

Scone and District Community Council Response to Perth & Kinross Council Main Issues Report – February 2011

1. Response Format

This response represents the views expressed to Scone and District Community Council (SDCC) by residents of the community of Scone and district to the Main Issues Report (MIR) .

As part of the response it is inevitable that further questions are raised. SDCC requests that Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) acknowledges and responds to the questions within this response.

This response sets out, under a variety of headings, specific objections to the proposals raised within the MIR.

SDCC would like to draw the attention of PKC to the survey of Scone residents which was undertaken by PKC at the time of the Perth Area Local Plan. The issues in the MIR are broadly the same, and the response from Scone residents is unequivocally the same. Scone and district residents do not wish to have further mass development of the village. This has been confirmed by the residents who attended recent meetings organised by the SDCC.

The MIR has been answered by SDCC as far as possible and are attached as an appendix to this response.

2. Consultation Process

SDCC has been asked to comment on a plan for 'sustainable economic growth' (1.1.1 page 9 MIR) however we were most disappointed to discover the document appears to be simply a shop window of Developers plans to build houses throughout the Perth area. There is virtually nothing other than zones for housing development in the MIR. Is this the only vision PKC has for the area?

At the recent Cross Tay Link Road (CTLR) and transport planning consultation meeting which SDCC attended there were approximately 50 other attendees. SDCC queries whether the consultation met with Scottish Government requirements for all elements of the community to be engaged as the majority of the attendees were either public sector employees (eg PKC, TACTRANS, Historic Scotland, Transport Scotland) or the direct agents of PKC).

3. About Scone & District

Scone preserves the feel of a being a small village. Within the district there is also the hamlet of Stormontfield. Currently the population of Scone is some 6,000 people

There is no secondary schooling within Scone and all secondary age pupils are bused, or taken by parents, to schools within Perth. During term time this has a significant impact on the peak hour traffic bottlenecks at Bridgend Main Street through to Atholl Street.

4. Scone Palace

The historic Scone Palace and the activities which are undertaken in its grounds have a direct impact on the community in Scone.

- Tourism
 - Game Fair/Historic pagents
 - Motorsport Events
 - Music events such as the Rewind Festival
- Racecourse
 - Around 14 race day meetings/year

When a major event is held either at the Racecourse or within the grounds it causes a major traffic problem, particularly at the time of exit from the event. Stormont Road is used for traffic exiting from such events. Frequently such traffic is inappropriately large for the road size. ie large coaches and buses which are forced to drive on the wrong side of the road.

As the Palace seeks to increase the revenues it can gain from hosting such events, it is clear that the frequency with which such traffic problems occur will increase.

5. Stormontfield

Stormontfield/Colenden is a small isolated community of approx. 30 houses served partly by a single carriageway access road. CLTR corridors 'C' & 'E' would open up road access to the area and invite further development which could be seen to have a detrimental effect on both the countryside and it's present residents. On the positive side the residents would see a marked improvement in their road access to Perth and beyond for employment and recreation. The residents of this area have expressed grave concerns about such future actions as they chose to live in this area because of it's rurality.

6. Economic Position

It cannot have escaped the notice of PKC that the UK is in the grip of a recession caused by a variety of factors which have never been experienced before. This economic position has caused a severe contraction in the construction sector and when this contraction is coupled with the reluctance of the banking sector to provide capital it poses questions about the ability to implement any plans which are proposed.

Coupled with the financial impact is the impact on employment. SDCC has reservations about the place of employment for any future dwellers in our community.

With the economic backdrop having changed substantially since the Government guidelines and requirements for housing stock were handed down to PKC, SDCC requests that PKC formally review and publish all the underlying assumptions upon which it is basing the MIR plans. This is an essential item as the MIR plans, which PKC planners state “may last for twenty years or more” are now being made. A commitment to allocating substantial housing development land which, although may not be implemented in the near future, could cause extreme problems in the more distant future. SDCC contends that a meaningful LDP is impossible to create as we understand these growth guidelines and assumptions will be subject to review in the next 12 –18 months.

