

STIRLING BEFORE PYLONS

Acting with

FRIENDS OF THE OCHILS

As a Relevant Person Group

For the purposes of the

STIRLING SESSION

**Of the public inquiry into
Scottish and Southern Energy's proposals for the
Beauly to Denny 400 KV Steel Tower Double Circuit
Overhead Electricity Transmission Line**

PRECOGNITION

Peter Pearson, MRTPI

**Regeneration and Social Inclusion
in the Eastern Villages
of Stirling**

REGENERATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE EASTERN VILLAGES OF STIRLING

1. Personal Background and Relevant Experience

- 1.1 My name is Peter Pearson and I am Secretary of Stirling Before Pylons.
- 1.2 I have been a Chartered Town Planner since 1980, and have over thirty years experience in the fields of Renewal and Regeneration.
- 1.3 I was a founding member of the Renewal Strategy Team of Leicester City Council, where I managed three local area offices for 7 years. This innovative area based, community strategy is still in operation 30 years later.

Since then I have been the Director/Senior Officer of three Housing Associations in Scotland for 17 years. I was the first Director of Lorne Area HA in Leith, in which time they received the UK Community Development Foundation Award for Partnership for 'a series of exciting and innovative changes in what was once said to be the worst street in Scotland'. This was followed by being founding Director of Wellhouse Housing Association in Easterhouse and managing the largest development programme in Glasgow at that time. Latterly, I worked for Rural Stirling HA and implemented their 'New Housing Partnership' programme in the pressured rural area.

Since 2003 I have been an independent Housing & Planning Consultant working with Universities, Local Authorities and RSL's.

I was invited to deliver the postgraduate and professional 'Sustainability and Development Course', which covers planning and the development process, for the Housing Policy and Practice Unit at the University of Stirling from 2003-2006. This year I presented the 'Renewal and Regeneration Course', which covers community engagement and social inclusion, on the same course and will do so again in 2008. In addition, I delivered the 'Sustainability and Community Development Course' to postgraduate and professional students at the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow in 2005/06.

I also wrote a distance learning course on the 'Development Process' for the School of the Built Environment at Heriot-Watt University in 2005.

In a voluntary capacity I am a Committee Member and Chair of the Development Working Group at Rural Stirling Housing Association and Board Member and Treasurer of the Rural Housing Service. I am also a volunteer Advisor with Planning Aid for Scotland and member of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations 'Planning System Advisory Group'.

In 2006 Scotland on Sunday included me in their 'Power 100' a review of the most powerful/influential people in Scotland, for my role in the Beaully to Denny Power Line Campaign. I have been a member of Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace or the John Muir Trust for over 30 years and am committed to sustainability and renewable energy.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Eastern Villages consist of three former coal mining communities to the east of Stirling. The pits were at Fallin : Polmaise 3&4, at Plean 4&5 and at Cowie : the Bannockburn pit. The closure of these pits had a significant impact on local employment and the viability and well being of the Eastern Villages. The communities have been identified as having poor health, high unemployment, low incomes, low educational attainment and relatively high crime rates. In order to address this a variety of renewal and regeneration measures have been initiated by central and local government in an attempt to reverse the decline of these communities.
- 2.2 Stirling Before Pylons and witnesses from the communities are of the opinion that the impact of the Beaully to Denny 400kv Power Line will have a negative impact on the regeneration of these communities. In addition, the latest information shows that these communities issues are proving difficult to resolve. Indeed the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Fallin to be suffering from greater disadvantage than previously.
- 2.3 As the applicants have not addressed these issues in the ES, it is necessary in this submission to lay out some of the relevant national and local policy issues and to supply basic data related to these matters.
- 2.4 We will conclude that the building of the power line adjacent to these communities will compromise other important Scottish Government policies, and that as a result other alternative routes for the power line should be more fully investigated. This precognition does not cover the potential health impacts on these communities, which is being dealt with in other evidence.

