

A map of Levenmouth showing a strategic land allocation. The map features a network of roads and a coastline. A large, irregularly shaped area is highlighted in a light blue color, indicating the strategic land allocation. The text 'Levenmouth Strategic Land Allocation Strategic Framework' is overlaid on the map in a bold, dark red font.

Levenmouth Strategic Land Allocation Strategic Framework

On behalf of Fife Council and Wemyss
October 2012



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This document has been prepared by Savills
on behalf of Fife Council and Wemyss.
For further information please contact:

Myriam Hengesch
Savills
163 West George Street
Glasgow G2 2JJ
T: +44 (0) 141 248 7343
www.savills.com



introduction



Figure 1.1: Site location plan

1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by Savills on behalf of the Wemyss Trustees, Wemyss Development Company (referred jointly hereafter as Wemyss) and Fife Council. In September 2010 Fife Council set out a brief for the preparation of a Strategic Framework for the proposed Levenmouth Strategic Land Allocation (LSLA). This document is in response to that Brief.

The context for this document is the approved Fife Structure Plan 2009. This sets out the strategic land use plan for Fife over the period 2006-2026. In order to deliver the housing and employment growth required by the Structure Plan and to enhance the communities over the plan period a series of Strategic Land Allocations are proposed, including one at Levenmouth. The precise site boundaries and the parameters of development are set out in the Mid Fife Local Plan as adopted on 23 January 2012. The Local Plan supercedes all current local plans covering the Mid Fife area and forms part of the Development Plan for Fife.

This document assimilates a range of background documents, listed in the appendix, earlier master planning and capacity testing into a Strategic Framework. The framework will set the context for detailed masterplanning work (in accordance with PAN83), leading to individual planning applications, and enabling timely delivery of housing, employment, education and other infrastructure. Further detailed placemaking work will be required to establish the character and appearance of the area.

The strategic framework has had regard to a number of background documents and other information. These are listed in the appendix.

Format of document

The Framework will:

- Set out the policy background to the development;
- Assess the wider context, physical constraints and opportunities affecting the site. From this a strategic framework will emerge. A number of layout options for key land use elements have been tested;
- Set out a strategic framework for the SLA, tested against key characteristics, and;
- Set out delivery options including phasing and density parameters to achieve efficient delivery of the SLA in line with the time scales set out in the Structure Plan and Local Plan.
- Provide the basis for detailed masterplanning of the SLA.

Aim

The principal aim of this document is to set out strategic design principles and development parameters to guide production of a detailed masterplan for the Levenmouth Strategic Land Allocation. This will establish the context for delivery of a high quality environment with appropriate services and facilities that will form the foundation for good place making. This in turn will lead to a reversal of population decline in the area and boost the local economy.

2. BACKGROUND

Planning policy context

The following planning policy context has set the guiding principles for the Levenmouth SLA.

Fife Structure Plan

The Approved Fife Structure Plan proposes the development of a number of Strategic Land Allocations within Fife. These are proposed to be mixed use areas for large scale, long-term development with a mix of housing, business, commercial, education and community uses as well as a series of transportation improvements. The developments will be delivered over the plan period (to 2026) and include a number of area specific requirements.

The Structure Plan notes that within Levenmouth, to assist in regeneration, at least 1,000 new houses and 15ha of employment land use will be provided by 2026. The development proposal should maximise the re-use of brownfield land but also seek development on greenfield land to form a comprehensive development scheme and fund new infrastructure and remediation. The Plan states that any development could also contribute to future infrastructure projects in the area including the re-introduction of passenger rail services.

Mid Fife Local Plan

The Mid Fife Local Plan (Local Plan) was adopted on 23 January 2012 and covers the period up to 2026.

The Local Plan sets out a “Levenmouth Development Framework” for the delivery of the Levenmouth SLA. The Development Concept is based on the following key considerations:

- Assessment of landscape capacity through consideration of landform and landscape features;
- Retain main features including burn corridors, ridge lines, tree belts, hedgerows, woodlands, boundary walls, transport corridors and existing built heritage to determine the location and form of the development;
- Planning of the site will take consideration of ground conditions;
- Development should not extend west beyond the B930 (Percival Road); and
- Connectivity to public transport networks

Following the Local Plan examination, a site at Cupar Road in Leven has been added as part of the Levenmouth SLA to allow for delivery of housing within the early stage of the plan period. The capacity of the site is estimated to be 100 dwellings. The site (LVA02) is allocated solely for residential development. LVA02 will be subject to a standalone planning application.

In drawing up the masterplan for the SLA account should be taken of the relevant sections of the Mid Fife Local Plan that apply to the site. The following sections highlight the key elements of the development as set out in the Local Plan. Later stages in the design process should cross refer to the Development Framework making sure that the development takes account of the key requirements.

Key Land Uses

The key land uses for the Levenmouth SLA are set out in the adopted Mid Fife Local Plan and include:

- A phased development of 1650 houses;
- 15 hectares of business land;
- A new link road between the A915 and Fife Energy Park;
- Community facilities;
- Park and play area provision;
- Structural landscaping;
- Retail provision; and
- A primary school.

However, this does not preclude smaller masterplans being delivered for particular projects including the LCIP and the new secondary school. It is proposed that a single masterplan will be produced for the SLA based on this Strategic Framework document.

The SLA will provide a range of housing needs and provide a wide choice in tenure, house types and size of property to create mixed communities and offer choice. 5% of the houses in the SLA will be affordable (both low cost home ownership and rented accommodation).

Key Objectives

The Local Plan states that the key objective for the SLA is to:

“Ensure that exemplar design principles are met. These principles and best practice guidelines are set out in a number of documents including the Fife Masterplans Handbook, the Fife Urban Design Guide, Fife Council’s Transportation Development Guidelines, Supplementary ‘Designing Streets’ Guidance, PAN 83 ‘Masterplanning’ and Local Plan policies. Development proposals should also be supported by the use of design briefs, statements and design codes.”

Retail Development

The Mid Fife Local Plan supports additional retail development in Leven in order to consolidate its role as a district centre. It recognises that the Levenmouth Strategic Land Allocation will deliver regeneration across the whole Levenmouth area, mainly through the delivery of new housing. New retail development in neighbourhood centres will deliver part of the economic benefits of the development. Additional economic benefits will result from the improved road linkage between the Standing Stane Road and the employment areas at Methil Docks and Energy Park Fife.

The Local Plan sets out that the masterplan for the Levenmouth SLA will need to ensure that new retail development will complement rather than compete with the existing centres in Leven, Buckhaven, Methil and Methilhill. The Council seeks to protect Leven Town Centre as the district centre for both residents and visitors in the Levenmouth area.

The Local Plan sets out its defined retail hierarchy. When selecting sites for retail development, the preference is to direct retail development to town and local centres. The local centre in Methil has been identified as serving the local or neighbourhood catchment (Policy R1). Policy R2 sets out that proposals for convenience shopping development should be well located in relation to the communities they are intended to serve, should be easily accessible by public transport and should minimise the need for travel between settlements. Food shopping should be located to satisfy local demand.

background

Density

The Fife Structure Plan requires an overall average density of 25 units per hectare. However, the Local Plan notes that higher densities around the neighbourhood centre, public transport nodes and at key gateways would be anticipated. As a guide, average densities per gross developable area should be taken as:

- High-Medium density – 30-45 units per hectare;
- Lower density – 20-30 units per hectare.

Phasing

The Local Plan sets out the following phasing for the SLA:

2011-2016	= 45 units
2016-2021	= 200 units
2021-2026	= 250 units
Post 2026	= 1,155 units
Total	= 1,650 units

The Local Plan recognises that key infrastructure must be delivered early in the development of the SLA. Each phase of development must be served by its own infrastructure as a stand alone entity, but consideration should be given to the wider layout of the SLA.

Layout

The development must be arranged to allow direct and frequent connections throughout the area to areas of interest, neighbourhood centres and public transport.

New housing should include strong building lines and active frontages along pedestrian and vehicle routes. Prominent buildings and natural features should be utilised to act as focal points and gateways, arterial routes and strategic views should be protected and enhanced and created. Points of arrival must be designed and recognise their importance in relaying the overall character of the place.

