Landscape and Visual Appraisal
(part 1)

proposed residential development,
land at milldeans, glenrothes
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Figure 1 Location Plan

Figure 2 Historical Context

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Note: Representative Viewpoints Figures 4 – 10 are located in Part 2 of this LVA.
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

1 Introduction

1.1 VLM Landscape Design Limited have been appointed by Hallam Land Developments Limited to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal on the land at Milldeans, Glenrothes. Victoria Mack, a chartered landscape architect with over twenty years professional experience, has been responsible for the production of this appraisal.

1.2 It is proposed to develop the land at Milldeans (referred to as ‘the Site’) hereafter for a residential development comprising around 350 new homes, passive and active open space, recreational facilities and associated ancillary work. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal presents an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts which are expected to arise as a result of the construction of the proposed residential development on the Site.

1.3 This report describes the existing environment, addresses landscape policy matters and considers the resulting impacts of a proposed residential development, in terms of its effects on the physical structure and the aesthetic character of the landscape (i.e. landscape impact) and its effects on views (i.e. visual impact). In tandem with this appraisal of landscape and visual effects, this report also includes an assessment of the interplay of natural key features to enable the determination of the Site’s landscape capacity. Through an understanding of the Site’s key features and landscape capacity and through analysis of the potential resulting landscape and visual impacts, the final sections of this report discuss how an appropriate mitigation strategy would be formulated to enable the successful integration of a proposed housing development on the Site.

1.4 Landscape character and landscape resources are considered to be of importance in their own right and are valued for their intrinsic qualities regardless of whether they are seen by people. Impacts on visual amenity as perceived by people, are therefore clearly distinguished from, although closely linked to, impacts on landscape character and resources. The appraisal of the landscape, townscape and visual aspects are therefore separate, although interrelated processes.

2 Methodology

2.1 This section aims to explain the adopted approach and methodology taken in preparing this Landscape and Visual Appraisal in support of this detailed Planning Application. This appraisal has been undertaken in line with current guidance contained in the ‘Guidelines for Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition’ (GLVIA 3), published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in association with the Landscape Institute; and, based on guidelines and principles described in Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (2002), published by the Countryside Agency and NatureScot (formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage).

2.2 There is no requirement for a formal Environmental Assessment to support this Planning Application. The following extract, taken from the GLVIA Statement of
Clarification (January 2013)\textsuperscript{1}, gives guidance on the terminology to be used in non EIA Landscape, Townscape and Visual Appraisals, such as this:

“In carrying out appraisals the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in doing so, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes. The reason is that should a landscape professional apply LVIA principles and processes carrying out an appraisal and then go on to determine that certain effects would likely be significant, given the term ‘significant’ is enshrined in EIA regulations, such a judgement could trigger the requirement for a formal EIA. The emphasis on likely ‘significant effects’ in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle – focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA.”

2.3 As such, in line with current guidance contained in the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)’, the terms ‘significant’ and ‘not significant’ have not been used in this appraisal. However, VLM considers it useful to set out the level of the residual effect. In this appraisal, effects are assessed to be either ‘negligible’, ‘minor’, ‘moderate’ or ‘major’. The level of effect is assessed through a combination of two considerations – the sensitivity of the landscape/townscape element, landscape/townscape character receptor, or view, and the magnitude of effect that will result from the proposed development. This evaluation is carried out for each receptor appraised in detail in the report.

Sources of Information

2.4 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal was informed by data gathered from the following sources:

- Fife Landscape Character Assessment (David Tyldesley, 1998);
- Fife Local Designations Review (FLLDR), (LUC in association with Carol Anderson, March 2010);
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment, Setting (Historic Environment Scotland);
- Pastmap mapping database (www.pastmap.org.uk);
- The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland;
- Ancient Woodland Inventory, SNH;
- Ordnance Survey maps (1:25,000 and 1:10,000 scale)
- Digital sources of mapping and aerial photography; and,
- Field surveys in July and August 2021.

Site Survey and Desk Study

2.5 An initial desk top study of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, plans, policy documents, other guidance and legislation and conceptual plans was undertaken to inform the assessment. Site surveys were then carried out in July and August 2021 to identify

\textsuperscript{1} Landscape Institute, GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 10-06-2013
landscape/townscape constraints, visual receptors and to verify and supplement data collected in the desk-based assessment. The site visits enabled examination of the local landscape and townscape character, landscape features, and familiarisation with the wider area, to identify key character areas and to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development from identified representative viewpoints (agreed through consultation with Fife Council). Photography was undertaken during some clear, dry and sunny weather conditions.

Study Area

2.6 For the purposes of this LVA, a study area has been applied to determine the extent of potential effects. The Site is located within a transitional landscape between the western fringes of the town of Glenrothes and the strongly rural agricultural landscape setting on the southern edge of the River Leven Valley. The Site lies across a band of volcanic hills with the wider upland landscape of the Lomond Hills providing a distinct backdrop and a lowland valleys landscape to the south. The prevailing rolling topography which creates a series of localised ridgelines, combined with numerous woodland components including woodland blocks, large mixed woodlands, extensive areas of policy woodland, riparian planting and structure and amenity planting across the settlement form of Glenrothes effectively combine to limits inter-visibility with the surrounding area. This has rendered the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility unnecessary and site work has demonstrated that visibility would be largely contained to the local area. Whilst it is acknowledged long distant views would be available from the summit of East Lomond Hill, it would be highly unlikely for notable effects to arise beyond 2km from the proposed Site. As such, the study area has been set at a 2km radius. Landscape and visual amenity outside this zone would remain unaffected by the proposed development. Figure 2 Planning Policy & Landscape Context, illustrates the wider landscape context to the Site, landscape designations and planning context as well as its relationship with other adjoining uses.

Objectives and Approach

2.7 The key objectives of the assessment are to:
- classify the area according to different types of landscape and townscape character;
- identify landscape features that may be affected by the development;
- identify key viewpoints and viewers likely to be affected by the development;
- identify the level of effects on the landscape and visual amenity; and,
- identify measures to mitigate these impacts.

2.8 The approach taken within this assessment reflects the need to identify and understand the following:
- the character of the landscape/townscape and its ability to accommodate change;
- the visual relationship between the study area and its setting during construction and following completion.

2.9 Landscape and visual impacts may potentially result from the following:
• visibility of elements associated with the development during the construction phase;
• loss of existing landscape features or the introduction of new features;
• the presence of permanent structures and lighting on completion of the development.

2.10 The aim of this appraisal is to identify and evaluate potential effects arising from the proposed development and considers two aspects: landscape impact and visual impact.

2.11 Landscape impact assessment considers the likely nature and scale of changes to the individual elements of the landscape and townscape in their own right, their aesthetic and perceptual aspects, their distinctive character and the key characteristics that contribute to this, and the consequential impact on this character as a result of the introduction of the proposed development. Judgements on the sensitivity of the landscape/townscape to change and the scale or magnitude of the impact were made to assess the impact of the development on the landscape/townscape. GLVIA sets out the factors which must be examined to inform an understanding of sensitivity (susceptibility and value), and magnitude (size/scale, duration, reversibility).

2.12 Visual impact assessment looks at the changes to the character of views experienced as a result of a proposed development, the reactions of visual receptors (the people who see the view: residents, recreational visitors, those travelling through the area, etc.) and the overall impact that a development will have on visual amenity.

2.13 Wherever possible predicted impacts are quantified. However, the nature of LVAs requires interpretation by professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the assessment, criteria for the sensitivity, the prediction of magnitude and level of effects of the residual landscape and visual impacts have been defined.

2.14 Grading of the scale of the impact is based on the detailed information available regarding the nature of the proposed development, the scale, duration and permanence of the change and the size of the resource/area affected. Impacts are described according to their level of effect, whether adverse or beneficial. The level of effects are assessed through a combination of two considerations – the sensitivity to change of the landscape elements, landscape character receptor or visual receptor, and the magnitude of effect that would result from the proposed development.

2.15 Each of the different receptor types has its own criteria used to define sensitivity and magnitude. The following criteria (adapted from the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013) are used.

**Criteria for Sensitivity and Magnitude of Effect on the Landscape**

2.16 Sensitivity reflects the nature of the landscape receptor and depends on: its intrinsic quality and explicit value (its importance in the pattern of elements that constitutes the landscape character), its susceptibility to the type of change, and, on its potential for mitigation.
2.17 People attach value to a landscape in widely differing, often personal, and sometimes conflicting ways. It is recognised that some landscapes are valued more highly by more people than others. Value attributed by public authorities is expressed through national and local designations and planning policy. Value given by the public is more difficult to measure. It may be expressed through literature and cultural association, through demonstrable use of the landscape, or simply by anecdotal evidence.

2.18 The susceptibility of the landscape to accommodate a proposed development, without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline, rests on a number of factors. It is a function of the type of development (its particular form and characteristics), how a development physically affects the landscape, and how a development affects how the character of the landscape is appreciated and perceived. The perceptual element relates to the quality of the landscape and the values attached to it.

2.19 There is no direct association between landscape quality and sensitivity but, in general, areas that are considered of higher quality tend to be more highly valued by a wider audience, i.e. including people from further afield, given that people will usually place high value on the landscape close to their home, and are therefore more sensitive. Quality is affected by the condition of the elements which make up a particular landscape, the integrity and intactness of the landscape as a whole and the extent to which its distinctive character is apparent.

2.20 The criteria for landscape sensitivity to change are summarised as follows:
- **High**: An area of highly valued landscape/townscape with strong structure and positive character, which is considered vulnerable to small degrees of change;
- **Moderate**: An area with a well-defined landscape/townscape character with positive qualities which may however, have suffered some degradation or erosion. Sensitivity will be diminished and change more likely to be accommodated; and,
- **Low**: An area of generally poor landscape/townscape character with few positive and valued features. Change will be a positive contribution to the landscape.

2.21 Magnitude is primarily about the nature of the impact. It is based on:
- The size and scale of the proposed change;
- The geographical extent of the area influenced; and,
- The duration and reversibility of the impact.

2.22 The criteria for magnitude of effect on the landscape are summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition of Magnitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Total loss of, or major alteration to, key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline landscape and/or introduction of elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Post development character and composition of the baseline landscape resource will be fundamentally changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Partial loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline landscape and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post development character and composition of the baseline landscape resource will be partially, but noticeably changed.

Low

Minor loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline landscape and/or introduction of elements that may not be characteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Post development character and composition of the baseline landscape resource will be noticeably changed but the underlying character of the baseline landscape will be similar to the pre-development character.

Negligible

Very minor loss of, or alteration to, key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline landscape. Change to the landscape character will barely, if at all, be distinguishable.

Criteria for Sensitivity and Magnitude of Effect on Views and Visual Receptors

2.23 As with impacts on the character of the landscape, the impact on visual amenity is a function of the magnitude of effect and the sensitivity to change. Visual sensitivity considers the nature of the visual receptor and reflects the expectations of the people affected, their likely susceptibility to the change, their reasons for being at a particular location and the value they may attribute to the view affected. Visual sensitivity depends upon the following:

- Value / importance of the view: a reflection of the recognition and importance attached either through planning designations or formal identification on mapping, or informally through the value which the public attaches to the view (s).

- Susceptibility to change: the nature of the viewer experiencing the view and how susceptible that are to potential effects of the proposed development. Professional judgement is used and based upon:
  - The occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view and length of viewing time e.g. a local resident with prolonged viewing opportunities will be more sensitive than a passer-by;
  - The location and context of the view e.g. a viewer with an existing view of industrial structures will be less sensitive than a viewer with rural views; and,
  - The extent to which the receptor’s attention is focused on the view or to which they have an interest in the visual amenity experienced at a particular location.

2.24 The criteria for Visual Receptor sensitivity are summarised below:

- **High**: the view is of high interest and widely promoted for its scenic qualities such as visitors to beauty spots and picnic areas; views where receptors have prolonged viewing opportunities such as users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape; a highly naturalised view containing important landscape features with physical, cultural/historic attributes; views enjoyed by a large number of people throughout the year;

- **Medium**: the view adds to the enjoyment of the experience however it is not a key reason for interest at a location such as people travelling through or past the landscape on roads, train lines or other transport routes; views from passenger
ferries and cruisers, views from minor settlements; a view which is locally promoted for its amenity value; a view experienced by a moderate number of people at certain times of the year.

- **Low**: Viewers have little interest in the view such as people engaged in outdoor sports or recreation whose attention may be focused on their work/activity rather than an appreciation of the wider landscape; a view which has little to no scenic or amenity value; a view which includes a number of man-made elements which are out of scale with the landscape, such as from heavy industrialised areas; views which are not regularly visited.

2.25 The criteria for **Sensitivity of Residential Dwellings / Settlements** are summarised:

- **High**: Direct views of the development from the main living room are available/may be possible;
- **Medium**: Oblique views of the development from the main living room are available/may be possible;
- **Low**: Very oblique views of the development from the main living room are available/may be possible;
- **Negligible**: Oblique/very oblique views of the development may be possible from the main living room, which are further limited by filtering and/or screening provided by intervening objects (e.g. trees/ man-made structures etc).

2.26 The magnitude of effect is a function of the scale and type of change to the view under consideration and are described as High, Medium, Minor or Negligible based on the overall extent of visibility. For individual viewpoints it will depend upon the combination of a range of factors, including:

- The size, scale and type of change (i.e. loss or addition of features within a view);
- Extent of development visible from the viewpoint (all of the development, partial area or a small part(s));
- The degree of contrast or integration of the development with the existing view;
- The angle of view and proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- The distance of the view to the development and the extent of the development that is visible within the view;
- The extent of other man-made elements visible;
- Number of people/viewers who are affected; and,
- The nature of the impact; and,
- The duration of time over which change will be experienced and its reversibility.