3. The Application

3.1 In their 'Interim Report on Consultations' (APL 7/2 para 5.1.1.1) the applicants describe the 'Indicative Proposed Route, route appraised as overall **causing the least disturbance to the environment and the people who live, work**, visit and recreate within it, whilst also taking account of the relevant technical issues.'

3.2 The Scottish Executive (APL 7/9) in their response to the Scoping Opinion produced by the applicants (APL 7/3) made the following points :

- Description of the Environmental Impacts : Population

2.1 The impacts on the population, represented by local communities and by those who use the land along the proposed route for work or recreation, require to be studied. The potential impacts that should be addressed include those arising from Electric Magnetic Fields (EMF), potential noise and on the amenity of the areas along the route.

- In Annex A : Braco to Denny they state 'Important issues in this section include the proximity of the proposed line to the communities in the Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Denny area.'

3.3 In Stirling Before Pylons opinion whilst the ES has looked at a vast array of information on the impact of the proposals, it has failed to address the impacts in relation to Social Inclusion and Environmental Justice at a national policy level on the Eastern Villages. At the more local level it has also failed to refer to how these policies are being implemented through the Stirling Community Planning Partnership : Regeneration Outcome Agreement (StBP/8/4). This section of the route is the most densely populated along the whole route and therefore deserves special attention and analyse of the impacts which do not apply to other sections.

3.4 References to the impacts on the Eastern Villages in the applicants documentation are limited :

- The Final Report on Consultations and Selection of the Proposed Route (CD-Ao3, Appendix G) in para 3.4.4.8 refers to the eastern route round Stirling creating :

'potential further damage to the already degraded landscape around the former mining villages east of Stirling.'

‘potential major adverse visual effects on the settlements of Fallin, Cowie and Plean, though some of these views already include overhead lines’.

‘the route would run within a more developed and industrialised, and less sensitive landscape in the area east of Stirling.’

It concluded in para 3.4.4.11 :

‘that the more developed and industrialised landscape east of Stirling had more capacity to absorb change than the more rural and undeveloped landscapes west of the city. ‘

It is clear that this decision making process took no account of the impacts of the line on the regeneration programmes for the Eastern Villages, which are the subject of this precognition. It is principally a landscape assessment and the implication is clear, that this is a ‘degraded’ landscape which won’t suffer from additional ‘major adverse visual impacts’. No account is taken of the impacts on the population and communities as required by the Scoping Opinion in this route choice. No mention is made of the positive environmental improvements to remove the bings and replace them with tree planting which has resulted for instance in Plean Country Park being created

4. Scottish Government Policies

This section outlines strategic Scottish Executive policies relevant to the Eastern Villages :

4.1 Social Justice

The concept of Social Justice was introduced by Donald Dewar in ‘Social Justice – a Scotland where everyone matters’ (StBP/1/15). In it the Scottish Executive put social justice at the heart of their Programme for Government and took on a responsibility to concentrate on the root causes of poverty and injustice through its responsibilities for education, health, environment and housing. It identified that too many Scottish communities and neighbourhoods are isolated and disadvantaged, or in danger of becoming so. It stated ‘we believe that every community matters and we need to work together with them for a more inclusive future’.

The long term targets for communities were to :

1. Reduce inequalities between communities.
2. Increase residents satisfaction with their neighbourhoods and communities.

The milestones to achieving these targets were identified as :

- Reducing the gap in unemployment rates between the worst and the average rate for Scotland
- Reducing the incidence of drug misuse
- Reducing crime rates in disadvantaged areas
- Increasing the quality and variety of homes in disadvantaged areas
- Increasing the number of people participating in voluntary activities
- Accelerating the number of homes in disadvantaged areas with access to the internet

4.2 **Environmental Justice**

In February 2002 Jack McConnell made a major speech outlining environmental policy and introducing the concept of Environmental Justice (StBP/1/3). This tied together the concepts of social and environmental justice :