Green space, landscape conservation and management

A network of Green spaces must be provided that complement existing landscaping features and provide linkages between areas of open space and the wider landscape. Connectivity of Green space including the provision of quality path networks and habitats are a key to meeting the objective of sustainable places.

Consideration should be given to connecting the green space to the wider network of open spaces and footpaths, for example, the Fife Coastal Path at Ness Braes and the Leven River Valley at Cameron Bridge. In so doing the development will enhance the Fife Core Path network and improve connectivity, as well as reducing the carbon footprint and enhancing the recreation offer of the SLA. The improvements to the footpath network will comply with the Greenspace Strategy and the Central Scotland Green Network.

Sustainability Checklist

A key principle underpinning planning policy is that all development should be “sustainable”. The Scottish Government has produced targets for all new build to meet reductions in CO2 emissions and significant reductions in carbon emissions over the period up to 2050. In addition, Scottish Planning Policy requires Local Authorities to ensure that all new development accords with the sustainable agenda and actively improve design and build quality.

Fife Council has embraced this drive for sustainable development and has set the objective of becoming Scotland's Leading Green Council. It has produced a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document - “Creating Sustainable Communities and Buildings – Sustainability Checklist” which was adopted in September 2010 to meet this objective.

The SPG sets out a checklist that will be used in assessing the preparation and submission of any planning application for Major Development proposals. The Levenmouth SLA falls within this category of development and as such account should be had to the SPG in all aspects of the development. In particular Policy Sus1 from the SPG states that a Sustainability Statement must be submitted with all planning applications. Statements must:

“clearly demonstrate the extent to which the development complies with the relevant standards and meet the set points cap. As a minimum, developments will be expected to meet the equivalent of a Silver Standard in all relevant elements.”

Future masterplanning work for the site will need to refer to the SPG, based on the above standards. In particular the principles set out in **Table 2.1** opposite are relevant.

Subsequent masterplan work will need to:-

- Ensure that the principles of sustainability have been incorporated in to all aspects of the design process;
- To reduce energy consumption on the site;
- To minimise pollution through use of sustainable materials;
- Enhancing bio-diversity and create new habitats or improve existing habitats where possible, including landscape enhancements throughout the development;
- To provide sustainable drainage solutions;
- To reduce the need and reliance for motor vehicles and to encourage more sustainable modes of transport through appropriate layout and design of the SLA; and
- To provide appropriate on site energy production.

The SPG also contains more detailed requirements that should be taken account of in subsequent stages of the development process.

In terms of the higher level design principles for the masterplan the following sections of the SPG are relevant:

SPG Section	Requirement	Comments
4.8	Transport and Proximity & Access to Local Amenities	Green Travel Plan needed for any planning application
4.9	Public Transport	Public transport must be considered at the layout stage to ensure convenient access and use
4.10	Private vehicles	All residential areas should be designed for 20 mph through appropriate street layouts rather than add on features
4.11	Pedestrians and Cyclists	The layout must provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes, as well as parking areas in all buildings
4.12	Biodiversity	Layout to enhance the biodiversity of the site where possible
4.16	Consultation and Community Sustainability	Appropriate consultation shall be undertaken on all aspects of the development – as detailed in the consultation strategy
4.17	Flood Risk	Avoid areas at risk of flooding and assess impacts
5.1	Food Cultivation	Layout to provide for allotments or private space sufficient to allow food cultivation
5.3	Economic Opportunities	To deliver the business development early in the development process
5.4	Employment	To ensure business development is provided within walking and cycling distance of dwellings
5.5	Services	Provide community services within walking/cycling distance of houses and business uses
5.6	Publicly usable green space	The quantity, quality and access to green space to be taken account of in the masterplan process
5.7	Diversity	Lifetime Homes standard to be adopted in the layout and design of dwellings. A range of house styles and sizes to be provided to allow choice and diversity
5.8	Transport	To provide information on local transport services and to consider transport nodes in the streetscape
5.9	Special Community Project	To consider quality public areas to foster sense of place and community ownership
6.3	Integrated Design	To provide greenspaces to enhance habitat lost by development where possible
8.2	Reduction in Surface Run Off	Drainage on the site should be designed using sustainable drainage techniques
9.10	Solar Design/Orientation	Design and layout of buildings should take account of orientation to maximise solar gain.

Table 2.1: principal considerations from 'Sustainability Checklist' SPG

background

Transport and structural requirements

The Framework sets out preliminary transportation details and a strategy for the highway network throughout the SLA. It is acknowledged that prior to preparation of the masterplan, a detailed Transportation Assessment will be undertaken. It will address both on and off site transportation issues in full detail.

The siting of the primary school, business land, retail uses and community facilities will all have an impact on the local highway network being high traffic generators. The subsequent Masterplan will consider Safer Routes to Schools, road, cycle and pedestrian routes through the SLA.

Road infrastructure

The masterplan for the entire SLA will set out required upgrades and, prior to development beginning on site, there must be agreement on the financial structure through which transport networking improvements will be delivered either through Section 75 agreements and / or planning conditions.

Community facilities – neighbourhood centres

The Local Plan states that the key aspect of the development in Levenmouth should be the creation of distinct neighbourhood centres that will serve as a focal point for the new community. These centres should be located to reflect 400 metre walking catchments ensuring that most residents within the new development will be within easy walking/cycling distance of a neighbourhood centre.

It is key that the new neighbourhood centres do not impact on the established town centre at Leven or the existing local centres at Methil , Methilhill and Buckhaven.

The Masterplan should include the following facilities:

- A primary school
- Healthcare facilities
- Small areas of public open space and childrens play areas
- local green corridors
- Recycling points at a ratio of 1 per 500 houses.

If any area of playing fields are lost replacement provision must be provided in line with the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy.

3. SITE ASSESSMENT

Site ownership

The majority of the site is within the ownership of Wemyss in use as agriculture, roads and employment generating uses. The balance of the site is owned by either, Fife Council, providing principally for Buckhaven High School and associated playing fields and a third party that owns the Former Diosynth Complex at the Muiredge Industrial Estate. Third party owners have been given the opportunity to comment on this strategic framework during the public consultation exercise. Further discussions with the third parties will take place as and when it is deemed necessary.

Site description

The site is located to the south-west of Sea Road as shown outlined in red on the plan in Figure 3.1. The total area of the site is approximately 110 hectares.

The site extends from the junction of Sea Road with Wellesley Road westwards towards Buckhaven High School. Land at Cameron Farm forms the western half of the site. The site is well-defined by roads, field boundaries and the urban form of the existing settlement. To the east the site is bound by Sea Road and Cowley Street. To the west the boundaries of the site are formed by the Standing Stane Road and Percival Road. Built development bounds the site to the south and north.

Existing land uses

The predominant land use on the site is agriculture. The Agricultural Land Classification for the land is Grade 2 with parts being Grade 3.1. This has come under increasing pressure due to the juxtaposition with the urban area and small field sizes.

In the southern part of the site, to the north of Cowley Street is a former brick works yard that is now occupied by a plastic mouldings company. To the west of Methilhaven Road is the Buckhaven High School and the associated playing fields. The playing fields are within the site, immediately to the west of Methilhaven Road and south of the school. To the south-west of the site is the former Diosynth Complex.

Historical land use

There is a long history of coal mining in the Methil area and it is reported that records go back to the late 15th Century. There are some 12 coal seams, dipping at an angle of approximately 7 to 9 degrees (a gradient of 1 in 6 to 1 in 8), to the east across the site which outcrop beneath the superficial drift deposits of Glacial Till (Boulder Clay) and Glacial Sands and Gravels and Marine Alluvium. The superficial deposits have a varying degree of thickness between 4.3m and 9.15m.

There are some 54 mine abandonment plans covering the area of the site dating between 1757 and 1967; the earlier of these records have scant information available, however since 1872 when records were required to be kept by law the information becomes more comprehensive. The coal seams were worked from several collieries, namely Cameron, Frances Wellesley, Leven, Wellsgreen, Pirnie and Muiredge Collieries.

