

Falkirk Local Development Plan 3  
Topic Papers

April 2024

# Infrastructure



Falkirk Council



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This topic paper contains evidence on infrastructure in the Falkirk Council area to support the preparation of LDP3 and in particular to provide input to the LDP3 Evidence Report. Infrastructure may be defined as the physical and technical facilities, natural and other fundamental systems necessary for the economy to function and to enable, sustain or enhance societal living conditions. The availability and efficient use of existing infrastructure and the deployment and sustainability of new infrastructure are essential considerations in planning future development in the area.
- 1.2 The scope of the paper covers the policy context to infrastructure use and planning, and provides information on availability, capacity, condition, need and investment in relation to various types of infrastructure including water and drainage, education, healthcare, community and sports facilities, and digital infrastructure. Several other important categories of infrastructure including transport, housing, green infrastructure, waste and energy supply are dealt with in other topic papers. Regard has been paid to the suggested areas of relevant evidence in the LDP Guidance.



## 2. Policy Context

### National

- 2.1 The **National Infrastructure Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26** builds on the findings of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland. Its vision is that our infrastructure supports Scotland's resilience and enables inclusive, net zero and sustainable growth, with a focus on three strategic themes.
  - Enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability
  - Driving inclusive economic growth
  - Building resilient and sustainable places
- 2.2 An important feature of the National Infrastructure Plan is the investment hierarchy which comprises four steps: determine future need; maximise the useful life of existing assets; repurpose and co-locate; and replace, create and build new assets. The efficient use and adaptation of existing infrastructure therefore needs to be considered before moving to investment in new facilities.
- 2.3 **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)** deals with infrastructure under Policy 18. It promotes an infrastructure first approach to land use planning which puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking. It is important that potential impacts on infrastructure and infrastructure needs are understood early in the development planning process as part of an evidenced based approach. Other NPF4 policies which are relevant to this topic paper are Policy 21 (Play, recreation and sport) and Policy 24 (Digital infrastructure).
- 2.4 Sectoral policies relating to individual categories of infrastructure are considered under the relevant sections of the topic paper.



## 3. Water and Drainage

- 3.1 Scottish Water is responsible for the provision of water and waste water services in Scotland. In terms of accommodating new development, it is required to meet the costs of providing strategic capacity for household purposes. This applies to Part 4 Infrastructure, i.e. strategic assets such as water and waste water treatment works. Scottish Water works with local authorities to establish any capacity issues based on allocations in the local development plan and identify and programme solutions to enable development. Local infrastructure connections are funded by developers but with a specified level of rebate (reasonable cost contribution) from Scottish Water.

### Water Supply

- 3.2 The Council area receives its water supply from three sources: Carron Valley Water Treatment Works (WTW), which serves the bulk of the area, Balmore WTW, which serves Grangemouth and Bo'ness, and Turret WTW, which serves Rural North and the northern and eastern sections of Larbert/Stenhousemuir settlement area. Scottish Water advise that all three of these WTWs have capacity currently available. The relevant WTW catchments are shown on [this map](#).



## Water Refill Locations

- 3.3 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, requires local development plans to include a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations. At present, there is a Scottish Water refill point in Callender Park, and public facilities at the Helix visitor centre and the Falkirk Wheel. Otherwise there are private refill points at a number of cafes, restaurants and shops in the area.