- 'I believe the biggest challenge for the early 21st century is to combine economic progress with social and environmental justice'.
- 'But the reality is that the people who have the most urgent environmental concerns in Scotland are those who daily cope with the consequences of a poor quality of life, and live in a rotten environment, close to industrial pollution, plagued by vehicle emissions, streets filled by litter and walls covered in graffiti. These are circumstances which would not be acceptable to better off communities in our society, and those who have to endure such environments in which to bring up a family, or grow old themselves are being denied environmental justice'.
- In relation to industry he made the following statements which apply particularly to the Eastern Villages : 'Scotland's industrial base is the core of our social and labour history- but it has left a legacy of contaminated land, run-down towns and social problems of its own. Industries which discharge to the environment cohabit with communities, and they are interdependent on each other-for workers and work. Improving relations between a community and industry should be encouraged. Industries should strive to be good

neighbours, aiming to distinguish themselves by an engagement with local communities to address concerns and promote better mutual understanding'. Unfortunately the applicants have singularly failed to achieve the latter over the period of this application.

The Scottish Executive Environment Group published a 'Review of Progress on Environmental Justice' (StBP/1/21) in December 2005. It defined Regeneration as 'about creating thriving sustainable communities, safe and attractive places where people want to live and business want to invest. Addressing the quality of people's local environment is a crucial part of regeneration'. Priorities in the review period had been to commit substantial resources (both current and new) across the range of Executive portfolios to help build safe strong communities, for instance, through improving the quality and affordability of housing, promoting regeneration of deprived areas and tackling anti-social behaviour. It also promotes 'Corporate Social Responsibility' and explains that the focus on environmental justice has served to highlight a perspective where business may be seen as accountable not only to shareholders but also to stakeholders such as the communities in whose neighbourhoods they operate'. This can be achieved by businesses publishing Corporate Social Responsibility Reports.

4.3 Community Regeneration Fund

In December 2004 the Scottish Executive established a £318 million Community Regeneration Fund to run for three years from 2005-08 (StBP/1/19). This fund is seen as making an important contribution to the Executive's 'Closing the Opportunity Gap' target for community regeneration. This was specially provided to address the issues referred to above. Specifically, people living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be employment deprived, have poorer health and lower educational attainment than the rest of the population. The quality of their local environment is also likely to be poorer. The combined and concentrated deprivation can limit people's routes out of poverty, especially their employment opportunities. It also has a cost and deprives the wider economy of workers, customers and taxpayers. Achieving reductions in these areas will therefore improve the quality of life for people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods and bring benefits to Scotland as a whole.

Stirling's Regeneration Outcome Agreement, outlined below is the local response to this initiative.

The Executive's commitment to addressing deprivation is far in excess of that allocated from the Community Regeneration Fund. A range of other programmes support this agenda in relation to education, health and employment, as well as core budgets of local government and the health service.

4.5 **People and Place : Regeneration Policy Statement**

People and Place (StB/1/32) was published by the Scottish Executive in February 2006 and is the latest policy document on regeneration. In the Foreword, Malcolm Chisholm, Minister for Communities makes the following statements :

- Our aim is to turn disadvantaged neighbourhoods into places where people are proud to live; to turn places that have been left behind into places connected with the opportunities around them; rather than the inward –looking places excluded from the wider successful Scotland around them; and to build mixed and vibrant communities that sustain themselves
- Regeneration is fundamentally about transforming places for the benefit of people who live and work in and around the area. This means responding to the needs of local people and creating opportunities from which they can benefit in terms of jobs, skills, training and employability. These issues are interdependent; and they are key to tackling the economic and social problems facing communities across Scotland
- Regeneration is about realising the opportunities from individual locations. It is about transforming the way places look, feel and serve the needs of local people.
- Successful regeneration is based on a partnership between different players in both the public and private sector.
- We have made good progress since devolution. But it is clear that we have more to do : to grow our urban communities; to grow our cities; **and to regenerate our former coalfields**. This is a challenge in which the Executive and all its agencies have a major role to play. And it requires us to be clear about our priorities.

