

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: FALKIRK GREENSPACE: A STRATEGY FOR OUR GREEN NETWORK
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 8 OCTOBER 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the February 2013 Leisure, Tourism & Community Committee, Members requested that officers undertake public consultation on the consultative draft Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy for Our Green Network, and subsequently report back on responses received.
- 1.2 This report seeks to inform Members of the consultation responses received and any proposed amendments to the draft strategy.
- 1.3 Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy for Our Green Network reviews and updates Falkirk Council's approach to greenspace enhancement and delivery. It sets out the Council's priorities and defines a locally relevant, achievable, programme to help Falkirk Council meet the ambitions of both the Central Scotland Forest (CSF) Strategy and Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN).

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 **Prior to formal public consultation** a series of workshops took place, with key stakeholder organisations to help inform the draft strategy. These workshops included constructive dialogue sessions with internal Falkirk Council services, as well as meetings with external partners, most notably Central Scotland Forest Trust (CSFT), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS).
- 2.2 **Formal public consultation** on the draft strategy was undertaken for a period of 6 weeks between 25 April 2013 and 10 June 2013. The document and feedback survey were available on the Falkirk Council website and to members of the public on request (in paper or electronic formats).
- 2.3 During this consultation, 37 partner organisations, local Members, Community Councils, neighbouring local authorities, Council and Community Trust officers, and 21 other interested groups were contacted directly to encourage formal comment. The strategy appears to have been well received by partners, with only a few formal responses seeking amendments.

2.4 The list of comments received and recommended amendments can be seen at Appendix A. A summary of the organisations who responded is as follows:

- Scottish Government;
- Key agencies - Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), SNH and FCS;
- Falkirk Council - Education Services, Development Services; and
- Falkirk Council's partner Central Scotland Forest Trust (CSFT).

2.5 The recommended amendments have been included in the finalised draft strategy at Appendix B. Some minor technical amendments have been made to clarify the descriptions of priority actions.

3. PARTNERSHIP CHANGE

3.1 A significant partnership change has emerged since the Council approved the consultative draft strategy. CSFT will from April 2014 operate as the CSGN Trust and will be charged with leading the wider partnership of 19 local authorities in delivering this national project. However, the Council is a signatory partner to the recent CSGN Concordat and will continue to maximize opportunities to maintain a stream of beneficial greenspace projects through partnership activity.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Policy: Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy for Our Green Network is in line with the Council's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Plan. It also contributes towards the Development Plan, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, Open Space Strategy along with Outdoor Access; Transport; Urban Regeneration; Urban Woodland; Employment and Training; Biodiversity; My Future's in Falkirk; and Community Health Planning projects and initiatives. Falkirk Council is a signatory partner to the CSGN (a National Planning Framework 2 'national' project).

4.2 Legal: None.

4.3 Financial: Funding requirements will be met from existing Service revenue budgets along with external funding bids as required.

4.4 Personnel: None

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Notes the consultation responses received and recommended amendments made to the Strategy; and**
- b) Approves the amended Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy for Our Green Network.**

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Director of Development Services

Date: 26 September 2013

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Report detailing consultee responses and suggested amendments.

Appendix B: Finalised Draft Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy for Our Green Network.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2012 – Main Issue 12 (The Green Network).
2. Falkirk Greenspace Initiative Feasibility Study 1993.
3. Central Scotland Green Network – Local Authority Concordat, Falkirk Council 2012.
4. Central Scotland Forest Strategy 2012.
5. Leisure, Tourism and Community Committee, 19 February 2013 – Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy For Our Green Network (Consultative Draft).

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers should contact Mandy Brown on 01324 504716