## Waste Water

- 3.4 There are several Waste Water Treatment Works serving the Council area. The two largest works are Dalderse, serving Larbert/Stenhousemuir, most of Falkirk, and part of Grangemouth and Kinneil Kerse which covers the Braes area and part of Grangemouth. These are complemented by three further urban facilities at Bo'ness, Bonnybridge and Denny, and several smaller works serving the rural villages of Torwood, South Alloa, Airth, Whitecross, Slamannan and Avonbridge. The catchments of the relevant WWTW are shown on this map.
- 3.5 Scottish Water states that there is capacity currently available at Dalderse and Bo'ness. At all the other WWTWs, future investment is potentially required.
- 3.6 The waste water network is predominantly a combined system with some areas served by separate systems where new development has occurred. Flows are generally gravity but there is also a reliance on pumped flows and pumping stations are a key part of the infrastructure.
- 3.7 In certain localities, network capacity issues can occur during periods of heavy rainfall with combined sewers unable to cope with additional flows resulting in surcharging and surface water flooding. For the core catchments of Dalderse and Kinneil Kerse, covering the core settlements, Scottish Water carried out an Integrated Catchment Study to understand flow interactions between below ground drainage infrastructure and open watercourses. This has fed into the Council's Strategic Surface Water Management Plan, which has set the context for more detailed area studies. In the meantime, Scottish Water's surface water policy seeks to avoid further surface water drainage discharges to combined sewers from new development.



## 4. Education

- 4.1 Land and buildings to support education at early years, primary, secondary and tertiary levels is an essential part of the infrastructure of the area. Population growth over the past twenty years alongside education policy changes has put particular pressure on the school estate which has required management and substantial investment.

### Overview of Education Estate

- 4.2 The main education facilities within the area comprise:
- Forth Valley College (Falkirk Campus at Middlefield)
  - 8 mainstream secondary schools
  - 1 secondary school for severe and complex needs
  - Inclusion and Wellbeing Service supporting primary and secondary aged pupils with additional social and emotional needs
  - School and Outreach Service Base for primary and secondary aged pupils with hearing and visual impairments
  - ASN Outreach Service Base and Interrupted learners education provision
  - 48 primary schools
  - 14 Early Learning and Childcare Centres
  - 39 Nursery Classes
  - Within mainstream schools
    - 3 secondary additional support centre provisions
    - 3 primary additional support centre provisions
    - 2 severe and complex needs provisions (1 split site)
    - 15 primary enhanced provisions



- 4.3 Over the past 25 years, all 8 of the secondary schools have been replaced. These were procured through PFI arrangements, with private facilities management. The first of the two contracts (covering the first four schools) will come to an end in 2025, with the Council having the option to acquire them. A new ASN secondary school - Carrongrange - was built at Grangemouth. Three new primary schools have been completed at Kinnaird, Maddiston and Antonshill (St Bernadette's). Extensions have been built at a number of schools to increase capacity or accommodate new needs, e.g. enhanced nursery provision. In terms of the quality of school accommodation, the condition of all schools is currently rated as at least satisfactory, whilst the suitability rating was at least satisfactory in 99% of cases.
- 4.4 Denominational secondary education in the west of the area (Denny, Bonnybridge and Banknock) is provided by Stirling Council at St Modan's High School in Stirling.

## School Rolls, Capacity and Occupancy

- 4.5 The estimated primary school roll in 2023/24 was 11,503. The figure is on a downward trajectory after a period of growth influenced by high levels of housing growth in the 2000s. The 'bulge' in the primary school population has now moved through into the high schools where rolls are increasing, with an estimated total school population of 9,822. The roll in special schools is fairly constant, but this hides the fact that an increasing proportion of pupils have complex needs, with more pupils with moderate needs being accommodated in mainstream schools.
- 4.6 The estimated total capacity of the education estate and current occupancy rates are set out in Figure 1. This of course masks the variations in capacity pressures from school to school which are discussed more fully later in this section.

**Figure 1: School Estate Capacity and Occupancy Rates**

	Capacity	Rolls (2022/2023)	Occupancy Rates
Early Years	3,133	2,975	95%
Primary	16,922	11,713	72%
Secondary	11,642	9,667	83%
ASN Wings	90	89	99%
Special Schools	212	201	95%