2.27 **Criteria for magnitude of effect on views & visual receptors** is summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition of Magnitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Highly noticeable change, affecting most key characteristics and dominating the experience of the landscape; Proposed development visible for a long duration; Proposed development is in close proximity to the viewer; The change will be long term (greater than 10 years) and irreversible; A high proportion of the view is affected and the change is dominant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medium Noticeable, partial change to a proportion of the landscape affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape; Proposed development visible for moderate duration, possibly at slight angle; Proposed development is in close proximity to the viewer; The introduction of some uncharacteristic elements; The change will be medium to long term (greater than 5 years) but reversible or partially reversible; Some of the view is affected and the change is conspicuous.

Low Minor change affecting some characteristics and the experience of the landscape to an extent but the character of the view is not compromised; Proposed development visible for short duration, possibly at oblique angle; Proposed development potentially at a distance from the viewer; The change will be short term (less than 5 years), and reversible/partially; The introduction of elements which are not uncharacteristic and little of the view is affected but the change is apparent.

Negligible Little perceptible change. No discernible effect upon the view; Change is inconspicuous or only noticeable for a very short duration, perhaps at an oblique angle; Proposed development is an indistinct element in the landscape and potentially at some distance from the viewer; Change will be temporary and reversible.

**Level of Effects**

2.28 The level of effect of any identified landscape or visual receptor has been assessed as Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible, or an effect can fall across two levels, e.g. Moderate-Minor. These categories have been determined by consideration of viewpoint/visual receptor or landscape sensitivity and predicted magnitude of effect with the following table used as a guide only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape and Visual Sensitivity</th>
<th>Magnitude of Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Major-Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.29 This matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location must take account of professional judgement, therefore in some situations the analysis may not reflect the effects predicted by the grid. It is noted that there is a gradual transition between the levels of effect. Where
professional judgement considers an effect to fall across two levels, a balanced effect is attributed, for example, Moderate-Major.

2.30 The following tables provide a definition of the level of effects on landscape and visual receptors. These ratings reflect the existing site condition and established use but also the nature and scale of the proposed development.

**Table 4: Definition of Landscape Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition of Magnitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>The proposed development would entirely change the character of the landscape for a long period of time or permanently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The proposed development would introduce a noticeable difference to the landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>The proposed development would introduce a barely perceptible change to the receiving landscape characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negligible/None</td>
<td>The proposed development would introduce no discernible effect and may be difficult to differentiate from the surrounding landscape characteristics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Definition of Visual Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition of Magnitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>The proposed development would entirely change the appearance of the view for a long period of time or permanently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The proposed development would introduce a noticeable difference within the view and would affect several receptors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>The proposed development would be perceptible but limited and affect a few (one or two) receptors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negligible/None</td>
<td>The proposed development would introduce no discernible effect and may be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings within the view and affect very few or no receptors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.31 In addition to the level of landscape and visual effect being determined, it is important to set out the nature and duration of impacts. These are described below:

**Nature**

- **Adverse**: Detrimental or negative effect to an environmental resource or receptor;
- **Slight Adverse**: Minor negative effect to an environmental resource or receptor;
- **Neutral**: Little / no effect to an environmental resource or receptor;
- **Slight Beneficial**: Minor positive effect to an environmental resource or receptor; and,
- **Beneficial**: Advantageous or positive effect to an environmental resource or receptor.

**Duration of Impact**

2.32 For the purposes of this assessment, the ‘Duration of Impact’ referred to in this Appraisal describes both the ‘construction / short term’ effect, including site clearance,
construction and early establishment of site-wide planting proposals, and the ‘Long Term’ effect (approximately +10 years from construction), including established development with woodland, structure, specimen tree planting and hedgerows maturing to provide mitigating effects it was designed to provide.

Cumulative Assessment

2.33 To date, there are no formalised guidelines in Great Britain defining an approved methodology for the assessment of cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity that have been approved and endorsed by the Landscape Institute. The approach used is therefore based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) LI-IEMA 2013. The Landscape Institute defines cumulative landscape and visual effects as:

‘Additional changes to the landscape and visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it) or actions that have occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future’.

2.34 A search for development of a similar size, scale and/or character to the proposed development which have potentially significant overlapping study areas and that are in the public domain, i.e. any constructed residential developments; any consented residential developments; and, any residential development proposals that have been lodged as a planning application.

2.35 At the time of writing this report, utilising the Council’s online planning application search tool, no developments identified within the study area were considered likely to result in significant cumulative impacts when considered in combination with the proposed development. Therefore a cumulative assessment has not been undertaken as part of this LVA.

3 Policy Context

3.1 Planning policy, key documents and guidance taken into account of in this LVA include:

- Scottish Planning Policy (2014);
- Fife Local Development Plan (September 2017);
- Making Fife’s Places (Supplementary Guidance, March 2017);
- Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity, Countryside Agency and SNH, (2004); and,

Overview of Planning Policy

3.2 A detailed review of National planning policy including the third National Planning Framework (NPF3), the upcoming fourth National Planning Framework and Scottish
Planning Policy (SPP) is set out in the Planning Chapter of the Supporting Statement and is not repeated in this LVA.

3.3 The Site and broader study area is located in the Fife administrative area where the Fife Local Development Plan (2017) represents the current adopted plan and sets out policies and proposals to guide development across the administrative area.

3.4 A review of the adopted LDP has identified that the Site is adjacent to, but out-with, the ‘settlement envelope’ of Glenrothes, as defined by Policy 1 within the Fife Local Development Plan (2017) and as such is located within an area of ‘Countryside’. Policy 7: Development in the countryside, and Policy 8: Houses in the countryside, apply to the proposed development. In addition to the ‘countryside’ status, the study area also contains areas noted for high landscape quality, cultural, built and natural heritage, as well as biodiversity and conservation value.

3.5 Figure 1 Planning Policy & Landscape Context illustrates the location of these policies and landscape designations within the study area and the table below describes relevant policies to landscape and visual aspects of the Proposed Development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation / Policy</th>
<th>Description and Distance / Direction from Site</th>
<th>Sensitivity to Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy 1: Settlement Envelope</td>
<td>Proposed site is located adjacent to but out-with the settlement envelope of Glenrothes.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 7: Housing in the Countryside; Policy 8: Houses in the Countryside</td>
<td>The Site is located out-with the settlement envelope and located in Countryside. Both policies advocate development which is “of a scale and nature compatible with surrounding uses; well-located in respect of available infrastructure and contribute to the need for any improvement; located and designed to protect the overall landscape and environmental quality of the area”.</td>
<td>Medium to High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 10: Amenity</td>
<td>The Proposed Development could potentially give rise to impacts upon amenity, “Development proposals would only be supported if it does not have a significant detrimental impact on amenity and ensure that existing uses and the quality of life of those in the local area are not adversely affected”. In relation to Amenity, the proposed development could potentially give rise to: Traffic movements; The loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight;</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Policy 13: Natural Environment and Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction impacts;</th>
<th>The visual impact of the development on the surrounding area;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The loss of outdoor sports facilities, open space, green networks, protected trees and woodland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Study Area contains a number of natural heritage and access assets, including:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lomond Hills Regional Park</strong> covers a large area of upland countryside in the heart of the Fife hinterland and includes areas of moorland, lochs and farmland. East Lomond Hill and West Lomond Hill form key references in much of the landscape across the Regional Park. The majority of the regional park lies on the northern side of the River Leven Valley although a small area extends across the south-side encompassing the setting to Ryelaw Farm and approximately 650m to the west of the Site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Lomond Hills Local Landscape Area** covers a similar area to the regional park incorporating moorland and farmland across the West Lomond and East Lomond Hill but its southern boundary extends to the A911 and does not include the River Leven Valley. The SLA is located approximately 950m to the north at its nearest point form the Site.  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Green Network Policy Areas:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boblingen Way, located to the east of the Site with a very small part extending into the south-eastern fringes of the Site;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Leven &amp; Spurs, located to the north of the Site with a small part extending into the northern fringes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lochty Burn, located approximately 500m to the south-east; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westfield – Kinglassie, located approximately 500m to the south to south-west.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| High |  |
### Existing Green Network Assets:

- Leslie-Strathendry, contiguous with north-eastern boundary of the Site;
- Glenrothes Golf Course, small part of western edge contiguous with the central part of the eastern boundary;
- East Prinlaws, located approximately 200m to the north;
- Southwood - Glenwood, located approximately 200m to the north-east;
- Whitehill, located approximately 350m to the south-east;
- Tanshall Park, located approximately 500m East;
- The Common, located approximately 600m NE;
- Lochty Burn, located approximately 800m SE;
- Leslie Cemetery, located approximately 870m to the north;
- Leslie Golf Course, located approximately 1km to the north;
- Templehall Playing Fields, located approximately 1km to the ESE;
- Caskieberran, located approximately 1.2km SE;
- Leslie House, located approximately 1.4km NE;
- Viewfield, located approximately 1.4km SE;
- Kinglassie, located approximately 1.5km SW;
- Lochty Bridge, located approximately 1.5km to the South;
- Whinneyknowe, located approximately 1.6km NE;
- Riverside Park, located approximately 1.7Km to the ENE;
- Whinneyhill Plantation, located approximately 2km NE;
- Balgeddie House, located approximately 2km NE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Heritage Sites:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leslie – Strathendry Wildlife Site, contiguous with north-eastern boundary of the Site and extending further west along the River Leven;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenton Pond Wildlife Site, located approximately 3.5km SE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tree Preservation Orders:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 single mature beech trees, East Prinlaws Mill, located approximately 280m north;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line of mature trees, edge of wildlife site, Glenwood Road, located approximately 420m NNE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small mixed woodland, Westpark, located approximately 700m NW.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle and Path Networks:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glenrothes and its setting contains a good network of local paths some of which form part of the Fife Core Paths Strategy. Some notable routes that form part of the Core Paths Plan come within close proximity to the Site:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Old Loan core path extends east to west across the central part of the Site;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A series of continuous core paths including Bloodyfoot Den Core Path and Flowers of May Core path extend north to south across the farmland context to the west of the Site with links to the core path network The Old Loan, to Kinglassie in the south-west and along the River Leven and Leslie to the north. Flowers of May Core Path / Bloodyfoot Den Core Path are located approximately 200m to the west at its nearest point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fife Pilgrim Way Long Distant Footpath,</strong> is located approximately 200m to the west at its nearest point and follows the same route as the Bloodyfoot Den and Flowers of May in the Study Area;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NCR 766,</strong> is located approximately 4km to the east.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Policy 14: Built and Historic Environment

The Study Area contains a number of cultural, built and historic assets, including:

**Leslie House Garden & Designed Landscape (GDL),** located approximately 1.4km to the north-east.

**Leslie Conservation Area,** located approximately 600m to the NNE.

The Study Area also contains a number of **Listed Buildings and Structures,** with a high percentage located within the historic part of Leslie and the approach into the village along Glenwood Road as well as a few listed structures, bridges and buildings scattered across the wider agricultural landscape. Listed buildings and structures includes:

- Cottages, Glenwood Road, located approximately 220m to the north-east of the Site’s north-eastern corner;
- Glenwood House, boundary walls, gatepiers, approximately 270m north-east;
- No.s 37-51 Glenwood Road, approximately 290m north-east;
- Prinlaws Stalk, approximately 400m north-west;
- Cabbagehall Viaduct, approximately 430m, north-east;
- No.s 1-7, Valley Drive, approximately 430m north;
- Rescobie Hotel terrace walls, boundary walls and gatepiers, approximately 540m NNE;
- Fluthers House, Glenwood Rd, with gatepiers and boundary walls, approximately 500m north-east;
- No.s 1-23 Prinlaws Road approximately 550m North;
- 2 Valley Drive with boundary walls, approximately 550m North;
- 40+ listed buildings in the Conservation Area, located between 550-1500m NE;
- Trinity Church with piers, approximately 570m North;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fettykil House</td>
<td>walled garden and boundary walls, approximately 590m north-east;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haggarts Mill</td>
<td>Fettykil Mill, approximately 650m north-east;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fettykil Lodge</td>
<td>with boundary walls, approximately 660m north-east;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankhead House</td>
<td>with boundary walls, gatepiers and gates, approximately 700m SW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inchdairnie Lodge</td>
<td>with boundary walls, approximately 700m SSE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith Anderson Stalk</td>
<td>Fettykil, approximately 730m north-east;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Glye House</td>
<td>Mansfield, with boundary walls and gate piers, approximately 750m NNE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingarth House</td>
<td>Mansfield, with boundary walls, 750m NNE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryfield Gardens</td>
<td>with boundary walls, approximately 770m NNE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinglassie Primary School</td>
<td>with boundary walls, gatepiers, gates and railings, approximately 1.5km SW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinglassie Miners Welfare Institute</td>
<td>approximately 1.5km SW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blythe’s Tower</td>
<td>approximately 1.5km West;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Bridge</td>
<td>approximately 1.5km NE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie House Lodge</td>
<td>and gate piers, approximately 1.5km NE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie House</td>
<td>approximately 1.7km NE;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathendry Lodge and Gate Piers</td>
<td>approximately 1.5km NW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathendry House</td>
<td>approximately 1.8km NW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathendry Cottage</td>
<td>approximately 1.8km NW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathendry Tower &amp; dovecot</td>
<td>approximately 1.9km NW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Free Church</td>
<td>Kinglassie, approximately 1.9m SW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>Kinglassie, approximately 1.9km SW;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Hall</td>
<td>Kinglassie, approximately 1.9km SW;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Accordingly, the potential landscape and visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development upon the wider high quality landscape, the local historic built environment, natural heritage assets and green networks are assessed in Section 6.