5. **Stirling Community Planning Partnership**

5.1 The Stirling vehicle for implementing these national policies is The Stirling Community Planning Partnership : Regeneration Outcome Agreement 2005 (StBP/8/4). This follows on from previous regeneration strategies : Stirlings Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) and Stirling Partnership for Urban Regeneration (SPUR). The statutory partners to Community Planning Partnership are :

- Stirling Council
- NHS Forth Valley
- Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley
- Central Scotland Police
- Central Scotland Fire & Rescue Service.

The Regeneration Outcome Agreement is approved and monitored by Communities Scotland, an arm of the Scottish Government. It therefore has to be accepted that Stirlings strategy is meeting the national wider policies outlined above.

5.2 The agreed Strategic Priorities which contains a shared vision for Stirling are :

- Regeneration
- Health improvement
- Community safety
- Economic development
- Sustainable development
- Lifelong learning
- Citizenship
- Community engagement

5.3 The targeting of the Regeneration Outcome Agreement in Stirling is primarily based upon the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. This is the accepted method of assessment and is outlined in StBP/1/20. This document 'Social Focus on Deprived Areas 2005' also looks at the depth and concentration of poverty at a national and local level and explains some of the interrelationships of the various factors.

The figures demonstrate that Stirling has been and remains one of the most polarised areas in the United Kingdom, experiencing great extremes between wealth and poverty. As a result some communities and individuals are being left behind as Stirling prospers and develops. Eight of the 110 data zones in Stirling are among the 20% most deprived zones in Scotland. Stirling also contains some of the most affluent data zones in Scotland.

The Regeneration Outcome Agreement has identified six Community Regeneration Fund areas, three of which are Fallin, Plean and Cowie.

Below this there are a further four Non-Community Regeneration Fund Areas.

6. The Eastern Villages Statistical Review

6.1 The populations of the three communities were as follows in 2003 :

Plean : 1,765

Cowie : 2,381

Fallin : 2,655

Total : 6,801

6.2 The following figures are extracted from the 'Regeneration Outcome Agreement 2005' produced by the Stirling Community Planning Partnership.

6.2.1 Mortality

	All Causes	Cancer	Coronary Heart Disease
Plean	164	137	204
Cowie	111	102	137
Fallin	125	148	147
Stirling	85	91	81

Source : NHS Forth Valley –Standardised mortality ratios 1999-2003

It is clear from the above that the Eastern Villages have significantly higher standardised mortality ratios than Stirling as a whole.

The Scottish Index of multiple deprivation also shows high levels of cancer admissions, lung cancer, breast cancer, coronary heart disease and respiratory disease in the Eastern Villages.

6.2.2 Hospital Admissions

	Emergency Hospital Admissions per 100,000 2003	Hospital Admissions for alcohol misuse per 100,000 1999-2002	Hospital Admissions for drug misuse per 100,000 1999-2002
Plean	13482	661	178
Cowie	11158	711	53
Fallin	13479	1380	128
Stirling	9166	574	86
Forth Valley	8604	499	80
Scotland	9022	759	139

Source : Scottish Index of multiple deprivation

Emergency hospital admissions, hospital admissions for alcohol misuse and hospital admissions for drug misuse are generally well above the Stirling and the Forth Valley average in the Eastern Villages.

6.2.3 Unemployment

	% of working age population classed as employment deprived	%of 16-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance 2004	% of population 16+ claiming Income Support 2004
Plean	24	3.16	8.9
Cowie	19	4.28	9.2
Fallin	25	5.31	10.2
Stirling	11	2.88	5.3
Scotland	14	3.86	7.7

Source : Scottish Index of multiple deprivation

Overall Stirling has a strong economy, an indicator of this is the comparison of Stirling and Scotland figures in the table above. This strong economic position, however, masks specific local issues. One of the most significant of these issues is the pockets of high unemployment, which apply to the Eastern Villages.