Source: Falkirk Council Children's Services

- 4.7 Dealing with increases in the school population over the past 20 years, driven by housing growth and other demographic trends, has been a major challenge. Pressures have been particularly felt in the most popular areas for new build, notably Falkirk, Larbert and the Braes. This has required significant capital investment which is ongoing. Temporary modular accommodation has also played a significant role in managing capacity pressures.
- 4.8 Over a number of years, education and planning services have worked together to manage and mitigate the impact of new housing on education infrastructure. The Housing Land Audit feeds into annual school roll projections by applying pupil product ratios, and assessments are made of future capacity risks. These are now captured in an Education Capacity Statement. Where capacity issues are projected, developer contributions are sought towards capacity enhancements which may include new schools, extensions or other adaptations. The methodology followed is set out in SG13 Developer Contributions. Whilst the management of pressures has been largely successful, there have been instances where it has taken time for infrastructure to catch up with growth, and the perceived failure to achieve an 'infrastructure first' approach has been a common theme in public consultations.
- 4.9 A contrasting challenge has been managing and determining the future of underutilised assets, including rural schools which are operating significantly under capacity. Two schools are currently mothballed, and there are others that operate significantly under capacity. Full closure requires stringent statutory procedures and Scottish Government clearance.





- 4.10 Adjusting school catchments can be a tool to manage demand and capacity issues, and the Council has on occasion done this for both secondary and primary catchments. However, this process has limitations. Catchments need to make geographical sense and facilitate sustainable journeys to school. They are often locally contentious. The process is again subject to statutory procedures and Scottish Government approval.
- 4.11 Other issues which the Council's Strategic Property Review is posing for the education estate include a more integrated approach to education, leisure, health and community facilities.
- 4.12 The Scottish Government's doubling of the early years entitlement to 1,140 hours a year has been a significant challenge. This has required significant investment in nursery provision within primary schools, requiring the remodelling of schools and the utilisation of hitherto spare capacity, as well new early learning and childcare centres. Further enhancement of the entitlement has been signalled by the Scottish Government. Several years ago, the Council extended its developer contributions policy to cover nursery provision.
- 4.13 Managing the increasing demand and needs associated with the ASN sector has been a further challenge, with a current project to extend the current Carrongrange school to a full 5-18 having been subject of a successful bid to the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment programme (LEIP).



## Capacity Issues and Investment by High School Cluster

- 4.14 The following is a summary of current capacity issues and planned investment by high school cluster. This draws on 2023 school roll projections and takes account of a comprehensive review of primary school capacity carried out in 2024. Future investment will be delivered in the context of the Council's Strategic Property Review which seeks to achieve a more financially and environmentally sustainable school estate. The school catchments are shown on [this map](#).
- 4.15 Within the **Bo'ness** cluster, substantial housing allocations mean rolls are projected to rise in Bo'ness Academy, Deanburn PS and Grange PS. Capacity issues are expected to arise at Grange PS where developer contributions are currently being taken. Substantial capacity still exists at Kinneil and Bo'ness Public PS. Blackness PS is a rural school with a small roll and operating well under capacity. Decisions will need to be made on the best way of deploying future investment in the primary school estate to deal efficiently with future demands.
- 4.16 Within the **Braes** cluster, housing growth has created capacity issues at Maddiston PS which have been addressed by the current 7 class extension for which developer contributions have been gathered over recent years and which will see the site fully utilised with no further scope for expansion. The school is expected to continue to experience high occupancy levels. Braes HS is also subject to capacity pressures with developer contributions being taken. Wallacestone PS, which was extended in 2008 in response to capacity pressures, now has substantial spare capacity. Likewise, there is under occupancy at three of the four village primary schools in the cluster - Avonbridge, Drumbowie and Shieldhill.
- 4.17 Within the **Denny** cluster, substantial recent and projected housebuilding means that Denny HS is subject to long term capacity risk, whilst upgrading to Denny PS is programmed to deal with current issues. At Dunipace PS some capacity related investment has taken place and further is anticipated because of recent and ongoing new housing development. Bankier PS is expected to reach and exceed capacity following planned large-scale housing developments in the area, and investment will be required. Contributions are being taken in respect of all four schools. Head of Muir PS has available capacity, but again, rising school rolls linked to housing growth in the area may necessitate the need for developer contributions to fund a further expansion of the school. Nethermaines PS, and the two Bonnybridge primary schools all have good levels of spare capacity.
- 4.18 In the **Falkirk** cluster, Comely Park PS is experiencing ongoing high occupancy levels, but otherwise catchment schools are generally projected to operate well within capacity. The village school at Limerigg has been mothballed.