Employment with the PKC area has changed markedly in the past ten years with many of the senior “white collar” jobs leaving the area. This has an impact on the economy of the area as average wages are therefore lowered – where are these types of replacement jobs to come from that will attract the incomers who will populate the new houses?.

7. Housing Provision

SDCC acknowledges that there is demand for Affordable Housing in Scone however this could be met by simply building Affordable Housing – Scone arguably does not need the other 75% just to achieve the 25% figure

Question: Could this not be met by only granting permissions for Affordable Housing on infill sites ?

8. Green Belt

Previous plans have proposed the establishment of a formal Green Belt around Perth. A revised plan is shown in the MIR and the ring is broken at Scone in a way that defies logic. The establishment of such an important device as a Green Belt should not be unduly influenced by the wishes of a single developer/landowner partnership north of Scone. Indeed during the planning application process for the Balgarvie Mill development the Scottish Government Reporter commented on the 30m contour as marking the natural boundary for development in Scone. The proposals in the MIR go far beyond this natural boundary and leave the door open for the inclusion of the Aerodrome complex within Scone village

The route corridor ‘E’ for the CLTR not only decimates planted Greenbelt woodland north of Scone but would also annihilate Langedge Wood, an area of Semi Natural Ancient Woodland

Question : Why is the Green Belt ring broken around Scone?

9. Finances

Most of the new development in and around the area of Perth itself are directly linked to the CTRLR project. However SDCC understands that the costs of developing the CTRLR are unlikely to be borne by central Government and that a model using Developer Contributions to provide core funding is preferred. We understood from conversations at the recent Housing Workshop that developers have no intention of providing such contributions in advance of building and selling new properties. Further the requirement to provide 25% Affordable Housing as part of new build means developers will have even less ability to raise the necessary contributions unless these are loaded onto high value property which may well then make them uneconomically viable.

Question: Can PKC back up their plans for 1000's of new houses around Perth and in Scone by demonstrating they have the ability to provide start-up funding for the CTRLR project

SDCC requests that PKC provides evidence of the financial benefits to the council of the 875 houses being planned for Scone, as there is no evidence in the MIR of any fiduciary or other benefits for the community in Scone.

SDCC contends that plans by Transport Scotland to spend money upgrading local A9 junctions such as the Inveralmond roundabout makes the financial case for CTRLR weaker.

Question: Would the CTRLR scheme not be more of a practical reality if it was to start at the Inveralmond roundabout or north on the A9 and strike directly across to Scone? Why are link roads to new housing developments around the west side of Perth not to be provided directly by the respective developers?

10. Transport

SDCC's major objection to the proposals in the MIR centre on the transport problems and traffic which will be generated within, and through, the village if the plans are approved.

Regardless of the predictions of any traffic model, Scone residents already experience substantial delays at the junction of the A93/A94 and Bridgend Main Street during peak hours. Development of a further 870+ 875 houses within the village can only make this worse. There is no way that this development will not have a negative impact on the traffic flow through this recognised bottleneck. During peak hours the traffic bottleneck stretches from the end of Atholl Street, across both bridges and up the A93 to Scone. SDCC does not accept that the CTRLR will alleviate this to any great extent.

A simple and obvious scenario if the housing development goes ahead, is that there will be need for more school buses (and parents taking children to school). This extra traffic will increase the jams at the identified bottlenecks.

Question: SDCC request PKC to publish their modelling information on the impact of additional school run traffic.

Further housing developments (which are already committed and in progress) along the A94

and A93 will again lead to an increase in traffic flow through the bottleneck zone identified above. The MIR highlights 1,820 new houses for the Strathmore area which do not appear to be linked to provision of the CTRLR - these will put considerable strain on Bridgend if the CTRLR plan falls.