4 Landscape Baseline Conditions

Site Location

4.1 Figure 1 highlights the location of the Site within the central Fife hinterland, on the western edge of the town of Glenrothes, approximately 1km from the town centre. The urban edge of the suburb of Newcastle provides the context to the east of the northern and central sectors of the Site whilst in the south, Glenrothes Golf Course across Goatmilk Hills provides a managed parkland setting. Large areas of hardstanding comprising Fife Airport form the immediate context to the south with Whitehouse Industrial Estate extending the built edge of Glenrothes into the countryside further south. In contrast, a strongly working agricultural landscape comprising gently rolling fields with a high number of large farmsteads and some single dwellings provides the context to the west of the Site and the River Leven Valley provides the context to the north. The River Leven continues eastwards across the settled rural landscape and meanders across the northern fringes to Glenrothes in a relatively deep wooded valley and provides a strong natural boundary to the village of Leslie which is located approximately 300m to the north of the Site at its nearest point. The Lomond Hills Regional Park provides a distinctly upland rural backdrop to the north of Glenrothes and Leslie with the distinct hill forms of West Lomond Hill and East Lomond Hill providing strong visual references points in the wider study area.

4.2 In strategic terms, the Site is well-placed within this transitional landscape with the main arterial route of the A92 defining the eastern fringes of the Lomond Hills Regional Park and extending southwards through the eastern part of Glenrothes and around the wider southern periphery before it extends westwards towards the A90 at the Hill of Beath and Halbeath. The A911 traverses the northern part of the Study Area on a broad east – west axis following the lower northern slopes of the River Leven Valley and dissecting through the core of the village of Leslie and onwards through the north-western fringes of Glenrothes. This main arterial route crosses over the river as it flows through Riverside Park in an incised wooded valley and extends in a south-easterly direction through the town centre where it joins the A92. This main route is located approximately 650m to the north of the Site at its nearest point. The B921 follows a similar east – west axis extending from the A92 and dissecting the southern fringes of Glenrothes to Kinglassie via Whitehill Industrial Estate and Fife Airport, with links to the A92 via the A909 at Lochgelly. This route is located approximately 550m to the south of the southern boundary of the Site at its nearest point. A network of rural roads and access tracks traverse the rolling agricultural landscape across the setting to the west of Glenrothes ensuring the villages of Leslie and Kinglassie and the relatively high number of dispersed farmsteads are well-connected to the high amount of facilities and amenities on offer in the large town of Glenrothes and to the wider classified road network.
4.3 Landscape character assessments of the region have been carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in partnership with local authorities and other agencies. These studies provide a detailed assessment of the landscape character of the area, considering the likely pressures and opportunities for change in the landscape, whilst assessing the sensitivity of the landscape to change. Guidelines indicate how the landscape character may be observed, enhanced or restructured as appropriate.

4.4 For the purposes of this LVA, the wider landscape setting to Glenrothes corresponds to the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) identified in the Fife Landscape Character Assessment (LCA, produced by David Tyldesley and Associates, 1999). As highlighted in the Fife Landscape Character Assessment, the Site is wholly located within the eastern fringes of a small landscape unit, Redwell Hill, of the Pronounced Volcanic Hills & Craigs LCT. The eastern boundary of the Redwell Hill unit abuts the western edge of the ‘urban’ area of Glenrothes and Leslie whilst to the west, this unit extends across Goatmilk Hills in the context to the Site and incorporates White Hill and Redwell Hill further to the west, and providing the immediate northern setting to Kinglassie. The Lowland Loch Basin LCT of Loch Leven Basin forms the western extent and an expansive area of Lowland hills and Valleys LCT provides the setting to the south of both Kinglassie and Glenrothes. Extending from the northern boundary of the Redwell Unit which follows the meandering course of the River Leven, the rising Lomond Hill Foothills LU (Upland Foothills LCT) comprises an attractive mosaic of well-tended agricultural fields and woodland blocks and other notable woodland features associated with the dispersed rural settlement pattern and the scattering of large country houses and policy woodlands. These valley slopes also form the southern extent of the Lomond Hills Regional Park which extends further north to incorporate the Lomond Hills LU (Upland Hills LCT) and form a highly scenic and well-settled upland backdrop to the wider setting.

4.5 Due to the Site’s geographical location on the far eastern fringes of the smallest unit of the Pronounced Volcanic Hills and Craigs LCT and near to the Foothills LCT, the Site and immediate context possess some key features and characteristics of both character types. As such, the Site is considered to have a transitional character, located across the eastern fringes of a series of low smooth, hills which rise in elevation further west and between the upland landscape of the Lomond Hills to the north and a large lowland hills area dissected by the Lochty Burn and River Ore valleys to the south. The Redwell Hills LU merges sinuously with the foothills of the Lomonds on the north side of the River Leven Valley and whilst locally these volcanic hills are conspicuous and pronounced, particularly above Kinglassie, from the adjacent lowland hills to the south, these hills appear as an extension of the foothills, with the Lomond Hills providing an important and distinctive backdrop. Land use across most of the Site is predominantly arable and defined by a network of hedgerows which is uncharacteristic of this LCT. However the nature of landform to the immediate west which is open in nature and has a curved and sloping topography creating a quiet and balanced landscape is wholly typical and further reinforces the transitional nature of the Site. Two pronounced hills form the context between the southern and central sectors and are another key characteristic of the Pronounced Volcanic Hills and Craigs. The larger hill extends from the eastern boundary further east to provide the context to Glenrothes Golf Course and
is volcanic in origin, with its smooth elevated form further accentuated by mature woodland which covers the hill and merges with structure and woodland planting across the golf course. The smaller peak is of carboniferous sandstone and its form possibly made more pronounced by extensive sandstone quarrying which occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. A small woodland and groups of mature trees are located across its elongated summit and provide a distinctive feature and soft backdrop to Goatmilk Farm, located at the southern base of the small hill form.

4.6 The northern sector to the Site forms the southern slopes of the River Leven Valley and due to its strong northerly aspect over the river, this part of the Site has a strong connection with the Lomond Hills and possesses some key attributes and features of this landscape unit. The lower foothills include a well-tended agricultural landscape comprising moderately sized arable and pastoral fields with a dispersed pattern of large farm complexes, small clusters and single dwellings which relate well to the landform and woodland structure and often stepped back from the rural road network on lower slopes where sloping agricultural fields provide an effective backdrop to built forms. The lower parts of the foothills also contain an extensive amount of wooded components where broadleaved and mixed woodlands relate well to and accentuate the smooth, curved and sloping landform and merge with the network of woodland belts, hedgerows, and mature field boundary trees defining the agricultural fields to form a strong mosaic pattern across the River Leven Valley. Riparian woodland features within the relatively narrow valley of the River Leven as it meanders across the landscape between the northern sector of the Site and the southern fringes of Leslie adds to the diversity of this part of the Lomond Foothills whilst the high number of policy woodlands relating to historic gardens, designed landscapes and estates across the valley and which extend into Glenrothes adds further richness and texture. This includes the wooded estate of Strathendry, located approximately 1.1km to the north-west of the Site along the A911, the extensive policies and designed grounds to Leslie House Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL), located approximately 1.2km to the north-east on the banks of the River Leven, a few large dwellings and ‘country houses’ in wooded grounds on the west fringes of Glenrothes and Leslie and the former Inchdairnie Park Estate, located in the landscape setting to the south-east and its former access along a tree-lined avenue located approximately 50m further east along the unclassified road demarcating the southern boundary.

4.7 Glenrothes and its setting to the north, south and west contains numerous typical features and characteristics of both LCTs which combine to create a unique and distinctive landscape setting to the town and the Site. Due to the relative heights of the hills across the Redwell Hills LU which rise further west towards Kinglassie, the interplay of complex topography plays a key part in providing a level of relative seclusion to the setting to the west of the Site and to Glenrothes. Despite the openness of some upper slopes within the context to the Site, a combination of topography and hedgerows lining the rural road network and amenity and woodland planting associated with dispersed large farmsteads on the lower slopes, limits views out of this landscape unit to open summits whilst views in from adjacent landscape types are frequently foreshortened by the wealth of landscape components defining the well-settled agricultural landscape further north and south. The settled nature and extensive amount of mature landscape components create a rich and diverse setting to the Study Area and affords a Medium-High landscape value. The relatively enclosed character created by the smooth curved
hills to the west and topography across the River Leven Valley combined with mature tree structure limit intermittent middle distant views and combined with the medium scale of the landscape, this Landscape Unit has a Medium to High susceptibility to change. Overall, the sensitivity to change is assessed to be Medium-High.

Historical Landscape Character to the Site and Local Context

4.8 The Site lies across Goatmilk Hills which historically formed part of Goatmilkshire and within the parish of Kinglassie. Two farmsteads, West Goatmilk Farm and East Goatmilk Farm were established at the southern base of the two prominent topographical features on Goatmilk Hills and further sheltered by areas of woodland which covered the upper slopes and accentuated the small hill forms. Between the 18th and early 20th centuries the Site and wider parts of Goatmilk Hills formed parts of a whinstone quarry and a sandstone quarry. Indeed, due to the geographical make up of these volcanic hills, quarries were a prevalent feature across White Hill further west and across the Basille Laws on the fringes of the Lomond Hills to the north. Refer to Figure 2 Historical Context. The River Leven dissected this quarried landscape and due to its short distance and fall of over 90m from its source at Loch Leven to the sea, made it attractive to mill owners and particularly to textile mills which were prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries.

4.9 The special landscape qualities of the River Leven Valley and its location above the coastal lowlands stretching to the Firth, also made the area attractive to wealthy landowners whom sought to develop their family estates. This included the historic Leslie House Estate, established in the 17th century and its extensive policy woodlands and parkland stretching across the northern and southern banks of the River Leven to the north-east of Goatmilk Hills. The village of Leslie developed in the 18th century providing housing for local mill workers. Further west along the River Leven Valley is Strathendry House, a comparatively much smaller wooded estate, and to the south of East Goatmilk Farm and West Goatmilk Farm the former Inchdairnie Park Estate was located. As illustrated in Figure 2, a formal tree lined avenue providing access to the former estate’s East Lodge extended south from near to the East and West Goatmilk Farms; now utilised as the access into Fife Airport.

4.10 Over the last century, this wider setting has changed significantly with the development of the New Town in Glenrothes, and of more recent years, its expansion further west to incorporate the village of Leslie into its suburbs. With the ceasing of the numerous mills along the River Leven and the large areas of aggregate and sandstone quarries that characterised this river valley landscape and setting to Leslie gave way to a settled agricultural landscape comprising predominantly arable fields across the fertile valley sides and containing a high number of dispersed farmsteads, often located in sheltered locations along the valley sides. A predominantly urban context comprising a variety of land uses forms the setting across the eastern parts of Goatmilk Hills with the Glenrothes Municipal Golf Course established across a former whinstone quarry and Fife Airport located across the northern part of the former Inchdairnie estate. Goatmilk Farm (formerly West Goatmilk Farm) remains operational with East Goatmilk Farm now in a ruinous state.
Landscape Character of the Development Area

4.11 The Site itself extends to approximately 24.13 hectares and comprises a number of agricultural fields and a few grazing fields which wrap around the western urban edge of Glenrothes and Glenrothes Golf Course. A combination of topography, localised landform, distinct topographical features, aspect, woodland components, characteristics of the prevailing urban fringes and other defining historical features effectively divide the Site into three distinct sectors.

4.12 The northern sector comprises several strongly rectilinear medium sized arable fields, located across the northern slopes of the River Leven Valley and due to its northerly aspect this sector has a strong visual connection with the River Leven and to Leslie, located across the southern slopes of the River Leven Valley. The urban edge of Glenrothes forms the context to the east of this parcel of land with various styles of fencing and a large amount of mature garden boundary features effectively defining this part of the eastern boundary. The urban edge continues to provide the context to the east of the central sector and is partly separated from this built edge by a mature woodland block whilst The Old Loan core path which follows the upper most slopes of the River Leven valley visually separates the northern and central sectors. Indeed, The Old Loan formed an integral part of the road network associated with quarrying across Goatmilk Hills and forms a strong linear and historical feature across the Site.

4.13 Large arable fields within the central sector are defined by post and wire fences with some limited areas of gorse and native vegetation, particularly along the core path corridor. Whilst the western boundary defining the central sector remains relatively open, rising localised landform within the context to the west provides some shelter and visual containment from views further west. Glenrothes Golf Course forms a managed parkland context to the east of the southern sector and to the urban edge of Glenrothes with large areas of structure planting and mature tree groups defining the golf course and merging with mature woodland across Goatmilk Hills with the two distinct topographical hill forms in the context to Goatmilk Farm cloaked in woodland and aiding in visually separating the central and southern sectors.

4.14 Goatmilk Farmhouse (formerly West Goatmilk Farm) and its associated large barns and outbuildings is located at the base of the smaller hill and forms the immediate context to the west of the southern sector, whilst to the east, a small unmanaged area of land which formerly comprised East Goatmilk Farm forms the context. The former access to East Goatmilk Farm remains visible on the ground and closely follows the eastern boundary to the southern sector and extends to an unclassified road defining the southern periphery to this whole area on the southern fringes of Goatmilk Hills. Rubble remains of the farmhouse remain in-situ marking its built footprint with the rest of the grounds comprising large areas of ruderal and scrub vegetation interspersed with areas of rough grassland and defined by lengths of unmanaged hedgerow and hedgerow trees. Hedgerow features continue along the southern boundary to the Site and continue further east to merge with mature woodland and structure tree components across the managed parkland of Glenrothes Golf Course.

