asset. Accordingly, the Council will support:

1. *The protection and enhancement of the ecology, archaeology, built heritage, visual amenity and water quality of the canals and their immediate environs, having regard to the detailed policies on these matters contained in the LDP;*
2. *The protection and enhancement of the operational capacity of the canals for recreational use, including the maintenance and improvement of navigation and the provision of moorings and other infrastructure for a wide range of canal users;*
3. *The improvement of access, signage and interpretation associated with the canals, with particular emphasis on linkages to and from adjacent communities, tourist attractions, public transport facilities and the wider countryside access network, whilst generally continuing to restrict access to the off-side bank (except for approved mooring areas, where access already exists and in urban areas) and to the Firth of Forth SPA for nature conservation reasons;*
4. *Residential moorings where an appropriate level of natural surveillance, amenity and access to community facilities can be achieved; and*
5. *Appropriate canal-side development which complies with other LDP policies*
 - *is compatible with the operational requirements of the canals and contributes to their recreational amenity through the provision, where appropriate, of public access, amenity areas, moorings and slipways, together with any appropriate commuted sums for maintenance;*
 - *achieves high design standards, particular attention being paid to the relationship of layout and form to the canal and to the sympathetic use of materials and detailing in buildings and canal-side landscaping;*
 - *incorporates measures to ensure that there is no detriment to the canal water environment; and*
 - *ensures there is no detriment to the structural stability of the canal.*

7a.58 The proposed development is unlikely to have any direct impacts on the Union Canal. It provides an opportunity to improve and enhance the relationship of the site to the canal, including an opportunity for appropriate canal-side development. This could be considered further at detailed design stage.

7a.59 Policy RW05 - The Water Environment states:-

The Council recognises the importance of the water environment within the Council area in terms of its landscape, ecological, recreational and land drainage functions. Accordingly:

1. *The Council will support the development of measures identified within the Forth Area River Basin Management Plan designed to improve the ecological status of the water environment;*
2. *Opportunities to improve the water environment by: opening out previously culverted watercourses; removing redundant water engineering installations; and restoring the natural course of watercourses should be exploited where possible;*

3. *There will be a general presumption against development which would have a detrimental effect on the integrity and water quality of aquatic and riparian ecosystems, or the recreational amenity of the water environment, or which would lead to deterioration of the ecological status of any element of the water environment. Where appropriate, development proposals adjacent to a waterbody should provide for a substantial undeveloped and suitably landscaped riparian corridor to avoid such impacts;*
4. *There will be a general presumption against any unnecessary engineering works in the water environment including new culverts, bridges, watercourse diversions, bank modifications or dams; and*
5. *The water environment will be promoted as a recreational resource, (subject to the requirements of policy GN03 (1) for Natura 2000 Sites), with existing riparian access safeguarded and additional opportunities for ecological enhancement, access and recreation encouraged where compatible with nature conservation objectives.*

7a.60 There are a number of watercourses and water features within and in the vicinity of the site. They include an unnamed burn which is culverted through the site on an east-west alignment, which outfalls to the Manuel Burn at Manuel Terrace. SEPA have advised the applicant to explore opportunities to re-open the culverted watercourse, possibly incorporating it into the design. Potential construction related impacts on the water environment would be considered as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). There may be a requirement for a construction site licence from SEPA under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations (CAR).

7a.61 Policy RW06 - Flooding states:-

1. *Development on the functional flood plain should be avoided. In areas where there is significant risk of flooding from any source (including flooding up to and including a 0.5% (1 in 200 year) flood event), development proposals will be assessed against advice and the Flood Risk Framework in the SPP. There will be a presumption against new development which would:*
 - *be likely to be at risk of flooding;*
 - *increase the level of risk of flooding for existing development; or*
 - *result in a use more vulnerable to flooding or with a larger footprint than any previous development on site.*
2. *Development proposals on land identified as being at risk from flooding, or where other available information suggests there may be a risk, will be required to provide a flood risk assessment that demonstrates that:*
 - *any flood risks can be adequately managed both within and outwith the site;*
 - *an adequate allowance for climate change and freeboard has been built into the flood risk assessment;*

- *access and egress can be provided to the site which is free of flood risk; and*
 - *water resistant materials and forms of construction will be utilised where appropriate.*
3. *Where suitably robust evidence suggests that land contributes or has the potential to contribute towards sustainable flood management measures development will only be permitted where the land's sustainable flood management function can be safeguarded*

7a.62 The submitted flood risk assessment considers the sources of potential flood risk to the site. It is accepted that the Manuel Burn does not pose a flood risk to the site. Flooding was found to occur in a valley within the site, which should be maintained as part the proposed development or compensated for by flood storage elsewhere on the site. The main flood risk issue relates to the potential for a collapse/ blockage of the existing culvert downstream of the site, leading to manhole surcharge and flooding within the site if this culvert is used to convey surface water from the site to Manuel Burn. In order to address this issue, the applicant has considered two options for surface water discharge (see the assessment above under Policy INF12). In terms of these options, while the provision of a new location for discharge into the Manuel Burn could introduce flood risk to new receptors, it is anticipated that it may be possible to mitigate this risk where it relates to a sensitive land use.