- 4.19 In the **Graeme** cluster, Graeme HS is subject to long term capacity pressures arising from planned housing, as is St Margaret's PS which will require an extension to cope with the large Gilston development. Westquarter PS, in spite of being extended in 2014, is still operating over capacity, and is likely to require further investment. Plans for substantial growth at Whitecross will require extension of the primary school. Developer contributions are being taken at all these schools. Victoria PS is projected to operate at high occupancy levels which may cause issues in the future. The remaining primary schools at Hallglen and Laurieston are projected to operate well within capacity.
- 4.20 In the **Grangemouth** cluster, low levels of housebuilding mean that Grangemouth HS, Bowhouse PS and Moray PS are all operating well within capacity. The exception is Beancross PS which is operating at very high occupancy, with temporary classrooms in place. Bothkennar PS at Skinflats has been mothballed
- 4.21 In the **Larbert** cluster, high levels of housebuilding have put significant pressure on parts of the school estate. Larbert HS continues to experience high occupancy levels, in spite of significant investment to create additional capacity. Likewise, Kinnaird PS will continue at high occupancy levels notwithstanding the completion of a series of extensions. Developer contributions continue to be taken for both schools, but there are limitations on the scope to increase their size. Reduction in the capacity of Larbert Village PS means it is once more experiencing pressures whilst Carronshore PS's roll is projected to approach capacity in the years to come for the same reason. The other primary schools are projected to operate within capacity.
- 4.22 In the **St. Mungo's** cluster, St Mungo's HS has had a consistently high occupancy, but intake is currently under control, the roll is expected to remain within capacity and for the time being developer contributions are no longer sought. The denominational primary schools do not currently have any projected capacity issues.

## Forth Valley College

- 4.23 Forth Valley College provides further and higher education to around 14,500 students across three campuses at Falkirk, Stirling and Alloa. The Falkirk campus is a recent new build at Middlefield on the east side of Falkirk, in close proximity to the Helix, the Falkirk Stadium and the planned Falkirk Gateway development. It specialises in STEM subjects, benefiting from its proximity to the petrochemical cluster at Grangemouth.





## 5. Healthcare

- 5.1 The regional health board covering the Falkirk Council area is NHS Forth Valley. Under the Scottish Government's arrangements for the integration of health and social care, the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership, run by the Integration Joint Board, oversees a range of health services delivered in the local area, which now includes primary care services, including GP services.
- 5.2 Acute health services are delivered from Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert, opened in 2010, with 860 inpatient beds. In addition, there are two community hospitals in the area - Falkirk Community Hospital, providing a range of outpatient services and also inpatient wards for patients requiring rehabilitation, palliative and continuing care; and Bo'ness Hospital, providing a range of inpatient and outpatient services as well as hosting two GP practices. Local primary healthcare services are provided from a number of health centres across the Council area, with services provided by GP practices either grouped in hubs or located on their own. Primary care also encompasses a range of other community health services such as pharmacy, dentistry and ophthalmology.