4.15 Due to the location of the Site across the Goatmilk Hills and forming the southern valley sides to the River Leven as well as its former quarry land use, landform is complex with
numerous localised intricacies. Two prominent topographical features on Goatmilk Hills which rise to approximately 162m AOD and 167m AOD form the context to the southern and central sectors with landform falling southwards from these small hill forms to a low of approximately 125m AOD along the southern boundary. Particularly around the western hill form providing the backdrop to Goatmilk Farm, potentially due to former sandstone quarry works localised undulations, steep slopes and ledges extend across the northern part of the hill and into the fringes of the Site. Landform across the central sector gently rises northwards towards the local ridgeline, lying at a high of approximately 154m AOD near the western boundary. Due to its location on the valley sides, the first field within the northern sector has a distinctly northerly aspect with landform falling north-eastwards across the lower two fields to a low point of approximately 123m AOD at the north-east corner. The interplay of local landform across Goatmilk Hills and the mature woodland components and vegetation which further accentuate the rounded prominent hill forms and the local ridgeline across The Old Loan, creates a small-scale and intimate landscape character to some internal parts of the Site and particularly the central sector. In combination with the wider prevailing rolling topography and series of local ridgelines, views towards the entire Site are not available and with limited inter-visibility to view parts of the Site from higher ground to the north and west. With the strong presence of the settlement form and urban land uses including the intensively managed nature of Glenrothes Golf Course, the Site has a strongly transitional nature and semi-urban character.

5 Visual Baseline Conditions

5.1 The existing visual resource comprises facilities, places and routes from which people have potential views of the proposed development from within the study area. It includes settlements and transport corridors.

Settlements and Properties in the Study Area

5.2 The Site is located on the western fringes of Glenrothes, with the residential area of Newcastle wrapping around the northern part of the Site’s eastern periphery and Glenrothes Golf Course providing the context to the east of the central and southern sectors. Glenrothes expanded from its new town beginnings with the extensively treed policy landscapes associated with the Leslie House Estate on the banks of the River Leven at the heart of the town. To the south, Fife Airport and numerous large warehouse buildings in Whitehill Industrial Estate demarcate the southern fringes of the town and exert man’s influence on this once settled estate landscape of Inchdairnie Park. Fife Airport is located directly opposite the southern boundary to the Site whilst the fringes of the industrial estate are located approximately 450m to the south-east at its nearest point.

5.3 Lying across the northern valley sides of the River Leven is the historic village of Leslie, located approximately 300m from the northern boundary to the Site at its nearest point. Although now forming a suburb of Glenrothes, Leslie retains its historic core and strong sense of place as a former mill village. Whilst the expanding urban form of Glenrothes covers much of the Study Area and dominates the context to the north, east and south of the Site, the agricultural setting to the west and further north and south, includes a settled landscape comprising a number of small villages and a high number of
dispersed farmsteads. The nearest villages include: Kinglassie, located approximately 1.1km to the south-west; Thornton, located approximately 4.2km south-east; and, Markinch, located on the eastern periphery of Glenrothes approximately 4.5km away. The small hamlet of Auchmuirbridge, developed at a bridge crossing over the River Leven, is located approximately 2km to the north-west.

5.4 In addition to these small villages, the wider agricultural setting also comprises numerous large farmstead complexes dispersed along the rural road network and frequently located in sheltered locations offered by lower valley sides and the prevailing topography across the volcanic hills. The nearest farmstead, Goatmilk Farm with its large barns and outbuildings, is located to the immediate west of the southern sector and Milldeans Farm, located close to the River Leven and former Prinlaws Mill, is located approximately 225m to the north of the north-west corner of the Site. Finmont Farm, Flower of May, Bellcraig Farm and Ryelaw are located along the rural unclassified road to the west and a number of farmsteads and large properties including Strathendry House, Ingleside House, The White House and the Farmlands farm complex are dispersed along the A911 to the north-west of the Site.

5.5 Despite the close proximity to the large town of Glenrothes, inter-visibility between settlements and the dispersed rural settlement pattern is very limited, mainly on account of the encompassing and strongly rolling landform and numerous intervening woodland components, and the extensive former policies and riparian woodland associated with the River Leven which form the mature setting to the town and its suburbs.

Roads, Rail and Routes through the Study Area

5.6 The main arterial route through Fife, the A92, is located approximately 5km to the south of the Site as it circumnavigates on a west-east axis across the fringes between the volcanic hills and lowland hills and valleys landscape and curves northwards through the eastern fringes of Glenrothes. The A911, located approximately 900m to the north at its nearest point, follows the lower northern slopes of the River Leven and in an easterly direction heads along Main Street in the heart of the Leslie Conservation Area in the village’s historic core and onwards through the western policies of Leslie House where it crosses over the deeply incised and densely wooded slopes of the River Leven Valley. Further east on the fringes of Glenrothes, the A911 links with the A92 at the Queensway Roundabout and continues further east crossing over the river once more on its way through Markinch and the outer fringes of Leven, Methil and Buckhaven on the Fife coastline. Heading west, the route passes through the small settlements of Auchmuirbridge, Scotlandwell, Kinnesswood and Wester Balgedie before linking with the A91 and the M90 at Kinross and Milnathort, near Loch Leven. A number of ‘B’ classified roads create a secondary hierarchy of road routes including the B921 which broadly follows an east-west axis through Glenrothes to Kinglassie and passing by the southern edge of Fife Airport, approximately 530m to the south of the Site at its nearest point. In addition to this classified road network, the Study Area also has a good network of local unclassified rural roads winding their way across the lower slopes of the rounded volcanic hills and along and across the River Leven Valley and linking the dispersed small settlements and numerous farmsteads to this relative dense classified road network.
5.7 The Dunfermline Line of the Fife Circle Line is located approximately 3km to the south and crosses through the wide valley floor of the River Ore from Dunfermline and serving Cowdenbeath and Cardenden and finally Methil where it terminates. At Thornton, the Fife Circle Line continues north passing through the edge of Markinch on the eastern fringes of Glenrothes with connections to the Edinburgh-Aberdeen Line at Ladybank. The nearest train stations are at Thornton, approximately 5.2km to the south-east, and Cardenden train station approximately 5.3km south-west.

5.8 The sensitivity along these transport routes is considered to be Medium, taking into account the speed the receptor will be travelling at.

Recreational Routes

5.9 The Study Area contains an excellent network of local paths, core paths and cycle routes which provide circular routes and link the various neighbourhoods and suburbs across Glenrothes and Leslie to the large amount of recreational and green spaces as well as places of historic interest across the town, surrounding smaller settlements and along the historic mill landscapes associated with the River Leven.

5.10 The long distance path, the Fife Pilgrim Way, is an historic route thought to have been used by medieval pilgrims as they travelled on their journey between West Fife and East Fife to reach the 12th century cathedral at St.Andrews, and which was thought to be one of the most important pilgrim destinations in Europe. The long distance path follows some of the most ancient paths in Fife, commencing in North Queensferry and following a variety of existing paths, tracks, core paths and rights of way crossing through the heart of Fife. Within the Study Area, the Fife Pilgrim Way enters Kinglassie and heads up the southern slopes of White Hill with direct views towards Blyth’s Tower, a folly, located on the summit of White Hill and which looms up out of the surrounding pastoral landscape forming a strong visual reference point in the local wider setting. Before reaching the summit of White Hill, the Fife Pilgrim Way heads in an easterly direction and traverses in a north-easterly over the western parts of Goatmilk Hills and along the valley floor of the River Leven as it meanders its way through the western fringes of Glenrothes and onwards through the policy woodlands and designed landscapes of Leslie House and beyond. This long distance path is located approximately 440m to the west of the Site at its nearest point.

5.11 The core path network across Glenrothes and the surrounding setting is prevalent and provides a number of circular routes across and around the town and beyond. The nearest core path, The Old Loan, effectively runs through the Site on a strong east-west axis and broadly follows the local ridgeline which separates the northern and central sectors. The Old Loan historically formed a key part of the local road network in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, providing a connecting route between the various quarries across White Hill and Goatmilk Hills. Although no longer a road, The Old Loan plays an integral part of the core path network in the area and links to the long distant path, the Fife Pilgrim Way, approximately 440m to the west of the Site. The core path extends further east through Newcastle and around the northern fringes of the golf course where it meets a core path which runs north-south and mostly follows the route of a disused railway line through Glenrothes. This core path extends northwards and merges with the former Markinch to Leslie Railway Line and continues as the Boblingen Way, where
it spans over the deep sided valley form of the River Leven at this location via the curved Cabbagehall Railway Viaduct. The former Cabbagehall Line also forms part of the core path network and closely follows the River Leven passing through the former mill history dispersed along the river banks including the large built form of Fettykil Paper Mill before continuing through South Woods and the historic 17th century designed landscapes of Leslie House.

5.12 Due to the recreational nature of this receptor where an appreciation of the landscape would be of a long duration, the sensitivity along these recreational routes is considered to be High.

Viewpoint Assessment

5.13 Viewpoints have been used as a tool to inform the assessment of the potential impacts on visual amenity throughout the visual study area. A total of 13 viewpoints have been selected through a process of baseline study and fieldwork to ensure full coverage of the proposed site and to illustrate the potential visual impact of the proposed mixed use development on the landscape. These viewpoints represent a range of receptor types, both visual and landscape, and from different directions, distances and elevations, and are all publicly accessible, on roads, tracks, footpaths or open ground. Each viewpoint has been selected because:

- it has a reasonably high potential number of viewers; and/or
- it is of particular importance to the viewers affected; and/or
- it is indicative of views from the local and wider landscape.

5.14 Table 7 below provides details of the representative viewpoints, presenting their location relative to the site, the type of viewer, reasons for inclusion in the visual assessment and the resulting sensitivity. For the purposes of assessing the effects on visual amenity, the sensitivity of the receptor is as defined on page 6, criteria for Visual Receptor Sensitivity and is defined as being High, Medium or Low.

Table 7: Representative Viewpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VP Name</th>
<th>Distance, Location</th>
<th>Receptor Type, Description and Reason for Selection</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VP1 East Lomond Hill, Lomond Hills Regional Park</td>
<td>5.1km North</td>
<td>Designated Viewpoint from the summit of East Lomond Hill which is representative of views for recreational users and ‘worse-case’ elevated views of the setting to Glenrothes from the Lomond Hills</td>
<td>High (recreation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP2 Blythe’s Tower</td>
<td>1.5km West</td>
<td>Elevated view from Blythe’s Tower on White Hill summit and is representative of views from the setting to a listed structure and for recreation users.</td>
<td>High (recreation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP3 Bowie House Farm, B922</td>
<td>2km South</td>
<td>Access track to Bowie House Farm, near the B-class road which represents worse-case open views for road-users and dispersed farmsteads</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP4 A91, Entrance to Strathendry House</td>
<td>1.1km North-West</td>
<td>Worse-case direct view from this ‘A’ classified road which is representative of views for road users and setting to listed buildings and structures. Views from Strathendry are contained by mature garden boundary features and views from the road corridor would be oblique. Most views would frequently be</td>
<td>High (setting to built heritage features)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
foreshortened by large built forms of the rural settlement pattern, vegetation/occasional woodland blocks defining the agricultural landscape.

| VP5 Local road network, Ryelaw Farm | 1.2km, West | Worse-case direct view from the dispersed settlement pattern to the west of the Site. Majority of views are generally contained by a combination of topography and intervening vegetation. Representative of local road users/ local residents. | Medium |
| VP6 Local road network, Finmont Farm | 700m, WSW | Typical view from this part of the local rural road network near Finmont Farm. Representative of local road users, local residents, visitors to Fie Airport. | Medium |
| VP7 Local road network, Goatmilk Farm | 80m, WSW | Typical view from this part of the local rural road network near Goatmilk Farm. Representative of road users, local residents, visitors to Fie Airport. | Medium |
| VP8 Local road network, Glenrothes Golf Course | 170m, ENE | Typical view from this part of the local rural road network near Glenrothes Golf Course. Representative of local road users and visitors to Fife Airport and golfers. | High (visual amenity) – close distance |
| VP9 Cabbagehall Railway Viaduct | 430m, North-East | Typical open elevated view from the listed bridge which also forms part of the core path network. | High (setting to built heritage and recreation) |
| VP10 Leslie, Southern fringes | 530m, North | Typical open and direct elevated view from the local road network on the southern fringes of Leslie, which also forms part of the core path network. | Medium |
| VP11 Carnoustie Gardens, Glenrothes | 15m, North-West | Typical view from the western fringes of Glenrothes. Representative of local residents and users of the core path network. | High (visual amenity) – close distance |
| VP12 Fife Pilgrim Way | 440m, West | ‘Worse-case’ open view from the Fife Pilgrim Way and core path network as it traverses the western part of Goatmilk Hills. This view represents an open section of the path. Most views foreshortened by a combination of rising topography and mature gorse vegetation and hedgerow/ trees that frequently line both sides of the path across Goatmilk Hills. | High (recreation) |
| VP13 The Old Loan | 0m, Within Site | ‘Worse-case’ open 360˚ view from The Old Loan core path as it traverses through the Site. Representative of recreational users. | High (recreation) |

6 Assessment of Landscape Impacts and Their Effects

6.1 This section assesses the potential effects on the landscape receptors identified in Section 4: landscape baseline.

Impact on Landscape Designations

6.2 As highlighted within the baseline, there are a number of policy issues which relate to proposed development of the Site. The potential effects upon relevant adopted policies, formal landscape designations, the historic built and cultural heritage features and conservation assets are assessed below.
Countryside

6.3 As highlighted within the baseline and illustrated on Figure 3 Planning Policy & Landscape Context, the Site lies adjacent to but out with the ‘settlement envelope’ of Glenrothes. As such, the Site is located in an area of ‘Countryside’, where Policy 7: Development in the countryside applies. The sensitive site planning of the site is considered to be favourable when assessed against criteria within this policy which fully advocates development which is “of a scale and nature compatible with surrounding uses; well-located in respect of available infrastructure and contribute to the need for any improvement; located and designed to protect the overall landscape and environmental quality of the area”.

6.4 It is considered that a measured expansion into a small portion of this large area of land would not prejudice the overall purpose or integrity of the Countryside policy and there would be no detrimental impact on the prevailing character. This is primarily on account of the Site’s direct relationship with the urban edge of Glenrothes and the rising landform further west across the volcanic hills of Goatmilk which effectively contain large parts of the Site. This effect is further reinforced by large areas of woodland, woodland blocks, groups of mature trees and amenity planting within the context to the Site and the dense network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees which define the surrounding fields to the north and south. These mature landscape components combine with the complex interplay of topography to define the Site within a distinct compartment in the landscape.

