

## APPENDIX 4: LANDSCAPE POLICY GUIDANCE

This section presents an overview of relevant planning policy documents and guidance where they have implications for the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

### Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010)

Scottish Planning Policy suggests that the Local Development Plan (LDP), see below, should take a broader approach to landscape rather than just conserving designated or protected sites. It suggests that protection of landscape is a matter to be considered by the LDP particularly where it would:

- *‘Safeguard and enhance the character and quality of landscapes which are important or particularly valued locally or regionally, or*
- *Promote understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of local landscapes, or*
- *Safeguard and promote important settings for outdoor recreation and tourism locally.’*

### TAYplan – Strategic Development Plan 2012 - 2032

Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 a new system of Development Planning is being developed. This will replace the current Development Plan system of Structure Plans and Local Plans, although these will remain in use until new Plans are adopted under the new system. The new Development Plan system for Perth and Kinross will consist of the Strategic Development Plan (TAYplan) prepared jointly by Perth & Kinross, Dundee, Angus and Fife Councils (adopted in 2012 and replaced the previous Structure Plan) and a Local Development Plan (LDP) to cover all of Perth and Kinross.

The Strategic Development Plan sets out policies for where development should be over the next 20 years and how to shape better quality places by the location, design and layout of development. Although policies contained within the TAYplan are not specifically targeted at the landscape, this is an important element in considering the quality of development and that it should understand, incorporate and enhance natural and historic assets. This includes landscapes, habitats, wildlife sites and corridors, vegetation, biodiversity, green spaces, watercourses, archaeological sites, historic buildings, townscapes.

### **Perth Area Local Plan (1996, amended 2000) and Perth Area/Central Area Draft Local Plan (2004)**

Until the Perth Area Local Plan is replaced by the new Perth and Kinross Development Plan (which will replace the existing six Adopted Local Plans), it remains current, although much of its content has been (or will be) superseded.

The Perth Area Local Plan includes the following policy with potential relevance to the landscape and visual assessment:

- Policy 17 – The Council will protect and seek to enhance Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes (Methven Castle, the nearest example, is not affected by the scheme).
- Policy 21 – The Council will safeguard the settings and archaeological landscapes associated with Scheduled ancient monuments (protected under the Ancient monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979).

The Local Plan stated that the settlement boundary of Almondbank has been extended to include the employment generating uses at Cromwell Park and along the banks of the Almond. The employment uses at Lochty and DARA (now Vector Aerospace) are also identified. The Green Belt surrounds the settlement boundary and minor changes have been made to the eastern and southern boundaries to reflect this. The Plan also identifies the open space which is important to the character of the village.

At the time the Local Plan was prepared, there were two large proposals for developments at Almondbank – the larger was Almondbank Valley Village (identified on Figure 7.1) would provide 1,800 new homes, a new primary school, sports/play areas, local shopping and employment facilities, new water and sewage infrastructure, and associated landscape works and vehicular and pedestrian access. It was proposed to infill all the open land between Almondbank and the Inveralmond Industrial Estate to the east, including all of the Huntingtower area and flood plain towards the river. The proposals are not currently being progressed.

A large site for housing was also identified at Pitcairfield (Reference VH4 in the Local Plan), currently occupied by industrial units and shown as ALT H26 on Figure 7.1. Any potential developer would need to take into account the following:

- New access into the site the (new bridge crossing of the Almond).
- Flood risk assessment.
- Drainage improvements.
- Retention of mature trees around river edge except where removal is required for river crossing.
- Pedestrian links to village.

The Local Plan's Green Belt Proposal No 4 states that the Council in partnership with landowners and others will seek to develop a management plan for the Green Belt with the aim of developing the following:

- A sustainable rural economy.
- Increased recreational usage.
- Landscape enhancement where appropriate.
- Improved footpath, cycling and bridleway network providing links to the wider countryside

The Perth Area/Central Area Draft Local Plan also includes the following relevant policies to landscape character and visual impact:

- Environment and Nature Conservation Policy 84: The Council will not normally grant consent for any development that would have an adverse effect on sites of local nature conservation or geological interest and will seek to protect the integrity of such sites identified on the Proposals Maps and any others that may be identified by Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and others, or during the Local Biodiversity Action Plan process, with the owner's agreement during the Plan period.
- Environment and Nature Conservation Policy 85: The Council will seek to protect and enhance habitats of local importance to nature conservation, including grasslands, wetlands and peat-lands and habitats that support rare or endangered species. The Council will take account of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) when making decisions about applications for development.
- Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes Policy 86: The Council will protect and seek to enhance the Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes as identified on the Proposals Maps and any others that may be identified by Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage during the Plan period.
- Tree Preservation Orders Policy 87: Existing tree cover should be protected as far as is practicable in any development proposals and the Council will seek the implementation of appropriate planting schemes. Individual trees or groups of trees which are considered important in their own right, or as part of a wider landscape, and/or contributing to biodiversity, will be protected by the use of Tree Preservation Orders, particularly where they are veteran trees or are considered to be in danger. Only in exceptional cases will Tree Preservation Orders be applied to woodlands or commercial plantations.

In the draft plan the site identified for housing in the Perth Area Local Plan (Ref. ALT H26 on Figure 7.1) is named Pitcairnfield Works and is earmarked for a total of 250 houses over 12 hectares at medium/low densities.