

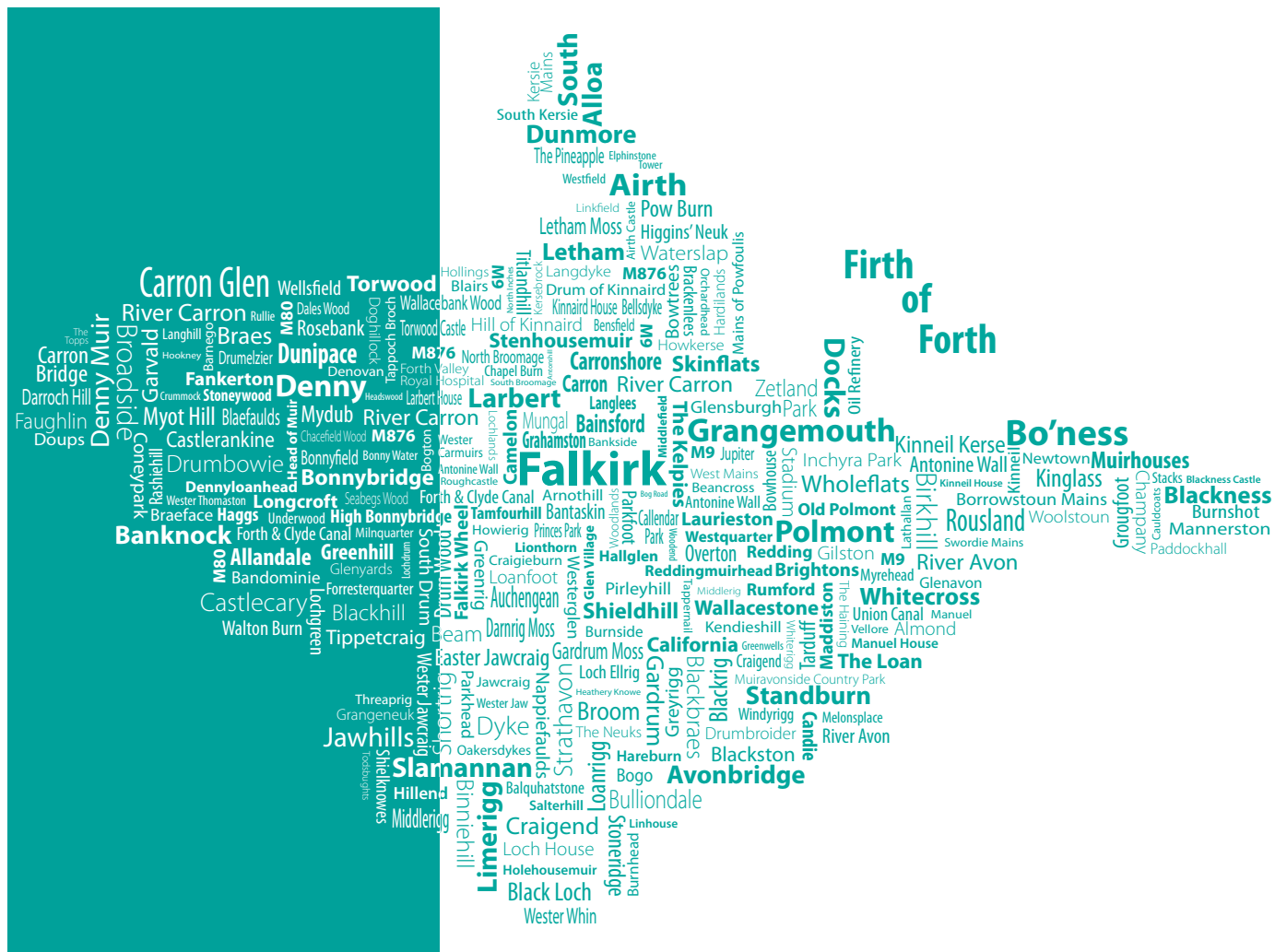
FALKIRK

Local Development Plan²

Technical Report 1:

Monitoring Report

February 2017



Falkirk Council

Falkirk Local Development Plan 2

Technical Report 1: Monitoring Statement

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in May 2015. It was the first all-purpose plan combining the strategic and local functions of the old development plan system format, the Falkirk Council Structure Plan and the Falkirk Council Local Plan.
- 1.2 Under Section 16 of the Planning, etc, (Scotland) Act the planning authority must publish a Monitoring Statement alongside the Main Issues Report of the LDP. Guidance provided in Circular 6/2013 states that an early task in preparing a Local Development Plan will be to monitor:
 - changes in the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area; and
 - the impact of the policies and proposals of the existing plan
- 1.3 Guidance further suggests that the Monitoring Statement should focus on the wider impact of the plan on area and population wide indicators and on how far the objectives and vision of the previous plan have been realised. The Monitoring statement is intended to provide one way of identifying the issues to be taken forward in the Main Issues Report.
- 1.4 Because of the rolling nature of LDP preparation relatively little time has elapsed since the adoption of the first Falkirk Local Development Plan, although LDP policies have been material considerations since April 2013. In selecting a baseline date from which this Monitoring Report will apply it is more practical to focus on changes which have taken place since the publication of the last Monitoring Statement in 2011.
- 1.5 The Council has published Development Plan Monitoring Reports since 2003, These monitoring reports have tracked the progress of the area's demographics and economic and environmental trends through monitoring policy areas of the old style development plans. Evidence gathered through the most recent monitoring reports informs much of this Monitoring Statement.
- 1.6 The main part of this Monitoring Statement will be structured according to the strategic themes of the first LDP; Vision, Spatial Strategy, Thriving Communities, Growing Economy and Sustainable Place. However it is appropriate to first set out the principal physical and demographic characteristics of the area, through which the area's recent development can be understood.

2 The area's geography, demography and economy

- 2.1 Encompassing a land area of 297 sq. km, Falkirk Council occupies a generally diamond shaped area located at the heart of central Scotland, at the axis of both east-west and north-south strategic road and railway links. Despite its relatively small geographical extent, the area's landscape exhibits great variety. The northern part is characterised by the relatively flat agricultural carseland adjoining the Forth Estuary. To the east a rolling landscape of good quality agricultural land is bisected by the scenic Avon Valley. The centre of the area, which is predominantly urbanised, sits in the river valleys of the Carron and the Bonny Water, and is traversed by the historical engineering features of the Roman Antonine Wall and the Georgian Forth and Clyde, and Union Canals. To the south the land rises up in a series of ridges to the more remote and less populous Slamannan Plateau and to the west rises into the Denny and Kilsyth Hills.
- 2.2 The population of 158,460 (2015 estimate) is distributed around a network of small to medium sized towns. The principal town of Falkirk is centrally located and serves as the main shopping, service and employment centre for the area. Closely surrounding Falkirk, but separated from it by narrow corridors of Green Belt, are the urban areas of Larbert/Stenhousemuir, Polmont and Grangemouth. The former two are largely residential in character, whilst Grangemouth is home to the largest petrochemical complex in Scotland, as well as the country's largest container port on the River Forth. Together these main settlements form a mini-conurbation of over 104,000 people. In the western reaches of the area lie the settlements of Denny, Dunipace, Bonnybridge and Banknock, whilst to the east, overlooking the Forth, sits the town of Bo'ness. Some 18 smaller village communities are scattered across the rural part of the area to the north and south of the central urbanised swathe.
- 2.3 The area played a key and early role in the industrial revolution in Scotland, with the founding of the Carron Iron Works in 1759, and the economy was traditionally based around coal mining, the timber trade and the iron castings industry. Manufacturing still plays an important role in the area, particularly the chemicals and petrochemicals sector at Grangemouth, but the service sector, both private and public, is now predominant in employment terms. The area's excellent communication links has contributed to the establishment of a significant logistics sector but they also allow an increasing number of people to commute outwith the area to work in the surrounding urban centres as well as the two main cities of Scotland.

