

LDISSUE: LDMI21**Town Centres**Name: **John**

02904/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

Removing parking charges in Falkirk Town Centre will help to increase visitor numbers.

Response:

Comment noted. However, parking charges are not within the remit of LDP2.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Ian Angus-Felton**

02902/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

Callendar Square should be replaced with affordable housing, leisure and mixed retail.

Response:

Callendar Riggs (Incl Callendar Square) is identified for mixed use development (MU13). The exact mix is yet to be identified. The site is included in the Major Areas of Change guidance in the Proposed Plan, which sets out the key design principles for development.

Comments 1

Name: **Ruth Arnott**

00964/FLDP_MIR/3001/003

Comment:

I agree with the approach of increasing housing within town centres.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Asda Stores Ltd**

00856/FLDP_MIR/3001/002

Comment:

References to 'discounters' should be amended as it is not appropriate. The identity of the retail operator is not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application, it is the use class that is being considered and not the individual business operator.

Response:

Discounters is not a reference used in the Proposed Plan.

Comment:

Support for the MIR's approach on the nature and level of developer contributions which will be related and proportionate to the impacts of individual development on local infrastructure.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 2

Name: **Mr James Ashe**

02761/FLDP_MIR/3001/010

Comment:

Queries why shops are leaving Falkirk Town Centre, in comparison to Stirling. Supports removing major retail development from the Falkirk Gateway. Central Retail Park takes people away from the Town Centre.

Response:

Comment noted. The Spatial Strategy and policies in the Proposed Plan seek to maintain the health and vitality of town centres by encouraging regeneration, encouraging residential uses within the town centre, improving transport links and accessibility, and promoting the 'town centre first' principle which seeks to prioritise town centres as the first choice for uses which generate significant footfall. There are, however, issues such as market challenged which cannot be fully addressed through the planning system.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Will Barclay**

02908/FLDP_MIR/3001/003

Comment:

Suggests introduction of a digital currency aiming to encourage customers to use independent shops, keeping more money circulating in the community. This has been done in Liverpool and Bristol, and is planned for Glasgow.

Response:

Comments noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Blackness Area Community Council**

00054/FLDP_MIR/3001/005

Comment:

The approach to town centres is supported.

Response:

Support welcomed.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Campbell Boyd**

02483/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

Need to understand why Linlithgow has managed to hang on to its many local independent traders compared to Falkirk Town Centre. There is nothing in the preferred approach which would halt the decline of Falkirk town centre.

Response:

Comment noted. The Spatial Strategy and policies in the Proposed Plan seek to maintain the health and vitality of town centres by encouraging regeneration, encouraging residential uses within the town centre, improving transport links and accessibility, and promoting the 'town centre first' principle which seeks to prioritise town centres as the first choice for uses which generate significant footfall. There are, however, issues such as market challenged which cannot be fully addressed through the planning system.

Comments 1

Name: **M Bremner**

02919/FLDP_MIR/3001/005

Comment:

Grangemouth town centre is the only one in the area not to have been regenerated. The town is ignored.

Response:

Grangemouth Town Centre is identified as an opportunity for redevelopment and the Plan supports it's redevelopment.

Comments 1

Name: **Callendar Pharmacy**

02887/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

The Town Centre needs to be looked at as a priority. Central Retail Park has thrived at the Town Centre's expense and should not be considered a part of the Town Centre. Suggestions of measures which would help include more free parking at certain locations, and bringing back some traffic flow into the High Street, even if it was just the eastern section. Concern expressed about development at Grahamston which could detract from the Town Centre and make the position of the Retail Park even stronger. Comparison is made with Newtownards in Northern Ireland, which has free parking and a one way flow of traffic on the high street, and is thriving. Vacant space in the Town Centre should be used to supply new homes.