Two technical studies have been carried out on the site into the implications of the mining on layout and viability. The report by Mason Evans (June 2009) states that whilst it will be necessary to grout or

fill a substantial number of mines the number and extent can be reduced though careful masterplanning. The overall conclusion of the investigations is that *“taking into account the magnitude of the site it is anticipated that the costs for mine stabilisation while significant fall well within the limits of commercial viability.”*

In addition, other parts of the SLA has been used as a chemical works (the Diosynth complex), and brickworks (to the south-east of the SLA (now in use as a plastics production factory).

Surrounding land uses

To the north of the site is the residential development of Methilhill. To the east is the residential area and open space of Savoy Park. To the south of the site is the residential development of Buckhaven. To the west is the main road (A915), beyond which is open countryside.

Planning application history

The former Diosynth complex has been the subject of three planning applications - two for residential use (07/03706/COPP and 08/03528/COPP) and the one (11/03300/PPP) for a mix of residential, care home, sheltered accommodation and health clinic. All applications have been refused permission, with the second of the residential applications being dismissed at appeal. One consistent reason being that the proposals would represent piecemeal development of part of the LSLA.

Fife Council is due to submit a planning application for its Low Carbon Investment Park on the western part of the site late 2012/ early 2013.

site assessment

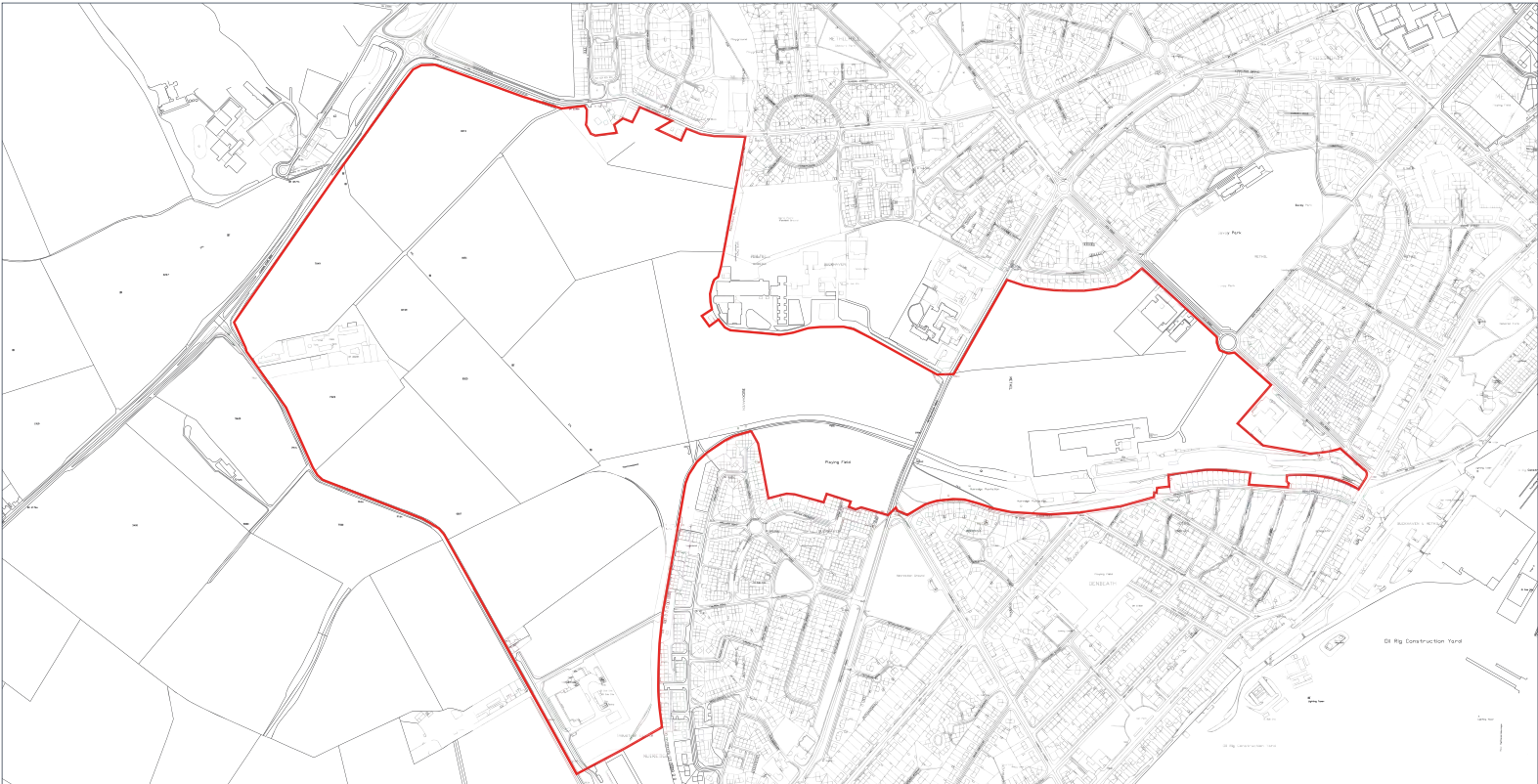


Figure 3.1: Site extent

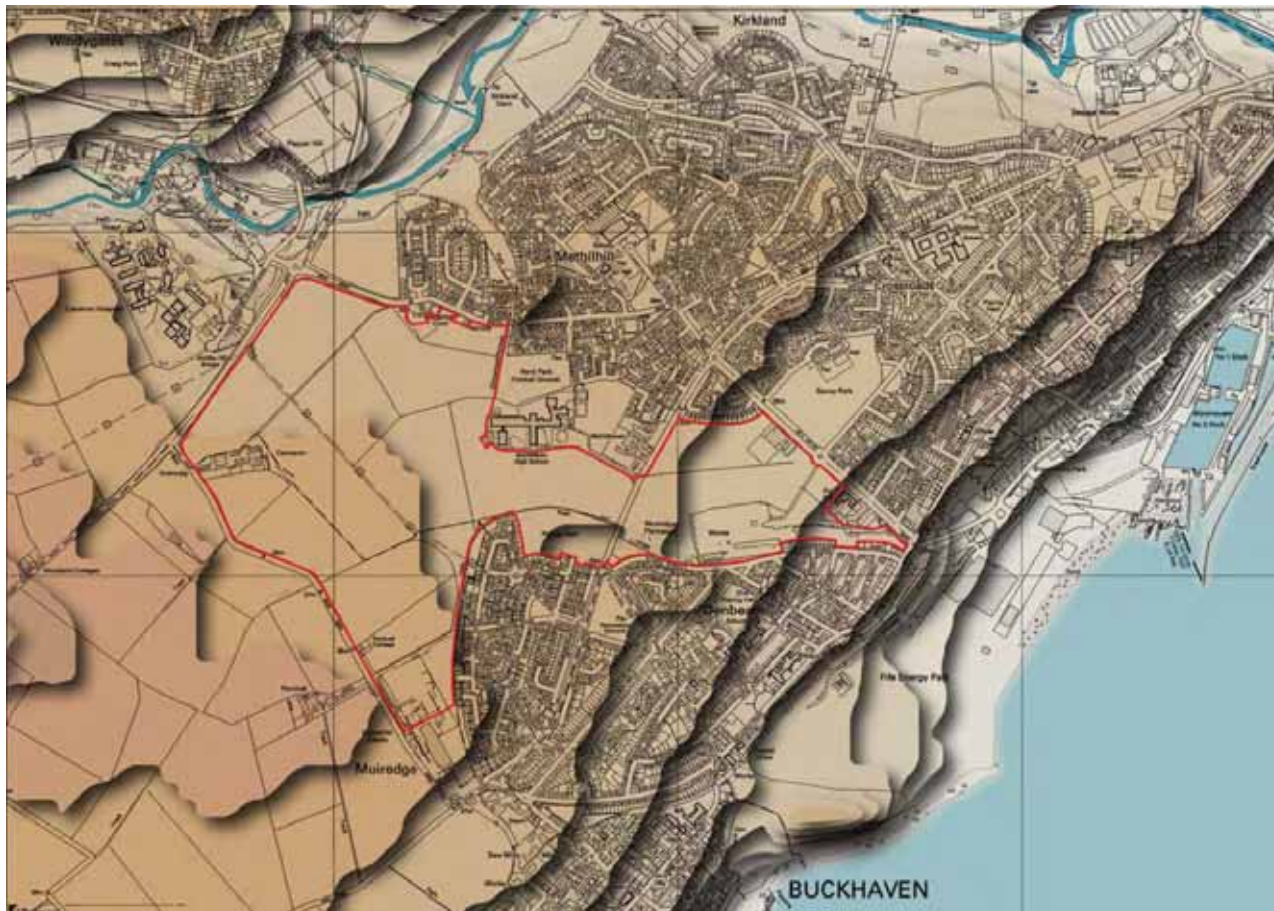
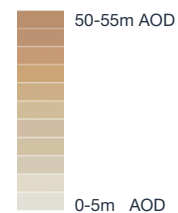


Figure 3.2: Site topography



PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

This section of the document assesses the existing site area and immediate surrounds to identify any physical elements which might pose potential constraints to development or create opportunities to create a well-balanced and sustainable development in this location.