- 5.3 Primary healthcare services and infrastructure in the area are facing increasing demands due to an increasing population, an ageing population (projected 80% increase in overs 75s by 2043), persistent levels of deprivation and inequality, increasing mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. The challenge of meeting these demands is exacerbated by recruitment and retention issues for both GPs and other clinical staff.
- 5.4 Alongside these pressures are other drivers for change with implications for healthcare infrastructure. The Forth Valley Primary Care Improvement Plan 2018-2021 put in motion a significant change in primary care whereby additional practitioners were employed to deliver certain services, thereby taking workload off GPs. This has required additional accommodation and suggests a movement toward a hub model of provision. As part of a greater focus on place and collaboration between public sector agencies, there is a further drive to co-locate public services in shared facilities where a range of health and wellbeing services can be accessed from a single campus. Finally, factors such as the increased use of technology and the importance of infection control, which came to the fore during the Covid 19 pandemic, will have implications for models of service delivery and associated accommodation needs.
- 5.5 In an attempt to mitigate capacity pressures resulting from the scale of housebuilding in the area, the Council in partnership with NHS Forth Valley introduced a policy of seeking developer contributions for primary healthcare facilities in 2015 through LDP1. This has been carried through and refined in LDP2. The circumstances in which contributions are sought and the methodology to be followed is set out in Supplementary Guidance SG13 on Developer Contributions.
- 5.6 NHS Forth Valley undertook a Primary Care Services Review in 2019 to consider accommodation pressures, taking into account the factors discussed above. Work is ongoing to look at needs in each GP cluster, informed by updated information on future housing, and an understanding is developing of where new or extended facilities are needed, and where developer contributions should be sought. Whilst a more complete picture of where deficiencies exist is emerging, it is taking longer to formulate actual solutions which will then be subject to a business case process. In some cases, internal reconfiguration of buildings may be sufficient; in others new extensions or new buildings may be required.



5.7 The following is a summary of the current position in the various GP clusters:

**Bo'ness** - 3 GP practices, two of which are located at Bo'ness Hospital. NHSFV has indicated that there are capacity issues associated with the high level of planned housebuilding in the town. Development contributions are being sought. No specific solution is yet confirmed.

**Bonnybridge** - 2 GP practices are located in Bonnybridge Health Centre, plus a branch surgery in Banknock. Bonnybridge Health Centre has capacity issues with a requirement for improved provision/new build allowing removal of temporary portocabins. Banknock is understood to have capacity to accommodate planned growth.

**Braes** - 3 GP practices are located in Meadowbank Health Centre, with a branch surgery at Avonbridge. A further GP practice is located in Slamannan. Meadowbank is experiencing significant capacity pressures and developer contributions are being sought. No solution to the accommodation shortfall has yet been confirmed.

**Denny** - 2 GP practices serve the town, one co-located with other services at Carronbank House, the other at Denny Cross. NHSFV has indicated that there is insufficient capacity to accommodate the scale of planned housebuilding in Denny. An upgrade to Denny Cross practice is consequently being implemented to mitigate pressures and developer contributions have been sought.

**Falkirk** - 7 GP practices serve the town, one of which is at Falkirk Community Hospital. NHSFV indicate that there are no capacity concerns based on current planned development and contributions are not being sought.

**Grangemouth** - 2 GP practices serve the town and there is adequate capacity in the accommodation.

**Larbert/Stenhousemuir** - 5 GP practices serve the town, four of which are located at Stenhousemuir Health Centre. NHSFV indicates that there are capacity issues as a result of the level of housebuilding in the area and developer contributions are being sought.

5.8 The future of Falkirk Community Hospital, and the role which the site will play in meeting the health care needs of the population, is a key issue. The community hospital was the former Falkirk Royal Infirmary and has been adapted to serve its present function, with substantial parts demolished. It is a large strategic asset, well positioned a short distance from Falkirk Town Centre. A masterplanning process has been commenced, and clearly the location has the capacity meet a wider variety of different healthcare needs in an attractive, accessible and integrated setting.

5.9 A key issue is the delayed discharge of patients from hospital where they are medically fit, but lack the onward support/care necessary. A major contributory factor is the lack of beds in other settings such as care homes. Care home numbers have ben declining since 2020, with the current number standing at 912 of which the majority (801) are in the independent sector. Capacity is being booked or reconfigured to deal with intermediate care needs.