7a.63 Policy RW07 - Air Quality states:-

The Council will seek to contribute to the improvement of air quality. Impacts on air quality will be taken into account in assessing development proposals, particularly within Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's). An Air Quality Assessment may be required for developments that are within AQMA's or where the proposed development may cause or significantly contribute towards a breach of National Air Quality Standards. Development proposals that result in either a breach of National Air Quality Standards or a significant increase in concentrations within an existing AQMA will not be permitted unless there are over-riding issues of national or local importance.

7a.64 The submitted air quality assessment predicts that overall the proposed development would have a negligible air quality impact on existing and new receptors. The Council's Environmental Protection Unit is satisfied with the methodology and the conclusions of the assessment. The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The effects of dust during the construction phase could be mitigated through the implementation of a dust management plan.

7a.65 Policy RW10 - Vacant, Derelict Unstable and Contaminated Land states:-

Proposals that reduce the incidence of vacant, derelict, unstable and contaminated land will be supported, subject to compliance with other LDP policies, particularly those relating to development in the countryside. Where proposals involve the development of unstable or contaminated land, they will only be permitted where appropriate remediation or mitigation measures have been undertaken.

7a.66 The proposed development utilises brownfield land and offers the prospect of developing and remediating a substantial derelict, former industrial site. The proposal is therefore supported by this policy, subject to compliance with the other relevant LDP policies.

Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance Forming Part of LDP

7a.67 The following Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance is relevant to the application:-

- SG02 'Neighbourhood Designs';
- SG05 'Biodiversity and Development';
- SG06 'Trees and Development';
- SG09 'Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations';
- SG10 'Education and New Housing Development';
- SG11 'Healthcare and New Housing Development';
- SG12 'Affordable Housing';
- SG13 'Open Space and New Development'; and
- SG15 'Low and Zero Carbon Development'.

7a.68 This guidance is referred to in the policy assessment as appropriate (see paragraphs 7a.5 to 7a.66 above).

7a.69 In view of the above assessment, the application is considered to be contrary to the LDP.

7b Material Considerations

7b.1 The material considerations to be assessed are in respect of the application are the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (Proposed Plan), the consultation responses and the representations received.

Falkirk Council Local Development Plan 2 (Proposed Plan)

7b.2 The Proposed Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) was approved by the Council for consultation in September 2018. The consultation period ran from 27 September 2018 to 23 November 2018. The representations to Proposed LDP2 were considered by Council on 26 June 2019. Following consideration by Scottish Ministers of representations received, it is expected that LDP2 will be adopted in 2020, at which point, it will replace the current Falkirk Local Development Plan. LDP2 provides the most up to date indication of the Council's views in relation to Development Plan policy and constitutes a material consideration in determination of planning applications.

7b.3 Proposed LDP2 indicates that infrastructure constraints, land assembly issues and market considerations have led to a re-evaluation of the previous vision for a major new settlement at Whitecross. Essentially, the opportunity now comprises two separate sites. One of these sites (BUS02) is the subject of this planning application. Proposed LDP2 indicates that re-use of BUS02 (former Manual Works) remains a priority, but it is considered best suited to business and industrial development. The other site (H29) has a minded to grant decision subject to the satisfactory conclusion of a Section 75 planning obligation (application reference P/17/0797/PPP).

7b.4 The land uses, key principles and other requirements for BUS02, as outlined in Proposed LDP2, include:-

- Use for business and industry;
- Vehicular access to be taken from Haining Road as present, or an alternative point further north;
- Core path running east-west through the site should be retained;
- Existing woodland encompassing the site is to be retained and reinforced; Haining Wood is a Wildlife Site for which a management plan should be prepared;
- Almond Castle to be protected and consolidated within a landscaped setting;
- Sensitive treatment of development in the vicinity of the Union Canal, with quality frontage development/public realm, or screen planting as appropriate;
- Ground conditions and contamination issues to be addressed and appropriate remediation undertaken;
- Upgrade of Myrehead Road and contribution to upgrading of M9 Junction 4 likely to be required, depending on scale and nature of uses;
- Pipelines between Whitecross and Manuel Works may impose constraints and should be taken into account in masterplans; and
- Scottish Water growth project required for Whitecross Waste Water Treatment Works, growth will be wholly funded by Scottish Water.