3 Vision and strategic objectives of Falkirk Local Development Plan

- 3.1 The first Falkirk LDP has a vision for the Falkirk area of:
A dynamic and distinctive area at the heart of Central Scotland, characterised by a network of thriving communities and greenspaces, and a vibrant and growing economy which is of strategic significance in the national context, providing an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, work, visit and invest.
- 3.2 This vision is taken forward through a range of strategic objectives which effectively form the development strategy for the plan. The objectives are:
- To facilitate continued **population and household growth**, and the delivery of housing to meet the full range of housing needs
 - To build **sustainable attractive communities** which retain a strong identity and sense of place.
 - To develop the area's **economic potential** and establish it as a major component of the Scottish economy
 - To strengthen the area's **transport connections** to the rest of Scotland and global markets.
 - To make our **town centres** vibrant and economically viable focal points within our communities
 - To contribute to **climate change** mitigation and adaptation
 - To extend and improve the **green network** and protect the area's natural heritage.
 - To improve the **sense of place** in our towns and villages and to protect, enhance and promote our **historic environments**.
 - To manage **natural resources and waste** sustainably
- 3.3 This Monitoring Statement attempts to measure how far these Strategic Objectives have been achieved, using the evidence built up through the annual Development Plan Monitoring Reports and the first LDP Monitoring Statement. It is worth pointing out that in 2016 the first Falkirk LDP has only relatively recently been adopted. Its development strategy, which continues to be one of sustainable growth, follows on from the previous Structure and Local Plans and therefore assessment of progress will rely heavily on evidence gathered while the earlier plans were still extant. Nevertheless, where there are elements of the strategy where little progress is displayed or there is a lack of focus this will be highlighted as an issue to be addressed in the new LDP.

4 Thriving Communities

Population and Household Growth and Distribution

- 4.1 The first Falkirk LDP contains a population target of 168,000 for the year 2034. This accords with the population projection for the area made by National Records of Scotland in 2010, although it falls short of the most up to date 2012 based projection of 171,668 by 2034. The area's population has continued to grow in recent years in spite of the recession and the sharp decline in new house building, which shows that the area continues to be attractive to new residents. As was intimated in section 2 the most up to date (mid-2015) population estimate for the area is 158,460. Table 4.1 below shows the population rise since 2010, amounting to 2,500 or around 2% over the period 2010-15.

Table 4.1 Council Area Population Growth 2010-14

Year	Population	Increase over previous year
2010	155,140	
2011	156,250	+1,110
2012	156,800	+550
2013	157,140	+340
2014	157,640	+500
2015	158,460	+770

Source: National Records of Scotland

- 4.2 If recent growth rates continue then the target population of 168,000 will be reached around 2034 although this is likely to depend on a sustained period of strong house building between now and then. The current annual increase of around 550 units per annum is below the figure of 750 per annum experienced during the 2000's, when house building activity was at a higher rate than currently. However the current population growth is sustained by both net in-migration and birth rates exceeding mortality.
- 4.3 This population growth has not been shared around all of the settlement areas of the Council in recent years, as shown in table 4.2 below. Whilst those areas most popular with house builders have continued to grow in population, others, notably Denny, Bo'ness and Grangemouth, have decreased.

Table 4.2 Population Growth in Settlements

Settlement area	2011 Census	2014 mid-year estimate	Change (no.)	Change (%)
Banknock & Bonnybridge	12,408	12,525	+ 117	+ 0.9%
Bo'ness	14,856	14,587	- 269	- 1.8%
Denny	13,715	13,563	- 152	- 1.1%
Falkirk	38,983	39,011	+ 28	+ 0.1%
Grangemouth	17,434	16,853	- 581	- 3.3%
Larbert/ Stenhousemuir	24,567	25,789	+ 1,222	+ 5.8%
Polmont	22,223	23,535	+ 1,312	+ 5.0%
Rural North	3,021	3,020	- 1	-0.0%
Rural South	8,784	8,758	- 28	- 0.3%

Source: Falkirk Council Research and Information Unit

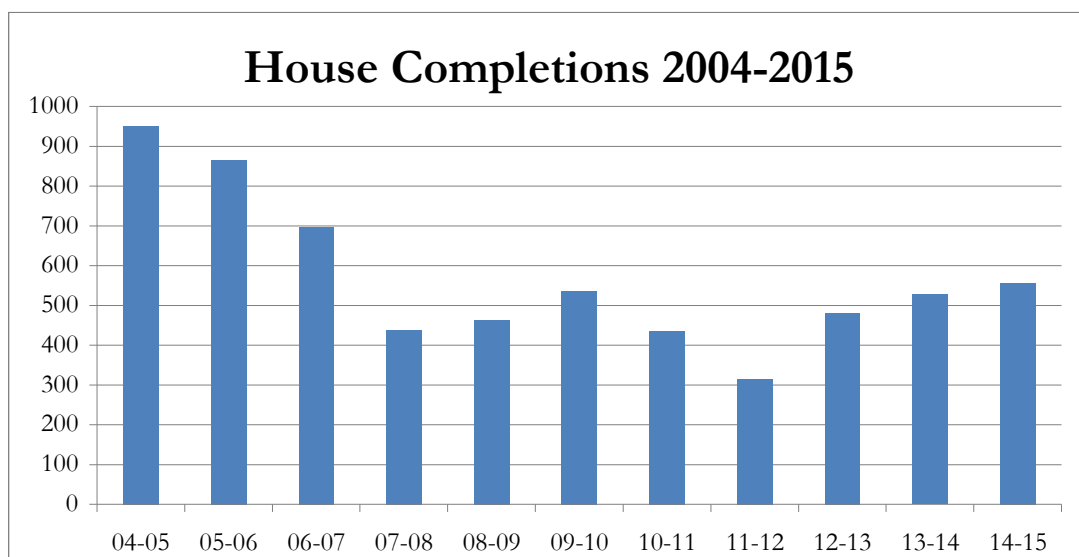
House Completions

- 4.4 The first LDP adopted the 2010 based constrained household projection of NRS of 82,550 households by 2034, which represents an increase of 12,410 households over the 2014-34 period. Achieving the target population of 168,000 by 2034 and meeting household growth to 82,550 households is predicated on increasing the housing stock by 13,630 houses in the period 2014-2034. Table 4.3 shows the annual total of new house building in Falkirk Council area since 2010/11 and the bar chart tracks the fall and rise of new house completions over the previous ten year period.

Table 4.3 Total House Completions per Annum

Year	Total	Sites of 4+	Small sites
2010/11	437		
2011/12	316		
2012/13	482		
2013/14	528		
2014/15	557		
Totals	2,394		

Source: Falkirk Council, Planning and Environment Unit



4.5 Since 2010-11 there have been 2,394 completions across the Council area, averaging 478 per annum. This falls far short of the 'high tide' of 999 completions in 2003/4, since when the trend was already downwards before the 'credit crunch' hit the house building industry in 2007/8. The 478 per annum figure is also below the 675 completions per annum required to meet the LDP housing supply target. Historically the recent average is still respectable compared to some earlier periods such as the late 1990s and mid-1980s.

4.6 The Falkirk Local Development Plan provides sufficient housing allocations to meet the housing supply target to 2024 (6,750 units), but there is considerable uncertainty as to whether build rates can pick up to the levels required to deliver this growth. Over the last 5 years completions have fallen short of the target, cumulatively, by 981 units.