6.5 A new and enhanced landscape framework applied across the Site area would set the context to a high quality residential development and it is predicted that the proposals would support a more robust, new and re-aligned settlement boundary by consolidating and rounding off the edge to the built-up area and positively enhancing the urban / rural interface. With the introduction of a native species based site-wide planting and open space strategy including interlinked ribbons of green space and substantial areas of woodland and structure planting introduced to the fringes to the Site, this would create an easily read physical relationship between the developed settlement edge and the wider ‘countryside’.

6.6 Ultimately, it is predicted that the proposals would not prejudice the qualities of the Countryside policy, but rather, be seen to strengthen and reinforce the settlement boundary at this location by consolidating the edge to the built-up area, positively enhancing the urban / rural interface and creating a new long term and appropriate woodland boundary.

Natural Heritage and Access Assets

6.7 As highlighted within the baseline and illustrated on Figure 3 Planning Policy & Landscape Context, the Lomond Hills Regional Park and the Lomond Hills Local Landscape Area cover a large area of the upland countryside across the context to the north and north-west of the Site with the regional park extending further south to include the River Leven Valley. Locally, inter-visibility with the Site is frequently foreshortened by a combination of topography and the mature vegetation structure whilst in more elevated views further north and north-west, it is acknowledged the northern sector with its strong northerly aspect is more prominent with the local ridgeline where The Old
Loan core path route is located, forming the backdrop to the northern sector and restricting views towards the central and southern parts of the Site. By drawing upon the strong, rectilinear field pattern evident across the River Leven Valley and the mature wooded components including the extensive amount of policy woodlands within the context to the Site and the western part of Glenrothes, it is considered an outward looking development framed by inter-linked green corridors and woodland planting would not be detrimental to the character and special qualities of the LLA or regional park.

**Built and Historic Environment**

6.8 As highlighted in Section 3 and illustrated on Figure 3 Planning Policy and Landscape Context, the Study Area contains a number of built, historic and cultural heritage features within the context to the Site, including a conservation area, a garden and designed landscape and over 50 listed buildings and structures.

6.9 Leslie House Garden & Designed Landscape is located in a sheltered location on the northern slopes of the River Leven Valley set within formal grounds with extensive policy woodlands which stretch over the south side of the valley and further east and west along the valley. These extensive mature woodland components combined with the dense built forms within the western part of Glenrothes effectively screen any views out from the GDL. Similarly, from Leslie Conservation Area, which includes the historic part of the village and a high concentration of listed buildings along the High Street, high density areas of built form combine with the valley landform and intervening policy woodlands and amenity planting to contain any views out towards the Site. The integrity and special landscape qualities of the HGDL and the settings to the conservation area and listed buildings would not be affected by the proposed development.

6.10 The southern part of Leslie also contains a number of listed buildings which are located out-with the conservation area. The River Leven cuts through the fringes of Leslie in a deep V sided valley at this location with both sides of the banks covered in woodland. A combination of topography, built form and the mature tree structure would screen views towards the Site. Even within close proximity to the Site, woodland cover is prolific and effectively restricts views from the nearest listed building, Category B listed Glenwood House, located approximately 260m away from the north-east corner of the Site. The settings to these listed buildings would not be affected by the proposed residential development.

6.11 Several listed buildings and structures are also scattered across the wider Study Area, including Blythe’s Tower, located on White Hill to the west, Strathendry House Estate to the north-west and within Kinglassie to the south-west. Intervening and locally complex landform across the upper slopes of White Hill effectively foreshorten views towards the Site from Blythe’s Tower (Refer to Viewpoint 2, Figure 4) whilst within Kinglassie, the high density of buildings lining the High Street combined with the steep rising slopes of White Hill contain views out of the village to the north-east. From Strathendry House, mature garden boundary features and wooded grounds contain the majority of views out from within this estate. It is acknowledged that from the southern curtilage and access to Strathendry, direct views are available towards the northern part of the Site (Refer to Viewpoint 4, Figure 5). From this part of the setting to the listed buildings and structures across Strathendry, new housing would be seen within the
context of the existing built fringes of Glenrothes and backdropped and framed by a newly enhanced woodland framework which would extend down the northern valley sides and wrap around distinct pockets of development. This strategy would ensure new housing across the northern sector would create a positive new built component and be seen to be consistent with the characteristics on this part of the urban fringe.

Natural Environment, Green Networks and Green Corridors

The context to the Site and Glenrothes contains a large amount of natural heritage features including numerous woodland blocks, mixed and broadleaved woodlands, policy woodlands, riparian planting and hedgerow and hedgerow tree networks which punctuate the agricultural landscape. There are also a number of significantly notable landscape features focussed along the River Leven which meanders in a relatively steep valley to the north of the northern sector. As the river meanders further east, the valley sides become much steeper and the banks are covered in mature woodland. This includes the extensive South Woods which forms part of the policy woodlands associated with Leslie House Estate and creates a mature and distinct sense of place to this part of Glenrothes. Within the context to the Site, the Leslie – Strathendry Wildlife Site extends along the River Leven corridor and abuts the far north-east fringes of the Site and contains a large amount of riparian planting, some scrub vegetation and rich grassland habitats. Mature woodland components across the two small hills within the southern part of the Site extend further east to merge with the large amount of woodland and structure planting across Glenrothes Golf Course and provide a distinct and mature soft backdrop to this part of the Site. In tandem with the rich and mature tapestry of woodland cover across Goatmilk Hills, the large amount of amenity planting and woodland cover across the built fringes to Glenrothes add a further woodland layer to this transitional landscape. Collectively, these form distinct landscape features containing a high degree of nature conservation and ecological value that support a wide range of habitats and also form part of the extensive green network corridors across the wider setting to the Site and to Glenrothes.

The approach to the delivery of the proposed residential development would fully acknowledges the importance of these features. Development would not only protect these important landscape resources through effective management but with the introduction of substantial areas of native species based woodland planting to augment and enhance the Site’s periphery as well as a comprehensive planting strategy applied internally across the Site, it is considered that the biodiversity and conservation value as well as the age diversity and mix of species across the setting would be significantly increased.

In addition to these natural heritage features, a review of the LDP has identified a number of green networks and green network assets across the Study Area. The Boblingen Way includes key green spaces within the western envelope of Glenrothes and within the context to the Site including Glenrothes Golf Course, Caskieberran Park, Tanshall Park, Warout Wood and Bighty Wood, with the far western fringes of this green network asset extending into the southern part of the Site. The River Leven and Spur green network asset incorporates the River Leven Valley within the context to the north of the Site including the Leslie – Strathendry Wildlife Site and extends into the northern part of the Site.
6.15 Consistent with the aspirations of the LDP to contribute to the Green Networks and Green Corridors, development of this Site represents an opportunity to introduce a range of long term environmental enhancements on the urban/rural fringes which would have particular regard to the particular nature conservation interests of the Boblingen Way Green Network and the River Leven and Spurs green network. A pro-active strategy would seek to maintain and significantly enhance the key characteristics and qualities of the setting by retaining and augmenting existing woodland and vegetation cover around the Site’s periphery and along internal field boundaries as far as practicable and managing and maintaining these features in the long term. Through the introduction of a substantial and predominantly native species based woodland and woodland edge planting to enhance particularly the northern and western boundaries, fragmented habitat corridors between existing wooded areas to the south and east can be linked to the River Leven corridor to the north and new landscape features including linear green corridors which incorporate internal field boundary hedgerows and field drain networks, would establish to further extend habitat corridors into and across the Site area. Once established, this new and significantly enhanced woodland structure would be seen to positively reinforce the existing landscape structure and extend green networks around and across the Site and thereby making an overall contribution to green network assets.

6.16 In tandem with these objectives and aspirations to extend habitat corridors, increase biodiversity and improve green corridors within the context to the Site, there is an opportunity to extend and connect to the existing strong network of paths which surround Glenrothes and dissect the Site. The inclusion of a site-wide integrated path network across the proposed inter-linked ribbons of green space which would extend from The Old Loan would allow direct links to the wider existing core path network and provide further circular routes around and across the new housing development. In turn, this would also allow long term permeability of this area and increase the sense of public access across the Site and provide direct links to the proposed areas of open space for use by new residents and the wider community.

Summary

6.17 It is concluded that when assessed against specific criteria relating to landscape policy, green networks and the built and cultural heritage of the environment, development compares favourably. The table below provides a summary of predicted residual effects.

Table 8: Summary of Effects on Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Sensitivity to Change</th>
<th>Magnitude of Effect</th>
<th>Residual Effect and Nature of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy 7: Housing in the Countryside</td>
<td>Medium-High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate-Minor to Moderate and Slight Adverse (construction/short term) Moderate-Minor to Moderate and Beneficial (long term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 13: Natural Environment and Access: Green Network Policy Areas and Existing Green Network Assets</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low (positive)</td>
<td>Moderate (positive) and Beneficial (short term and long term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 14: Built and Historic Environment - Leslie House Historic Garden &amp; Designed Landscape</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No residual effect and Neutral (short term and long term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 14: Built and Historic Environment - Leslie Conservation Area</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No residual effect and Neutral (short term and long term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 14: Built and Historic Environment - Listed Buildings</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None for the vast majority of settings to listed buildings; Strathendry House setting: Low</td>
<td>Moderate and Slight Adverse (construction/short term) Residual Effects reduce once planting strategy establishes: nature of change Slight Beneficial (long term)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact on the Landscape Resource**

6.18 As a result of construction on the Site for a residential development, there would be a loss of a number of large, broadly rectilinear arable fields and a few fields utilised for grazing horses. The intensively worked nature of the majority of the Site ensures land cover is not a particularly valuable resource and given that there is an abundance of pastoral and arable land encompassing the Site within the wider context, its loss in terms of a landscape resource would be negligible.
6.19 Mature woodland, woodland belts, groups of mature trees and length of hedgerows which extend around the Site’s northern, eastern and southern periphery and across some internal areas form a mature treescape. In association with the prevailing rising landform to the west and the extensive woodland cover across the fringes of Glenrothes and Glenrothes Golf Course to the east, these features already provide an opportunity to relate new parcels of development to established components in the landscape. The approach to the delivery of a residential development would fully acknowledge the importance of these valuable resources and the retention, augmentation and enhancement of these key features is seen as an important baseline factor to the proper planning of this site. As such, the proposed development strategy as illustrated in the Indicative Development Framework (produced by EMA Architects) seeks to retain, augment and enhance the important woodland, tree groups and hedgerow features across the Site as far as practicable, and, through the adoption of a pro-active site-wide management plan, ultimately seeks to manage and maintain the quality of this landscape resource thereby providing for the longer term survival. However, a single mature tree specimen between the central and southern sector would need to be removed to accommodate the internal road layout, a small amount of vegetation along the southern boundary and eastern boundary along Rosemount Road would also be removed to accommodate the two new vehicular accesses into the Site, and areas of self-seeded gorse and scrubby vegetation along both sides of The Old Loan would also be removed.

6.20 It is proposed to more than compensate for these small losses and by building upon the wooded context to the north, east and south of the Site, it is proposed to introduce a primary layer of mixed woodland and woodland edge planting to augment the existing wooded resource and introduce a new 15m wide woodland along the western boundary in the north and central parts of the Site. ‘Green’ wooded fingers would extend this primary wooded canopy into the Site to further define and frame distinct pockets of development. A secondary layer, including structure planting, riparian planting, avenue and specimen tree planting, lengths of hedges and a level of domestic / ornamental planting would reinforce this primary layer. This would form part of a mitigation strategy to be adopted across the site and would include a high percentage of native and locally indigenous species to increase biodiversity whilst key areas of new woodland could be undertaken at an early stage to ensure that key landscape resources are enhanced in line with the scale and mix of development proposed.

6.21 This comprehensive, native species-based planting strategy would ultimately help to reinforce the sense of structure experienced across the local area and through the adoption of a pro-active site-wide management plan the strategy also seeks to maintain and manage the quality of existing and new landscape features and thereby providing for the longer term survival of this important landscape resource for the benefit to the wider setting. Whilst there would be a period of adjustment and change, through careful planning and design, development would have a negligible impact on the overall landscape resource in the short term, whilst in the longer term many of these features would be enhanced. In the medium to long term and as planting establishes, this strategy would add to the overall value of the landscape resource, provide the opportunity for the creation of extended wildlife corridors and create a new positive and wooded element at this important interface between ‘town’ and ‘country’.
6.22 It is judged that the susceptibility to change is Low and the value is High. This gives a sensitivity to change rating of Medium. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be Negligible and the nature of change is assessed to be Slight Adverse in the short term. Following completion and once the planting strategy establishes, the overall residual effect is assessed to be Negligible and nature of change Beneficial.

**Impact on Landscape Character**

6.23 Following development, there will be an impact to the local landscape character of the site and its immediate context, changing from a number of arable and pastoral fields to a high quality residential development set within a parkland setting and framed by an existing and augmented woodland framework. In addition to residential areas, the development would also include a range of recreational resources in the form of passive and active open spaces including the creation of a large central new 'village' green and linked through an integrated site-wide paths strategy.