6.2.4 Financial Inclusion

	% Currently Income Deprived
Plean	26
Cowie	26
Fallin	20
Stirling	11
Scotland	15

Source : Current Income SIMD figures

Low income is defined as less than 60% of the contemporary median income, before housing costs. Pensioner families, lone-parent families, workless households, people in the social rented sector or people with no educational qualifications are more likely to experience persistent low income. The Eastern Villages are 2 to 2.5 more times income deprived than Stirling as a whole.

6.2.5 Education

	% residents with no qualifications
Plean	51
Cowie	52
Fallin	57
Stirling	27
Scotland	33

Source : Stirling Council Research Team using 2001 Census data

Residents in the Eastern villages are on average twice as likely to have no qualifications as Stirling as a whole.

6.2.5 Crime

In the last three years Plean and Cowie had experienced higher levels of crime than the Stirling average per 1,000 head of population :

Stirling Area average : 44
Plean : 73
Cowie : 68

Fallin figures were not available.

7. **Three Year Regeneration Outcome Agreement**

7.1 The Three Year Regeneration Outcome Agreement outlines a range of projects which are being implemented across all six regeneration areas in Stirling. In addition the following projects are specific to the Eastern Villages and have been developed through close community involvement :

- Fallin Bing – Countryside Park
- Plean-Cowie-Fallin Cycle path
- Adult Learning Development Worker –Fallin
- New Community Facilities –Plean
- Streetwise Project –Cowie
- Cowie Youth project
- Internet Café –Cowie
- After school activities –Cowie
- Fallins Future Community Enterprise
- One Stop Shop Plean
- Cowie Health and Well-Being Action Plan
- Improve access and facilities –Cowie Library
- Impact of alcohol on community project –Cowie
- Lifestyle Coaching – Cowie, Fallin, Plean
- New village hall – Fallin
- Better community information – Fallin
- Better transport links – Fallin
- Improve Youth Club provision – Cowie, Fallin, Plean
- Eastern Villages Youthbank
- Pre-school and Primary school upgrades – Cowie
- Develop Adult Learning – Plean
- Develop ITC learning centre – Fallin
- Employment courses – Fallin
- Older adult activities – Cowie and Plean
- Play at Home – Cowie, Fallin, Plean
- Community Health Facilities – Cowie
- Education programmes on drug and alcohol misuse –Fallin
- Fallin Mining Museum
- Urban Woodland strategy – Plean, Fallin
- Adventure playground – Plean
- Refurbish Play Areas – Plean
- Multi-sport area and youth shelter – Plean

- Underage drinking project – Fallin, Cowie, Plean
- Alcohol project –Cowie
- Alcohol free activities for young people –Cowie
- Community Wardens – Cowie, Fallin, Plean

7.2 Other Investment

Social Housing

Forth Housing Association operates in the Eastern Villages. They receive a substantial part of their capital funding in grants from Communities Scotland, a part of the Scottish Government.

Forth HA have made the following substantial capital investments in the Eastern Villages :

- Plean : 58 houses/flats at £4.6m
- Cowie : 38 Houses/flats at £3.2m
- Fallin : 40 houses/flats at £3.4m

136 houses/flats at £11.2m

In addition, Communities Scotland has also channelled Gro-Grant through private developers to provide affordable housing in the area.

It is understood that Forth HA wrote expressing their concerns about the 400kV line to the Scottish Executive during the consultation stage of the application, due to their concerns about the potential impacts on their tenants.

8. Current Position

- 8.1 The Stirling Regeneration Outcome Agreement Annual Report 2006/07 (StBP/8/7), currently in draft, prior to submission to Communities Scotland, reaches a sombre conclusion in relation to progress in the Eastern Villages, in its Executive Summary it states :

‘ the former mining villages of Plean, Fallin, and Cowie have continued to develop their small scale community regeneration funded projects within a broader backdrop of potential decline. Fallin has appeared in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as suffering greater disadvantage and despite increased private sector housebuilding in both Plean and Cowie, the hard core disadvantage remains difficult to

resolve. All the Eastern Villages however have been working very effectively, together with Bannockburn, in their Area Community Planning Forum and are now in a strong position to work with their community planning partners to affect mainstream budget provision in their communities.'