4.7 In tandem with the local variation in population increase, the distribution of new house building varies widely across the Council area, as shown in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 House completions by Settlement Area 2004-2014

Area	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Bo'ness	48	33	58	17	73	12	16	28	8	0
Bonnybridge/Banknock	151	47	115	63	39	31	32	2	9	32
Denny	130	118	19	21	21	11	13	2	17	40
Falkirk	319	313	274	72	86	86	55	41	75	86
Grangemouth	6	0	0	1	2	105	5	28	0	9
Larbert/Sten'muir	69	147	138	179	170	115	166	96	190	149
Polmont	153	137	55	70	64	151	135	118	171	202
Rural N	66	58	1	0	0	0	2	0	4	7
Rural S	8	12	36	16	9	25	13	1	8	0

Source: Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

- 4.8 In contrast to the previous development plan cycle most new development in the Council area since 2010/11 has reverted to the traditional pattern of concentration in the Falkirk, Larbert/ Stenhousemuir and Polmont settlement areas. The previous development strategy of encouraging growth across the whole area was aided by the buoyant housing market at that time and resulted in growth being more evenly spread, with areas like Bonnybridge/Banknock showing greater activity than in previous periods. Bo'ness, Grangemouth, Rural North and Rural South now exhibit low activity levels.

Affordable Housing

- 4.9 The first Falkirk LDP was informed by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment which identified a need for 233 affordable homes annually over the first quarter of the Plan's lifetime. It was recognised in formulating the housing supply target that resource constraints would limit the contribution of new build to 100 units per annum. The Council's policy response since 2011 has been to adopt a suite of measures, involving adaptation of existing stock, buy-back of ex-Council stock, undertaking a programme of Council and RSL new build, and through planning policy, requiring a percentage contribution of affordable units from developer – led sites.
- 4.10 The buoyant housing market of the middle part of 2000's created a housing need problem, as average house prices rose ahead of the ability of those on lower incomes to pay, although, in context, Falkirk Council area was (and still is) a relatively cheap area to buy in, compared to neighbouring areas like Stirling and West Lothian. The subsequent downturn in developer activity has resulted in very little output to date from the planning policy, and new affordable provision has been overwhelmingly provided by the Council and RSLs using the traditional public funding mechanisms on publicly owned sites. The annual output is shown below:

Table 4.5 Output of Affordable Housing

2010 -11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL	Annual average
131	140	72	16	205	564	113

Source: Falkirk Council Corporate & Housing Services

- 4.11 It should be noted from the table that the average annual output of 113 has exceeded the 100 units per annum target set by the Council, so progress has been made in addressing the affordable housing need through new build. The output from the public sector has been a substantial percentage (as high as 41%) of all house completions in most years, as can be seen by comparing tables 4.3 and 4.5.

Strategic Growth Areas

- 4.12 The policy focus for housing investment in the LDP has been on the 12 Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs). These are large development areas where there is the opportunity to create sustainable communities of a high quality and sense of place. Many of these locations have complex infrastructure issues to overcome and progress has been slower than originally anticipated, particularly due to the economic downturn and their size and complexity. This is particularly true of the residential led regeneration initiatives carried forward from the Falkirk Council Local Plan. For two of them, Bo'ness Foreshore and Slammanan, their start is not expected before 2024, while for Banknock and Whitecross progress has been slow in concluding complicated S75 obligations. Banknock North now has planning permission in principle, but Whitecross requires a new masterplan and planning application following the developer going into administration. In other SGAs there has been greater developer interest, with applications under consideration or granted in Denny South East, Bo'ness South East, and Maddiston East, while at Larbert North, Falkirk North, Parkhall Farm and Overton development is well on the way to completion.
- 4.13 While most of the SGAs are still expected to deliver growth and regeneration, but potentially at a slower rate than previously anticipated, the lack of progress in a few will necessitate a review of their continued designation.

Strategic Infrastructure

- 4.14 Falkirk Council's location in the centre of Scotland gives the area very good strategic links with the rest of the country. Lying midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh means the Council area lies astride the principal road and rail connections of the country.

Strategic and local road network

- 4.15 Significant portions of the country's principal motorway network, comprising the M80, M876 and M9, skirt the northern edge of the central built up area. Branches continue northwards to Stirling and Perth via the M9 and M80, and north-eastward to Fife and Dundee via the M(A)876.
- 4.16 Most outstanding strategic road projects were completed before 2010 but a few came forward during this monitoring period. The upgrade of the A80 to motorway standard between Stepps and Hags was completed in 2011, and the construction of east facing slip roads at junction 2 Glenbervie on the M876, was completed in 2013. Improvements to junction 6 of the M9 opened in 2015, funded by developer contributions and the Council's TIF fund. A long awaited local road improvement, the Denny Eastern Access Road, was started

in 2015 but another long-standing road upgrade to the A801 at Avon Gorge, still awaits a funding package.

Rail Network

- 4.17 Falkirk lies midway on the 'flagship' Glasgow to Edinburgh rail route and has benefited in past years from the doubling of the daytime frequency of train services. Since 2013 phase 1 of the Scottish Government/Network Rail funded Edinburgh - Glasgow Improvement Project (EGIP) has been progressing in the Falkirk Council area with bridge reconstruction, platform lengthening and electrification work. New electric trains are expected to be in service in 2017 which will provide greater capacity and speed up journey times to the two cities. Apart from bridge raising or reconstruction, the second phase of EGIP, extending electrification to the Grahamston and Larbert routes (including the Grangemouth freight branch), has yet to start, though it is due for completion in 2019.

Water and Drainage

- 4.18 A number of upgrades to the sewerage infrastructure are promoted in the LDP. Airth Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) was upgraded in 2014 to accommodate community growth and preliminary work to upgrade Torwood WWTW has been undertaken by Scottish Water. Improvements to the other waste water treatment works await the bringing forward of development proposals in their catchments, in line with Scottish Water's protocol for providing strategic sewerage capacity. i.e. where sites are supported in the development plan and have obtained planning consent.

Community Infrastructure

- 4.19 One of the key considerations for the development strategy was the impact of growth on community and physical infrastructure. The population growth has put pressure on community infrastructure in particular localities and new facilities have not always been delivered in tandem with the housing. Nevertheless considerable progress has been made with some types of provision, particularly in education, a service which is closely affected by population growth. Most schools in the area have experienced a growth in pupil numbers and some have had considerable pressure on capacity. While the primary age school population is due to peak soon, around 2016-17, that of the secondary age will not reach its peak until 2023-24.
- 4.20 Major investment in the schools estate has continued, with a new denominational primary school opened in Antonshill in 2012 to add to the replacement of four secondary schools and a primary school and the construction of a new primary school in the previous monitoring period (2002-2010). A programme of primary school extensions has continued and further extensions to relatively new schools at

Maddiston and Kinnaird are urgent priorities. Additionally a new ASN Secondary School is being constructed in Grangemouth to provide new accommodation for pupils displaced from Carrongrange School, which in turn, is being converted to provide a 300 space extension to Larbert High, due for completion in 2017/18. Developer contributions to the upgrading of school infrastructure have been significant although by no means sufficient, and the Council's capital programme continues to be the prime source of finance for accommodation enhancements except the ASN project.

- 4.21 Provision of new health facilities in the community to match population growth has been patchy, with a new health centre opened in Airth and one extended in Polmont, in the previous monitoring period. However in other communities local facilities are being stretched and further investment in the Primary Care sector can be anticipated following the introduction of Policy INF06 in the LDP which seeks developer contributions for extending or replacing GP surgeries in pressured areas identified by NHS Forth Valley. At the strategic level the major new investment in health was the Forth Valley Royal Hospital, opened in July 2010, and the rationalisation of facilities at Falkirk Royal Infirmary to form a new community hospital has been ongoing over this monitoring period. No plans have been submitted for alternative uses for the surplus land at that site.