Response:

Concerns about Central Retail Park's inclusion within the Falkirk Town Centre boundary are acknowledged, and it is accepted that the Retail Park has the character of a commercial centre as defined in SPP. Accordingly, Central Retail Park has been removed from the town centre boundary and classified as a commercial centre in the Proposed Plan. With regard to Grahamston, it is not expected that there will be a particular retail focus, or that development here will detract from the retail focus of the town centre core. The site is considered to present an important opportunity for regeneration which will benefit Falkirk Town Centre as a whole. The Proposed Plan encourages new housing within town centres.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Douglas Cameron**

02892/FLDP_MIR/3001/002

Comment:

Proposal to emphasise 'town centre first' is welcome. However, the inclusion of both phases of Central Retail Park (CRP) within the Falkirk Town Centre boundary is questioned. The Council's support for this position needs to be backed up by evidence. CRP does not meet the criteria to be a part of the Town Centre. Relaxation of planning controls over CRP has exacerbated the imbalance between the Retail Park and the traditional Town Centre. CRP should be identified as a commercial centre instead in line with SPP. Encouragement of mixed use and suggested relaxation of developer contributions is welcome. It is odd that the MIR makes no mention of the potential relocation of the Municipal Buildings and Town Hall civic facilities.

Response:

Concerns about Central Retail Park's inclusion within the Falkirk Town Centre boundary are acknowledged, and it is accepted that the Retail Park has the character of a commercial centre as defined in SPP. Accordingly, Central Retail Park has been removed from the town centre boundary and classified as a commercial centre in the Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan identifies the Municipal Buildings as a potential redevelopment opportunity, but decisions over the future of the Council's HQ have yet to be made.

Comment:

MIR2 Falkirk Sites

The scale of the Grahamston railway station development site is significant relative to the potential impact on the traditional town centre area to the south. Road access to the Grahamston site is constrained by its location and surroundings. Given that many of the road access routes to this site and the adjacent Retail Park are congested, some reference should be made to traffic infrastructure solutions and the proposed usage of the site.

Response:

Further information on the Grahamston opportunity is provided in the Proposed Plan, although further feasibility work is required to scope out the nature and extent of potential future development. The requirement for transport assessment for significant proposals is highlighted.

Comments 2

Name: **Ms Kate Christie**

02922/FLDP_MIR/3001/008

Comment:

Falkirk Town Centre has suffered due to popularity of Central Retail Park and internet shopping. High rates are a problem for local businesses. However, some businesses are successful, suggesting that people still want to use the Town Centre. Mixed use opportunities may attract more people and businesses.

Response:

The Spatial Strategy and policies in the Proposed Plan seek to maintain the health and vitality of town centres by encouraging regenerating, improving transport links and accessibility, and promoting the 'town centre first' principle which seeks to prioritise town centres as the first choice for uses which generate significant footfall. The Proposed Plan also aims to encourage residential and mixed-use developments within town centres.

Comments 1

Name: **Ms Susan Crook**

02911/FLDP_MIR/3001/003

Comment:

There are many properties above retail units in the town centres that could be brought into housing without building any more. Would not like to see the town centres lose their character by the introduction of buildings that were not in keeping with the original buildings.

Response:

Comment noted. The Proposed Plan supports the re-use of upper storeys in town centres for residential use.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Douglas Dewar**

02893/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

Good ideas in MIR's approach to our town centres.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Susan Dyer**

00469/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

I would be in favour of actions that brought life and business back to Falkirk Town Centre. Are the business rates too high for smaller businesses?

Response:

Comment noted. Business rates, however, are not within the remit of the LDP2.

Name: **Ellandi LLP**

02703/FLDP_MIR/3002/001

Comment:

The preferred policy options for Falkirk Town Centre are generally supported, including increased flexibility for changes of use. However, continuing concern is expressed about keeping Central Retail Park (CRP) within the Town Centre boundary. CRP does not have the character of a town centre as defined within SPP, and competes with rather than complements the Town Centre. It should instead be defined as a Commercial Centre, with its function and restrictions specified. The threshold of 1,000 sq.m. in Policy TC02 is considered high and should be reviewed. Retail evidence on which the MIR is based is out of date and a new retail/household study should be commissioned to inform LDP2

Response:

Concerns about Central Retail Park's inclusion within the Falkirk Town Centre boundary are acknowledged, and it is accepted that the Retail Park has the character of a commercial centre as defined in SPP. Accordingly, Central Retail Park has been removed from the town centre boundary and classified as a commercial centre in the Proposed Plan.