Whilst the last sentence indicates potential improvements in the future, it is clear that even with the concerted work to date the regeneration of the Eastern Villages is fragile. The impact of the Power Line will do nothing to increase the communities or public confidence that the area is being successfully regenerated.

9. Power Lines and Regeneration

- 9.1 It is generally accepted that high voltage overhead pylons are visually intrusive and detract from all environments. There is a range of evidence to back this up from public responses to pylons in Visit Scotlands report APL10/6/8, to the Inspectors Report on North Yorkshire Inquiry that 'overhead lines are visually intrusive in almost any landscape through which they pass' – ALP 2B2 para 9.66.

Given this situation there is a general presumption that such power lines should not pass through residential areas and mixed use residential areas. In an urban context they are generally only seen as acceptable in industrial land uses and landscapes. Contrary to the impression created by the applicants the area around the Eastern Villages is predominantly agricultural and residential. Since the closure of the mines, it can no longer be regarded as an industrial area, although elements of its historical legacy remain.

- 9.2 There are a number of precedents which indicate that overhead power lines can be seen as having a negative impact on regeneration areas. Whilst those quoted below are not directly comparable to the situation in the Eastern Villages, they provide a context and setting from which to view the potential impact of this proposal.

9.3 Olympics

The Lower Lea Valley in London's East End has been the focus of a variety of regeneration strategies over the last thirty years or more. Whilst some of the individual initiatives have been successful, it is clear that regeneration in a lasting and comprehensive manner has failed.

The regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley is seen as a fundamental part of the Olympic bid and undergrounding the overhead pylons was prioritised as the first element in that work programme. The following quotes were made on 6th April 2006 at the commencement of tunnelling works to underground 52, 65metre high pylons. Document StBP/8/8 :

Tessa Jowell, Olympics Minister : 'This is the start of something big This is about much more than 29 days of sport in the summer of 2012. This huge and impressive powerline project shows our determination to leave a lasting legacy for generations to come, improving lives and changing the face of London for ever.'

Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London : 'For decades many people have identified the Lower Lea Valley with large pylons and powerlines and burying them underground unlocks the precious space enabling us to deliver a lasting legacy of thousands of new homes for Londoners, many of which will be affordable. It will transform the landscape of east London for the enjoyment of local people and Londoners alike for generations to come.'

Sebastian Coe, Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games : 'This is an important step in the transformation of the Lower Lea Valley. The undergrounding of powerlines will provide an uncluttered landscape'.

David Higgins, Chief Executive of the Olympic Development Agency : 'Placing the powerlines underground is a vital part of the regeneration of East London.'

Mary Reilly, London Development Agency : 'Securing the Games has provided the LDA with a tremendous opportunity to really improve the local environment for people who live and work in a part of London that has not seen this focus for more than a century. This milestone marks an important symbolic stage in a huge project that is integral to realising the potential of what was the heart of London's Victorian industrial revolution.'

The undergrounding of pylons is seen as symbolic and 'key to the long term regeneration of the area'. It places a context for how the introduction of this powerline proposal is seen negatively by the communities of the Eastern Villages. It is also indicative of how the introduction of higher pylons will impact negatively on the regeneration initiatives.

9.4 North Yorkshire Inquiry

The North Yorkshire Inquiry Report (APL-2B/2) made significant reference to the issue of regeneration, and it is therefore somewhat surprising that the applicants to the Beaully to Denny application have not seen it as a relevant subject to report on in their ES.

In this case the Councils and objectors material points are reported as :

Para 5.11 'An overhead line would conflict with the twin policy foci of revitalising the economy and protection/enhancement of the environment. It would be a visual intrusion which would ruin the effect of a number of environmental initiatives, undermine the fragile regeneration process and diminish the quality of certain residential areas.'