Topography and land character

The existing levels of the site indicate that a fall in the region of 10 to 15 metres occurs from west to east along the route of the proposed east-west road link. At the western end of the development site along the boundary formed by the B930 Percival Road, existing ground levels vary between 35m to 40m above ordnance datum (AOD). At the intersection of the main alignment with A955 Methilhaven Road the existing ground levels are in the region of 30m AOD. Finally at the existing roundabout on Sea Road the existing ground levels have reduced to approximately 25m AOD.

The proposed development site covers an area of approximately 110 hectares or 1.1 square kilometres. To the west of the site the land is farmed and is currently used to graze livestock and grow arable produce. This area of land gently undulates, however the general fall of the land is toward the east. There is a change of character further to the east and the land is used as school and public playing fields, although this area appears to have been graded to provide this facility, the OS mapping indicates that a fall of approximately 5 metres towards the west occurs over this section.

This area of land gently climbs and rolls over to fall towards the east where the arable land stops and a small area of trees and general

site assessment

scrub is encountered, this area is generally flat. The topography is not seen to be a barrier to the delivery of this site but creates an attractive and deliverable setting for housing on the north western part of the site.

Superficial deposits

Superficial deposits exist and in fact blanket the area of the site with Glacial Till (Boulder Clay) present across the site and Glacial Sand and Gravel present in the north western part of the site. Generally the superficial deposits in the western area are between 5 and 10 metres thick. The surface geology (superficial deposits) in the eastern part of the site is Glacial Till overlain by Marine Alluvium and is represented by the deposits of the 100 foot raised beach. The thickness of the superficial deposits does vary across the site with generally thicker deposits in the east where the superficial deposits are recorded to be between 10 and 15 metres thick.

Solid geology

The solid geological strata in the area of the site are the Carboniferous Productive Coal Measures and the Barren Red Coal Measures. The productive coal measures include sixteen worked seams and a number of other small seams interspersed between them. The coal seams vary in thickness between 0.2m to 4.57m and dependant upon the nature of the structural geology across the site the coal seams can occur near the surface or at depth.

The solid geology of this small coalfield area tends to be complex, with a number of main faults running east/west, the main one being the Muiredge fault running across the southern part of the site and a smaller one through the middle of the site.

Existing habitats

The site has no designated habitats, although there are existing hedgerows around the field margins that will act as wildlife corridors. The strategic framework of the development will seek to retain the historical layout of the hedgerows where possible. It will also seek to mitigate and enhance habitats where necessary.

Utilities

There are high voltage powerlines passing through the site, from the centre of Standing Stane Road running southwards towards Eagle Road. These powerlines require an easement on either side and will have to be assessed at the next stage regarding the safe distance for construction of habitable buildings. Consideration will be given to placing these underground.

Environmental impact

The proposed development will be partially on brownfield land and partially on greenfield land. It will abut built development to the north, east and south. The proposal must have a strong landscaped edge to the open countryside to the west. The layout should respect the existing network of hedges and link in with the existing road network to produce a seamless layout.

The scheme has the ability to regenerate the wider area through good quality housing with a strong gateway feature. A good quality scheme will also assist in improving the general perception of the overall area.

The proposal will involve the loss of grades 2 and 3.1 agricultural land. The loss of this land will have little impact on the viability of

agriculture in the wider area.

TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

It has been identified in the BiGGAR Economics Report (May 2010) that the transport links to the east of the Redhouse Roundabout influence the socio and economic profile of the area and improving linkages to the wider public and private transport network must form part of the strategic framework.

Road access

The site is bound by Percival Road to the west, Standing Stane Road and Main Street to the north, Sea Road to the east and Methilhaven Road passes north south through the central part of the site. Methilhaven Road and Standing Stane Road link through to Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Dunfermline. Methilhaven Road is a direct link to Leven town centre which lies about 3km east of the site.

As part of the comprehensive development of this site a new street structure will be needed. A hierarchy of streets should be developed (in accordance with the Fife Masterplans Handbook and Urban Design Guide) in order that development is easy to navigate. This will also assist in providing an identity to the area by linking the street types with character areas. Consideration will also need to be given to the 'Sustainability checklist' SPG in relation to the provision of public transport, for private vehicles, cycling and walking.

There is also a need for improved links to the Fife Energy Park, as referenced in the Local Plan as well as a junction upgrade at Sea Road/Wellesley Road/Swan View/High Street.

Bus services

A number of bus routes lie along Sea Road, Methilhaven Road, Standing Stane Road and Percival Road, making Leven town centre and surrounding areas easily accessible from the site by public transport. The site is in a sustainable location and the development can encourage the use of public transport. Indeed, the development of the site will improve the efficiency of bus links as it fills a gap in an otherwise spread out, diverse area. Sections 4.8 and 4.9 of the 'Sustainable checklist' SPG provide further issues for consideration relating to proximity and provision of public transport.

Train Services

The site does not have direct access to existing train services. However, the Local Plan refers to the scale of housing contributing to improving the viability of re-opening the Levenmouth Railway.

Pedestrians

The development should be perceived as a series of walkable neighbourhoods based on good practice and robust urban design principles. The development concept and strategic framework will be set out using the concept of walkable neighbourhoods where most local facilities are within 400-800 metres/ 5-10 minute walking distances from the new housing. The scheme will maximise pedestrian walkways and improve access to the local schools and shops promoting modes of transport other than the private car.

Cyclists

The strategic framework must envisage that cycle ways will be established throughout the scheme, linking into existing cycle ways, to improve connections with existing facilities and surrounding areas. Although none are specified at this stage, these will be incorporated at the masterplanning stage in accordance with the advice in PAN83, the

SPG 'Sustainability checklist' and other masterplanning guidance.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Site investigation

Site investigation surveys have revealed that the brownfield element of the site will need extensive remediation of disused coal shafts. In addition, there have been several areas of contaminated land identified, which includes a former landfill site of circa 1950, an unknown waste facility, an infilled brickworks and a railway line infilled with soils. Further details of these sites are unknown at this stage. Further investigation work is required to better define the exact development area.

The site is not known to be within any floodrisk area.

The site is not considered to be affected by any air pollution and the development is unlikely to produce any pollution. There are no known pipelines through the site.

Services

No detailed work on services has been carried out at this stage. However, it is understood that water, electricity and telecommunications services are located in close proximity to the site boundaries and as such no problems are perceived.

With regard to foul sewerage, it is understood that a scoping report is being prepared by Scottish Water that will inform the masterplanning of the site. Either on or off-site facilities could be provided, if required.

There are several power lines crossing the site and the initial highways assessment recommended the under grounding of several of these

to avoid issues with the proposed road layout. There are also several sub-stations that may need to be moved to accommodate the roads. This is not considered to represent an issue in the development of the site.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

In May 2010 BiGGAR Economics was commissioned by Fife Council to carry out a study into the social and economic conditions, needs and opportunities within Levenmouth. The Study found that significant variation exist both within and between the two main wards which constitute Levenmouth. The areas of Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss villages suffers from high levels of deprivation especially in income and employment, while its population suffers from low educational attainment, a high mortality rate, a lack of health awareness and a high incidence of crime. There is also a high level of derelict land which contributes to a poor environment and perceived quality of life. The areas of Leven, Kennoway and Largo also suffers from deprivation and its population has low educational attainment and poorer health than is typical within Fife and Scotland. However, it has significantly lower levels of derelict land and the quality of the environment is on average with the rest of Fife.