At the recent consultation meeting on "Transport for Perth" PKC's traffic modelling expert indicated that Perth would be approaching gridlock if 30% of the housing development within the MIR occurs without the CTRLR being in place. SDCC requires PKC to show that they have included the existing and committed developments into this traffic planning model. 30% of the houses proposed for Scone = approx. 300 houses. Rosemount in Blairgowrie has recently had planning approval granted for some 98 houses. This is one third of the houses needed to create the forecast traffic gridlock. If PKC has already granted planning permissions to any other developments along the A94 or A93 then there can be no further development within Scone until the CTRLR is built. Otherwise PKC will be hastening the peak hours gridlock at the recognised bottlenecks

11. Train Services

SDCC does not understand why there is no emphasis on improving the train services to Perth within the MIR.

Question : Was increased use of Trains to reduce through traffic in Perth City considered when running traffic models? SDCC requests that PKC publish a detailed strategy for shifting journeys from road to rail as SDCC believes that such a strategy could significantly alleviate roads congestion through Perth and, if the Edinburgh journey time was improved provide a valuable stimulus to the economy of Perth.

12. Cross Tay Link Road

SDCC requests that PKC provide answers to the following questions:

- how will CTRLR be financed?
- when does PKC envisage construction commencing?
- how long do PKC envisage it will take to build the link roads
- The currently planned link roads are single carriageway. Why not have some foresight and construct it as a dual carriageway

13. Housing

As previously stated within this response, there is a substantial number of houses being planned for Strathmore which do not appear within the MIR.

SDCC requests that PKC advise SDCC of the impact of these housing developments on the traffic flows through and around Scone.

The MIR outlines potential developments around North Scone. PKC should be in no doubt that this plan is not accepted by the community of Scone. Creating such a development would substantially alter the character of the village of Scone. Regardless of traffic

modelling, any substantive increase in housing in Scone could overwhelm the traffic flow capabilities of the main street. There are currently very limited car parking facilities to support the local businesses, therefore while the development of many hundred new houses may look like a good opportunity, without substantial upgrades to the local amenities, including car parking, the opportunity is likely to be lost.

Subject to being given clarification and detailed road planning information, SDCC may be able to accept the additional housing proposed as in-fill within the MIR.

The housing development at Balgarvie Mill is not yet complete. SDCC requests that PKC demonstrates that the traffic impact of the completion of this development has been undertaken, prior to any further land being released for housing development within Scone.

14. Timescales

SDCC is very concerned that the proposed housing developments may be given permission to commence long before the CTRL is underway. The impact of any such decision is likely to be catastrophic for the traffic flow through Scone centre and onwards into Perth.

SDCC requests that PKC publish detailed planning timescales which are to include as a minimum:

- When planning consent is expected to be achieved for the CTRL
- When the construction of the CTRL may commence
- When the planning consent for additional housing development(s) at North Scone may be given
- When the first housing construction activities in North Scone would be expected to start.

15. M.I.R. Proposals

Answers to the specific questions raised in the MIR are attached as an Appendix to this document. SDCC has attempted to complete as many questions as are applicable to the Scone area .

16. Quality of Life

The majority of residents of Scone and District either chose to remain as locals who have been raised in the area or they have moved into the area because of the existing amenities. The proposed MIR including the CTRL would seriously detract from what the residents currently enjoy.

17. Summary

The community within Scone and district have requested the SDCC to reject the proposals for further developments within Scone on the grounds outlined in this response.

- Increased congestion and traffic flows

- Adverse Impact on local amenities, including schooling
- Adverse impact on the quality of life
- No fiduciary or other benefit for the community from the current proposals

Appendix : SDCC Response to specific questions contained within the MIR

Q1 :

No. We believe that in the current economic climate the demand forecast for housing stock should be revised every year. A seven year forecast is certain to contain many inaccuracies. The overall macro- economic environmental conditions make it impossible to have any certainty about demand for housing within the next 5 years.

Q2 :

While SDCC understand the desire to preserve the environmental attractiveness of the Loch Leven area, this ought to be balanced against the Environmental Impact of the inevitable increase in traffic if the 10% of the allocation is moved further to the North. SDCC contend that some demand for housing in Perth & Kinross comes from commuter overspill from Edinburgh therefore it makes sense to accommodate these commuters as close to the capital as possible.