Para 5.14 'Turning to the impact on residential areas, there is general concern that an overhead line would detract from the quality of existing areas, thereby conflicting with the Structure Plan's aim of upgrading such areas.'

In their general conclusions the Inspectors find :

Para 27.10 'It is not disputed that the installation of overhead lines has a severe visual impact on almost all landscapes and environments. Therefore the installation of overhead lines is clearly at odds with the underlying aims of the relevant development plan policies designed to protect or improve the environment, and thereby stimulate the economy, in both urban and rural areas.'

In their conclusions in relation to the Northern Route option the Inspectors find :

Para 27.83 'In our opinion the line would create heavy industrial images wholly inconsistent with the well supported strategy of the local authorities and TDC to improve the environment and to regenerate the area'.

Para 27.84 'Similarly the line would be visually intrusive and inconsistent with the regeneration strategy for the area'.

Para 27.88 'The line would have a serious adverse impact on many areas important to the aims of the Cleveland Structure Plan and of TDC to secure environmental improvement and regeneration of Teeside in general'.

Para 27.89 'These impacts are collectively so severe we conclude that this route (option) is unacceptable and consent for the route (option) as a whole should be refused'.

Stirling Before Pylons would concur with the general views outlined above, and suggest that they are generally relevant to regeneration areas. We are also of the view that they generally apply in relation to the Eastern Villages.

9.5 **Wester Hailes – Edinburgh**

This is a Scottish case study relating to a peripheral estate on the west side of Edinburgh (document StBP/8/9). It is of significance as when the initial regeneration strategy was developed, the undergrounding of a 132kV power line which ran through the estate was seen as an essential pre-requisite to the regeneration of the area by the community. This related to its unsightly appearance in a residential area and community concerns about the potential health impacts.

The estate was constructed in the 1970's, but by the 1980's was exhibiting a range of difficulties. These included an image problem, high levels of crime, alcohol and drug dependency, high levels of unemployment and the housing stock being in poor condition. As a result Wester Hailes was chosen as one of 4 peripheral housing estates to take part in the 'New Life for Urban Scotland' initiative in 1988. The Wester Hailes Partnership was established and was one of the first to move towards community involvement as a means of rehabilitating an area.

An evaluation of the 'New Life for Urban Scotland' in 1998 resulted in the following positive headline findings as a result of the regeneration work :

- The provision of new and rehabilitated housing
- A more diversified stock of housing
- Better training and employment opportunities

- An improved image
- Declining rates of out migration

The undergrounding of the power line was carried out in 1991 and was seen as an essential and successful component of the initial regeneration of Wester Hailes.

10. **Comment on Renewal and the Eastern Villages**

The following are a brief selection of public comments on the power line with reference to the Eastern Villages, further comment on the local perspective is found in the precognitions of Archie Bone and Tommy Brookes which follow :

10.1 Parliamentary Debate on the Power Line : 20/9/07 (StBP/

During this debate Keith Brown MSP (Ochil) stated 'The eastern villages of Stirling are often forgotten about in this context but have regularly been seen as a dumping ground for pylons and various other public utilities, to the detriment of their people. I hope their interests will also be taken into account.'

He was followed by Dr. Richard Simpson MSP (Mid Scotland and Fife) who said 'My final point is that after the loss of the mining industry in the eastern villages and given all the health inequalities and the major economic and employment problems in the area, I think that it is a total disgrace that pylons should be dumped on these people as well.'

10.2 Andrew Arbuckle, MSP :

'I fully support the local action group in its bid to get the power giant to move its supply line further away from their communities'. Stirling Observer 10/8/05 (StBP/4/7).

10.3 Council

Councillors have clearly had to be circumspect in the public comments on the application, however, the following references are noted :

10.3.1 At the Council Meeting on the 29/4/04 concern was minuted on

'the impacts of the preferred route on areas of high population density and on areas of search in relation to the Major Growth Area'.

