



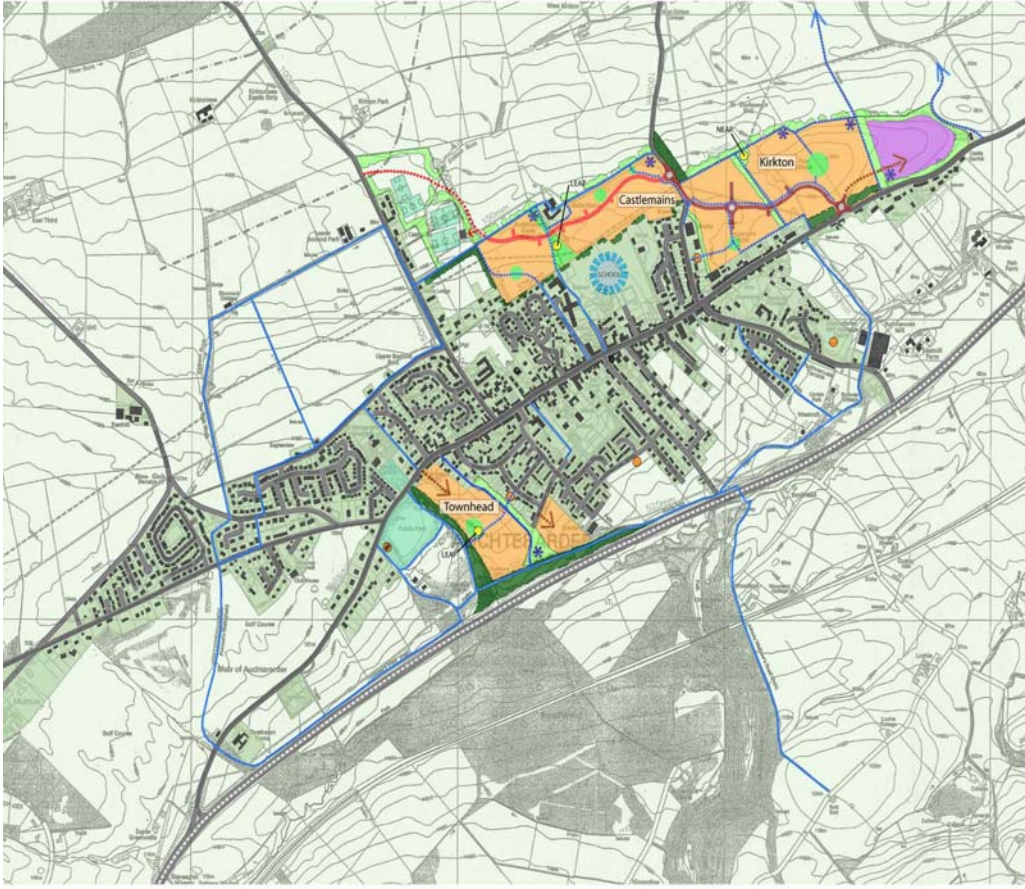
**SEA Screening Report  
*Auchterarder Expansion –  
Townhead and North East Development Framework***

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2006

**SECTION 1**

<p><b>Name of Responsible Authority</b></p>	<p>Perth &amp; Kinross Council</p>
<p><b>Name of plan, programme or strategy</b></p>	<p>Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework</p>
<p><b>Area covered by the plan, programme or strategy</b></p>	<p>53.7 hectares Gross Area (excluding area allocated for pitches to the north of Castlemains Road – approximately 4.0 Ha)</p>  <p>Map courtesy of Gillespies in conjunction with Dougall Baillie Associates</p>

**SECTION 2**

Screening is not required because the plan/programme falls under Regulations 9(a) and 9(b) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004.	
Screening is required because the plan/programme falls under Regulation 9(c) or Regulation 10 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004.	<b>X</b>
<b>An SEA is required</b> because the plan/programme is likely to have significant environmental effects	<b>X</b>
<b>An SEA is not required</b> because the plan/programme is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects	

**SECTION 3**

The plan/programme does not require an SEA under the Regulations. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis.	<b>N/A</b>
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**SECTION 4**