Q3 :

SDCC cannot express a view on this question. SDCC does not have access to sufficient information to be able to make any comment.

Q4:

SDCC feel they are not competent to comment in a meaningful way on the density ranges quoted without further information and comparative plans. We believe estates on Perth's Western Edge to be too high a density and lack open spaces. Our community does not wish to see the Area A (map 12) developed in this way.

Q5:

Not for Scone. The demographics in Scone show that the bulk of the population of the village is above 50 and ageing. It is difficult to see how this demographic requires such a high percentage of "affordable housing " however there may well be a significant demand for both sheltered housing and housing with care (4.2.21).

Q6:

SDCC believes that as the area around the north of Scone is to be included in the green belt, then the tighter controls would be welcomed.

Q7:

SDCC cannot comment on this question.

Q8:

SDCC supports the desire stated to increase supply of economic development land. SDCC feels that there is an increasing percentage of the local population who are commuting away from P&K to gain employment. Zoning more land for economic development will be advantageous to the local (Perth) economy and in the long term increase housing demand.

Q9:

SDCC supports any activities which will have a positive impact on the local (Perth) economy and employment opportunities.

Q10:

SDCC supports mixed development. This is what villages and towns are all about.

Q11:

SDCC broadly agrees with promotion of tourism, although this should be as part of a balanced economic development.

Q12:

As above for Q11:

Q13:

SDCC supports the development of rural businesses.

Q14:

SDCC supports this view.

Q15:

SDCC cannot comment on this question.

Q16:

SDCC believes that Perth city centre will not move forward into the 21st century without resolution to the future of Perth City Hall. As we have no confidence that this will happen before the commencement of the LDP Period we request that such a strategy is documented in this Plan.

SDCC is broadly in favour of the approach outlined but would like to see initiatives developed to directly encourage the proliferation of new specialist retail outlets in the city centre and surrounding areas including Scone. We would like to see a limit imposed on out of town supermarkets to offer food & essential goods only. We have seen the demise of Woolworths and BHS from the High St and the future of the HMV store in St Johns Centre must be uncertain (Dunfermline HMV has just closed) – we urge the Council to resist any further out of town developments especially around the Inveralmond area. We consider it fortunate that opening of the Primark in the old BHS unit has re-invigorated footfall in the High Street and ST Johns.

SDCC would welcome a more comprehensive study into the future development of Retailing in the Perth Core Area.

4.3.30 – The policy here states no identified need for additional superstores in our area and Map12 appears to show the Scone Park & Ride still in place to the north of the village. 5.2.31 makes mention that approval has been given for a new store in Scone and presumably it would be in this location. If this is the Council view and policy then this should be shown on current plans and note made of where the Park & Ride facility will be moved to. The community is split over the building of such a store in Scone; whilst there is a lot of opposition and a local survey returned a majority against such a development we have had many views expressed to say that the store would get used by a significant number of local residents.

Q17 & Q24:

SDCC supports the approach detailed. Scone has ready access to a variety of 'local landscape' and this is one of the main factors when potential home buyers look at our area. We have woodland walks starting out on all sides of the village itself and have Scone Palace grounds to west & East and the Sidlaws to the East. To protect all of this SDCC believes that the entirety of Scone should be contained within the green belt. The current diagram has an unexplained cut-out around Scone which will substantially cut into the otherwise circular green belt around Perth. Is it also disingenuous to colour an area green to denote Greenbelt and then propose to build the CLTR through it which would create a wide corridor of environmental damage through an area of natural beauty. The preferred route corridor 'E' for the CLTR not only decimates planted Greenbelt woodland north of Scone but would also annihilate Langedge Wood, an area of Semi Natural Ancient Woodland. Immediately this road would be finished there could be expected to be additional planning proposals to extend plan 'A', 5.2.25 up to the boundary of this road.