10.3.2 At the Council Meeting on the 26/8/04 Councillor Hazel for Polmaise (Eastern Villages):

‘supported the concerns expressed by citizens concerning the impact that would arise from SSE’s preferred eastern route.’

In the Stirling Observer of 1/9/04 (StBP/4/7) he said :

‘I would like to say that when the council does make a formal submission this is taken on board for the people of the Eastern Villages.’

10.4 Stirling Observer Editorial : 20/1/06 (StBP/4/7)

‘One of the great achievements of my lifetime has been the land reclamation in all the former mining areas. The transformation of places like Fallin is quite amazing. Having worked so hard on that front, it’s easy to see why the prospect of giant pylons is so disagreeable’.

11. **Implications for the Eastern Villages**

- 11.1 It is not possible to say precisely what the implications of the proposed powerline will be for the Eastern Villages, in terms of the impacts on regeneration and the community. That would have to wait for a detailed analysis after the event. It is possible, however, to draw on extensive experience of other communities in similar circumstances and draw up a range of likely eventualities.
- 11.2 We know that the regeneration of these three villages is in the balance and indeed that despite significant efforts the latest Scottish Index of multiple Deprivation shows that Fallin has moved backwards.
- 11.3 Regeneration is about confidence: in the community, in the housing market and its image in the wider community. We know that the local community are strongly opposed to the plans and they will view the scheme being approved, as the area being ‘dumped on’ again to quote Keith Brown, the local MSP. As has been said elsewhere, if there were not negative implications, there would not be a good reason for line not going through the New Growth Area.

11.4 The results from a loss of confidence engendered by such a significant development as the powerline, both physically and symbolically, could easily lead to the classic cycle of decline in the area. This might include :

- Increased incidence of a lack of hope in the community
- Increased levels of graffiti and anti-social behaviour
- Increased incidence of depression, alcohol and substance abuse
- Truancy increases and school performance declines
- The areas image makes properties more difficult to let
- Tenancies will only be accepted by the socially excluded
- This leads to more mobile people in the community moving out to more 'desirable' areas
- House prices stagnate and the area becomes less attractive to developers
- Local shops and other services close and cannot be relet and are boarded up

The degree to which this would happen cannot be predicted, but those are amongst the very real concerns of these communities, and good reasons why serious consideration should be given to undergrounding the proposed line.

12. **Concluding Remarks**

1. The Scoping Report for the application made it clear that the implications on the local population and communities had to be taken account of in the ES. This does not appear to have occurred.
2. The Scottish Executive has a range of central policy initiatives, covering Social Justice, Environmental Justice and Regeneration which are not referred to in the ES and apply to the Eastern Villages.
3. The Local Authority has responded to these Executive policies with a wide ranging series of local initiatives in the Eastern Villages through its Regeneration Outcome Agreement with the Executive. Again these are not referred to in the ES.
4. These initiatives show that significant public resources are being invested to regenerate the Eastern Villages. The success of these programmes is currently in the balance.

5. The reporters in the North Yorkshire Inquiry found that a 400kV line could have a negative impact on regeneration policies, and was a relevant factor to balance in their judgement of that application. The lack of any such analysis in the ES is a significant flaw in this application.
6. A range of case studies illustrate that re-routing or undergrounding has been seen as an alternative in relation to regeneration strategies. The applicants did not consider this in preparing their ES.
7. The local community, councillors and MSPs have all drawn attention to the impact on the Eastern Villages, expressing their concern that the power line will have a negative impact on the communities. These concerns appear to have been ignored.
8. In addition to the evidence in this submission there is additional significant concern expressed on health grounds reported to this Inquiry. The Eastern Villages represent the most densely populated section along the whole proposed line, with by far the most people potentially at risk.
9. It is SBP's submission that the additional evidence submitted in relation to the Eastern Villages, taken with the other evidence produced against the OHL to the east, are sufficient grounds to refuse this application and to require the full investigation of other alternatives including undergrounding to the west.