None of the above applies. We have prepared this screening report because:
<b>N/A</b>

## SECTION 1 - KEY FACTS

<b>Responsible Authority</b>	Perth & Kinross Council
<b>Title of Plan/Programme</b>	Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework
<b>Plan purpose</b>	The purpose of this document is to chart the Development Framework process and explain how the sites will be developed. It will describe how the proposal will be implemented, and set out the costs, phasing and timing of development. Development Frameworks are normally required for larger sites within or on the edge of settlements. It is proposed that approximately 800 housing units (incorporating an element of Affordable Housing) will be built on the site through 3 phases over a minimum period of 10-15 years.
<b>What prompted the plan</b> (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision?)	Required by Statutory Local Plan
<b>Plan subject</b> (e.g. transport)	The Development Framework deals specifically with the development of the Castlemains and Kirkton sites on the northern edge of Auchterarder, and of the Townhead site to the south-west.
<b>Period covered by plan</b>	To be completed over a minimum period of 10-15 years, in 3 phases (will be dependent on date if/when planning consent is granted)
<b>Frequency of plan updates</b>	It is intended that the Development Framework will cover a minimum of a 10-15 year period for development of the sites. Progress is likely to be updated in future Local Plans for the Strathearn planning area.
<b>Plan area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0.54 km <sup>2</sup> (excluding area for playing pitches) 0.58 km <sup>2</sup> (including area for playing pitches)
<b>Summary of nature/content of plan</b>	The Development Framework aims to provide a framework for integrating this major proposed expansion into the physical fabric of Auchterarder.
<b>Are there any proposed plan objectives?</b>	Yes
<b>The objectives</b>	<b><u>The Strathearn Area Local Plan 2001</u></b>  The Strathearn Area Local Plan identifies land to the north of the town and Townhead Farm in Auchterarder for residential, employment and associated development to provide a land use framework in order to promote necessary confidence to allow investment in infrastructure by both the public and private sectors.

The Local Plan seeks to meet the strategic aims and priorities of the Corporate Plan. The Strategy recognises that, in dealing with land-use issues, it is necessary to take account of the inter-relationship between social, economic and environmental considerations in order to provide an achievable and sustainable plan. The strategy aims to:

- Provide development opportunities in appropriate locations.
- Protect and enhance the quality and diversity of Strathearn's environment.

Some of the principal components of the Local Plan strategy are:

- To realise significant opportunities for development within settlements along the A9 by identifying land at Auchterarder and Blackford for the long-term development of the settlements incorporating both housing and commercial developments.
- To protect the valuable landscape resources and the natural and built heritage within Strathearn by directing new development to land within or adjacent to existing settlements.
- To ensure the continued role of Crieff and Auchterarder as important local shopping and service centres by guiding investment to the town centres and promoting schemes to increase their attractiveness.

In responding to the local circumstances that exist within Strathearn, the strategy in the Local Plan for housing land provision would seek to meet the Structure Plan requirements for the housing market area by:

- Providing a land use framework for a long term supply of housing land in Auchterarder and Blackford, based on a longer term, co-ordinated, expansion of the two settlements.
- Identifying housing sites that encourage the investment by both the public and private sectors in drainage, education and other facilities.

However, it should be noted that the Strathearn Area Local Plan was adopted in 2001 and the Perth and Kinross Council Structure Plan was approved later in June 2003; as such the Local Plan was prepared in line with the previous Tayside Structure Plan adopted in 1993 and not the existing one.

#### **Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework**

Although the Development Framework is prepared in conformity with the Council's Strathearn Area Local Plan Strategy, conflict does exist between the 240 housing unit allocation requirement stated in the Council's Structure Plan for Auchterarder (2000-2020) and the site yield of approximately 800 units advocated by the findings of Inquiry Reporter for the Strathearn Area Local Plan Public Local Inquiry in 1999. It should be noted that the development of the houses will be carried out in 3 phases, the first of which is likely to be within the lifetime of the Structure

## Plan.

The Development Framework aims to provide a framework for integrating this major expansion into the physical fabric of the town, through the following general principles:

