



Do you want development between the Strathkinness High Road and the A91 Guardbridge Road?

If you are angry at being asked this question again, we sympathise. St Andrews has been asked it several times in the last 15 years. Each time the answer has been a resounding 'No!'

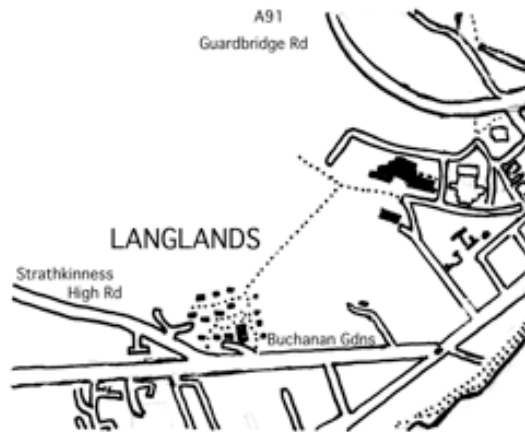
The original question, during the Strategic Study in the mid-1990s, provoked over 900 responses - an unprecedented level of concern. The same question has re-arisen several times in consultations on the 2002 and 2009 Structure Plans and met with the same response. Sadly the Fife planners are better at asking questions than they are at listening to the answers. So development in this area is still the key proposal for the town in the Draft St Andrews and East Fife Local Plan, on which Fife Council is currently conducting a consultation.

If your answer is still 'No', you need to say so NOW.



Proposed distributor road

The idea of linking Bogward Rd to the A91 may have an initial attraction, but it has previously provoked strong opposition as Bogward Rd and John Knox Rd were never built to serve as a bypass. Indeed Fife Council itself believes that the former is sufficiently dangerous to warrant speed humps!



Views from the West

We are being told that building on Langlands will not harm the long-valued views of the town from the Strathkinness High Rd. If the principle of development is granted, however, "rules" may prove hard to enforce. The Community Council gave a strong warning of the irreparable damage that the new Medical Sciences Building would do to the view from Kennedy Gardens, but planners, councillors and the applicants judged it acceptable.

The commercial site on the Strathkinness High Rd. proposed in the Local Plan is apparently for the cemetery extension. It needs a designation that prevents other uses, be they industrial or commercial.

What are the ground rules for the Local Plan?

The Local Plan must provide sites for all the new housing specified in the Fife Structure Plan approved last May - a highly controversial document that brushed aside over 2000 objections - many from N. E. Fife. One Community Councillor, Penny Uprichard, acting alone, has challenged its legality. This challenge may not be heard until late 2010, with judgement in 2011. Fife's Local Plan consultation assumes that this legal challenge will fail. If it succeeds, everything is back in the melting pot.

Can Fife Council legitimately ignore your response?

By law, the Local Plan must keep to the framework set out in the Structure Plan. So if you call for something that is contrary to the Structure Plan, Fife Council has no option but to ignore you. For instance, there is no point in saying there should be no housing development at all in St Andrews (even if that is your view), as it would contravene the Structure Plan (see the housing section below).

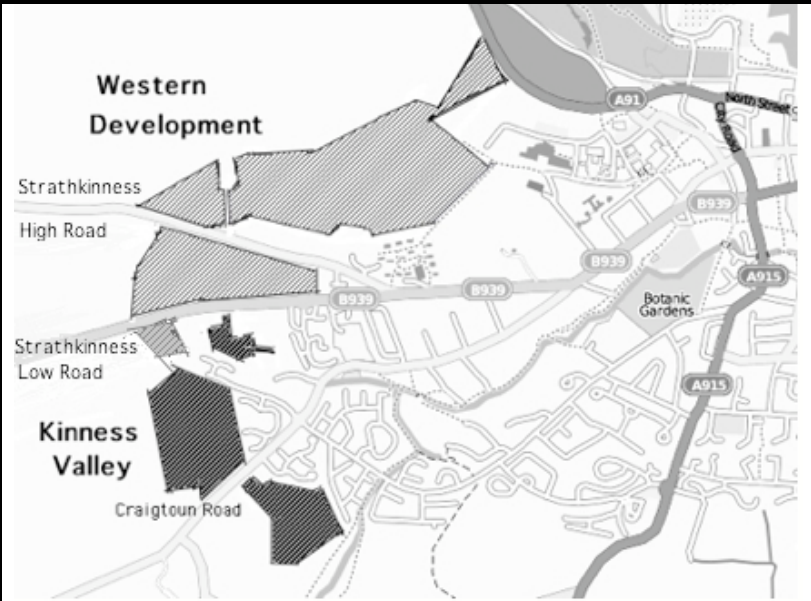
What is it worth saying? In responding to Fife's consultation you should thus assume that large-scale development will happen, and either (a) say where you want that development to be (see below) or (b) say which areas you don't want developed; or (c) both! As well as the danger of large-scale development to the west, other developers could try to get their proposals agreed later at the Public Inquiry when there is no time for the public to react. e.g. the Muir Group could resurrect its plan for a huge development to the south.