6.24 As highlighted in the baseline, in terms of landscape classification, the Site is located on the edge of the urban area of Glenrothes and within the eastern fringes of the small Redwell Landscape Unit of the Pronounced Volcanic Hills and Craigs LCT. Essentially, this area forms a transitional landscape located between the Upland Foothills LCT across the northern slopes of the River Leven and further north and an extensive Lowland Hills and Valleys landscape to the south. The Site and its setting possess typical characteristics and features of all three landscape types which serves to reinforce the transitional nature of the Site and its landscapes. Positive attributes include the wealth of mature tree cover comprising large areas of woodland across the eastern parts of Goatmilk Hills, woodland belts, woodland blocks, mature groups, riparian planting and network of hedgerows which define the agricultural setting and fringes to Glenrothes The richness of the cultural heritage of the area, the concentration of wooded estates and extensive areas of policy woodland and tree-lined avenues associated with the former Inchdairenie Park Estate to the south, Leslie House Estate to the east and Strathendry House Estate to the north, add to the strong woodland structure and rich and diverse texture which characterises the setting to Leslie and the western parts of Glenrothes. More recently, amenity and structure planting associated with Glenrothes Municipal Golf Course to the east and a large amount of mature garden boundary features across the settlement form of Glenrothes combine with the prevailing rising and complex interplay of topography to provide a level of relative exclusion to the west of the Site and Glenrothes. At a local level, the rolling topography across Goatmilk Hills and small volcanic hill features within the southern part of the Site is further accentuated by woodland cover and mature tree groups combine with structure planting associated with the golf course to create a well-wooded and distinctive backdrop to the southern sector. Across the northern and central sectors, the well-established woodland block, amenity planting around the Site's eastern periphery and mature hedgerow and riparian planting features on the northern periphery as well as several lengths of hedgerows defining the internal field boundaries, already provide a framework to the Site. In conjunction with the landform across the northern sector which rises towards a local ridgeline, all of these well-established components combine with the urban context to enclose the Site and its setting into a distinct compartment in the landscape.
6.25 Within this transitional and wooded landscape on the fringes of Glenrothes, it is considered that the local landscape and historic townscape including the wooded estates that were once prevalent in this area offer many positive attributes that can be drawn into the vision for the Site and enabling a pro-active design strategy to be developed. In turn, this would ensure that the residential development forms an appropriate addition to the landscape on the urban edge. Through careful site planning, new areas of housing, new swathes of amenity open space, the SUDS strategy and associated infrastructure have been laid out to respond positively to the landform across each distinct sector and the sense of maturity already established across the wider Site are would be reinforced by the introduction of a comprehensive site-wide “native” species based planting strategy.

6.26 Key criteria in the sensitive planning of the Site is to ensure a residential development comes forward which would be seen to be consistent with the prevailing settlement pattern and would form an appropriate addition to the urban fringes. In this regard and through careful site planning, it is proposed to create distinct pockets of housing which would be laid out to respond positively to the various landforms across the three distinct sectors of the Site and accessed via two accesses, one along the southern boundary and one off Rosemount Road on the eastern boundary of the northern sector. The primary road infrastructure which would form a loop road and main spine through the development with secondary road infrastructure, courtyards and shared surfaces providing access to the distinct ‘development pods’.

6.27 Building upon the wooded characteristics and sense of maturity already established around the context to the north, east and south of the Site, it is proposed to introduce a comprehensive, site-wide “native” species based planting strategy which would not only reinforce the wooded boundaries but extend along the western boundary and into the Site with fingers of new woodland, structure and riparian planting wrapping around distinct parcels of housing. This planting strategy would not only complement the existing landscape resource but also form the backdrop to a new informal landscape which would include recreational facilities, a large amount of amenity open space and a range of new habitats. This approach would help to reinforce the sense of structure in the landscape, with the opportunity taken to maximise the recreational value of the Site and provide greater access. Proposals seek to marry into the existing core path network across the Site with new walkways to encourage use of the recreational resources not only for new residents but also for the existing community.

6.28 It is proposed to introduce a range of integral open spaces incorporated into the proposed landscape strategy and set out as a series of interlinked ribbons of parkland throughout the development form. At the centre of the open spaces strategy is the proposed ‘village’ green which is envisaged to become a large central hub of active and passive activities including an equipped play area, informal play equipment inspiring natural play, adventure trails and large areas for informal play. It is proposed to locate this new recreational hub along the local ridgeline separating the northern and central sectors with housing stepped back into the Site on both sides of the ridgeline. These features and recreational resources would be set within swathes of grass and wildflower meadows which in turn would be framed by the substantial new woodland on the western boundary, and structure and specimen tree planting to encompass the new village green and hub in a parkland woodland setting. Where applicable, surrounding
housing would be designed to overlook the new village green thereby providing a safe area for the hub of active and passive open spaces as well as being well trafficked with the integration of the route of The Old Loan which crosses this part of the Site.

6.29 Leslie has the characteristics of a typical planned Scottish village settlement and in line with these positive townscape attributes and the distinctly northerly aspect of the northern sector overlooking the River Leven, new housing has been set out to incorporate a distinctly formal layout with an outward looking aspect. Green fingers of open space, structure and riparian planting would extend across the northern sector from the central village green ensuring a fully integrated network of green space wraps around the distinct development areas with the village green providing a soft backdrop. In addition, tree-lined avenues reminiscent of the inherent estate landscapes would be created along the primary road structure with ‘view’ corridors extending further north across the River Leven valley. Due to the Site’s location on the urban fringe, the ratio of garden plots to building forms would be relatively high towards the eastern fringes to protect the visual amenity of existing housing.

6.30 The southern sector has a more rural character and southerly aspect overlooking the lowland settled agricultural setting to the south. The grassy wooded hillock and wooded hill which provide a soft and sheltered backdrop to Goatmilk Farm effectively separate the southern part of the Site from the rest of the landholding with lengths of unmanaged hedgerows defining the grounds to the former East Goatmilk Farm extending south and partly along the unclassified road to define the southern sector within a distinct ‘landscape room’. By drawing upon the traditional rural settlement character comprising large farm steadings which prevails across the context to the southern sector and reflecting the historic estate landscapes including the former Inchdairnie Park Estate which was located in close proximity to the south-east, it is proposed to introduce a residential development set within a courtyard setting. Through the introduction of features reflecting the historic estate and parkland character inherent in the local area, the strategy presented for the southern sector incorporates a distinctly formal layout based with built forms utilising local materials and vernacular features and linked with lengths of stone walls and formal beech hedging. It is proposed to step this linked courtyard steading development back into the Site and a large area of parkland incorporating part of the SUDS strategy presented to the frontage along the unclassified road. Other features such as gate piers and lengths of stone walls would be located at the main access onto the road network and a tree lined avenue created as the primary road extends north through the gated steading development and on to the central, wooded part of the Site. Set within the context of the extensively wooded hills forming a mature backdrop near to the established Goatmilk Farm building group, it is considered this sensitive approach to the development of the southern sector would be seen to be consistent with the prevailing settlement pattern with the introduction of key historic features creating an estate character that was once prevalent in the local area. In turn, these components would have a positive effect and introduce a development into the southern sector with a strong sense of place and distinctiveness.

6.31 The sensitivity of the local landscape character area to change across the northern and central sector is considered to be Medium. The northern and central sectors have a Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change, on account of its transitional nature and influence of the existing urban fringes. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be
Medium. Therefore the impact on landscape character is considered to be Moderate and nature of change is Adverse during construction and in the short term. In the medium to long term, once the comprehensive site-wide planting strategy begins to establish, residual effects would reduce and the nature of change is assessed to be Beneficial. The proposals would bring a more wooded and secluded character to the urban/rural interface with the sensitive development strategy ensuring the development effectively assimilates with its townscape and wider landscape setting.

6.32 The sensitivity of the local landscape character area to change across the southern sector is considered to be Medium-High. The southern sector has a Medium value and Medium-High susceptibility to change, on account of its more rural, settled character. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be Medium-Low. Therefore the impact on landscape character is considered to be Moderate and nature of change is Slight Adverse during construction and in the short term. In the medium term, once the planting strategy including formal lengths of hedging, avenue trees and riparian planting around the parkland frontage begin to establish and filter and frame views towards the courtyard steading development, and in conjunction with the hard landscape features at the entrance, development of this part of the Site would have a positive effect and the nature of change would be Beneficial.

7 Assessment of Visual Impacts and Their Effects on Visual Amenity

7.1 The representative viewpoints have been used to assess the potential impacts on visual receptors. An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken to establish the potential impact of the proposed development on the local environment and townscape and to assist in determining the capacity of this part of the urban fringe to accommodate change. Rather than repeat information, the representative viewpoints have been used to provide an assessment of the various visual receptors as highlighted within the visual baseline.

7.2 Full consideration has been given to the viewpoints 1 – 13 illustrated in Figures 4 – 10, their location and distance from the Site, the quality of each view and the impact that future development would have on the setting. The locations of these viewpoints are presented on each of the viewpoint figures. A detailed review of the findings is discussed below.

7.3 In general, the prevailing topography across the setting where the complex interplay of the rolling and rising landform across Goatmilk Hills to the west and rising upland landscape to the north merge with the River Leven Valley within the local context to effectively contain visibility towards large parts of the Site and the fringes to Glenrothes. A number of smaller tributaries which drain into the River Leven including the Den Burn in close proximity to the west add an additional layer of complexity to localised areas of the terrain and similarly to the south the Lochty Burn, River Ore and associated smaller burns create a complex series of low ridgelines and undulations across the lowland valley landscape to the south. The rural setting includes numerous landscape components such as a network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland blocks defining the farmland, as well as riparian planting, amenity planting associated with the high number of dispersed farmsteads and an extensive amount of policy woodland and tree-lined avenues. These key characteristics within the setting to the west of
Glenrothes create a tight visual envelope around the Site and its context with limited opportunities for views.

7.4 Approaching Glenrothes from any direction in the wider landscape, a combination of the prevailing landform, the low-lying nature of the town and the numerous amount of intervening areas of vegetation and extensive policy woodlands within the local context effectively restrict inter-visibility with Glenrothes. Occasional fleeting glimpses towards the urban fringes and parts of the Site are available as the receptor travels along the classified road network towards Glenrothes.

7.5 This is illustrated in middle distant viewpoints 3 and 4, Figure 5. Approaching Glenrothes from the south along the B922, this road corridor is very well-defined by managed hedgerows, hedgerows trees and occasional woodland blocks which combine with the subtle twists and turns of the route and the rolling intervening valley topography, to generally restrict views. To illustrate a worse-case scenario, Viewpoint 3 is taken from the access road to Bowmore Farm, located off the B922 and near to where the Fife Circular railway line dissects the landscape on a strong east-west axis and illustrates how parts of the southern sector is visible within the context of the settled rural settlement pattern. Where visible in the approach from the south, the proposed courtyard steading development would be seen as an extension to the large building group at Goatmilk Farm and backdropped by the extensive wooded Goatmilk Hills.

7.6 Viewpoint 4 illustrates a worse-case view travelling east towards Glenrothes along the A911. Views across the River Leven Valley are occasionally foreshortened by the high number of large farm steadings dispersed along this road corridor and associated amenity planting and heavily filtered or screened by mature hedgerow planting which frequently lines both sides of this ‘A’ class road. In the vicinity of Strathendry Estate, the road corridor is more open with views across the River Leven valley and towards the fringes of Glenrothes and the northern part of the Site. Once the comprehensive planting strategy along the Site’s western and northern boundary begin to establish the northern sector would become more secluded with potentially glimpsed views towards parts of dwellings seen in the context of the existing built form on the edge of Glenrothes.

7.7 Similarly, from a handful of elevated views further north and north-east on the northern side of the River Leven Valley, parts of the northern sector are visible with a combination of numerous intervening landscape components and the prevailing landform wholly containing any views towards the central and southern sectors. This is illustrated in worse-case Viewpoints 9 and 10, Figure 8, from the western fringes of Leslie and from the Cabbagehall Railway Viaduct as it crosses over the River Leven within Glenrothes. Generally, views from within Glenrothes and Leslie are wholly contained by a combination of built form and mature intervening vegetation (Viewpoints 8 and 11). However, where views out are available, proposed new pockets of housing, framed and softened by the woodland planting strategy, would be seen in the context of the existing urban fringes. To further mitigate potential effects from the north and north-east, an important part of the strategy is to ensure the local skyline along the route of The Old Loan is protected. In this regard, development on both sides of this local ridgeline has been pulled back and a new woodland park introduced which not only provides the
setting to the new ‘village’ green and hub of recreational resources but also provides a soft backdrop to the proposed residential development.

7.8 Inter-visibility from the local context as the receptor travels along the rural road network is also limited due to the combination of the prevailing topography and intervening landscape features and it is not possible to view the entirety of the Site from any one location. Viewpoint 5 from the west illustrate how small parts of the northern and central sectors are visible and Viewpoints 6 and 7 from the south-west illustrate that parts of the central and southern sectors are visible. Once mitigation planting including the substantial woodland proposed along the western boundary establishes, these views would in the medium to long term diminish and the new woodland components would add new positive and characteristic features to the woodland resource already evident across the fringes to Glenrothes.

7.9 The general characteristics of the landscape setting to the Site, the prevailing landform, juxtaposition of woodland blocks and mature vegetation and its relationship with the existing built edge on the western fringes of Glenrothes are illustrated in Viewpoint 13, taken from the core path, The Old Loan, which runs along the local ridgeline on a strong east to west axis between the northern and central sectors. During construction and in the short term there would be a high degree of change for receptors utilising this core path with large areas of gorse and native vegetation which enclose both sides of the path largely removed and a new landscape framework introduced to frame new areas of housing. A wide landscape buffer would be introduced incorporating the core path into swathes of meadow grass and wildflower areas and lined with specimen tree planting and groups of smaller native flowering trees to create an attractive corridor to the core path, not only for recreational users but also in terms of conservation value. Housing to the south would be stepped back from this new swathe of green space and at key locations orientated to overlook the core path corridor thereby forming a secure by design approach.