The enterprise base of Levenmouth is currently focussed around three principle sectors:

- Manufacturing;
- Distribution, hotels & restaurants, and;
- Public administration, education and health.

These sectors tend to have relatively low earnings potential, do not offer long term stability and in many cases do not provide workers with transferable skills.

site assessment

The BIGGAR report states “a very substantial opportunity is presented by the prospect of housing led regeneration; this will potentially significantly reverse a downward trajectory for the population and facilitate growth in consumer expenditure, as well as contributing to physical renewal of the area and investment in supporting infrastructure (such as new and refurbished schools). The availability of good housing and educational facilities will be key to the perceived quality of life in the area.”

Rapid expansion of jobs at the Fife Energy Park and expansion at Diageo are also seen to be a key to assist with regeneration in the area.

Community impact, housing mix and tenure

The surrounding area has a mix of dwelling size, type and tenure. There is little choice for residents wishing to move up the housing ladder in terms of new housing. The development of the LSLA will provide a mix of residential development both in terms of size of units and tenure. It has not been possible at this stage to identify a precise mix.

Affordable housing

It is recognised by Fife Council that Methil already has a high proportion of affordable housing. There is, however, understood to be an issue regarding the quality of such housing in the area. Given this the Sea Road site is available for affordable housing but this should be balanced against a thorough housing needs survey for the area as a whole. The affordable housing would be spread throughout the development but not so dispersed as to create maintenance issues for housing associations.

Anticipated population

The Mid Fife Local Plan sets a target of 1,650 dwellings over the Plan period (up to 2026) for the SLA. This would mean an average density of around 28-30 dwellings per Ha. The density of the existing, surrounding built up area varies between 20 dwellings per hectare in the north to approximately 40 dwellings per hectare in the south. Based on this total number (1,650 units) and applying the average household size statistic for Scotland of 2.21 a resulting population of 3,647 people is seen.

Size of development in comparison to the existing community

The LSLA was chosen, in part, due to its physical location, bridging the housing areas of Methil, Buckhaven and Methilhill. The development site complements the layout and form of the existing settlements and has the ability to significantly improve infrastructure and community facilities in the area, as well as linkages between them, to the benefit of the whole community.

Anticipated social mix of the development

The development will be socially mixed and bears the potential to integrate with the existing settlements to form new community networks.

Impact on privacy and amenity of neighbours

The majority of the site abuts open areas or roads such that there will be no significant impact on privacy or amenity of surrounding residential neighbours. However, there are three areas where rear gardens of housing abut the site. These include houses along Brady Crescent, Raven Crescent and Kestrel Crescent. In these areas the strategic framework must demonstrate due care and attention to

protect the amenity and privacy of the existing residents.

Schooling

Fife Council has been successful with its application for funding to replace the existing Buckhaven and Kirkland High Schools with a new single purpose built secondary school for Levenmouth. The site envisaged for the new school is the existing Buckhaven High School playing fields. The new school would have a capacity for up to 1,700 pupils.

The building work on the school is likely to commence by late 2013 subject to further ground surveys and an extensive remediation strategy.

Emergency services

The road layout and density of development must take into account accessibility for emergency vehicles.

Other community facilities

As part of the strategic framework neighbourhood centres should be proposed, including shops and other community facilities.

The Fife Retail Capacity Study 2010 (Update March 2011) sets out a detailed assessment of the current floorspace requirements for Fife. The SLA falls within the Mid Fife study area (which is different to the Mid Fife Local Plan Area).

The SLA area falls within an established residential area which is well served by local retail facilities which provide day-to-day shopping

facilities in the Levenmouth area. The local centres within close proximity to the SLA are shown on the Mid Fife Local Plan map extract for Levenmouth shown in Figure 3.3 (coloured in blue) and include:

- Buckhaven Local Centre (Randolph St/College St)
- Methil Local Centre (Wellesley Road) and
- Methilhill Local Centre (Methilhaven Road).

The local centres provide essential everyday shopping facilities and ancillary services to the residents of the area. In addition to the local centres, there are further local shops and services to fulfil top-up shopping needs.

The current foodstore provision within the immediate area of the site is dominated by small convenience stores including Spar, Nisa and David Sands as well as medium sized foodstores in Leven including Farmfoods, Iceland, Lidl and Sainsbury. There is an extant planning permission for an Aldi Store at Mountfluerie in Leven. Larger food superstores within the catchment area are located in Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy. Figure 3.4 identifies the current foodstore distribution within Mid Fife and shows that the larger food superstores are located outwith the immediate Levenmouth area.

The Council's Fife Retail Capacity Study sets out that there may be an opportunity for a new supermarket in Leven, depending on retail assessment and policy considerations. There is a pending planning application for a Tesco store at Riverside Road (with a gross floorspace of 3,372 sqm) opposite Riverside Retail Park. The Council's study sets out that there is limited capacity up to 2015 for additional foodstore provision but this increases beyond 2020 with the potential to support an additional major foodstore.