IF YOU DON'T WANT THE SOUTHERN HILLSIDE DEVELOPED, SAY SO AGAIN NOW!

Housing

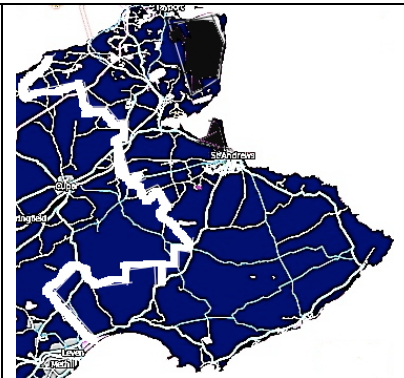
St Andrews West need not be the Western Development

The new Structure Plan says that a large proportion of the “strategic” housing required in St Andrews must lie in the Strategic Land Allocation called “St Andrews West”. Unsurprisingly, it says that this lies to the west of the town, but *it is left to the Local Plan to fix its location*. Press adverts by Joe Headon and the University imply incorrectly that St Andrews West covers just the light shading shown, which should be compared to the “Western Development” they proposed in 2002. In the Local Plan St Andrews West also includes the dark shading. Where do you think it should be?



St Andrews West could be in the Kinness Valley (see below)

How much housing is required? Do not be misled by talk of 1000 houses for St Andrews West. That figure is the minimum number of “strategic” houses that the Structure Plan requires **BY 2026** in St Andrews, with “**a large proportion**” lying within St Andrews West. The Local Plan runs only **UNTIL 2018**. Under the required phasing, 575 of these 1000 “strategic” houses are needed in St Andrews by 2018. A similar approach implies that the Structure Plan requires an additional 600 houses by 2018 in the Housing Market Area (HMA) that covers St Andrews. Noting our overloaded infrastructure and traffic congestion, the Community Council believes at most 150 of these should be within St Andrews itself. There are many possibilities elsewhere in the HMA, including the Preservation Trust’s sensible suggestion to use fully the former mill site at Guardbridge.



Approximate boundary of St Andrews HMA

Use the brownfield and suitable infill sites first Before resorting to greenfield sites on the edge of town, the sensible strategy is to re-use previously developed (brownfield) sites in the town. Some of these are listed in the Local Plan, including the former New Park School, Memorial Hospital site and St Leonards Fields, but there may well be further possibilities, such as the old health centre. If a greenfield site is chosen for the new Madras College, there will also be the extensive site at Kilrymont. Fife Council appears to be under-estimating the potential brownfield contribution – perhaps to make “St Andrews West” appear the more necessary.

... and then the Kinness Valley For the last 20 years, the merits of a contour-based approach have been broadly agreed. To maintain the landscape setting of St Andrews, it is sensible if essential development is on relatively low-lying land, with that in the Kinness Valley being the most obvious. This area is also in walking distance of Lawhead School. In the 2005 Draft Local Plan, Fife Council indicated two sites near the Craigtoun Rd, with capacity for 815 houses. In the Plan period, only a fraction of this would be needed, if brownfield capacity is fully utilised.