Q18

SDCC feels that answers given to Q18 & Q24 are sufficient to point out our concern over damage to local biodiversity. We would welcome the opportunity to examine an action plan that include protection for the environment with the whole of our area.

Q19:

SDCC does not have the expertise or experience to comment in detail on this section however we believe that the climate changes ambitions can only be met if there is local employment for the people who purchase the proposed housing stock. If there is any form of commute required then the climate change ambitions will be unable to be met – 4.5.13 does not square with building a dormitory housing estate as proposed on Map12.

Q20:

SDCC believes the development of site 'A' Map 12 poses significant flooding risk for Scone village. SDCC realises developers will initially install approved drainage systems however at this time we believe no local authority or water authority can guarantee upkeep of these systems such as to prevent catastrophic flooding in the centre of Scone at some point in the near future – we point towards the recent flooding in Feus Road, Perth as an example of .

SDCC would welcome a PKC led initiative to establish a speedy, frequent and reliable train service between Perth and Edinburgh.

Q21

SDCC believes developer contributions should be part of any development . However, any such contributions must be front end loaded in order that the benefits to the community are received at the commencement of the development, not at some unspecified point in the future. Travel through Bridgend is an existing problem. The environmental impact of additional traffic have to flow through this bottleneck is not acceptable.

Although funding of the CTRL is linked to the provision of 875 houses in Scone mention is not made of upgrading school facilities which would undoubtedly be required. Also there would be strong local lobbying for potential developers to provide community facilities such as halls or recreation spaces.

Q22:

SDCC supports the policy of seeking contributions as long as the terms of the contract are strictly adhered to and that the wider community benefits are delivered. Whilst major transport infrastructure should be considered as part of the national infrastructure and as such funded from

central government, it is recognised that some locally funded projects must go ahead. It is unlikely, in the view of SDCC, that a single development or developer could contribute the majority of the cost of a major infrastructure upgrade such as a bridge without significant central government help .

Q23:

With the information supplied in the MIR it is difficult to reconcile this with the projected green belt around Perth.

Q24.

See Q18.

Q25:

5.2.11 This is a separate question. SDCC does not agree with the potential to do more with existing sites. Although there may be the need for a review of plans, this statement is a back-door enabling developers to amend and alter existing plans and push through higher densities than was originally debated and agreed when schemes were first passed for development.

Q26 - 28: NC

Q29

SDCC believes the land allocation 'A' shown in 5.2.25 to be completely unacceptable to the majority of our area's residents. The Balgarvie Farm development in Scone has been placing strain on the transport infrastructure for some months now and it is our contention that simply providing a new CTRLR will not divert enough traffic away from the village to prevent gridlock on Perth Road and at Bridgend, Perth. Small scale development of, say, 50 - 100 houses would be achievable but this should include any further expansion of the Balgarvie Farm area.

It is firmly the view of all canvassed residents that if the CTRLR is built as shown north of Scone then site 'A' will be built up to it and will also extend to the north west to link up with the Aerodrome facilities – if this happens there will be great pressure to allow more housing on the Aerodrome site.

Scone will change from the Largest Village in Scotland to the Smallest Town in Scotland.

Site 'B' will require a long term solution whatever is agreed as the Glebe buildings are deteriorating and being vandalised. SDCC has real concerns about access to this site.

5.2.24 Map 11 Site 'A' – SDCC has no objection but would be actively monitor the situation to ensure that this is not the start of large scale re-development of the Aerodrome area.

Q30 NC

Q31

SDCC agrees to the concept of Mixed Development and would like to see better use made of the Aerodrome providing this includes affordable accommodation for start-up business.

Q32 – 45 NC

Q46 – 53

The Strathmore area is outwith the remit of SDCC however we would point out that none of the development areas indicated are directly linked on the provision of the CTLR – it can be expected that a significant number of residents from these 1820 new houses will commute to or through Perth each day and of course most will have to pass through Bridgend in Perth – this is unacceptable to SDCC.