## 6. Community, Sport and Leisure Facilities

- 6.1 The Council area has a wealth of community, sport and leisure facilities which are vital to the health and well being of the communities they serve. The focus of this section is on the Council owned assets which form the core of the infrastructure, but there are many other private and third sector venues and organisations which make an important contribution to the resource.
- 6.2 Until recently, the Council's sport and cultural venues were run by Falkirk Community Trust. The Culture and Sport Strategy 2014-2024 set out the overall vision for the development of these assets and the activities that they support. These service areas were brought back into the direct control of the Council in 2022.
- 6.3 A key factor affecting the future of Council owned facilities is the Strategic Property Review (SPR). The SPR recognises that the cost of maintaining the current large number of Council properties, some of which are in poor condition and have poor energy efficiency, is no longer sustainable, and identifies a process for rationalising and modernising the estate. For sports, leisure and community assets, this will mean seeking alternative delivery models (e.g. asset transfer) or closure/ disposal in respect of some properties, whilst retaining and investing in others.



## Sport Facilities

- 6.4 In terms of sports facilities, significant Council assets include the Mariner Centre, Falkirk; Grangemouth Sports Complex; Grangemouth Stadium; and Falkirk Stadium. Local assets include Bo'ness Recreation Centre; Stenhousemuir Gym; Polmont Sport Centre; and Bankier Community Sports Hall. Sport specific assets include Grangemouth Golf Course; Polmont Ski Centre; and Stenhousemuir Sports Centre (Carron Gymnastics). There are also sports facilities in some of the area's larger parks including tennis courts in Dollar and Zetland Parks; and a bowling green in Zetland Park. Halls and swimming pools in secondary schools are also available for community use. Additionally, the Council owns and lets out a number of grass playing pitches in parks across the Council area, some with pavilions or changing facilities. At present there is no Sports Pitch Strategy in place to assess the level of provision in relation to need. However, the condition and capacity of some pitches during the winter months is known to be poor due to drainage issues.
- 6.5 Alongside Council facilities, there are many private sports clubs and facilities operating in the area providing access to football, rugby, tennis, cricket, bowling and gyms. These facilities include some 3G pitches, e.g. at Stenhousemuir FC and Woodlands Community Sports.





## Arts and Cultural Facilities

- 6.6 The Council's main arts venue, Falkirk Town Hall, has closed and is in the process of being demolished. A new facility is planned for the east end of Falkirk High Street where it will perform a significant role in the regeneration of the Town Centre. The Hippodrome in Bo'ness provides an arts cinema. Callendar House and Kinneil Estate host museums, whilst the high profile Falkirk Wheel and Helix enhance and provide interpretation for the area's rich canal heritage. Building on this, the Falkirk canal corridor will be location for Scotland's National Art Park which is one of the place projects within the Falkirk Growth Deal.
- 6.7 There are seven libraries serving the various communities, including a mix of historic and modern properties, with Denny library the most modern facility developed as part of the Denny town centre regeneration. Falkirk library is proposed to be integrated into the new arts centre in the High Street.



## Community Halls

- 6.8 These assets comprise the larger historic Town Halls in Bo'ness, Grangemouth and Larbert (Dobbie Hall), as well as some 29 Community Education Centres, and village and community halls across the area. Under the SPR, these properties, in particular, are being targeted for alternative delivery models or community asset transfer, failing which they will be rationalised.

## Public Toilets

- 6.9 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, requires local development plans to include a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences. Public toilets in Bo'ness, Grangemouth and Falkirk Town Centres closed in 2022, and a number of automated toilets have been also decommissioned. The public toilet in Blackness is to close under the SPR, whilst the Callendar Park facility is to be retained under a leasing arrangement.
- 6.10 Work is ongoing to improve community access and inclusion through enhancing the availability of Changing Places Toilets (CPT) across the Council area. As of 2023, there were eight CPTs in the area, seven of which are in publicly owned leisure, education and healthcare buildings, with one private facility at Klondyke Garden Centre.