- Retain the High Street as the focus of town activity, recently reinforced by the development of the community school.
- Access expansion areas from roads directly linked to the High Street, as near the centre as possible to encourage integration.
- Break down the sites to create neighbourhoods divided by landscape wedges, the neighbourhoods to relate to natural features, and to reflect existing pattern of field boundaries, characteristic of this part of Perthshire.
- Castlemains site has been subdivided by the landscape framework into two housing neighbourhoods, and Kirkton site into two housing neighbourhoods plus an area designated for employment at the eastern extremity. Townhead has been subdivided into one large and one small housing neighbourhood.
- Particularly on the northern edge which is partly visible on the approaches from Strathearn, landscape wedges will visually contain the new developments, providing a green backdrop along the skyline and tying into existing hedgerows and field boundaries.
- The Townhead site is already enclosed by woodlands along its south and west edges, and had therefore been sub-divided by a single internal landscape strip along the edge of the existing development, aligned with the historic rig boundary.
- Within each major housing neighbourhood, a nominal landscaped area allows for the creation of a specific focus or green at its heart. The Pow Hillock neighbourhood suggest this be sited at its crest, incorporating two existing trees.
- To retain views, it is proposed that garden boundaries fronting the countryside along the northern edge consist of stock proof fencing and hedging, with the occasional trees.
- Maintain the visual integrity of the entry roads into the town. Minimise the visual impact of the development on the road corridors.
- Retain and promote the natural features of each of the sites to maximise the landscape setting for the residential expansion, which will assist in its successful integration into the town of Auchterarder and wider countryside.
- Extend the network of foot paths around and through Auchterarder in order to connect the new development areas into the existing town.
- Follow sustainable building design guidelines.

Date

9<sup>th</sup> November 2006

## SECTION 2 - CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of the Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework are set out below.

	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Yes/No
1(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The framework for the development of the Northern Edge and Townhead Farm sites in Auchterarder is established under the Strathearn Area Local Plan. The purpose of the Development Framework is to set out the necessary level of detail for the development of these sites. The Council's Structure Plan was adopted in 2003 and therefore precedes the provisions of the Strathearn Local Plan and in addition it states:</p> <p><i>"against the background of recently proposed assumptions in respect of lower population growth, the scale of expansion of Auchterarder as identified in the Strathearn Area Local Plan 2001, can at present no longer be fully justified within the current Structure Plan period (up to 2020). The master plan to be prepared by the Council for Auchterarder will take account of the revised population assumptions and the scale of development required to make its infrastructure requirements viable. The master plan should be incorporated into an amended Strathearn Area Local Plan."</i></p> <p>The boundaries and parameters of the sites were established through the Strathearn Area Local Plan Public Inquiry 1999, and allocated in the 2001 Local Plan as a development opportunity for residential and compatible uses, including an allocation of general business uses, with the details of land allocation and finalised housing numbers to be set out/determined in the Development Framework.</p> <p>The Auchterarder Expansion Development Framework will set the framework for the future development of Opportunity Site 3 of the Strathearn Area Local Plan, describe how the proposal will be implemented, and set out the costs (for both the public and private sectors), and the phasing and timing of the development (including approximately 800 houses) over a minimum period of 10-15 years.</p>	No
1(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework is most likely to influence the Council's housing need requirement and priorities, Open Space Strategy and also future reviews of the Strathearn Area Local Plan (depending on the status of the Development Framework at that time).</p>	No