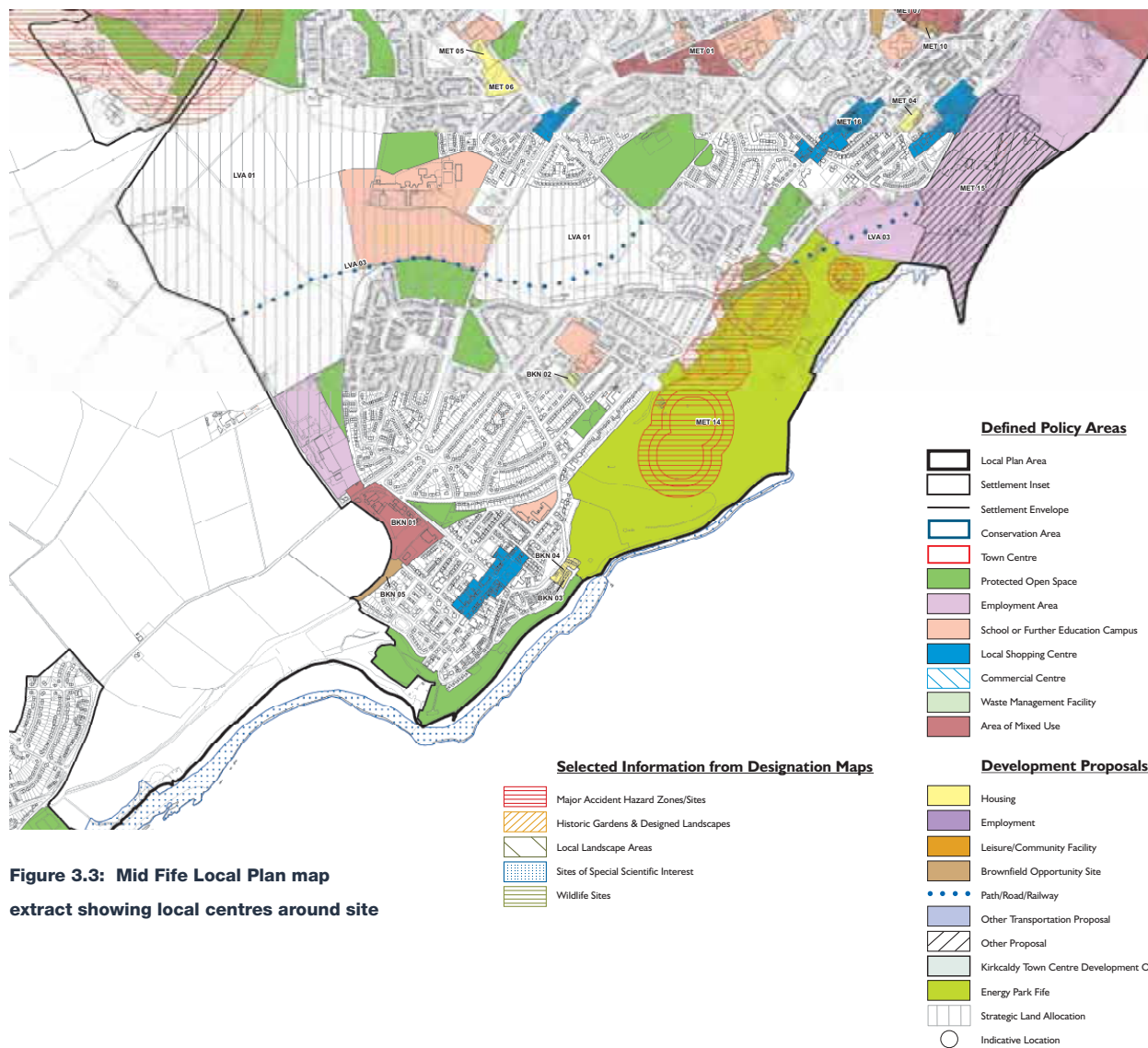


Figure 3.3: Mid Fife Local Plan map extract showing local centres around site

site assessment

At present there is no identified gap for a new food superstore in the SLA area. Should this change in the long term, the masterplan would be adjusted accordingly to address any further shopping needs whilst protecting the existing and proposed local shopping facilities.

In terms of comparison floorspace, the study shows additional capacity to support significant comparison floorspace up to 2015 which should mainly be delivered through a major town centre scheme. There is limited capacity for bulky goods retail warehousing up to 2020.

Any future retail developments would have to be assessed against policies R1 – R4 of the Mid Fife Local Plan.

Accessibility to employment

The scheme is located adjacent to various employment areas and is highly accessible, in particular the existing employment area off Percival Road. In addition, the existing Local Plan has a further allocation for employment land to the north of the existing area.

Employment creation

The proposal will boost and bolster economic activities in the area as a direct result of increased demand for services and facilities. In addition the jobs created by the construction of the scheme will be significant.

The proposed development also has a substantial element of employment use (15ha) which will create many new jobs for existing and future residents. The provision of employment in this location will benefit both existing and future residents in terms of accessibility.

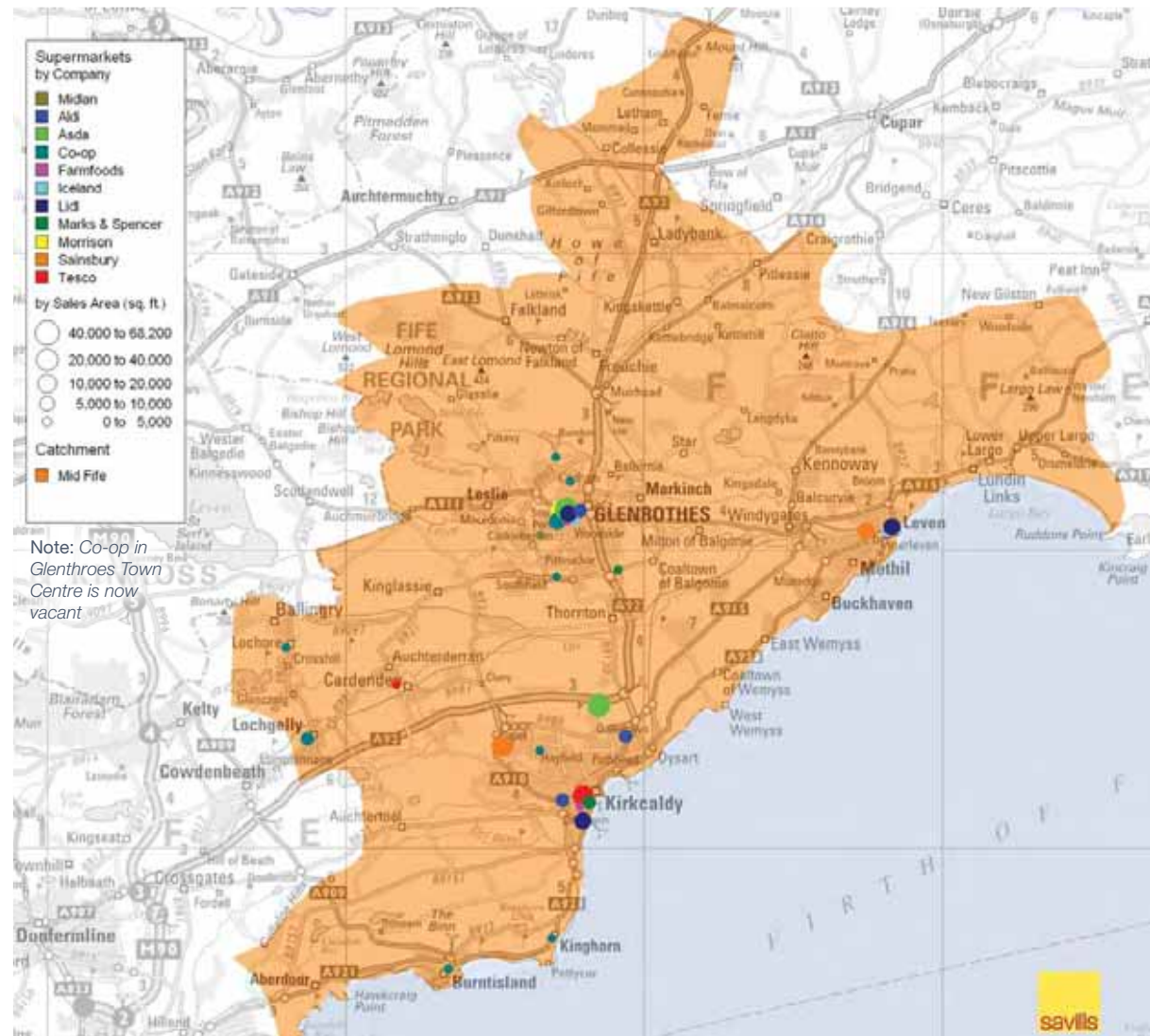


Figure 3.4: Mid Fife catchment showing foodstore operators

Opportunities and constraints

Drawing from the preceding sections, it is evident that the site is relatively unconstrained as there are no known landscape designations, archaeological findings and planning designations which would hinder future development of the site. The site is relatively flat.

The main considerations for future development of the site are the location of employment land and school playing fields which would guide the overall site development.

Depending on more detailed studies, the existing powerlines within the site can either be relocated or rerouted underground. The higher voltage powerlines in the western part of the site will require a certain amount of easement, the exact distance can be determined at the planning permission in principle stage or at the detailed design stage. It is, however, anticipated that a buffer distance of 30 metres either side of the cables is likely to be needed.

There are a number of mine shaft entrances with associated undermining and potentially instable ground conditions. There is likely to be a requirement to stabilise beneath buildings, structures and adoptable roads. The development of the site would incur these remediation costs but sensitive masterplanning of the site could lead to significant reductions in the areas required to be remediated.

As such, none of the above mentioned criteria will cause any hindrance to the development and can be overcome with sensitive and robust

masterplanning. The development of the site will be based on good design principles to ensure a secure and safe environment with well linked pedestrian and cycle ways.

Initial reports and surveys have been undertaken to ascertain the extent of undermining on the site, key visual receptors and road alignment, there will be a need for other technical studies (including ecological impact, visual impact assessment, drainage and trees survey) to be carried out to evaluate the various physical constraints on the site prior to the masterplanning stage.

There are several opportunities to create a sustainable new development with good design principles for a strategic allocation in this location. These are shown in Figure 3.5 and summarised below.