Comment:

MIR2 Falkirk Sites

The owners of Callendar Square support its inclusion in the Falkirk Town Centre East End redevelopment opportunity (site 71). This will afford wider development opportunities in this location which has traditionally been focused on retail uses.

Response:

Support welcomed. Callendar Square is included in the East End development opportunity in the Proposed Plan.

Comment:

MIR2 Falkirk Sites

Clarification is required as to the type and quantum of retail uses envisaged at this location. The effects of any proposal should be tested through a retail assessment. Expansion of retail uses outwith the Town Centre core should only be considered once existing vacancies/opportunities in the core have been fully addressed.

Response:

A range of town centre uses have been identified as being potentially suitable for the Grahamston site in the Proposed Plan including housing, business, leisure, tourism, community and retail. It is not expected that there will be a particular retail focus, or that development here will detract from the retail focus of the town centre core. The site is considered to present an important opportunity for regeneration which will benefit Falkirk Town Centre as a whole.

Name: **Falkirk Towns Ltd**

00605/FLDP_MIR/3001/005

Comment:

The preferred policy options for Falkirk Town Centre are generally supported, including increased flexibility for changes of use, promotion of the East End opportunity, and support for building of more homes in the Town Centre. However, continuing concern is expressed about keeping Central Retail Park (CRP) within the Town Centre boundary. CRP does not have the character of a town centre as defined within SPP, and competes with the Town Centre. There is the potential for further adverse impacts/relocations. It should instead be defined as a Commercial Centre, with its function and restrictions specified. The threshold of 1,000 sq.m. in Policy TC02 is considered high and should be reviewed. Retail evidence on which the MIR is based is out of date and a new retail/household study should be commissioned to inform LDP2.

Response:

Concerns about Central Retail Park's inclusion within the Falkirk Town Centre boundary are acknowledged, and it is accepted that the Retail Park has the character of a commercial centre as defined in SPP. Accordingly, Central Retail Park has been removed from the town centre boundary and classified as a commercial centre in the Proposed Plan. The 1,000 sq.M. Threshold is considered appropriate to allow a meaningful and viable level of convenience provision in neighbourhoods. In terms of retail data, Town Centre health checks were carried out in 2016, and this information is reflected in Technical Report 7 : Town Centres and Retailing. A full floorspace survey was carried out in 2014. Household surveys are resource intensive and are only generally carried out at 10 year intervals.

Comment:

MIR2 Falkirk Sites

Clarification is required as to the type and quantum of retail uses envisaged at the Grahamston opportunity. The effects of any proposal should be tested through a retail assessment. Expansion of retail uses outwith the Town Centre core should only be considered once existing vacancies/opportunities in the core have been fully addressed.

Response:

A range of town centre uses have been identified as being potentially suitable for the Grahamston site in the Proposed Plan including housing, business, leisure, tourism, community and retail. It is not expected that there will be a particular retail focus, or that development here will detract from the retail focus of the town centre core. The site is considered to present an important opportunity for regeneration which will benefit Falkirk Town Centre as a whole.

Name: **Frank and Birgitta Fortune**

00907/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

Agree with the focus on bringing premises in Falkirk Town Centre back into use to bring back life into the town.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Grangemouth (including Skinflats) Community Council**

02723/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

Town centre retailing is under pressure and a more flexible approach to their development would be welcomed as a means of reinvigoration.

Response:

The Proposed Plan supports the redevelopment of town centres and includes policy support for housing development in town centres.

Comments 1

Name: **Ms Sandra Hallows**

00888/FLDP_MIR/3001/008

Comment:

Completely agree with the preferred options for town centres.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Hammerson UK Properties**

00903/FLDP_MIR/3001/001

Comment:

The approach to Falkirk Town Centre is supported in principle, specifically the rejection of the option of excluding Central Retail Park (CRP) from the Town Centre boundary. CRP is a significant positive asset in the Town Centre's ability to retain shopping trips as it accommodates national multiple retailers that would otherwise have been unable to meet their business model requirements in the Town Centre. A flexible and proactive approach to accommodating a wide range of uses should be applied to the Town Centre as a whole including CRP. As such LDP1 Policy TC02(4) should be reviewed and the policy support for the historic S75 obligation removed.