<p>1(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p>General Policy 1 Sustainable Development of the Strathearn Area Local Plan states that <i>“the Council will seek to ensure, where possible, that development within the Plan area is carried out in a manner in keeping with the goal of sustainable development. Where development is considered to be incompatible with the pursuit of sustainable development, but has other benefits to the area which outweigh this issue, the developer will be required to take whatever mitigation measures are deemed both practical and necessary to minimise any adverse impact.”</i></p> <p>As such the aim of the Development Framework will be to ensure that any development will respect the principles of sustainable development; ensure the quality of the environment is maintained or improved; the costs and benefits of the development will be equitably distributed; biodiversity is conserved; and, the new development meets local needs and enhances access to employment, facilities, services and goods as per the Local Plan criteria.</p> <p>In particular the development will aim to make a positive contribution to the identity, character and quality of the built environment in Auchterarder; contribute to sustainable development through energy conservation, efficiency through design to off-set the cumulative carbon footprint created by the development and additional need to travel, site layout and where possible, the use of local materials. Furthermore, it is intended that an Affordable Housing provision of approximately 200 houses will be provided on site to meet local affordable housing requirement needs; any existing Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced through reducing the loss of field boundaries and boundary trees, replanting of trees where appropriate, increasing woodland cover, encouraging new planting to compliment existing landscape and provide screening, encouraging a phased programme of replanting, and managing hedgerow trees; both formal and informal open space will be provided in conjunction with the proposed residential development and existing walks will be enhanced and extended. The sites are proposed to be developed in 3 phases over a minimum period of 10-15 years so as not to create a rapid and overwhelming expansion to Auchterarder that will be difficult to sustain. In addition to ensure support for the local economy, in line with the proposed residential expansion, a site has been proposed for the development of high quality business and employment uses, which will comply with sustainable development guidelines and will be released through phasing. Finally, it is anticipated that improvements to the local roads infrastructure to accommodate the proposed new development may be the catalyst for delivering a new ‘town service’ bus, which will subsequently increase the frequency of public transport services in and around Auchterarder.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
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<p>1 (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p>	<p>At this stage of the process the main SEA Directive topics of potential concern appear to be Water, Landscape, and Population and Human Health.</p> <p><b><u>Water</u></b> Any potential concern regarding water will be alleviated through improvements to the water supply in Auchterarder and the upgrading of the existing Waste Water Treatment Works.</p> <p><b><u>Landscape</u></b> Changes to the landscape setting of Auchterarder as a result of the proposed development are a potential concern. However, it is the aim of the Development Framework to mitigate any potential impacts through maintaining the visual integrity of the entry roads into the town; minimising the visual impact of the development on the road corridors; and retaining and promoting the natural features of each of the sites to maximise the landscape setting for the residential expansion. It is the intention that the Development Framework will ensure the successful integration of the proposed development into the town of Auchterarder and wider countryside.</p> <p><b><u>Population &amp; Human Health</u></b> There are likely to be both economic and social impacts which may affect the local community, much of which has previously been established by the Development Plan. However, it should be noted that some of these “problems” may actually be benefits (i.e. affordable housing provision, enhanced public transport links; improvements in open space and recreational provision, and increased employment land provision), if designed, implemented and managed according to sustainable development guidelines, which the Development Framework seeks to realise.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>1 (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment</p>	<p>Not relevant due to the level which the Development Framework sits within the hierarchy.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>Localised impacts on landscape and/or habitats are more probable, and hopefully will be beneficial. However, if adverse they should be reversible over time. Impacts (if any) are most likely during the construction phase of the proposed developments. It should be noted that the aim of the Development Framework will be to mitigate any such impacts through the use of Construction Method Statements.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p>Cumulative effects may arise because of the incremental change on the environment as a result of the combined</p>	

influences of various plans, programmes, strategies or projects and other human activities. Furthermore, each plan, programme or project could induce new projects to occur.

The most likely cumulative effects as a result of any development through the Development Framework are:

**Air Quality:** The creation of a large expansion to Auchterarder will introduce an increase in the town's population and potentially traffic levels as a subsequent result. It is the intention of the Development Framework to mitigate any potential negative impacts on air quality levels by encouraging a reduction in the need to travel through locating employment opportunities and open space opportunities in close proximity to the residential area and also to improve the current public transport service and pedestrian links in and around the town to reduce private car usage.

No

**Climate Change:** Any potential problems in terms of climate change as a result of the proposed development should be mitigated through the employment of sustainable building principles in the design process through to construction on site with an aim to help reduce - greenhouse gas emissions; vulnerability of the development to the effects of climate change; and energy consumption per building and per occupant to help off-set the overall carbon footprint of the development through perhaps the potential additional journeys it might generate. In addition improvements to public transport services in the locality, siting of employment opportunities in close proximity to residential areas and also improvements to pedestrian links in and around Auchterarder should help reduce the need for private car use and subsequently reduce CO2 emissions.