- ✓ There is an opportunity to use the existing road network, including Percival Road, Sea Road and Methilhaven Road and Standing Stane Road;
- ✓ There are a number of potential access points into the site off the existing road network;
- ✓ There is an opportunity to provide employment use which could be directly accessed off Percival Road without any impact on the existing settlement or new residential development;
- ✓ The site proposes the opportunity to create a permeable and integrated community by bridging the gap between the areas to the north and south of the site;
- ✓ The development of the site at this location will regenerate a brownfield site through ground stabilisation and remediation of the old mine shaft entrances;
- ✓ The site development would rationalise and consolidate the Buckhaven High School playing fields;
- ✓ Provision of the identified need for affordable housing to create a socially inclusive development; and
- ✓ Creation of green infrastructure and improvement of biodiversity in the area.

site assessment

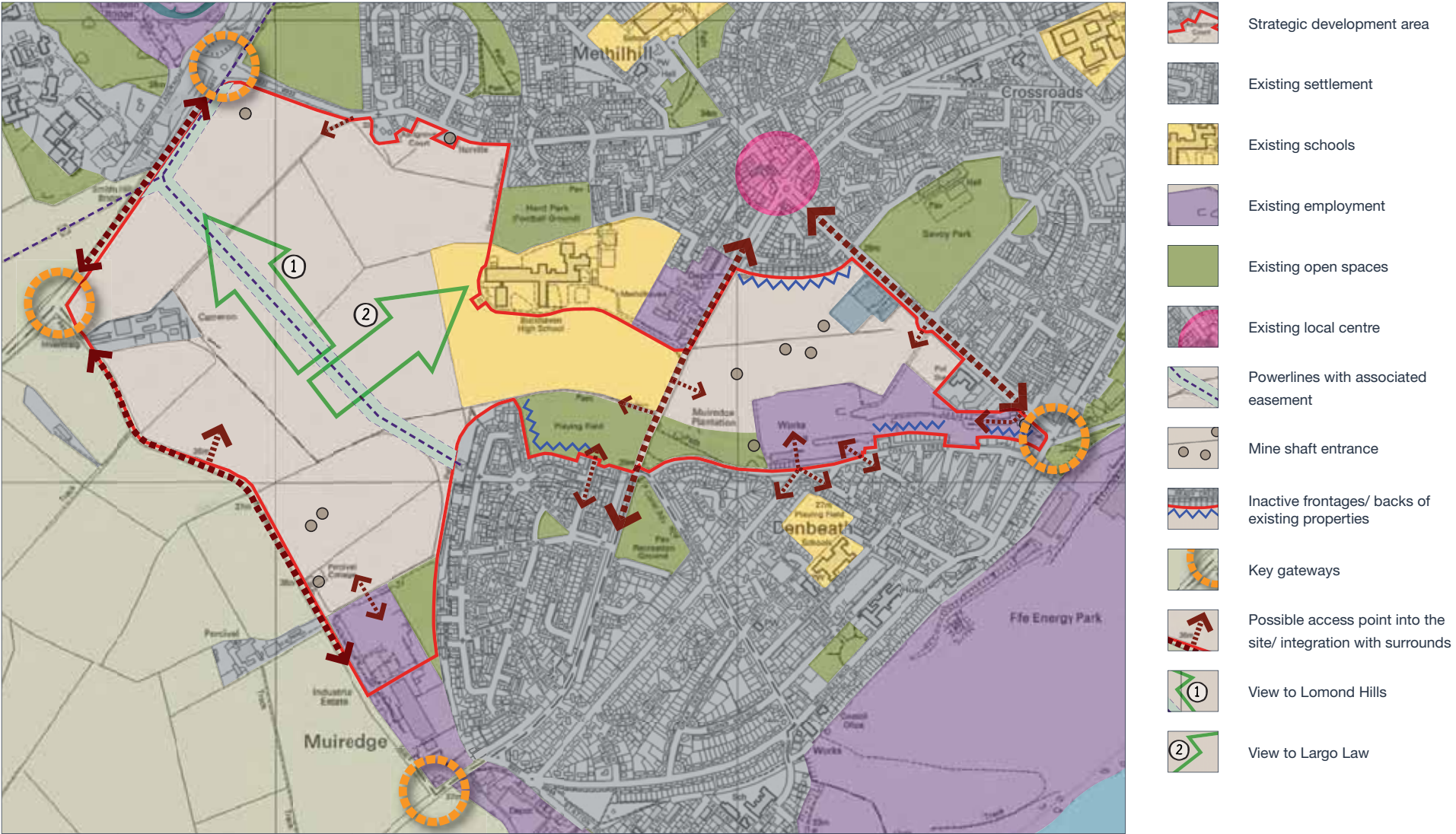


Figure 3.5: Site analysis: opportunities and constraints

4. SLA - Preferred Options

The site assessment informed the options appraisal set out in the draft Strategic Framework as presented to the Levenmouth Area Committee in March 2012. The draft SLA set out preferred development options for the employment land and playing fields location. The development options were based on creating a sustainable development, with a mix of services and facilities, public open spaces, the required element of employment, housing balance and to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling. This section builds on the consultation exercise and sets out the preferred options for the main elements of the strategic framework.

Access

Access and linkages into the existing route network is a primary consideration for the LSLA, which benefits from several access points off the existing road network that circulate the site. A previous transport assessment provides evidence towards the suitability of access off Percival Road, Methilhaven Road and Sea Road. In addition, this spatial evaluation also considers the advantages of connecting through to the Standing Stane Road to create a highly accessible and permeable development. Figure 4.1 illustrates how an east west link could form a new connection between these existing access points and would be supplemented with appropriate junction improvements.

It is envisaged that Percival Road, Methilhaven Road and Sea Road already form the basis of a primary road network structure. The east west link would form the primary spine through the development with secondary loops off this spine. Secondary access would be subject to further detailed consideration following additional technical work.

Whilst the road hierarchy is important, given the topography of the site, the existing road network and surrounding development, it is not seen to be critical in influencing the layout of the development at this stage. However, the road hierarchy will be addressed at the next stage of the design process. The road hierarchy will assist in guiding the urban grain, block sizes and patterns and will inform the character of the areas. We envisage the road hierarchy to be set out as the main east-west link road, being the most dense and carrying maximum traffic, followed by secondary street structures, followed by tertiary or residential streets. Further technical studies and character assessment will inform the final street hierarchy.

Local Centres

In terms of good design and to create successful commercial values, it is considered that the mixed use local centres would benefit most from strategically locating them at crossroads or important junctions. It is proposed to have two local centres in addition to the existing local centres located at:

- junction between Methilhaven Road and new east west link and
- crossroads formed between the new east west link and new north south link connecting to Standing Stane Road.

Figure 4.1 shows 400m radius circles around the mixed use centres indicating easy walking distance (5-6 minutes) to services and facilities as well as existing centres. These will be beneficial to at least 80% of the development with the remainder of the housing within 600m walking distance (8-10 minutes). Following more detailed

masterplanning a reduction in the number of neighbourhood centres may be feasible.

The proposed neighbourhood centres will include stores which would not have an impact on existing stores or established centres. The proposed retail element will address local needs resulting from the increase in population and will not harm Leven Town Centre. The proposed local neighbourhood centres will have the potential to add to the overall economic benefit of the SLA and address any shortfalls in local retail provision.

Green Networks

The proposed green networks and open space provision are in line with the SESplan and Central Scotland Green Network requirements. The SLA will create a new green link to connect the River Leven Valley with the Fife Coastal Path at Buckhaven. The masterplan will set out further details on the provision of green space and address the minimum requirement of 8ha of quality green space that is required in line with Council policy.

Employment Land

The draft SLA set out that the preferred option for employment land provision is the south western corner of the site due to the following advantages:

- Employment in this location is close to the existing employment north of Methilhaven Road;
- Employment in this area can be easily accessed from the existing Percival Road (B930) which is at the edge of the settlement area;

SLA - preferred option
















-  Strategic development area
-  Existing settlement
-  Existing schools
-  Existing employment
-  Existing open spaces
-  Key connections
-  Other link opportunities
-  Key nodes
-  Existing local centre
-  Walkable neighbourhoods
-  Employment links
-  Green links (power line easement)
-  Expected road and junction improvements required for SLA development

Figure 4.1: Accessibility and Connectivity Plan

- This area will benefit from the existing connection via Wellesley Road to the existing employment to the south of the site;
- The north-south green link and easement around the power lines will provide a substantial buffer between the industrial use of the employment area and residential areas;
- The potential industrial use of this employment area will not interfere with the largely residential areas surrounding the site; and
- The eastern part of the site can be developed for residential use and will create an area better integrated with its surrounding areas.