## 7. Cemeteries and Crematorium

- 7.1 The Council operates a crematorium which is located within the green belt at Camelon. It has been upgraded and extended in recent years.
- 7.2 There are nine active cemeteries in the area. Several of the facilities are subject to capacity issues, with limited capacity remaining as show in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Cemetery Capacity December 2020**

Cemetery	Remaining Lairs	Notional Remaining Years
Polmont	33	5
Muiravonside	12	1
New Grandsable (Polmont)	125	2
Hills of Dunipace	232	5
Airth	62	12
Larbert	321	13
Camelon	1095	17
New Carriden (Bo'ness)	318	13
Slamannan	230	46

Source: Falkirk Council Bereavement Services





7.3 The Council has attempted to manage capacity pressures through maximising the use of existing cemetery land. Charging structures encourage cremation over burial, and casket burials enable capacity to be increased. However, the Council has also been looking actively at creating additional capacity, through cemetery extensions or new cemeteries although this has not been straightforward as SEPA regulations related to groundwater and soil permeability place quite severe constraints on land for cemetery use. Land is allocated in LDP2 for extensions to Camelon, Muiravonside, Hills of Dunipace and Weedingshall (adjacent to New Grandsable), but the suitability of these has yet to be tested, and some may be only appropriate for casket burials. In the longer term, a more strategic approach to cemetery infrastructure may be required.



## 8. Pipelines and Major Hazards

- 8.1 Given the status of Grangemouth as a petrochemical hub, and the strategic location of the area at the heart of central Scotland, the Council area is crossed by a number of pipelines carrying oil, gas and ethylene which represent important national infrastructure. The major pipelines have HSE consultation zones associated with them within which development may be restricted. Typically, they follow corridor routes between the settlements, often in green belt, although occasionally they impinge on development in towns, the key example being the BP Forties pipeline which runs along Bo'ness foreshore and has had some implications for development in Bo'ness Town Centre. Mention should also be made of the potential repurposing of redundant gas transmission pipelines to carry CO<sub>2</sub> from Grangemouth to the North Sea as part of carbon capture and storage proposals.
- 8.2 Grangemouth hosts the largest concentration of COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations 2015) 'Top Tier' establishments in Scotland. Regulation of the chemicals stored and manufactured in the town is tightly controlled under health and safety legislation and a series of hazard consultation zones defined by HSE operate around each hazard source within which the scale and nature of new development is restricted. Hazardous substances consents are a significant asset for chemical and petrochemical companies, supporting existing economic activity and future investment, but there are implications for redevelopment and regeneration in the town. For this reason, the Council's policy has been to avoid extending the combined footprint of the consultation zones.