Response:

In response to concerns about Central Retail Park's inclusion within the Falkirk Town Centre boundary by various parties, the Council has reviewed its approach to the Retail Park, and concluded that it has the character of a commercial centre as defined in SPP. Accordingly, Central Retail Park has been removed from the town centre boundary and classified as a commercial centre in the Proposed Plan.

Comments 1

Name: **Ms Hassan Karen**

02923/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

What about community centres. Kinnaird Village was promised restaurant/bar, nursing home, retail but none of this has come to exist, yet more houses are thrown up with the lure of empty promises.

Response:

The Proposed Plan can allocate land for retail, business etc but the take up of such commercial uses is market dependent.

Comments 1

Name: **Historic Environment Scotland**

02656/FLDP_MIR/3001/039

Comment:

Investment in town and district centres can bring distinct benefits to the historic environment. In particular we encourage the re-use of historic and existing building stock in the area to meet housing need.

Response:

Comments noted.

Comment:	MIR2 Grangemouth Sites
Grangemouth town centre allocation (site 074) is adjacent to Dundas Church category A listed building. Impacts can be mitigated through sensitive design.	
Response:	
The Proposed Plan retains the site as a mix use proposal. Mitigation/enhancement measures are incorporated in the plan through the environmental policies of the plan.	
Comments 2	
Name: Mr Roddy Htet-Khin	00803/FLDP_MIR/3001/009
Comment:	
I think a focus on building in the Town Centre is a good idea, as it would also benefit businesses and make it more attractive to shoppers and tourists.	
Response:	
Comment noted.	
Comments 1	
Name: Mr Douglas Jardine	02894/FLDP_MIR/3001/008
Comment:	
Agree with approach to town centres but would suggest consideration is given to reducing local business rates to attract new shops.	
Response:	
Support noted. The control of business rates is outwith the remit of the development plan process.	
Comments 1	
Name: Lorna King	00846/FLDP_MIR/3001/010
Comment:	
I would like to have seen more ambition in terms of vision for Falkirk town itself. Could we capitalise on the aesthetic qualities and support small independent shops to create a visitor attraction in the town centre? Could we focus on returning it to a retail centre? Small shops in the Cow Wynd etc. Have no visibility and little footfall - can we help with this? What about attractive independent cafes and outdoor culture? Can we take a different approach to parking? Town planning is only one tool in the box of initiatives and i would like to see this complimented by other initiatives to help the return of high street names. Many uses have left Falkirk for Stirling and Livingston and need more of a reason to come back.	
Response:	
Comment noted. LDP2 has positive planning policies encouraging and supporting uses in Falkirk Town Centre that enhance the centre's vibrancy, vitality and viability. The plan embeds the Scottish Government's town centre first principle, directing major footfall generation uses to urban centres first. Uses include retail, commercial leisure, offices, community and cultural facilities.	
Comments 1	
Name: Larbert Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council	00432/FLDP_MIR/3001/014
Comment:	
The MIR identifies the Town Centre as being the first priority, it is probably too late for Stenhousemuir to take advantage of that but some consideration should be given to creating a town centre that is not simply a car park.	
Response:	
The redevelopment of Stenhousemuir Town Centre has been successful in enhancing facilities for local shopping and service needs in Larbert and Stenhousemuir. The Proposed Plan supports the future vitality and viability of local centres. Existing parking facilities are considered essential.	
Comments 1	
Name: Ms Elaine Mackie	02895/FLDP_MIR/3001/007
Comment:	
The town centre is a shambles and restricted parking access only makes visiting the high street worse. Suggest improving parking and reducing business rates. Nothing in the MIR that would make it better.	
Response:	
Parking regulations and business rates are outwith the remit of the local development plan.	
Comments 1	

Name: **Mr Gordon McKean**

02900/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

There is too much emphasis on Falkirk Town Centre. Bo'ness and other smaller town centres are dying.