Education Provision

In light of the recent funding arrangements for a new high school on the Buckhaven High School playing fields, the SLA sets out a broad indication of the proposals. A further consultation exercise will also determine the future of the location of the playing fields. The details of the new school and playing fields will be determined through a detailed design process.

The SLA includes the provision of a new primary school the location of which has been determined in light of the existing primary school catchments. There is limited projected capacity at Methilhill and Denbeath Primary Schools. There is some capacity at Buckhaven Primary School and therefore it is expected that some development can take place before the provision of a primary school is required.

Other Factors

It is acknowledged that the document has not considered some of the other possible issues such as ecology, drainage strategy, landscape and visual impact assessment. However, this is an iterative process and the scheme will evolve and develop in response to the studies as these are undertaken.

Based on the policy and physical analysis in the overall site assessment, it is considered that the following land uses are key to producing an effective framework for the development:

- Location of the Employment land
- Layout of the School playing fields
- Indicative green network links
- Potential neighbourhood centre locations

The options for the above land uses will be considered in relation to surrounding uses and road network.

strategic framework

5. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This document provides a strategic framework for the development with an indicative land use budget. A number of technical studies, character area study and historic growth need to be carried out to produce a robust vision for the development. The Framework also takes on board the key considerations set out in the Levenmouth Development Framework, contained within the Mid Fife Local Plan.

The strategic framework sets out the strategic design principles and essential development parameters to guide development and steer decisions made at the detailed masterplanning stage. This has been based on a site assessment and evaluation of options in the previous sections of the document. The development options have fixed the parameters for development by the location of the employment land and playing fields in relation to the concept of an east-west route, mixed use centres and walkable neighbourhoods.

The strategic framework proposes to deliver 15ha of employment, 1,650 houses, a primary school, mixed use centres and associated open spaces. Figure 5.1 sets the Strategic Framework for the LSLA and highlights the key features of the new development.

The strategic framework is a schematic diagram to highlight the various parameters such as an east-west link, relocated playing fields for the school, provision of employment and the linear open space. Further work will be carried out to support a well-informed street structure and urban pattern.

These are summarised as follows:

- ✓ An east-west street connecting Sea Road, Methilhaven Road and Percival Road to create an accessible and permeable new development, well-integrated with the surrounding areas; plus additional street connecting to A955
- ✓ Two mixed use centres within 400m or 5-6 minutes walkable distance for at least 80% of future residents;
- ✓ Key employment in the south western corner separated by a green buffer from the residential areas and some commercial uses within mixed use centres;
- ✓ Land for future high school and playing fields provision;
- ✓ Green infrastructure through the site to improve local biodiversity and providing green links between the River Leven Valley and the Fife Coastal Path at Buckhaven;
- ✓ A new residential area which will be well integrated with the existing residential areas, offering the opportunity to integrate the areas to the north and south of the site, forming a connected community;
- ✓ New residential areas following a robust perimeter block structure with a permeable road network;
- ✓ Create a secure neighbourhood with active frontages and well-overlooked streets and spaces;
- ✓ A new primary school easily accessible by residents; and
- ✓ The introduction of energy-efficient techniques, design and materials to create a sustainable new development.

An indicative land use budget based on the Strategic Framework in Figure 5.1 is set out below:

Description	Area (ha)
Residential	58.0
Employment	9.0
Primary school	2.5
Secondary school and playing fields	15.0
Mixed use centres	3.0
Open space	10.0
Structural planting / other infrastructure	8.5
Existing employment	4.0
TOTAL	110.0

The density will be varied across the development to provide an average density of 28-30 dph resulting in 1,650 houses. The higher densities will be provided along the new east-west link and in the mixed use centres. Medium and low densities will be allocated to the peripheries of the walkable neighbourhoods and closer to the rural edges of the development.



Figure 5.1: The Strategic Framework

phasing and delivery

6. PHASING AND DELIVERY

Phasing

The Strategic Framework is envisaged to be delivered in five key phases of development. This section graphically demonstrates the phases along with the key infrastructure that is required to underpin them. The phasing takes on board the requirements set out in the Levenmouth Development Framework regarding delivery of key elements early in the programme as well as ensuring that the development is deliverable.

Based on current discussions with Fife Council, it is envisaged that the site will be taking forward in the following phases:

Phase 1

2012 to 2015 - Low Carbon Investment Park and replacement Secondary School

- Potential upgrades to southern section of Percival Road and could include improvements to junction with Methilhaven Road.
- The first phase of ground remediation works across the site will also begin in these locations.

Phase 2

2015 to 2021 - Delivery of up to 400 new private and affordable homes (approx 65 units per annum)

- Likely junction upgrade required between Sea Road/ Wellesley Road/ High Street.
- Start of east-west link road from Sea Road roundabout
- Start of a north-south route connecting B932 Main Street eventually to the east-west link road
- Start of green network and core path provision between Low Carbon Investment Park and River Leven Valley

Phase 2/3

2018/19 to 2021 - Development of first neighbourhood centre (Methilhaven Road) and delivery of additional housing (subject to demand up to 100-150 units)

- Creation of junctions on Methilhaven Road for east-west link road
- Provision of local retail services
- Enhancement to the local core path network

Phase 3

2021 to 2026 - Delivery of further 450-550 housing units (between 90-110 units per annum)

- Completion of north-south link connecting B932 Main Street to the east-west link road.
- Provision of primary school subject to further assessment and discussion with Fife Council Education Services

Phase 4

2026 to 2032 - Final stages of development- 400 - 500 housing units (between 85-110 units per annum)

- Completion of east-west link road
- Contribution towards secondary school
- Completion of core paths and green network
- Provision of possible second neighbourhood centre
- Percival Road upgraded including a new junction provided onto the Standing Stane Road

Delivery

The Strategic Framework enables a platform for progressing more detailed design work, through the masterplanning process. The current document is an overarching framework for development. The masterplan will be informed by further technical studies, reports and consultation. The evidence base will assist in producing a well-informed, detailed masterplan which will consist of road hierarchy, urban block patterns, scale and massing, character areas and appearance of the proposed development.

The Framework will act as a material consideration for the determination of planning applications, that must reflect the ideology and aims of this document. It is expected that several housebuilders will be active on the SLA at any one time to meet the delivery targets set out in the Structure and Local Plans. The Phasing referred to above has taken account of this expectation as well as the need to provide key infrastructure links early in the process and also remediate land prior to development taking place. The list of elements which will come forward as part of the masterplanning process, already outlined in the strategic framework for the LSLA is:

- A phased development of 1650 houses;
- 15 hectares of business land;
- A new link road between the A915 and the Fife Energy Park;
- Community facilities;
- Park and play area provision;
- Structural landscaping;
- Retail provision; and
- A primary school.



Figure 6.1: Phasing strategy for development

appendix

The strategic framework has had regard to a number of background documents and other information including:

- The Fife Masterplans Handbook
- Fife Urban Design Guide
- Levenmouth SLA Interim Strategic Development Framework
- Financial and Market Appraisal of Housing Sites, DTZ - January 2004
- Levenmouth Action Plan, BiGGAR Economics – May 2010
- Preliminary Planning Assessment, Savills - April 2006
- Development Site Appraisal, Savills - September 2006
- Preliminary Mining Instability Investigations, Mason Evans - June 2009
- Transport Review, Final Report - PBA, February 2007
- Preliminary Geo-Environmental Considerations, PBA – February 2007
- Highway Engineering Feasibility Report, PBA – February 2007
- Housing Needs Assessment 2010
- Levenmouth Area Local Plan, July 2004
- Levenmouth Area Economic Regeneration Action Plan 2011
- Levenmouth Greenspace Action Plan 2012
- The Levenmouth Plan 2012
- Fife Council's Sustainability Checklist SPG 2010
- Planning Advice Note PAN81 - Community Engagement
- National Standards For Community Engagement, Communities Scotland
- Representations on the Fife Structure Plan, Kirkcaldy and Mid Fife Local Plan and Pre-examination Modifications to the Mid Fife Local Plan;
- The outcome of meetings with Fife Council, local organisations, key stake holders and residents; and
- Savills Report on Consultation October 2012.