7b.5 The proposed development is mixed use and includes a significant housing element (400 units). This is contrary to BUS02, which allocates the site as solely for business/employment uses. In other respects, the proposal largely complies with the site requirements or compliance could be secured at detailed planning stage. However, a fundamental unresolved issue is the absence of suitable proposals for the upgrade of Myrehead Road to serve the scale and nature of the development proposed in the application.

7b.6 The applicant has objected to Proposed LDP2 as they seek an allocation for the site that reflects the current planning application.

Consultation Responses

7b.7 The consultation responses are summarised in section 4 of this report. The main issues identified in these responses relate to access, road network impacts and road safety matters. Other matters raised could be the subject of a Section 75 planning obligation or conditions attached to any grant of planning permission. The concerns of Scottish Natural Heritage in relation to placemaking and of West Lothian Council in relation to potential impacts on the West Lothian Council area are noted.

Assessment of Public Representations

7b.8 The public representations are summarised in section 6 of this report. The following comments are made in response to the concerns raised in the representations:-

- Concerns in relation to traffic impact and road safety are considered in this report;
- Potential construction related impacts on the water environment would be considered as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in consultation with SEPA;

- The potential for indirect effects on fish e.g. as a result of drainage and pollution during construction would be addressed through implementation of an approved CEMP;
- The submitted ecology report indicates that an otter survey of the Manuel Burn was not considered necessary as the proposed development would be unlikely to present a significant disturbance to otter populations. The report does acknowledge that otters are likely to use this burn;
- Updated protected species survey would be required prior to construction as appropriate; and
- The report states that no invasive species were recorded within the site boundaries. An invasive species survey would be carried out prior to works commencing to confirm whether the findings of the reports remain valid.

7c Conclusion

- 7c.1 The application is considered to be contrary to the LDP for the reasons detailed in this report. A planning application is to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7c.2 The material planning considerations include the following benefits of the proposed development:-
- The proposal uses brownfield land and offers the prospect of developing and remediating a very substantial derelict site;
 - There is a substantial business element which could promote job creation, albeit that demand in this location may be limited;
 - The proposal offers the potential to enhance Almond Castle, Haining Wood, and the Union Canal, and access to them, which were aspirations of the wider proposals; and
 - The proposal would result in new greenspace within the site.
- 7c.3 A further material consideration is Proposed LDP2. While significant weight cannot at this stage be given to the proposed business/ industrial allocation (BUS02), it is considered that significant weight can be afforded to the proposed re-evaluation of the previous vision for the village. The 'direction of travel' is clear in that the development opportunities are now far more modest and centred on two separate sites, rather than a cohesive masterplan area and the concept of a new settlement. The concerns with the proposal under part 5 of Policy HSG01 of the LDP can therefore be set aside.
- 7c.4 On balance, however, it is considered that the primacy of the Development Plan should be retained and the application refused. In terms of this balance, significant weight is afforded to the access and connectivity deficiencies of the proposed development which are a significant factor undermining the sustainability of the proposal. As detailed in the report, the application does not include any proposals for suitable pedestrian and cycle links to the village including to the primary school, or suitable road infrastructure to connect the proposed development to either the A801 or A803. The applicant's submissions that these matters could be addressed by suitably worded planning conditions are not supported, for the reasons detailed in this report. (See paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7). In addition, the road improvement drawings more recently submitted by the applicant do not satisfy the requirements of the Council's Transport Planning and Roads Development Units.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is therefore recommended that the Planning Committee refuse planning permission for the following reason(s):-

- 1. The application is contrary to Policy INF07 'Walking and Cycling' of the Falkirk Local Development Plan as the proposed development does not include appropriate links to existing networks in surrounding areas, in particular to facilitate school journeys and provided connections to public transport. It would not be appropriate for the provision of these links to be the subject of planning conditions as it has not been demonstrated that there would be a reasonable prospect of fulfilment of these important infrastructure works.**
- 2. The application is contrary to Policy INF10 'Transport Assessments' of the Falkirk Local Development Plan as suitable mitigation measures to address transport network impacts have not been identified and agreed.**
- 3. The application is potentially contrary to Policy D01 'Place-making' of the Falkirk Local Development Plan as there is a prospect of housing which is physically isolated, poorly connected and exposed to dis-amenity from a derelict neighbouring brownfield site if an initial phase of housing was taken forward and given the likelihood of a slow take-up of the business land. This concern is reinforced by the applicant's suggested planning condition to allow up to 199 dwellinghouses prior to implementation of improvement works to Myrehead Road and that a reasonable prospect of fulfilment of the infrastructure works has not been demonstrated. This raises the prospect of the development stalling before the 200th unit and without provision of a suitable primary access to serve the proposed development.**
- 4. The application is contrary to Policy D02 'Sustainable Design Principles' of the Falkirk Local Development Plan as the proposed development is not considered to comply with all of the principles of sustainable development set out in the policy. In particular, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, provide safe access for all users, and address infrastructure needs and their impacts with particular regard to traffic and road safety.**

Informative(s):-

- 1. For the avoidance of doubt, the plan(s) to which this decision refer(s) bear our online reference number(s) 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08A, 09, 10, 11A, 12, 13, 14 and 15.**

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pp Director of Development Services

Date: 16 August 2019

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Local Development Plan.
2. Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (Proposed Plan).
3. Objection received from Mr Alan McMaster, Stanehadden, Linlithgow, EH49 6LQ on 6 January 2018.
4. Representation received from Mr Lindsay Mcfadzean, 72 Birkdale Park, Armadale, EH48 2NE on 23 January 2018.