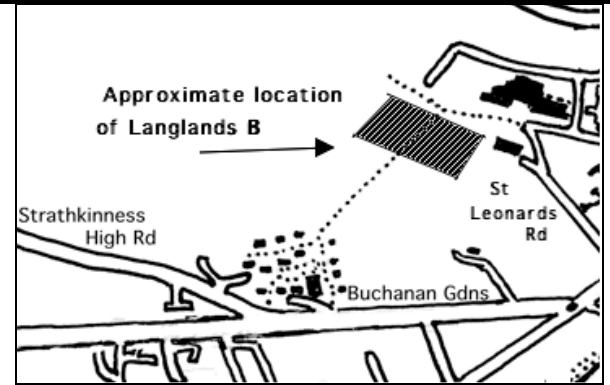
Affordable housing The Community Council supports the provision of affordable housing in St Andrews to meet local need. Although the requirements of the Development Plan represent some progress, they still permit developers to build 7 top-of-the-range houses for every 3 affordable ones. In the context of St Andrews, this is still a waste of scarce housing land. The Community Council also seeks to avoid developers providing cash contributions in lieu of affordable homes. The recent suggestions from a developer that affordable housing would be disruptive of social harmony are not acceptable. We wish to promote mixed and integrated communities.

Further information An electronic version of this newsletter, including links to some relevant sources, is available on the Community Council’s website <http://www.standrewscc.net/> You can also download a copy of Fife Council’s consultation response form, should you wish to use it.

A new Madras College

Fife Council intends to create a single-site Madras College and is understood to have initially considered a list of a dozen possible sites. That was reduced to just two – a re-use of the Kilrymont site or a greenfield site to the west of town provided by the University. In the early autumn, two University sites were believed to be possible – at the western end of the North Haugh, or a higher site at the level of the Sports Centre. In consultation with the University, the Education Committee recently chose the latter, the so-called “Langlands B” site.

The Madras Parent Council notes that the Kilrymont Building has been allowed to deteriorate generally, has asbestos which needs to be removed, and redevelopment – although deemed feasible by the Scottish Government’s consultants - is bedevilled by the recent imposition of listed building status. It sees positive advantages in the Langlands B site. Officials have described this as “a move to the heart of the University” and establishing a relationship with the University that is unique in Scotland. As well as contact of an academic nature, shared sports facilities are promised.



The choice of the school site is likely to impact, to varying degrees, on all residents of the town. Community Council members are concerned at the lack of public information on why some sites are being ruled out, and believe the projected completion date may well raise false hopes. The Langlands B site would mean that the school buses no longer need to go through the town, but it raises a range of different possible problems:-

Questions worth considering

What would the effects on traffic be? Would parental cars create traffic jams in City Road before school each morning? If there is access from Hepburn Gardens, St Leonards Road or Buchanan Gardens, where would parents drop off their children?

Would sharing of sports facilities work?

Assertions that the university does not currently use sports facilities during the day do not tally with our experience, and not all community use demand is currently met. Would demand be cut by high prices?

What about climate change? Noting that the the problem is urgent, the Scottish Government is seeking a massive 42% cut in carbon emissions by 2020. A Tay Bridgehead school would enable Fife Council to cut the total bussing distance by around 50% (and avoid the need for some pupils to sit on buses for over an hour a day). Two smaller schools would cost more than a one large one (but not double the cost), but would cut the annual bussing cost, currently £750,000 and likely to rise in future.

What would happen to the South St and Kilrymont Buildings? Would the listed building status of the latter mean that it would remain empty and undeveloped for years?

How about the view from the golf courses?

A three-storey building at the top of the raised beach will be highly visible.

Can a safe lunchtime regime be assured?

Assuming many pupils head for the nearest supermarket at lunchtime, as at present, would the footpath provision be adequate (e.g. at the eastern end of Doubledykes Rd)?

How much would university academics interact with pupils in practice? Academics are well aware that they are appointed and promoted largely on their research output.

Is history repeating itself?

The Muir Group needed an access road to the southern hillside where it wishes to build 1000 houses. As hospitals attract fewer objections, it provided some of the land for the new hospital, but required a shared access road built to its specification. The Trojan horse strategy worked to perfection. The backers of the western development will also have asked themselves what would smooth their way to planning consent. The secondary school could well do the trick, and provide the access road up to “Langlands” from the A91. What could be simpler?

What would happen to Station Park?