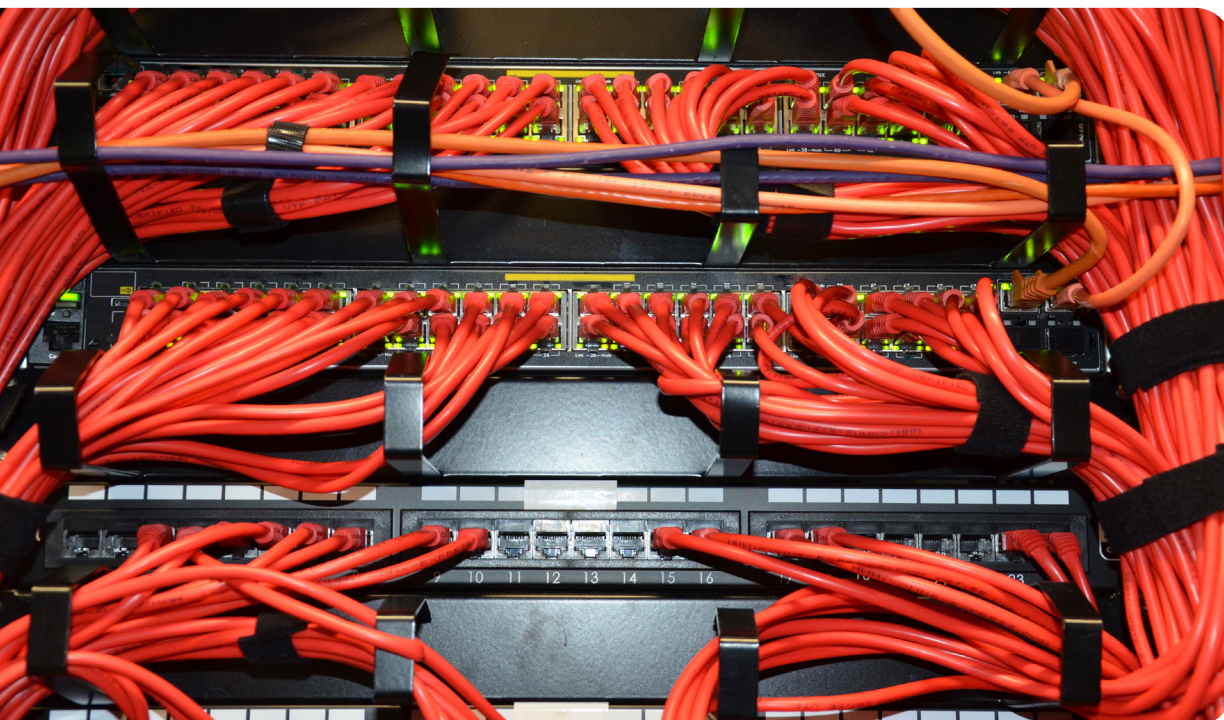
## 9. Digital Infrastructure

- 9.1 Data on access to fixed and mobile broadband is available from Ofcom's Connected Nations report, as shown in Figure 3. The figures show a generally good level of connectivity across the area compared to Scotland as a whole. Gaps tend to be in the rural area where connection can be challenging. Satellite broadband can be a solution for remoter areas, but is more expensive than standard home broadband offered by the major operators. Full fibre availability is still relatively low.

**Figure 3: Fixed and Mobile Broadband coverage in Falkirk Council area (% of premises)**

	Falkirk	Scotland
<b>Fixed Broadband</b>		
Superfast broadband availability (min 30Mb download speed)	97.4%	94.6%
Ultrafast broadband availability (min 100Mb download speed)	88.8%	69.3%
Full fibre availability	17.7%	47.4%
Gigabit (1000Mb) availability	88.7%	67.7%
<b>Mobile Broadband</b>		
4G (outdoor) signal from a least one operator	99.98%	99.92%
4G (outdoor) signal from all operators	98.34%	98.06%
5G (outdoor) signal from a least one operator	85.01%	84.86%

Source: Ofcom Connected Nations Report September 2023





## 10. Summary

### 10.1 The key points are:

- There are a variety of different types of infrastructure which are essential to the area and which must be considered in planning for its future.
- The National Infrastructure Plan's investment hierarchy outlines an approach to investment based on determining future need; maximising the useful life of existing assets; repurposing and co-locating; and replacing, creating or building new assets.
- There is capacity in the water treatment works serving the area. For the waste water treatment works, Dalderse and Bo'ness have capacity, but other facilities potentially need future investment to cope with new development.
- Education facilities in parts of the Council area have been placed under considerable strain by housing growth over the past twenty years. There has been major investment in the school estate, assisted by developer contributions, but there remain capacity constraints in some schools which will influence choices on future growth.
- Likewise, primary healthcare services are under considerable pressure due to a variety of factors and NHSFV and the Falkirk HSCP are still in the process of determining future accommodation requirements to meet these challenges, including the future of Falkirk Community Hospital.
- The number of Council owned sports, leisure and community facilities is no longer sustainable and, through the SPR, a process of rationalisation and modernisation has been commenced.
- Some cemeteries have limited remaining capacity but options to provide additional capacity are constrained by technical requirements.
- The area hosts a number of strategic pipelines and major hazards, many associated with Grangemouth, which impose constraints on development.
- The area has generally good connectivity to fixed and mobile broadband, although there are still some gaps in rural areas and access to full fibre is still relatively low.

# Sources

- [National Planning Framework 4](#)
- [National Infrastructure Plan](#)
- [Education Capacity Statement](#)
- NHSFV Primary Healthcare Capacity Statement
- [Falkirk HSCP Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)