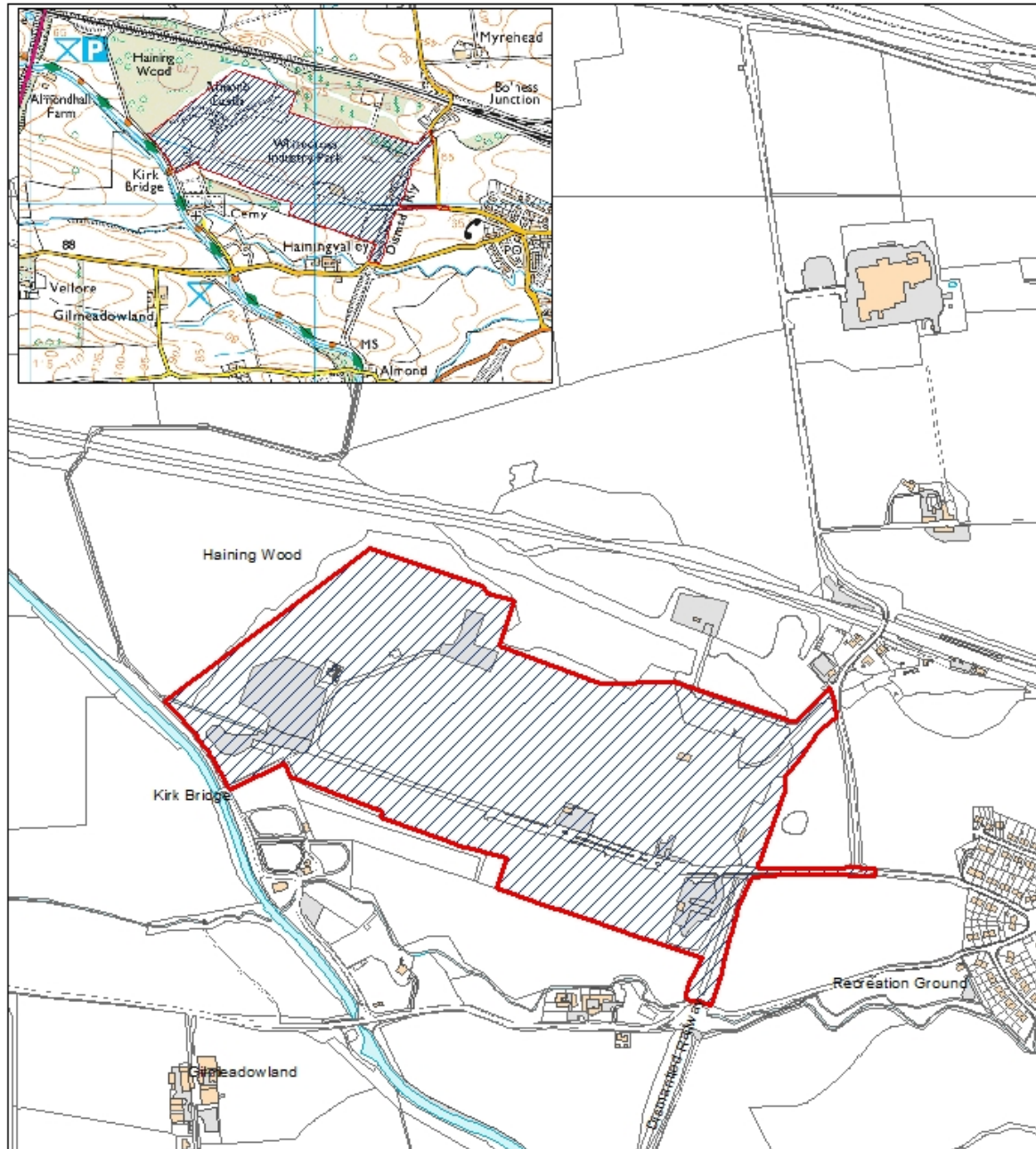
Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 504935 and ask for Brent Vivian, Senior Planning Officer.

Planning Committee

Planning Application Location Plan

P/17/0792/PPP

This plan is for location purposes only. It should not be interpreted as an exact representation of the application site.



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