No

**Infrastructure:** Improvements/upgrades to the trunk road network are included in the Scottish Executives programme of works but as a result of any potential proposals at Auchterarder through the implementation of the Development Framework these improvements/upgrades are to be brought forward sooner to facilitate this expansion. In addition Scottish Water have programmed for improvements to the water supply in Auchterarder and also an upgrade to the existing Waste Water Treatment Works. Despite these improvements potentially creating a cumulative impact, it is likely to be for a short duration, most probable during the construction/upgrading phases and they may not necessarily be adverse effects.

No

**Landscape:** This proposed extension to the north of the town on the urban fringe, over a minimum of a 10-15 year period may have the potential to affect the setting of the town and the landscape character of Strathearn Valley. However,

No

these may not necessarily result in adverse impacts dependent on design, layout, boundary treatments etc.

A visual appraisal has been carried out from the surrounding visitor destinations, main roads and tourist routes, public walks and other areas where people congregate, to ascertain the visual effect (if any) of the proposal in its landscape context. The proposed development will have the most visual effect on the roads, particularly the A824 and B8062. However, views to the sites are sporadic due to the existing landscape structure providing enclosure to the road corridor. In the areas where the roads run alongside the sites and the visual impact will be high, appropriate landscape responses can be employed to minimise the impact.

A Landscape Character Assessment of the countryside surrounding Auchterarder was carried out to assist in deriving design principles to ensure that the proposed addition to the existing settlement will 'fit' comfortably into its setting and have only minor effects on the landscape character of the Strathearn Valley. The Tayside Landscape Character Assessment (undertaken by Land Use Consultants in 1997) was used as the basis of this study to assist in the classification of the landscape character of Auchterarder and its surrounding countryside.

Design guidelines have been developed to minimise potential visual impact of the proposed expansion to Auchterarder and reduce the change to the landscape setting and the character of the town. Furthermore the principle of development on this site was previously established through the Public Local Inquiry and Strathearn Area Local Plan.

**People & Health Assessment:** The Development Framework makes provisions to serve the proposed development in terms of open space (both formal and informal), and pedestrian connectivity with the rest of the town and throughout the new development. In addition it seeks to ensure that access for existing residents is not inhibited by proposed development.

The provision of affordable housing on the sites will improve local people's access to high quality housing at affordable prices.

The above provisions are likely to have a positive effect on the quality of life of local people.

A Noise Assessment has been carried out on the Townhead site and indicates that the site is not subjected to traffic noise levels which would have an adverse effect on the proposed development.

**Yes**

**Yes**

**No**

	<p><b>Socio-economic:</b> The combined effects of the various elements of the Development Framework on Auchterarder and the Strathearn planning area may result in effects on human communities (e.g. social services, health services, education provision capacity and employment), and use of land (e.g. recreation). Cumulative socio-economic effects may result in economic redistribution and changes to services and quality of life.</p> <p><b>Soil:</b> As a result of site preparation and construction there may be the risk of loss or contamination of soil in the immediate area. Paragraph 6.19 of the Council's Structure Plan outlines the importance of soil as an essential non-renewable resource in Perth and Kinross, due to its wide ranging effects on many aspects of our environment including agriculture, cultural heritage, landscape, forestry and industry. Therefore there is a need to protect the best quality agricultural land from development to ensure that the soils of the Council area are protected from contamination.</p> <p><b>Loss of Agricultural Land:</b> Environment and resources Policy 12 of the Council's Structure Plan states that <i>"development that would result in the permanent loss of prime agricultural land will only be permitted where such land is required for the implementation of the Strategy."</i> Policy 45 Agriculture of the Strathearn Area Local Plan highlights that <i>"prime quality agricultural land will be protected from irreversible development."</i> The site covered by the Development Framework includes a large area of agricultural land which will be lost. However, the decision to develop this area was already taken in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Development Framework seeks to address all of these issues and mitigate any potential negative impacts.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p>
2 (c) trans-boundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	There are no trans-boundary effects within the terms of the Directive.	<b>N/A</b>
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	The only real potential for risks to human health that can be envisaged is the normal onsite accidents which may occur during the construction phases of the proposed developments. There may also be impacts associated with construction traffic outwith the site. However, all construction works should be carried out under the Construction Design Management Regulations (CDM) in order to meet with Health and Safety requirements, which should address/mitigate this potential risk.	<b>No</b>
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical	Direct impacts will most likely occur at the local level i.e. within the settlement boundary for Auchterarder town, and most particularly within the boundaries of the actual sites	<b>No</b>