Shared sports grounds with the university would make the Madras School Playing Fields redundant. Would a cash-strapped Council be able to resist selling them? Would they be used for housing?

When developments are proposed, those who ask questions are routinely accused of imperilling the possible funding. Whilst there may indeed be good answers to some of those above, the Community Council tries to see that, before decisions are taken, as many of the implications as possible are widely understood.

Other Local Plan Issues

Southern hillside (a) Pipelands For the last 16 years, St Andrews has objected strongly to development on the southern hillside. The “Pipelands” site next to the new hospital is thus appropriate for neither the proposed commercial/industrial use nor for housing.

(b) Grange Road site Elected members of Fife Council very recently threw out development proposals for this site next to Irvine Crescent. We are dismayed that officials should persist in proposing it for housing.

Traffic As this consultation is based on 1000+ more houses over 20 yrs, more planning on how we cope with the resulting cars would be helpful.

Rail link As climate change begins to bite, the case for reinstating the rail link to St Andrews can only strengthen. The Structure Plan requires “St Andrews public transport route” to be safeguarded. Fife officials, aiming to push the link on to the back burner, have now omitted the route from the map.

Primary School Fife’s plan for St Andrews West shows a new primary school off the Craigtoun Rd. The Council seems to have forgotten that it is those east of the Largo Rd who have lost their school, and who have the most inconvenience and cost in reaching both the primary school and, if it were to move to Langlands B, the secondary school.

Bassaguard We objected to the proposal in the 2005 Draft Plan to use this site for housing. We welcome the current intention to leave it as employment land.

Craigtoun Park The options envisaged by the Local Plan include “sensitive, small-scale, commercial, leisure or hotel development”. The Community Council favours better advertising of the park, rather than commercial development.

Green Belt Instead of fixing the boundaries on environmental grounds, as in the study by David Tyldesley, the proposed Green Belt in the Local Plan consists of those areas where the planners do not wish to put houses in the next 20 years. The proposed Green Belt policy (E17) weakens the Structure Plan policy by exempting classes of development from the rules. The officials’ lack of belief in Green Belts could hardly be more evident. The Community Council wishes the Green Belt to include Langlands (the “western development”) and the southern hillside (including both the Grange Rd and Pipelands sites).

St Leonards Fields/Memorial Hospital site

The Local Plan now gives this site a capacity of 120 houses – compared to 180 in the 2005 Draft Plan when the site was 1.8 hectares smaller. The latest Plan envisages a mix of uses, including a hotel (one of several proposed in this area) and an office development of 1000 sq. metres. The Community Council would like to see the whole site used for housing, particularly affordable housing, as the site is within easy walking distance of the centre.

Phone masts Policy I6 Telecommunications seeks to “conceal or disguise” installations to minimise their visual impact. This is an instance where health is more important than appearance. Masts should be obvious so that house-buyers, for instance, can take informed decisions on how close they are happy to be.

AGLVs Fife is proposing to replace the designation “Area of Great Landscape Value” by a new system of Special Landscape Areas. Indications to date are that this will further weaken landscape protection.

Timing Why do so many consultations coincide with Christmas preparations or summer holidays? It always looks like an attempt to cut the number of responses. Why not write now before you’re too busy!

Make your voice heard! Tell Fife Council your views on the Local Plan!

You should send in your comments **by December 24th** at the latest.

Write to REF. EFLP2a, Fife Council, FREEPOST RRKT-TTSR-KBYU, Development Services, Town House, 2 Wemyssfield, KIRKCALDY, Fife KY1 1XW.

Or if you have access to the web, go to <http://lpconsult.fife.gov.uk/portal/fsaeftp09>

If there are parts of the Local Plan you dislike, say explicitly that you OBJECT!

Questions you may wish to answer include:-

1. Which area is preferable/less environmentally damaging for development?
(a) Between the Strathkinness High Rd and the Guardbridge Rd, or (b) the Kinness Valley?
2. Do you oppose the development of the following? (a) The Grange Rd site (next to Irvine Crescent)
(b) The Pipelands site (next to the hospital) (c) Other parts of the southern hillside?
3. Where should the new Madras College be built?
4. Do you wish to see a route safeguarded for a possible future rail link to the town?
5. Which areas around the town do you believe should be included in the Green Belt?