Open Space

- 4.22 The primary strategic document for directing investment into the open space resource is the Council's Open Space Strategy (OSS). This first OSS became operational in 2010 and a review was recently approved in October 2016. The LDP assists delivery of new open space facilities in areas where there is a deficit in provision through policy linking it to new development or requiring land to be specifically allocated for this use. This aims to improve relative levels of accessibility to open space across the Council area.
- 4.23 As regards the quantity of open space an audit in 2013 found there is an abundance in most of Falkirk's settlement areas, well above the 5ha/1000 people standard. The exceptions to this are Grangemouth, with just 5.8ha per 1000 population and the rural villages of Avonbridge, Dunmore, California, Shieldhill and Skinflats, where the quantity does not meet the Council's standard. The audit also found that the quality of open spaces varies from settlement to settlement, and Bonnybridge and Banknock, Denny and Larbert/Stenhousemuir areas scored significantly lower on overall quality than other areas.
- 4.24 Existing open spaces are distributed disproportionately around the area meaning that some places are not within an acceptable walking distance of different types of open space. Notable deficiencies are:

- Access to fit for purpose open space within a 400m walk is particularly low in the Rural South
 - Access to park or amenity space of over 0.2ha within 400m is particularly low in the Rural North
 - Access to an open space containing a playspace is particularly low in Bo'ness
 - Access to an open space containing a sports area within 800m is particularly low in the Bonnybridge and Banknock area
- 4.25 Nonetheless the review of the Open Space Strategy demonstrated significant progress since 2010 including
- Setting up of the Falkirk Community Trust to manage the high profile parks;
 - Creating and establishing the Helix;
 - Improving the quality of the 7 core parks previously identified in the 2003 Culture and Leisure Strategy;
 - Improving the quality of the poorest quality play areas; and
 - Installing Multi use Games Areas at several locations.
- 4.26 Significant investment has been made in the parks and open space resource by the Council and its partners over the last five years, amounting to an estimated £13.7 million, excluding the Helix. This has resulted in significant improvement to the quality of open space.
- 4.27 The new Open Space Strategy has four strands to its vision:
- Modernising our parks and open spaces;
 - Addressing inequality and fostering community through open space investment;
 - Working and investing more efficiently; and
 - Generating capital and revenue for investment in parks and open space.

It reviews open space standards, and contains detailed area strategies with action plans. LDP2 will clearly have to take account of these changes.

5 Growing Economy

Business Land

- 5.1 The focus of promotion of business and industry through the local development plan moved away from the nine Strategic Development Opportunities designated in the previous FCLP to a consolidated group of four Strategic Business Locations (SBLs) – Grangemouth Investment Zone, Falkirk Investment Zone, Larbert Gateway and Eastern Gateway. The Grangemouth Investment Zone is also a National Development in terms of NPF3. These locations were chosen to be the key drivers for the economic regeneration of the area and are

critical land use components in delivering the Council's economic development strategy.

- 5.2 During the monitoring period employment prospects in general were improving in the Falkirk Council area, after sharp adverse trends between 2007 and 2010, Thus the number of people in employment in the district has risen (62,600 in 2014) and unemployment rates have fallen (2.1% in July 2016) to levels similar to or better than, those before the 2007/8 economic crash.
- 5.3 The ability of planning policy to have direct influence on these macro-economic trends is negligible and against that background the development of the SBLs has been patchy. With the exception of a new ASDA distribution warehouse at Earlsgate opened in 2012 the vast bulk of new employment opportunities have arisen in existing premises in non-allocated business locations.
- 5.4 Activity at the SBLs is shown below:

Table 5.1 Progress at Strategic Business Locations

Grangemouth Investment Zone (including sites ED12 to ED17): in the docks additions to the provision of distribution warehouses have been proposed and some upgrading of storage facilities has taken place. Proposals for a carbon capture power station in NPF3 remain unfulfilled. Ineos has undertaken major rationalisation of its plant and has constructed a new ethane tank and import facility to handle its new feedstock from overseas, and has completed a new HQ building. Further investment at Earlsgate Park appears to have stalled following the construction of a new ASDA distribution warehouse. A number of new power plants have been proposed or consented and the prospects of an Energy Supply Company (ESCO) providing energy through a district heating system has been explored.

Falkirk Investment Zone (including sites ED03 to ED06): following on from a lack of progress on the original plans for the Falkirk Gateway site the Council initiated a review of the development mix and has prepared a preliminary development framework, likely involving the removal of retail elements and the introduction of housing on part of the site. The neighbouring Forth Valley College has permission to redevelop its site and relocate partly into the Gateway site.

At Abbotsford Park, four advance units has been constructed by the Council to kick start development.

Falkirk Town Centre has been adversely impacted by recession and structural changes in retailing; most investment by new occupiers has been concentrated at Central Retail Park, although The Hub opened in 2014 for small business starts ups in the town centre, has been very successful.

Larbert Gateway (including sites ED19 to ED21): some investment at Central Business Park has continued; the Glenbervie site has remained vacant despite the completion of the long-anticipated M876 east-facing junction in 2012; a retail parade of 6 units at Kinnaird Village was completed in 2014; Hill of Kinnaird business site is being proposed for reallocation to housing by the landowner/developer.

Eastern Gateway (including sites ED23, ED24 and M02): at Gilston the access roundabout was constructed in 2013 but the landowner is proposing the business element of the development mix on the site be reduced in favour of housing; at Whitecross the original mixed use proposal is under review following the administration of the original developer; at Bo'ness there has been some industrial investment in the Carriden/Bridgeness area but the Drum business site has remained vacant.

Source: Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

- 5.5 The vast bulk of businesses in the council area occupy existing business land and the development plan has contained policies to retain much of this land in business use while providing flexibility to introduce other uses on less suitable locations. Monitoring of application activity suggests that the trend of the previous monitoring period has continued and significant portions of business land have been redeveloped for other uses. The mixed fortunes of the land allocated and policies on promoting business land suggest that the approach to business land needs to be reviewed through the new LDP.

Retailing and Town Centres

- 5.6 Retailing is a dynamic and innovative industry which is constantly evolving. Structural changes in the industry, driven by consumer trends, have seen national retailers focus investment on city centres and purpose built centres such as Silverburn and Braehead, whilst withdrawing from smaller centres such as Falkirk. Meanwhile internet shopping continues to grow. Discounters continue to thrive, putting pressure on the big supermarket chains.
- 5.7 In 2014 a further retail floorspace survey was undertaken to provide an update on the picture of retail provision across the Council area and enable comparison with data gathered in 2009 and 2004. In terms of floorspace there has been an increase overall of over 30,000 sqm (10% of the total provision), principally in convenience provision through new foodstores at Redding and Camelon indicated above. Service floorspace has continued to rise since 2009, reflecting the more diverse nature of town centres, but comparison floorspace in total has reduced considerably. Vacancy levels have also risen, although

this has been concentrated in Falkirk, while the district centres have shown greater resilience in the face of structural change.

- 5.8 There has been no fresh Household Survey carried out to update the 2009 information on shopping patterns, but it is possible to make some broad assumptions. The former dominance of Falkirk for convenience shopping continues to diminish, with the building of new stores in Redding and Camelon, to add to those built at Stenhousemuir and Grangemouth. Denny and Bo'ness continue to leak expenditure to other towns. In terms of comparison spending, leakage from Falkirk Town Centre is likely to have increased, as the town has lost ground to its regional and sub regional rivals such as Stirling, Livingston, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The continuing success of Central Retail Park has helped to counter this trend to some degree. It is able to offer large format premises that suit occupiers' requirements, in contrast to the more constrained properties within the traditional town centre.
- 5.9 The pressures being experienced by Falkirk Town Centre are reflected in the increase in vacancy levels, particularly in the prime High Street areas and the shopping malls. By contrast the District Centres of Bo'ness, Denny, Stenhousemuir and Grangemouth have been more stable as they are traditionally less reliant on the national multiples and more focussed on local services.
- 5.10 Fuller information on retailing and town centres may be found in Technical Report 7 and in the Council's Town Centres Health Check.

Tourism

- 5.11 The completion of the Falkirk Wheel and the Millennium Canals project over 13 years ago precipitated a step change in tourism for the Falkirk Council area, a trend which was consolidated by the opening of the Helix Park and Kelpies in 2014-15. Tourism activity in Falkirk has expanded in the face of a generally challenging economic situation. The LDP has helped to promote the tourism profile of the area by identifying a series of tourism networks and nodes, which, in addition to the Wheel and Helix includes Callendar House and Park, Falkirk and Bo'ness town centres, Kinneil House and Park, and Muiravonside Country Park. Tourism proposals which support these nodes are priorities for development.
- 5.12 The two 'Jewels in the Crown', the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies/Helix, are now recognised as national attractions. The Wheel has continued to attract summer visitor numbers of over 50,000 per month while in its first full year (April 2014 – March 2015) the Kelpies/Helix drew in 922,505 visitors, with over 200,000 visiting in July 2014 alone, on average 77,000 per month as shown below.