7.10 To the north, it is proposed to locate a new ‘village green’ which would become a hub for a variety of passive and active recreational resources. This would push housing further north into the Site and away from the local ridgeline where the path is located. Whilst there would be some considerable change to the character of this core path route, a more formal parkland character would emerge with new woodland and riparian planting reinforcing the soft backdrop and in the foreground specimen tree planting framing and softening views towards new areas of housing. This strategy would ensure the visual amenity of this core path route would be protected in the long term with the route becoming an integral part of the open space strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint 1: East Lomond Hill, Lomond Hills Regional Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
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Table 9: Assessment of Viewpoints
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Short Term / Construction</th>
<th>Residual Effect (Long Term)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 2: Blythe’s Tower</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral/Slight Beneficial</td>
<td>None, Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 3: Bowie House Farm, B922</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral</td>
<td>Negligible, Neutral/Slight Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 4: A91, Entrance to Strathendry House</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate, Slight Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Slight Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 5: Local road network, Ryelaw Farm</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low-Negligible</td>
<td>Moderate-Minor to Negligible, Slight Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Slight Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 6: Local road network, Finmont Farm</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate-Minor, Slight Adverse</td>
<td>Negligible, Slight Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 7: Local road network, Goatmilk Farm</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Major-Moderate, Slight Adverse</td>
<td>Moderate (positive), Beneficial</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIEWPOINT 8: Local road network, Glenrothes Golf Course</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Landscape and Visual Appraisal

**Milldeans, Glenrothes**

VLM Landscape Design Ltd

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIEWPOINT 9: Cabbagehall Railway Viaduct</th>
<th>None, Neutral</th>
<th>Residual Effect (Long Term): None, Neutral</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short Term / Construction:</td>
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<td>Moderate-Minor, Slight Beneficial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual Effect (Long Term):</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Moderate-Minor, Slight Beneficial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual Effect (Long Term):</td>
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<td>Negligible, Slight Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Effect (Long Term):</td>
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<td>Negligible, Slight Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Effect (Long Term):</td>
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<tr>
<th>VIEWPOINT 13: The Old Loan core path</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Short Term / Construction:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Effect (Long Term):</td>
<td>Moderate, Beneficial</td>
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### Summary of Visual Impacts

7.11 The paragraphs and table above have assessed the potential visual effects likely to arise on visual receptors across the study area. The assessment concludes that there are limited opportunities to view parts of the Site and no opportunities to view the Site in its entirety. This is due to a combination of factors including the Site’s strong visual and physical relationship with the existing built form of Glenrothes which effectively wraps around the setting of the northern and eastern sectors and the substantial mature
woodland components along the Site’s boundaries and which extend across the local setting of the Goatmilk Hills. The prevailing rising and rolling landform across these eastern parts of the volcanic hills where the Site is located also plays a key role in reducing inter-visibility. The numerous landscape and built form components combine with the complex topography to form a tight visual envelope around the Site’s periphery.

7.12 Where views are available, the proposed housing development across the northern and central sectors would be seen at a similar elevation to the existing urban form which would frame the development to the north and east and backdropped by the mature woodland and garden boundary features along the eastern boundaries. Once the comprehensive site-wide planting strategy within the interlinked ribbons of green space around the periphery and internally across the northern and central sectors begin to establish, the sense of maturity and landscape structure in the area would be enhanced and bring about a more secluded character to this part of the urban fringe. In the medium to long term, development would be seen to round-off the urban fringes and form a logical extension to Glenrothes.

7.13 It is considered the proposed small-scale courtyard steading development in the southern sector would also form a logical addition to the dispersed settlement pattern and where visible would be seen in the context of the existing large farmstead of Goatmilk Farm and backdropped by the two distinct and wooded hill forms. With the sensitive approach to the vernacular design of new buildings which would be laid out around a linked courtyard concept, as well as the introduction of key features including gate piers and lengths of stone walls linking key building groups together, this part of the development would be seen to be wholly characteristic and consistent with the prevailing rural settlement pattern. In addition, the introduction of a sensitive steading development would reinstate the former characteristics to the setting where Goatmilk Farm (formerly West Goatmilk) and the former East Goatmilk Farm would have collectively formed ‘gateway’ steading features on the approach to the main tree lined access to the former Inchdairnie Estate, which now forms the entrance into Fife Airport.

7.14 In the long term, a high quality residential development would be seen to consolidate and round off the existing urban edge and be seen to be consistent with the prevailing settlement pattern as well as introducing key features to reflect the former estate landscapes inherent in the area. The site-wide implementation of a comprehensive native species based woodland, structure and riparian planting would extend into the Site from the wooded context and wrap around areas of housing to form distinct visual development pods. This new and enhanced woodland framework would also provide the setting to the wide range of recreational passive and active open space set out across the Site as a series of interlinked green ribbons and which would extend from the ‘village green’ centrally located across the local ridgeline between the northern and central sectors. This would ensure that from any location in the Study Area where views are available, the existing skyline across The Old Loan is preserved and a more structured and wooded parkland setting would emerge on the urban fringes. Ultimately, a residential development in tandem with a sensitive design approach to the distinct sectors and comprehensive landscape framework strategy would bring a new positive and highly attractive environment to the western fringes of Glenrothes and would bring about beneficial improvements to the visual amenity of the local area.
8 Mitigation of Landscape and Visual Impacts

8.1 In parallel with the assessment, options for mitigation have been considered including practical measures to avoid, reduce or off-set any loss of landscape resources as well as embedded mitigation measures in the form of design principles and development strategy for the proposed affordable housing development. Proposed mitigation measures, as outlined below have therefore been fully incorporated into the sensitive site-planning of the Site with the aim of minimising adverse effects on the landscape resource and reducing potential effects on landscape character and views to the Site from the study area. In the medium to long term, mitigation measures would be designed to ensure that the proposed development would fully integrate into the urban edge and the wider landscape setting of Glenrothes.

8.2 Mitigation of the predicted landscape and visual impacts generated by the proposed housing development and its integration into the landscape would be achieved through a combination of factors, which could include:

- the retention, protection and enhancement of the existing mature vegetation cover located along the periphery to the Site and to some internal areas (as far as practicable), including: mature woodland, groups of mature trees, hedgerows and single mature trees and riparian planting;
- introduction of substantial woodland and woodland edge to reinforce the primary woodland structure including a high percentage of ‘native’, locally indigenous and long lived species and to increase the age diversity of woodland cover around the Site’s fringes, ensuring the long term survival of these important landscape features;
- a comprehensive site-wide planting strategy including new areas of structure and riparian planting, specimen trees and avenue trees, wildflower and grass meadows, amenity grassland and, a layer of ornamental and bulb planting to add colour and interest all year round;
- introduction of a 15m wide substantial woodland along the western boundary to the northern and central sectors and a green buffer along the northern fringes planted with riparian and hedgerow planting, groups of structure trees and swathes of meadow and wildflower grass to create an appropriate urban/rural interface with the rural setting further north and west;
- creation of tree-lined avenues incorporating the primary road infrastructure and extending ‘view’ corridors further north across the River Leven Valley;
- ‘fingers’ of native species based woodland, woodland edge and riparian planting extended across the Site and along the network of burns and drains to form a new woodland framework to the interior of the Site and to create a series of development pods within which housing parcels would be readily absorbed;
- creation of green buffers along the eastern fringes to provide a degree of visual separation between the existing urban edge and proposed pockets of development to respect the visual amenity of existing residents;
- introduction of a range of integral open spaces set out as a series of interlinked ribbons of green space throughout the development form and which would extend from the new central ‘village green’ located on the local ridgeline. This would ensure that the existing skyline is preserved and together with the site-wide planting strategy, these green spaces would provide both separation and softening to the distinct pockets of housing.
and create a substantial soft backdrops to each sector when viewed from elevated areas in the wider setting;

- the new and large ‘village green’ would incorporate The Old Loan core path corridor and include a range of formal and informal recreational activities, set within a new wooded parkland setting with swathes of amenity grass, grass meadows and wildflower grass framed by new woodland, structure and specimen tree planting;

- a secondary play area including areas of passive open space and setting the context to more informal activities and designed to encourage natural play would be located on the southern slopes of the small topographical hill feature above Goatmilk Farm. This wooded elongated hill form with its summit accentuated by a woodland copse creates sense of place and highly attractive, settled character to this area of open space and new housing area;

- a site-wide integrated path network would be introduced across the interlinked ribbons of green space and provide direct links to the new facilities across the Site for new and existing communities with new circular links created north to south across the Site as well as east to west. This would significantly improve the permeability and connectivity of the Site to the urban fringes of Glenrothes and beyond;

- opportunity to include four basins forming part of the SUDS strategy and open space strategy within the network of green spaces across the Site, including a detention basin near to the southern access and an attenuation basin on the northern fringes. Associated wetland, riparian planting, wet wildflower areas and rich habitat grass meadows would increase and extend habitats and biodiversity across the Site and contribute to Fife's green networks;

- at strategic locations across the Site, built form would be stepped back and orientated to overlook these new areas of open space, ribbons of green space and SUDS facilities and particularly around the new village green which incorporates the existing core path and thereby not only significantly enhancing the visual amenity of this route but also increasing the ‘secure by design’ approach;

- working with the subtle and natural contours of the Site and through careful siting, distribution and orientation of new buildings, the development would respond positively to the existing urban edge, the strong northerly aspect and river valley setting to the north and create a unique and distinctive courtyard steading development set into the backdrop of the existing wooded topographical features and southerly aspect of the southern sector;

- creation of a linked courtyard steading development in the southern sector which would be stepped back into the Site and orientated across a new area of parkland with a tree-lined avenue extending from the unclassified road. The use of stone wall and gate lodge features as well as gate piers and lengths of stone walls at the entrance would not only reflect the well-established steading character inherent across the settled rural setting but also reflect the former Inchdairnie Park Estate landscape located in close proximity to the south-east; and,

- a long term management plan responsible for management and maintenance of communal areas, existing and proposed planting strategy and hard landscape features.

8.3 Proposed mitigation measures as described above would be fully incorporated into the landscape component of the development strategy, as presented in the Landscape Framework, Figure 11, to ensure that any impacts upon the landscape resource, landscape character, landscape quality and visual amenity resulting from the proposed residential development are minimised. In turn, the development strategy
acknowledges the well-treed context to the Site and the historic estate setting and respects the need for the strategy to respond positively to the results of this LVA.

9 Landscape Framework Strategy

9.1 Following the appraisal of potential landscape and visual effects, the Landscape and Visual Appraisal has established that the Site has the capacity to accommodate a new, high quality living environment and would be seen to promote an intimate and fully integrated development (as illustrated in the Indicative Development Framework). This has been achieved by placing an emphasis in the development strategy on the need to respect the opportunities and constraints inherent across the Site and building upon its relationship with adjoining land uses and the strong ‘sense of place’ through sensitive design.

9.2 This section seeks to establish the broad principles of the landscape framework which has been designed as an integral component of the development strategy. In turn this would ensure that any potential landscape and visual impacts expected to arise from the sensitively planned residential development at Milldeans would be fully mitigated.

Development Strategy Components

9.3 The overall objective of the development strategy for this Site is to protect the important features identified, enhance the sense of structure experienced and build upon the strong parkland character evident across the Site, thereby allowing for a carefully planned development form to be realised. As the Site is located on the western fringes of the existing built form of Glenrothes and framed by a high number of strong landscape features including woodlands, woodland belts, extensive policies riparian planting and mature tree groups and by the strongly rolling landform to the west and rising landform to the north, it is considered that the release of this landholding for a suitable scale and character of residential development set within a strong and enhanced woodland framework would present an opportunity to complete the settlement pattern and add a high number of new positive features which would reflect the inherent estate landscapes that the more historic part of Leslie is set within. Overall, the release of this Site for a suitable residential development (as presented in the Indicative Development Framework) would be seen as a logical extension to the existing settlement pattern of Glenrothes.

Landscape Strategy

9.4 The proposals have been tailored to respond to the particular characteristics of this landscape which has led to a key principle of the landscape strategy to introduce a range of landscape enhancement measures. Not only would these measures conserve and protect the key landscape resources across the Site but also, help to fully integrate the proposals into the overall setting. In turn, this will necessitate the implementation of an advanced and phased planting strategy which would fully comply with the release of the various development parcels and a management plan implemented in tandem to ensure the early establishment and long term quality of these features.

9.5 In this regard, the opportunity has been taken to promote a suitable character of housing development within the three distinct sectors across the Site,
created by the existing site conditions including: the prevailing landform, topographical features, aspect, woodland components and settlement pattern characteristics. Within each sector, and building upon the surrounding woodland features, it is proposed to create a new landscape framework which would fully augment and enhance the primary landscape resource by extending ‘green’ fingers of tree cover and open space across and around the Site. This newly enhanced woodland framework would provide broad softening and separation to distinct development pods within each sector and set the context to a network of interlinked ribbons of open space fully connected by an integrated site-wide paths strategy. This approach would ensure that impacts on landscape resources, landscape quality and the landscape character are minimised and that the effects of the development strategy can be fully mitigated.

**Site-Wide Planting Strategy**

9.6 Development of the Site provides an opportunity to introduce a comprehensive programme of native species based woodland, structure and riparian planting which would draw upon the prevailing wooded characteristics including extensive policies across the historic estate landscape setting and long established woodlands, woodland blocks and numerous other mature vegetation features across the wider Goatmilk Hills to the east and west, upland foothills landscape to the north and lowland valleys landscape to the south.

9.7 Existing mature tree cover and mature vegetation features offers the proposed development an immediate sense of place and maturity and provides a strong primary framework which when combined with the prevailing landform can already effectively absorb new areas of housing. As such, the retention of the woodlands, woodland belts and mature tree groups around the Site’s periphery and ultimately their extension into and across the Site is seen as an important baseline factor to the successful integration of the proposed development.

9.8 In this context, substantial new areas of native species based woodland and structure layer would be introduced to complement and reinforce the existing tree cover in the area and extend the wider prolific estate setting into the Site to set the context to not only a new development form but also a range of recreational and open space resources. A wide area of woodland would be introduced along the western boundary to augment and connect fragmented woodland blocks and create a substantial wooded interface to the wider rural setting; in turn forming a robust, long term settlement boundary. Structure trees, riparian and hedgerow planting would also extend along broad green swathe along the northern periphery as well as a linear green buffer comprising structure tree planting and an understorey layer which would extend around the eastern periphery. In conjunction with existing woodland and mature garden boundary features on the eastern boundary, this would protect the visual amenity of properties on the urban fringes whilst the wider and extended woodland framework would ensure that a strong wooded skyline continues to provide a soft backdrop to the existing and extended western fringes of Glenrothes for many years to come.