area and size of the population likely to be affected)	covered by the Development Framework.	
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to		
(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	There may be potential for some impact upon elements of cultural heritage due to the proximity of the site to a scheduled ancient monument at Castlemains and other sites of potential archaeological interest, however further investigation/information will be required as part of an archaeological survey to accompany the planning application.	<b>No</b>
(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or	Future improvements programmed by Scottish Water for both water supply and treatment are primarily as a result of the requirements set out under the Water Framework Directive 2000 (transposed into Scottish legislation through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003. These improvements are being fast-tracked as part of the Development Framework process which is a benefit.	<b>No</b>
(iii) intensive land-use.	N/A	
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	Consideration will be required to be given in the Development Framework to the potential impact of the proposed development on the Gleneagles Hotel Historic Garden and Designed Landscape (approx. 2273 metres to the south west), Kincardine Castle Wood SSSI (approx. 1134 metres to the south) or Craig Rossie SSSI (approx. 3030 metres to the south east). However, due to the distance between these designated areas and the Development Framework sites, it is not envisaged that the proposed development set out within the Development Framework will have an effect on the above mentioned sites.	<b>No</b>
3 Conclusion	Despite the principle of development of the site having been previously established under the Strathearn Area Local Plan 2001, conflict exists between the numbers identified by the Public Local Inquiry Reporter findings and the housing allocation requirement for Auchterarder set out in the Council's Structure Plan. A development of this size will have a significant impact upon Auchterarder town regardless of the factoring in of mitigation measures and the staggered development of the site in 3 phases over a minimum of 10-15 year period. Although the decision to allow development in this location has already been taken, the Council believes that it would be difficult to justify that development of this scale will not have a significant effect particularly in respect of the SEA categories: Population, Human Health, Soil and Climatic Factors. As such the Council are of the opinion that an SEA is required for the Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework.	<b>Yes</b>

### SECTION 3 - SUMMARY RECORD OF COMMENTS FROM THE CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES

<b>RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY</b>	Perth & Kinross Council
<b>TITLE OF PLAN/PROGRAMME</b>	Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework

CONSULTATION AUTHORITY	DATE COMMENTS RECEIVED	SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT	
		YES/NO	REASON
<b>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</b>	07/12/06	YES	SEPA considers that the plan has the potential to have significant environmental effects.
<b>Scottish Natural Heritage</b>	07/12/06 11/12/06 – additional information	YES	SNH agrees that the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.
<b>Historic Scotland</b>	06/12/06	YES	<p>The Development Framework has the potential to have significant effects on the historic environment given the proximity of the development to the monument (Scheduled Ancient Monument – Auchterarder Castle).</p> <p>The response is solely in the context of the SEA Regulations, Historic Scotland will respond separately to consultations on the Development Framework. It is suggested that at this early stage the Development Framework should acknowledge the need to safeguard the site and setting of Auchterarder Castle. It should also consider the wider archaeological implications of development within these areas.</p>

**SECTION 4 - RECORD OF POST SCREENING ACTION**

It is not a requirement to include this section in the screening report. However, the Responsible Authority may find it useful for record purposes

<b>TITLE OF PLAN/PROGRAMME</b>	Auchterarder Expansion – Townhead and North East Development Framework
<b>RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY</b>	Perth & Kinross Council

	<b>Date referred to Consultation Authorities or Scottish Ministers</b>	<b>Date of determination</b>
<b>Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities in agreement – SEA is required</b>	09/11/06	13/12/06

<b>Publicity requirements met (Regulation 15)</b>	The Courier – Perth Edition 14/12/06
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2006