Table 5.2: Visitors to Helix Park

month	Total visitors
Apr 14	55,855
May 14	102,870
Jun 14	55,560
Jul 14	213,034
Aug 14	115,222
Sept 14	108,079
Oct 14	58,163
Nov 14	30,422
Dec 14	33,464
Jan 15	35,382
Feb 15	72,730
Mar 15	41,727
Apr 15	164,924
May 15	61,676
Jun 15	56,840
Jul 15	80,716
Aug 15	88,166
Sept 15	57,482
Oct 15	48,881
Nov 15	17,671
Dec 15	16,397

Source: Falkirk Community Trust

- 5.13 The challenge for the Council and other stakeholders is to maintain this initial level of interest and to draw this large cohort of visitors towards the area's other attractions. To this end a tourist bus linking the attractions in Falkirk was inaugurated in 2015 over the tourist season and usage has surpassed expectations, with over 20,000 users in its period of operation. Signage to tourist destinations in and from Falkirk town centre has been improved.
- 5.14 Other development proposals to support tourism have come forward sporadically. Scottish Canals have continued to develop the Wheel site with additional visitor facilities and attractions, with a major refresh completed in 2016. The Scottish Railway Preservation Society at Bo'ness extended its train trips from Birkhill to Manuel Junction in 2011 and continues to add to the Scottish Railway Museum collection. Premier Inn has built extensions to a number of its budget hotels in the Falkirk area during 2014-15, and there have been a number of proposals for holiday chalets. This suggests that the market for overnight tourists, in addition to day trippers, has recovered after a dip at the height of the recession.

6 Sustainable Place

- 6.1 The theme of Sustainable Place is supported by a wide range of policies and proposals in the Local Development Plan and an attempt has been made here to group these into related sub-themes.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Traffic Growth

- 6.2 Traffic growth is monitored by the Department of Transport and published under Scottish Transport Statistics. Table 6.1 below shows the growth in road traffic in Falkirk for the current monitoring period.

Table 6.1 Traffic Growth

Falkirk Council area (million vehicle kms)	motorway	A class roads	All major	All minor (B and C)	Total all roads
2011	489	454	943	545	1,489
2014	532	449	981	545	1,526

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics

This shows that total traffic grew by 2.4% over the period, all of which was on the motorway network, with minor roads showing no change. This picture mirrors change at Scotland-wide level, where total road traffic volumes have been increasing again in recent years after a reduction during the economic downturn, with most growth on motorways.

Sustainable travel modes

- 6.3 The Council has a hierarchical approach to promoting sustainable transport. This favours active modes such as walking and cycling before public transport (bus, rail, taxi), with private car transport at the bottom of the hierarchy. Information became available only recently from the 2011 census on travel modes (to work or education) in Falkirk and this allows comparison with the situation at the previous census and with data gleaned from the Council's household survey in 2009. The results are shown below:

Table 6.2 Modal split

Mode	2011 census Falkirk	2011 census Scotland	2009 Household Survey Falkirk	2001 census Scotland
Car driver	72.5%	62.4%	62%	46%
Works van			2%	-
Car passenger			5%	13%
taxi			0%	1%
Walk	6.5%	9.9%	10%	19%
Bus	5.6%	10.0%	10%	11%
Rail	5.2%	3.7%	4%	3%
Cycle	2.2%	3.1%	1%	1%
Other			1%	0.5%
Working from home	8.0%	10.8%	5%	4%

Source: Census and Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

- 6.4 Comparing the three sets of data shows there have been some changes in modal share over the various periods. Car travel remains the overwhelmingly dominant mode, and is 10 percentage points higher in Falkirk than in Scotland as a whole. Usage of sustainable modes in general appears to have decreased between the censuses at national level and between the two sets of Falkirk-related data, with walking showing particular decline at least for commuting purposes. Rail travel, in Falkirk, though, has increased, and is above the national average. Probably the most striking growth is in the number of 'home workers', with over 10% now in that category nationally and 8% locally.
- 6.5 Comparing the two indicators, traffic growth and modal share, the traditional pattern of continuing traffic growth and heavy bias towards car travel is being maintained, with no discernable shift towards sustainable transport modes. The only growth area in the latter category is rail travel, where it is used for longer distance commuting to the main cities.
- 6.6 The last Monitoring Statement noted the large (50%) increase in usage of stations in the Falkirk Council area, brought about by improvements to train services. For the current period growth has been less spectacular at 6%, though data is only available for a much shorter review period of 2010 to 2014. While usage continues to grow at Larbert (19%), Polmont (9%) and, notably, Camelon (26%), usage of the 2 main Falkirk stations has actually plateaued, as shown below. This may be due to the inability of the car parks at Falkirk High to accommodate demand, forcing car commuters to drive to park at less congested stations. The Council has plans to alleviate the shortage of parking space, but this issue may well become a considerable challenge when the EGIP improvements of electrified train services start running in 2017, encouraging more demand.

Table 6.3 Rail patronage

Total Patronage					
Year	Larbert	Camelon	Falkirk (2 stations)	Polmont	Total
2009/10	659,899	92,071	1,515,225	661,055	2,919,177
2010/11	711,469	98,606	1,518,225	661,055	2,989,356
2011/12	747,710	104,504	1,495,482	687,881	3,035,578
2012/13	770,462	110,860	1,472,660	695,318	3,049,300
2013/14	787,548	116,378	1,514,516	722,406	3,140,848

Source; Scotrail

6.7 In relation to bus travel there are no figures available from the bus companies on usage levels, due to commercial confidentiality in a deregulated industry. In contrast to practice during the previous monitoring period the Council has reduced its level of subsidy for non-commercial routes during recent years and there have been considerable changes to routes and frequencies by the main operator in the area, First Bus Midland Bluebird. Unfortunately it is not possible to ascertain whether the trend of falling bus patronage found by the census and discussed above has carried on or has been arrested over this monitoring period. Usage of the Council's only Park and Ride facility at Carmuir, west of Falkirk, has remained negligible over this period. Anecdotal evidence suggests that pressure on Falkirk town centre car parks has eased over the period as a result of the contraction of the bricks and mortar retail economy.

6.8 The Council has continued to implement other measures to support sustainable travel to varying degrees over the review period. School travel contributes to road congestion in specific localities and to alleviate this, the council has promoted a number of initiatives, including Safer Routes to School, school travel plans and cycle parking. A survey carried out in May 2014 found the following modal split for school travel across Falkirk: Walking 41%, Car 25%, Bus 20%, 'Park and Stride' 6%, Cycle 3%, and Taxi 2%.

Freight Transport

6.9 The large role played by freight transport in the Falkirk transport network, identified in the last Monitoring Statement, has continued during this period. The area is a major logistical hub for Scotland, centred on Grangemouth at the docks (which is the country's principal container port) and at Wester Newlands on the Grangemouth branch railway line, where there is a significant intermodal road-rail facility. Over this period the only major investment was the construction by ASDA of a new distribution centre at Earls Gate Park, next to Junction 6 of the M9. All these facilities generate considerable volumes of road freight traffic in and around Grangemouth.

- 6.10 The role of these facilities continues to be recognised in the National Planning Framework with the designation of the Grangemouth Investment Zone as a national development. This seeks to implement a package of infrastructure improvements around the locality to tackle the issues of traffic congestion at key junctions, to improve access, and enhance capacity for the further development of freight distribution and energy related industry.

Renewable energy

- 6.11 The vast bulk of renewable energy development in the Falkirk Council area has been in the form of wind energy schemes, either wind farms or, more predominantly in recent years, single turbines. The table below shows the trend of rapidly rising capacity over this monitoring period.