9.9 Broad fingers of woodland, structure and riparian planting would extend from this extensive wooded edge across the Site, framing and visually separating areas of housing into distinct visual ‘pods’. Within the northern sector, green fingers would extend along existing internal field boundaries from the local ridgeline separating the
northern and central sectors and drawing upon the strong rectilinear field pattern within the context to the north, whilst tree-lined avenues would be created incorporating the primary road infrastructure and allowing ‘view’ corridors to extend further north across the highly attractive and settled river valley setting. These new landscape components would set a wooded context to the northern sector and taking advantage of the distinctly northerly aspect, an outward looking development backdropped by a continuous soft skyline would form an appropriate form of housing on the southern slopes of the River Leven Valley. It is also proposed to introduce new areas of native riparian and understorey planting across the network of small burns and drains that cross the Site and to enhance the SUDS strategy which would add another layer to the internal landscape framework. These new landscape components would vary in width and height allowing inter-visibility with the surrounding context and a woodland edge mix would be introduced where appropriate to provide a more human scale to the development ‘pods’.

9.10 This approach would be seen to reinforce and extend fingers of woodland from the surrounding wooded context and across the internal areas to the Site thereby forming a more secluded wooded character and providing a transitional soft buffer to the rural setting further west. It must be stressed that new planting has not be designed to ‘screen’ the Site but rather to ensure that when viewed from locations out with the Site boundary and on the approach to and from the site, the new development would be seen as a positive feature in the landscape, fully acknowledging the Site’s inherent opportunities and constraints.

9.11 As part of a longer term, strategic masterplanning exercise an advanced planting programme could be undertaken which would consist of mainly ‘native; and locally indigenous species and would provide a context into which more ornamental and exotic species can be introduced within each of the development ‘pods’ as they come forward for detailed design. This substantial mitigation strategy would provide, in time, an increased sense of visual containment to the Site and ultimately pave the way for the phasing of this housing development.

**Green Networks and Open Space Strategy**

9.12 New woodland, structure and riparian planting would be introduced firstly, to complement the existing landscape resource of woodland cover and secondly, to form the backdrop to a new informal landscape which would include recreational facilities, a large amount of amenity open space and a range of new habitats. This approach would help to reinforce the sense of structure in the landscape, with the opportunity taken to maximise the recreational value of the Site and provide greater access with the proposals seeking to marry into the existing core path network across the Site with new walkways to encourage use of the recreational resources not only for new residents but also for the existing community.

9.13 It is proposed to introduce a range of integral open spaces which have been incorporated into the proposed landscape strategy as a series of interlinked ribbons of parkland throughout the development form and fronting onto river valley landscape to the north and the unclassified road network to the south. The opportunity has been taken to incorporate a large, new centrally located ‘village green’ along the locally prominent ridgeline which visually separates the north and central sectors. It is
envisaged that this area would become a large hub of active and passive activities including an equipped play area, informal play equipment inspiring natural play and large areas for informal active play and would incorporate the route of The Old Loan. These features and recreational resources would be set within swathes of meadow grass and wildflower meadows which in turn would be framed by woodland, structure and specimen tree planting to encompass the new village green and park area in a woodland parkland setting. Where applicable, surrounding housing would be designed to overlook the ‘village green’ thereby providing a safe area for the hub of active and passive open spaces as well as being well trafficked with new and existing pedestrian paths extending to all sides of this large area of open space. Where houses are orientated outwards principle elevations could include focal points designed to form an attractive frontage to the setting.

9.14 A second recreational space is located on the southern slopes of the small topographical hill feature which provides the distinct backdrop to Goatmilk Farm. In addition to swathes of passive open space, this area also includes the potential for adventure play and informal play equipment and utilising the steep slopes in some areas to inspire and encourage natural play. This recreational areas would connect to passive open space incorporated into the green corridors which extend from the central village green and across and around the periphery and incorporating part of the SUDS strategy. The basin in the north-east fringes is designed as an attenuation basin which would extend amphibian habitats and increase the conservation value of the adjacent Leslie-Strathendry Wildlife site, whilst the other three basins in the northern, central and southern sectors are designed as detention basins with contoured edges. It is envisaged these could be used as informal kick-about areas for most of the year, thereby adding to the range of informal open spaces across the development. Another large swathe of passive open space is presented to form the context and ‘parkland’ frontage to the courtyard development in the southern sector. A second tier of smaller local pockets of parkland would also be included within the development areas, providing a focus to each individual development pod. These smaller local spaces would accommodate circulation patterns as well as space for outdoor informal activities, resting places and safe areas for children to play.

9.15 In addition to these interlinked green corridors and areas for formal and informal community use, there is a significant opportunity to build upon the existing path network evident within the local area. An integrated network of paths (and potentially cycleways) have been incorporated into the ribbons of open space across the site and laid out to link to the existing paths network. The opportunity would be taken to upgrade the existing core path which crosses the centre of the Site and would act as a spine to the new site-wide path network. This site-wide paths strategy would create circular links north to south across the Site and linking to The Old Loan core path within the centre with its existing connections further west to the Fife Pilgrim Way and east into the existing urban fringes. There is also potential for the circular route in the northern sector which extends to the proposed attenuation basin to connect to the River Leven via the Leslie-Strathendry wildlife site adjacent to the north-east corner of the Site, although access would need to be limited to balance the nature conservation interests of this area. Overall, the site-wide paths strategy would further increase public access across the Site with direct pedestrian links provided to the wide range of open spaces and recreational facilities available.
Hard Landscape Elements

9.16 To complement the soft landscape strategy and the proposed building styles, the external works package to be applied across the Site would follow a design code. This would ensure that the quality and style of the development, whilst allowing for variations within the theme, would be consistent across the site. Whilst it is envisaged the design code would be developed in detail through the reserved matters applications, as each phase of the development comes forward, in principle it is proposed that it would follow a courtyard steading character in the southern sector and developing into a ‘village’ concept across the central and northern sectors. In this respect, textures and colours of the materials chosen for the paved elements will be sympathetic both to the locality and the new built forms with the potential for porous paving systems applied to the shared surfaces, courtyards and car parking areas. The hard landscape package would also include boundary treatments and entrance details. Lengths of formal hedges, potential for stone wall features and gate piers would signify the access into the development from the south and extend into the Site linking building groups together. Lengths of walls could also be utilised to define the curtilage to the steading development and at key locations further into the Site in addition to a range of low walls, railings, and wooden gates. The use of these vertical elements would have a strong influence on the character of the development and particularly in the southern sector where key features and building forms would reflect the character of the former Inchdairnie Park Estate.

9.17 The careful use of colours, materials and detailing would provide a coherence, distinctiveness and local identity and through the use of a detailed design code would allow a new development to be delivered that exhibits a strong sense of place by building upon the site’s inherent features and characteristics.

Landscape Strategy Summary

9.18 The approach to the landscape strategy draws upon current best practice guidance and reflects the need to develop a fully integrated development form which respects the characteristics of this distinctive landscape character area. The Indicative Development Framework and the Landscape Masterplan illustrate the potential for the existing wooded characteristics and landscape structure to provide the context to the creation of new habitats whilst allowing for a wide range of recreational activities. This would be in keeping with a strategy aimed at promoting a balanced community where the needs of the landscape and townscape setting are set against the benefits of a new community designed to fit within a transitional context. This approach is reflected in the Indicative Development Framework which seeks to deliver a balance between development areas and green space, as well as informal and formal recreation and habitats. This has been achieved by seeking to retain and enhance the key woodland features across the Site and wider setting whilst incorporating a comprehensive programme of soft landscaping works and a high quality hard landscape works materials to define external spaces.

9.19 In turn this strategy would help to reinforce the sense of structure in the landscape with the proposed development pattern arranged around a clearly defined road hierarchy with the three distinct sectors being further separated into a number of distinct development parcels and separated by the existing and enhanced landscape framework and prevailing landform. The retention of the existing mature woodland
framework and mature tree groups around the periphery to the Site together with the substantial mitigation planting would contribute to the character and structure of the development whilst offering the opportunity for a number of formalised amenity open spaces and connected to the large central village green via a circular network of paths. This would ensure the whole Site area is opened up with additional walkways linking new areas of housing to the existing core path network. In turn, this would increase the sense of public access and allow use of the wide range of integral green spaces not only by the new residents but also for use by the existing community. In time the new development would be seen to fully integrate into this landscape setting and would be seen as a logical part of the wider settlement pattern.

10 Conclusion

10.1 This LVA has assessed that the land at Milideans, Glenrothes, offers scope for the creation of a high quality living environment which would be seen to promote an intimate and fully integrated development. This has been achieved by placing an emphasis in the development strategy on the need to respect the opportunities and constraints inherent across this environment and build upon the Site’s strong relationship with the existing urban edge through sensitive design.

10.2 The Site is well defined on all sides through a combination of mature woodland components across the Goatmilk Hills, the urban fringes of Glenrothes, and the prevailing strongly rolling and rising topography further west which effectively contain the land within a distinct compartment in the landscape. Within this context, it is considered that the Site has strong visual containment, offers a distinct sense of place, identity and maturity and has a close physical, direct and visual relationship with the existing urban edge of Glenrothes.

10.3 In line with the strategic objectives and vision identified in the adopted LDP1, development of the Site offers considerable opportunities to add to the green network, green infrastructure and primary tree cover by drawing upon the wooded estate characteristics prevalent across the wider context, with an opportunity to create an enhanced woodland framework and landscape structure to the Site. Primary woodland canopy around the Site would be incorporated into a comprehensive site-wide planting strategy and applied to frame pockets of housing within distinct compartments. Once mature, this would form a more secluded wooded character to the Site which in turn would reflect the characteristics across the historic settlement pattern of Leslie which is nestled into the extensive wooded policies of Strathendry and Leslie House Estate on the northern side of the River Leven Valley. The application of a site-wide management plan would enable the long term survival of new and existing landscape resources, ensuring an extensive treescape continues to form the skyline to the settlement form.

10.4 In addition to the creation of a newly enhanced landscape structure, it is proposed to significantly add to green infrastructure and open space in the area by providing large swathes of interlinked ribbons of open space and green corridors which would extend along the boundaries and into the Site to wrap around and provide softening and broadening to the distinct parcels of development. The open space strategy would offer a wide variety of passive and active areas of recreation including a new centrally located village green along the local ridgeline between the northern and central sectors. Formal
and informal sports and play activities would be set within swathes of amenity grass, grass meadows and wildflower meadows and framed by specimen tree planting and areas of woodland for informal recreation.

10.5 Green corridors incorporating the network of existing hedgerows, burns and drains would extend from the new village green and effectively connect the open space strategy into a series of interlinked ribbons of green space. A layer of native species and locally indigenous based planting, wildflower meadows and rich grassland meadows would be introduced to these green corridors and across the SUDS strategy and providing a real opportunity to contribute to Fife’s green networks and green network assets by extending and connecting fragmented habitat corridors as well as creating new habitats. The application of an integrated site-wide access strategy which would incorporate The Old Loan core path across the village green would increase the sense of public access and permeability providing direct circular links to the recreational resources on offer not only for use by new residents but also for the existing community.

10.6 The findings of this appraisal have established that in both landscape and visual terms the Site is appropriate for and has the landscape capacity to accommodate a highly attractive living environment comprising a clearly legible street structure and a range of housing densities. On account of key woodland features that combine with the rising and rolling topography and the direct relationship with the existing urban edge, the Site offers a good visual ‘fit’ and very logical extension to Glenrothes. Ultimately, development of the land at Mildeans would be seen to be complementary and consistent with the prevailing settlement pattern across Glenrothes. By building upon the Site’s inherent features a high quality and unique development would be realised which would strengthen, consolidate and ‘round off’ the settlement edge without any long term, adverse impacts upon the landscape resource, character, quality nor visual amenity.

10.7 The aims and vision for the land at Mildeans are to build a sustainable, attractive community which retains a strong identity, local distinctiveness and sense of place. This is advocated in Designing Places, PAN 67 and PAN 83, where CONTEXT, IDENTITY AND PLACE are fundamental issues in designing new environments for people to live. It is therefore considered that the proposals are consistent with the requirements of Policies of the adopted Local Plan, emerging Local Development Plan and current Scottish Government guidance and policy documents on effective place making.
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

FIGURES
figure 2

historical context map
(dated 1856)

date: September 2021  not to scale
Proposed Residential Development, Land at Milldeans, Glenrothes, Fife

LEGEND
- SITE BOUNDARY
- BUILT FORM
- CLASSIFIED ROAD NETWORK
- MINOR ROAD NETWORK
- WOODLAND COVER (TREE GROUPS / TREEBELTS INDICATIVE)
- AGRICULTURAL FIELDS
- GLENROTHES GOLF COURSE
- FIFE AIRPORT

PLANNING POLICY
(TAKEN FROM THE ADOPTED FIFE PLAN SEPTEMBER 2017)
- SETTLEMENT ENVELOPE
- COUNTRYSIDE
- LESLIE CONSERVATION AREA
- LISTED BUILDINGS
- GREEN NETWORK POLICY AREAS
- GREEN NETWORKS
- LESLIE HOUSE GARDEN AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPE (GDL)
- LOMOND HILLS REGIONAL PARK
- LOMOND HILLS LOCAL LANDSCAPE AREA
- LESLIE-STRATHENDRY WILDLIFE SITE
- SAFEGUARDED EMPLOYMENT AREA
- PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT AREA
- HOUSING PROPOSALS
- CORE PATH NETWORK (FIFE COUNCIL CORE PATHS PLAN, MARCH 2013)
- FIFE PILGRIM WAY

scale 1:12,000 @ A3  date: September 2021

figure 3
planning policy & landscape context