Response:

All town centres in the area face challenges. District centres such as Bo'ness, Stenhousemuir and Denny have seen investment over recent years under the Council's Town Centres' Strategy. There is a need for a focus on Falkirk Town Centre because of its importance to the economy of the whole Council area.

Comments 1

Name: **Ms Louise Meikleham**

02920/FLDP_MIR/3001/008

Comment:

The preferred option for dealing with out town centres sounds reasonable. The town centre needs a boost, otherwise it will disappear completely.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Michael Moir**

02822/FLDP_MIR/3001/001

Comment:

Suggests that pedestrianisation in town centres may be reducing footfall (e.g. Falkirk and Grangemouth), as compared with other more vibrant centres with through traffic such as Linlithgow and Kelso.

Response:

Comment noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Stuart Moss**

02726/FLDP_MIR/3001/007

Comment:

All town centres are struggling due to shopping at home. There are no easy fixes.

Response:

Comment noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Paths For All Partnership**

00359/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

The provision of infrastructure that prioritises walking and cycling is an ideal way to promote active, accessible and attractive town centres. There is ample evidence from Scotland and the rest of the world that enhancing the public realm for people rather than cars is fundamentally important for the future of towns. Therefore, the actions in 5.32 that prioritise investment in pedestrian and cycle movement, linking to Grahamston rail station, the retail park and key visitor destinations are to be welcomed. Figure 5.5 also identifies the opportunities to link the town centre core to the canal network. If this was achieved by active travel means it would add excellent value to the area.

Response:

Comments are noted and welcomed.

Comments 1

Name: **Jules Robinson**

02906/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

Agrees with the preferred options for town centres. Highlights potential for live/work units in the Town Centre.

Response:

Support noted. Policies in the Proposed Plan seek to maintain the vitality of town centres by encouraging residential uses, which could include live/work units.

Comments 1

Name: **Mr Peter Robinson**

02913/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

There are far too many private landlords with buildings in the town centre who have unrealistic ideas on shop rentals. Some practical help for small businesses would be useful.

Response:

Comment noted. The issues raised are not within the remit of the Local Development Plan.

Comments 1

Name: **Ms Kathryn Rosevear**

02921/FLDP_MIR/3001/006

Comment:

Agree with the preferred option for dealing with our town centres.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Royal Mail Group Ltd**

01254/FLDP_MIR/3001/001

Comment:

MIR2 Falkirk Sites

Royal Mail's Falkirk Delivery Office (DO) should not be identified as part of the development opportunity at Grahamston in Falkirk Town Centre (site 70). There are no plans to vacate the site which is critical to current operations and ideally located. Residential development in proximity would be inappropriate due to early morning operation of the DO. Also there should be no disruption to the road network or layout of Royal Mail operational land. DO vehicles park in the adjacent car park and these spaces are essential.

Response:

The Royal Mail's intentions with regard to the Delivery Office are noted. Nonetheless, it is considered appropriate to include the Delivery Office in the opportunity area at this stage, pending further investigation into the scope of the opportunity, given its close relationship with the surrounding land. Royal Mail would be fully involved in these investigations and their operational needs would be taken into account.

Comments 1

Name: **Scottish Natural Heritage**

00646/FLDP_MIR/3002/007

Comment:

Emphasis should be on encouraging Town Centre visits which are not reliant on cars. Active travel should be improved and the identification of routes in the context of the green network should be pursued.

Response:

Comment noted. The guidance for the Falkirk Town Centre Major Area of Change includes provision for strengthening path links and connections with the wider urban area and green network.

Comments 1

Name: **SEPA (East Region)**

00532/FLDP_MIR/3001/010

Comment:

Reference should be made to the fact the Falkirk Town Centre is an Air Quality Management Area.

Response:

This is referenced in supporting information to the Air Quality policy in the Proposed Plan.

Comments 1

Name: **Ms Marie Short**

02917/FLDP_MIR/3001/004

Comment:

The preferred option for town centres seems sensible.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Name: **Michael & Janice Smith**

02915/FLDP_MIR/3001/004

Comment:

Completely agree with the principle of Town Centre first. No town centre means no soul and the essence of Falkirk will be lost.

Response:

Support noted.

Comments 1

Total no. of comments 47