Table 6.4: Energy Generation from Wind Energy Development

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
Operational energy output from wind energy developments (GWh)	0.28	0.28	34.48	104.91
Estimated electricity consumption in Falkirk (GWh)	717	711	700	688
Percentage of local electricity consumption generated from wind energy development	0.04%	0.04%	4.9%	15.2%
Annual CO2 emission reduction (kt)	0.12	0.12	14.8	45.1

Source: Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

While installed capacity and output has been rising rapidly it still only accounts for 15% of consumption. Even if this trend carried on and all consented wind energy developments and those currently under consideration were to be operational by 2020 it would still fall short of the Scottish Government's target of 100% generation of electricity consumption by then.

- 6.12 In other technologies one mini-hydro scheme became operational at Carrongrove Mill, Denny in 2015 and in the same year there were 924 photovoltaic installations in the Council area and 1 micro combined heat and power installation, with a cumulative installed capacity of 3.3MW and an estimated annual energy generation of 2.8GWh

Flood Risk

- 6.13 Falkirk Council area faces considerable issues of both watercourse and coastal flooding, having a hydrology dominated by the Forth Estuary and the two catchments of the Rivers Avon and Carron that flow into it. The SEPA Flood Maps indicate that outside the main Scottish cities, the Falkirk Council area is most at risk from flooding. Amongst the areas at highest risk are the coastal zones around Grangemouth and Bo'ness, while the extensive carseland north of the Carron and other more localised riparian areas of the Rivers Carron, Avon and their minor tributaries are also shown at risk of flooding. The intention of the Flood Map is to raise awareness of flood risk and to assist local authorities in taking a more proactive approach to flood risk management.
- 6.14 In the previous reporting period flood alleviation projects were completed in Bo'ness and Dunipace. Since then the Council has been focusing on its duties under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 to help prepare Local Flood Risk Management Plans which were published in 2016. The highest priority scheme within the Forth Estuary plan is a Flood Prevention Scheme for Grangemouth, to protect both the town's residents and the critical infrastructure industrial complex from flooding. To date most work has been of a preparatory nature and the final scope of the project has still to be determined, but it is likely to cost in excess of £100m. The Council has already committed £2m to the flood alleviation work but the lack of secured funding for implementing the project remains a critical factor for timeous project delivery.
- 6.15 The Council is no longer required to publish flood reports but flooding incidents continue to be monitored. In spite of the scale of the overall risk of flooding, during the recent past flooding incidents within Falkirk Council area have been relatively small scale, and have tended to be caused by localised surface water management and maintenance issues. Two events over the monitoring period are worth noting however. In December 2013 and January 2014, surge and high spring tides combined to generate high water levels in the Forth Estuary. Commercial premises in the Grangemouth Dock area were flooded, but no residential property in Grangemouth was affected. Bunds at Airth failed and the waters from the River Forth flooded the waste water treatment works and agricultural land. No residential property was affected.
- 6.16 There has been anecdotal evidence of more frequent incidences of sewer surcharge. An Integrated Catchment Study covering much of the eastern half of the Council area was undertaken in partnership with Scottish Water in 2015 to examine the interaction between surface water run-off, the sewer network and watercourses. The findings will help identify the highest priority needs for inputting into Surface Water Management Plans.

- 6.17 In the light of the overall flood risk in the area it is perhaps not surprising that a significant number of sites allocated for development are within areas of known flood risk. The range of sites affected are shown in the table below. Flood risk will restrict the development potential on these sites although in most cases only a small proportion of each site is affected.

Table 6.5: Development sites affected by flood risk

	Total number	With an area of medium risk of coastal or fluvial flooding	Percentage of proposals with a portion of the site at medium risk of coastal or fluvial flooding	Total area of sites affected by coastal or fluvial flooding (hectares)	Percentage of the total area within the medium risk zones
Housing proposals	71	21	29.6%	139.6	4.7%
Mixed - Use proposals	15	6	40.0%	143.7	7.9%
Economic Development proposals	24	5	20.8%	124.5	17.4%

Source: SEPA and Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

Green Network

- 6.18 One of the most visually evident changes in the area over successive development plan periods has been the ‘greening’ of the urban fringes. The Council won the top Scottish planning award in 2012 for its work in creating its green network. Projects to extend and improve the green network until recently have been mainly through woodland creation and outdoor access path networks. Tree planting activity was at its height in the previous monitoring period but has since declined. Planting in Falkirk Council area since 2010 is shown in the table below

Table 6.6 Tree planting

year	ha planted	no. of trees
2010	14.7	36,800
2011	4.9	12,250
2012	0.3	750
2013	3.3	7,000
2014	0	0
total	23.2	56,800

Source: Central Scotland Green Network Trust

- 6.19 The rate of new woodland planting in recent years has been at a five year average of 4.64ha/ year between 2010 and 2014 compared to the historical average of 10 times that rate up to 2008. The Council's new Forestry and Woodland Strategy aims to reinvigorate tree planting and support the delivery of 850ha of new woodland between 2015 and 2055, a rate of 21.25ha/ year.
- 6.20 With regard to outdoor access the Council has maintained its strong record in this field. The total network of maintained paths throughout the area has more than doubled since 2010 from 172 km to 464 km in 2014. A further 14.2 km are maintained by Callendar Estate/Bespoke Community Development Company. Over 75% of this network is now signed. A steady programme of path creation or upgrading has been accomplished over the period as shown in the table below:

Table 6.7: Path Creation/ Improvement

Year	Total length of path creation projects	Total length of upgraded routes
2011-12	24.75km	10.3km
2012-13	5.8km	13.2km
2013-14	4.3km	11.8km
2014-15	2.6km	13.9km

Source: Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

Much work has been achieved through partnership working with Scottish Canals, Callendar Estates and Central Scotland Green Network Trust.

Natural Heritage

- 6.21 A substantial proportion of the Falkirk Council area (20%) is covered by a natural heritage designation, represented by the full hierarchy of designations from SPA/Ramsar sites to SACs, SSSI's, LNRs, Wildlife sites and SINCs, totally 5,996ha.

Table 6.8 Natural Heritage Designations

Designation	Number of sites	Total area in Falkirk Council area
Special Area for Conservation (SAC)	1	Black Loch 2.5ha approx. (overall area of SAC = 108.42ha)
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	2	Firth of Forth 1440ha approx. (overall area of Firth of Forth SPA = 6313.68ha) Slamannan Plateau 10.3ha approx. (overall area of Slamannan Plateau SPA = 616.10ha)

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	10	2012.28ha approx. (based on SSSI citations and estimate of Firth of Forth SSSI within Falkirk area taken as estimated area of SPA + 100ha). This also includes approximately 95 ha of the new Slamannan Plateau SSSI.
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	3	28 ha – Bonnyfield LNR, Bonnybridge 55 ha – Kinneil Foreshore LNR 18 ha – Carron Dams LNR
Wildlife Site	62	2101.29ha (including total areas of cross boundary sites)
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	25	345.44ha

Source: Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

- 6.22 Since the last Monitoring Statement two new Local Nature Reserves have been designated, both in 2013, at Kinneil Foreshore and Carron Dams. Management of these sites is shared between the Council, local groups and, in the case of Carron Dams LNR, the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The potential for new LNRs in other locations is being investigated.
- 6.23 Policy has focussed on protection of such sites in the first instance, and protection of sites has been largely successful despite developer pressure. Local designated sites tend to be more vulnerable to this pressure and during the monitoring period there has been the partial loss of Torwood Mire wildlife site to the Denny-Beaully power line work, and Rodel Drive SINC in Polmont was degraded prior to a new housing development.
- 6.24 In 2015 the Council started a review of all its local designated sites, as many had been designated some considerable time ago. Statements on each of the local sites have been included in Supplementary Guidance SG08, and the sites will be reviewed through the LDP2 process.
- 6.25 Tackling invasive species has become an important issue in habitat protection. Around a dozen invasive species have been detected in the Falkirk Council area but data on their extent is limited, although some mapping has taken place or is planned along the River Carron and Avon corridors. An invasive species forum was established in 2015 and this should help to progress control of the spread of invasive species beyond the few sites tackled to date.

Improve sense of place and historic environment

Vacant and derelict land

- 6.26 As noted earlier the Falkirk area played an important role in the industrial revolution and was a major centre for iron working and mining. With the demise of these industries, largely during the 1980s, the area had a considerable legacy of derelict or potentially contaminated sites.
- 6.27 The Council is required to monitor and record change in the amount of vacant and derelict land in its area and submit returns to the Scottish Government Statistician Group. In the previous monitoring period there was a substantial reduction (58%) in the amount of vacant and derelict land in the council area but in this monitoring period this trend has halted and the overall amount has levelled out, at around 140-150 hectares, as shown in the table below.

Table 6.9 Change in Vacant and Derelict Land

Year	Total vacant and derelict land (ha)
2010	140
2011	140
2012	139
2013	152
2014	150

Source: Falkirk Council Planning and Environment Unit

- 6.28 As most land is remediated and brought back into use through development the halt in the reduction trend can be explained largely by the relative lack of new development activity during this monitoring period, coupled with new vacant sites being added to the register in Bo'ness, Allandale and Denny. Many vacant or derelict sites are in the rural areas, being abandoned mineral sites. To some extent these have self-remediated through being re-colonised by nature, but the Council has been more proactive in some locations, such as Avondale Quarry, and developed them for nature conservation.

Placemaking Priorities and Built Heritage

- 6.29 The Council revisited its placemaking priorities in the LDP and the policy now supports proposals in the strategic housing and business locations, town and village centres, gateways and major transport corridors, the canal corridor and the CSGN. Progress over the period at the strategic housing and business locations has already been covered. During the last monitoring period a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) was started at Bo'ness and this was successfully concluded in 2011, delivering over £5m of improvements. A second THI, which won lottery funding in 2014, is now underway in Falkirk Town Centre and is expected to spend a similar amount as Bo'ness on

building repairs, shopfront improvements and public realm upgrades. This includes enhancement of the iconic A listed Steeple in the heart of the town centre. Smaller public realm enhancement projects have also been completed in Airth and around the historic St Modan's and Old Parish Church in Falkirk town centre. The canal corridor has benefitted from extensive towpath upgrades and a new café/restaurant opened in 2014 at Bridge 49 on the Union Canal. The Kelpies project, referred to earlier, has transformed the eastern outfall of the Forth and Clyde canal. Proposals are also in hand for the further enhancement of the canal corridor through Falkirk including interpretation and orientation panels.

- 6.30 The Council's programme of preparing Conservation Area Management Plans for the area's 9 Conservation Areas was completed in 2013. These support the earlier appraisal work for the Conservation Areas and are intended to enable positive management of change in these areas. This has encouraged local groups to bring forward their own enhancement projects, including signage and interpretation panels in Dunmore and Letham, and public realm improvements in Muirhouses. Development proposals affecting listed buildings over this monitoring period have tended to be minor, but notably there has been the successful redevelopment of the B-listed former post office building and neighbouring 1970s office block in Falkirk town centre to create a business hub, and work is well advanced to restore the B-listed Larbert House and stables for residential use, supported by enabling development. Unfortunately other enabling proposals for listed country houses at Dunmore Park and Lathallan House remain stalled.
- 6.31 There are various other areas of architectural, historic or townscape merit across the Council area which do not have conservation area status. These include the 1920's model village of Westquarter, and various Victorian/Edwardian districts in Falkirk, Grangemouth, Larbert and Polmont. The designation of Areas of Townscape Value was introduced to the development plan in 2010 to recognise areas with coherent and historically significant groups of buildings. If resources permit the Council intends to undertake character appraisals of these area to assess whether they can be 'promoted' to the status of Conservation Areas.
- 6.32 The two most significant archaeological sites and scheduled ancient monuments in the Council area are the Antonine Wall, designated as a World heritage Site in 2008, and the canals. Improvements at the latter have already been covered. Supplementary Guidance to guide development in the vicinity of the Antonine Wall is in preparation jointly with the four other local authorities along the route, while an earlier SPG remains in force. The Council has considered a few development proposals that have come forward within the wall's buffer zone. The Council approved a management plan and Local Action Plan for the Wall in 2014 and 2015 respectively. These aim to develop the social and economic potential of the wall for its heritage and tourism value.

- 6.33 The LDP seeks to protect historic gardens and designed landscapes in the area. Three such landscapes appear in a national list maintained by Historic Environment Scotland – Dunmore Park, The Pineapple, both north of Airth, and Callendar Park in Falkirk. However there is a much larger portfolio of non-inventory designed landscapes, listed in Supplementary Guidance SG09, which are not as intact as the inventory ones but which are nonetheless valued locally. Many of these landscapes have come under development pressure prior to or during the current monitoring period e.g. Denovan House, Glenbervie House, Larbert House, and in most case policy advice to preserve important features has been incorporated in consents or actual development. Further survey work on these non-inventory designed landscapes would be beneficial.
- 6.34 Protective policy also covers battlefield sites within the National Inventory of Historic Battlefields, of which there are three wholly or partly in the Council area. The large area covered by the second Battle of Falkirk, to the south of the town, has been the subject of repeated pressures for housing development over many years, but the Council has successfully repulsed proposals.
- 6.35 The Council's Built Heritage Strategy, originally published in 2006, is currently under review. The outcome of the review may have implications or actions for LDP2.

Manage natural resources and waste sustainably

Minerals

- 6.36 The Falkirk Council area has a long history of mineral working and in spite of over two centuries of exploitation there are still resources of economic significance, including coal, coal bed methane, fireclay and aggregates (sand, gravel and hard rock) which are being worked or have been worked in the recent past. The extent and volume of the resources is unclear and information on output is not easily obtained. Policy has sought to recognise the national significance of the resource while minimising environmental impacts where there has been working.
- 6.37 While there has been no active coal mining, either deep or open cast, over the monitoring period, a broad area of search, covering the Slamannan Plateau, for future open cast production has been applied through the development plan since 2002. In the recent past there has been growing interest in the potential of coal bed methane and a number of consents have been granted for exploration and production in the Airth/Bothkennar area of Rural North. The moratorium on unconventional gas exploration, applied by the Scottish Government since 2015, has put a halt to consideration of any further proposals. This includes a major proposal involving 14 wells west and south of Letham, which was the subject of a public inquiry in 2014. Fireclay

production is a by-product of coal extraction and therefore there has been no activity during the review period.

- 6.38 There are 4 hard rock quarries in the west of the area, spread between Dunipace and Banknock. The two quarries north of Dunipace, Boards and Northfield, have been operating throughout the period while Cowdenhill, near Banknock ceased production in 2013. In addition a proposal for a small quarry for dimension sandstone working at Drumhead, north-east of Denny, was granted in 2015.

Air quality

- 6.39 Planning can play an important role in improving air quality and the Council is required to review and assess air quality for seven pollutants in the area. As a result of this process Falkirk Council has four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), one monitoring sulphur dioxide breaches, two dealing with road traffic related air quality, and one dealing with particulates. The latter three AQMAs were declared during this monitoring period. The position in each AQMA is set out below.

Table 6.10 Action at AQMAs

AQMA	Action/commentary
Grangemouth AQMA (<i>sulphur dioxide</i>)	This AQMA was declared in relation to industrial emissions. In contrast to previous monitoring periods the 15-minute objective was met in 2013 at the three monitoring sites in this AQMA after the installation of abatement equipment at the Petroineos refinery was in August 2013. The monitoring in the AQMA will continue to ensure that the compliance achieved in 2013 continues.
Falkirk Town Centre (<i>nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter</i>) and Haggs (<i>nitrogen dioxide</i>) AQMAs	These two AQMAs were declared in relation to road traffic emissions. A draft Action Plan was submitted to the Scottish Government in August 2014. As part of this plan an environmental fleet recognition scheme was established in the Falkirk Council area among haulage companies operating 2,500 vehicles in or through the Council area.
Banknock AQMA (<i>particulate matter</i>)	Following the cessation of operations at Cowdenhill quarry in July 2011, the PM ₁₀ objectives were met at the monitoring sites in 2013. However, the AQMA and monitoring remain in place due to a new quarry being given planning permission at nearby Tomfyne in North Lanarkshire, as the main access route passes through Falkirk Council's area

- 6.40 The objectives for carbon monoxide, lead, benzene and 1,3 butadiene continue to be met in the Falkirk Council area.

Loss of prime agricultural land and carbon rich or rare soils

- 6.41 Approximately 17% of agricultural land in the area is of prime quality (Classes 1, 2, and 3.1). This is concentrated in two distinct areas; in the western part of the Council area, between Larbert, Bonnybridge and Denny and in the eastern part of the area to the east of the Braes Villages and to the south of Bo'ness.
- 6.42 The Macaulay Institute's agricultural land capability maps (which were produced in the 1980s) indicate that 980 ha of land in Falkirk Council area are in class 2 and 4,102 ha are in class 3.1 (none is on class 1).
- 6.43 Scottish Planning Policy and the LDP indicate that development on prime agricultural land should not be permitted except where it is essential as a component of the settlement strategy or necessary to meet an established need. In this light, sites allocated in the LDP could result in the loss of 375.5 hectares of prime quality agricultural land, and a few of these sites have received consent or are under construction in 2016. A few allocated sites infringe on areas of carbon rich or rare soils, such as in Banknock, Slamannan, Limerigg and Standburn, but none of these have attracted any firm development proposals.

Water quality

- 6.44 There are over 200km of river, streams and ditches with flowing water in the Falkirk Council area. SEPA identifies 25 water bodies within the Council area: 21 within the river category and 4 within the estuary category. The number of water bodies in each classification from 2010 to 2013 is shown below:

Table 6.11: Water body classification

Year	Good status	Moderate status	Poor status	Bad status
2010	8	9	8	0
2011	8	8	8	1
2012	8	11	5	1
2013	8	10	6	1

Source: SEPA

- 6.45 In 2013 (the latest year of data) waterbodies deteriorating in status were:
- River Avon (Jawhills to Logie Water Confluence);
 - River Carron (Bonny Water Confluence to Carron Estuary; and
 - Bonny Water/ Red Burn

Those improving in status were:

- Auchenbowie Burn (Loch Coulter Reservoir to River Carron);
- Pow Burn/ Tor Burn (from source to confluence with Sauchenford Burn); and

- Upper Forth Estuary

- 6.46 Whilst there appears to have been a slight overall improvement in the status of water bodies in the Falkirk Council area between 2010 and 2013 (17 of good or moderate status in 2010 against 18 of good or moderate status in 2013) there has not been any improvement in the number of waterbodies reaching their target status (good). There are known sewerage constraints in the Falkirk council area and without maintenance of the infrastructure there could be potential impacts on water quality or ecological value of watercourses.
- 6.47 A number of water bodies within the Falkirk area have had their ecological quality adversely impacted by past morphological alterations. These water courses include: Forth Estuary, River Carron, Forth and Clyde Canal, Union Canal, Mains Burn, Grange Burn and Auchenbowie Burn.

Waste Management

- 6.48 During this monitoring period SPP superseded Annex B of the Zero Waste Plan as the key guidance for recycling and the handling of waste. The levels of waste arisings and recycling over the period are shown in the table below.

Table 6.12: Waste and Recycling

Year	Household Waste generated (tonnes)	Percentage of household waste that was recycled	Business waste generated
2011	78,177	52.7%	127,654
2012	76,111	55.2%	113,382
2013	71,950	53.0%	100,865
2014	73,620	54.3%	88,278

Source: SEPA and Falkirk Council Waste Strategy Unit

- 6.49 It is not clear whether the levelling off of the trend of increases in household waste recycling in Falkirk Council area is a blip or whether it is an indication that recycling rates have peaked. If the rates have peaked then the national targets endorsed in SPP of 60% of household waste to be recycled by 2020 and only 5% of all waste to be going to landfill by 2025 will be very challenging for stakeholders to meet.
- 6.50 The LDP shows 33 operational waste management sites within the Falkirk Council area identified by SEPA, which include recycling centres, transfer stations, metal recyclers and landfill sites. Excluding landfill these sites had a handling capacity estimated by SEPA as 3,356,030 tonnes in 2013. However SEPA still requires an additional 200,000 tonnes capacity to be accommodated within Forth Valley,

some of which is likely to fall into the Falkirk area. The LDP policy of steering waste proposals to existing industrial areas may have to be supplemented by identification of specific sites. This includes energy from waste plants, and a few proposals for such facilities have come forward in Grangemouth over the monitoring period.

- 6.50 As regards landfill the rolling 10 year landfill capacity for the Forth Valley area at December 2012 was over 3.4 million tonnes, which exceeds the landfill capacity requirement of 2.7 million tonnes. There is no need to identify additional landfill sites in the Forth Valley area, although the LDP does safeguard land for an extension to the largest site by far in the region, at Avondale by Polmont.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Over the period 2011-16 the aftermath of the economic downturn has continued to have a significant impact on the area. Housing completions are slowly recovering but progress with some of the major development and regeneration initiatives has stalled. Financial constraints on both public and private sectors have ensured that only a modest rate of progress has been achieved in implementing the strategy set out in the current LDP.

- 7.2 A summary of some of the key issues arising during the period which are likely to be taken forward to the new Local Development Plan is:

- With a steady rate of population increase in Falkirk Council area, consider which settlement areas are most suited to cope with further proportionate growth
- Capitalise on the modest resurgence in house building activity by steering development to the most appropriate locations
- Ensure that the pressure on existing community and physical infrastructure is not exacerbated and that new infrastructure is aligned with the locations chosen for growth
- Review the current suite of sites for business and industry, to assess their continuing attractiveness for job creators, while supporting the TIF funded projects
- Provide a supportive framework for the transformational growth in tourism
- Focus the LDP's coverage of the low carbon agenda on areas it can influence
- Tackle the decline in Falkirk Town Centre by encouraging its diversification from retailing and support remaining district centre revitalisation
- Review the approach to accommodating waste management facilities in the light of increasing capacity requirements
- Support the continued development of the award winning green network and ensure that local designated sites are protected adequately from development pressure.

8 Supporting documents

Falkirk Local Development Plan 2015

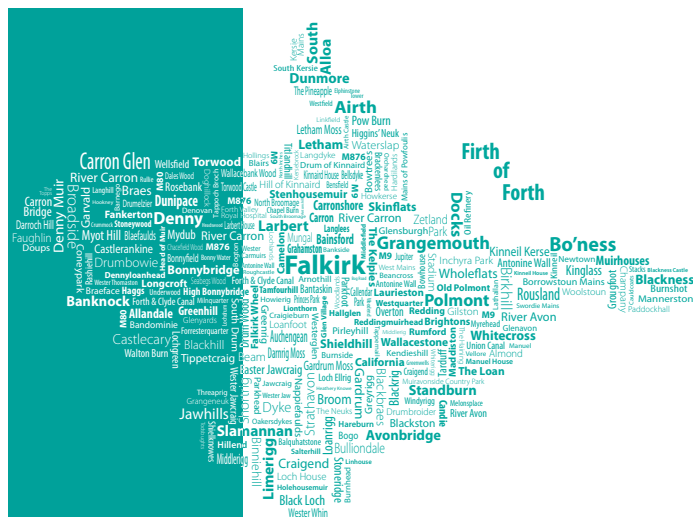
Development Plan Monitoring Reports 2013 and 2014.

Falkirk Council's 2nd Local Development Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, November 2015

FALKIRK

Technical Report 1: **Monitoring Report**

February 2017



Falkirk Council