Issue 3: Housing Targets and Requirements

Key Question: How many homes should we plan to build?

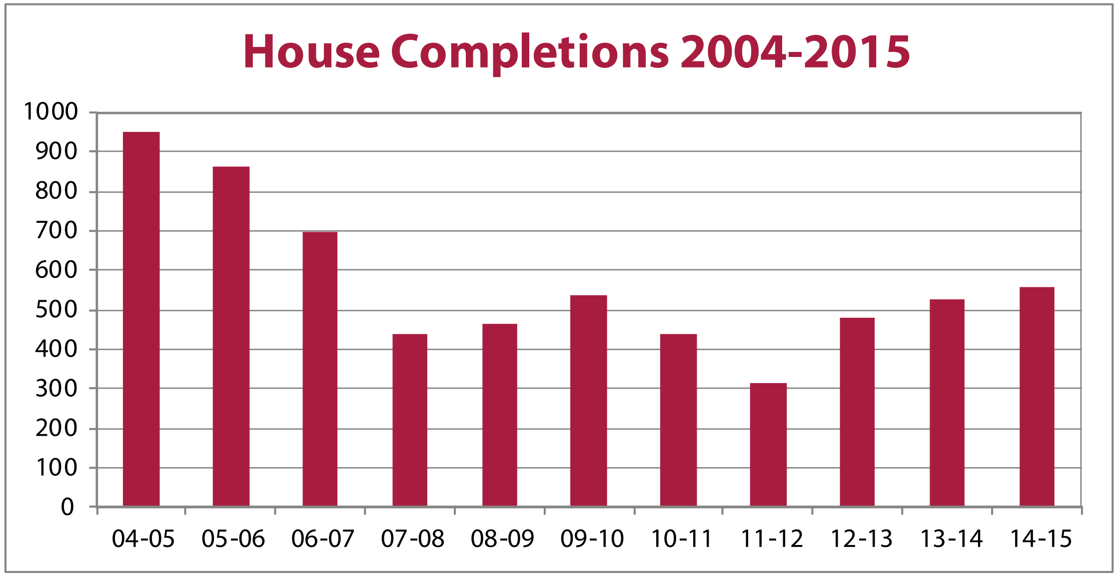
4.01 The population of the area has been increasing over the past 20 years, and now stands at 158,460 (2015 estimate), the highest it has ever been. Further growth is projected over the period of the plan, although at a slower rate than of recent times. It is estimated that by 2037 the population will have reached 173,130. The number of households is projected to increase by 10,979 between 2012 and 2037.

4.02 There is a need to build more new homes, and it is a key role of the LDP to set the number of homes to be built over the plan period (the housing supply target). This target is based on the Council's Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA), but also takes account of a broad range of factors. Infrastructure and environmental capacity are prime considerations, as is the broader economy and the state of the housing market.

4.03 The annual level of house completions in the area over recent years is shown in Figure 4.1. Prior to the recession, annual completions were approaching 1,000 homes, but this fell back to around 400 in 2007/2008, and has only recovered slowly, with the rate averaging less than 500 over the last five years, which is well short of LDP1's current annual target of 675 homes per year.

4.04 Based on the HNDA's estimate of housing need, the Council considers that a housing supply target of 9,600 over the plan period 2020-2040 should be set. Assuming an even rate of development, this would give a target of 4,800 for the initial 10 year period, and an annual target of **480 homes per year**, which is around what is being achieved at present. This is a reduction from LDP1, reflecting lower household projections and the general slowdown in household formation over the last eight years. It is likely to be a more sustainable figure over the long term, bearing in mind strategic transport and education constraints facing the area, environmental constraints, and market conditions. This still represents a very substantial level of new housing for the area. The housing supply target is split between market and affordable sectors, as indicated in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.1 House Completions in Falkirk Council Area 2004-2015



Issue 3: Housing Targets and Requirements

4.05 SPP emphasises the importance of providing a generous supply of housing land, and requires that a flexibility allowance of 10-20% be added to the housing supply target, to give the housing land requirement. This flexibility is intended to cover uncertainty in the delivery timescales for sites, and to allow the housing supply target to be met, even if there are delays in some sites coming forward, or sites are built out at a slower rate than anticipated. Flexibility needs to be set at a level reflecting the nature of the land supply, and the level of uncertainty attached to allocated sites.

4.06 At this stage a moderate level of flexibility of 15% is considered appropriate given the degree of uncertainty over the timescale for delivery of some of the larger sites in the land supply. The resultant housing land requirement is set out in Figure 4.2.

4.07

Preferred Option

The target will be to build 9,600 homes over the period 2020-2040, with 4,800 over the initial period of 2020-2030, at an average rate of 480 homes per year. A flexibility allowance of 15% would be applied, giving a requirement to identify land for 5,520 homes deliverable between 2020-2030 (see Figure 4.2).

Alternatives

1. A more generous level of flexibility could be provided, giving a greater housing land requirement. For example, choosing a level of 20% would increase the requirement by 240 homes.
2. A less generous level of flexibility could be provided, giving a lower housing land requirement. Choosing a level of 10% would reduce the requirement by 240 homes.

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred housing supply target is less than the 675 houses per year in the current LDP1. The current level of flexibility in LDP1 is 17%.

Figure 4.2 Housing Supply Target and Housing Land Requirement

	Housing Supply Target (HST)		Housing Land Requirement (HLR = HST + 15%)	
	2020 - 2040	**2020 - 2030**	**2020 - 2040**	**2020 - 2030**
Market	5,500	2,750		
Affordable	4,100	2,050		
Total	**9,600**	**4,800**	**11,040**	**5,520**

Issue 3: Housing Targets and Requirements

Affordable and Special Needs Housing

4.08 Affordable housing is housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. Affordability has been an issue in the area since the rise in house prices in the early 2000s, and there has been a significant building programme of affordable housing to rent by the Council and housing associations over recent years, averaging over 100 homes per year.

4.09 Of the overall annual target of 480 homes, the affordable housing element has been assessed as 205 a year during the LDP period. This will be delivered through new build, but also by better use of existing stock, buy backs of ex-Council stock, or by social landlords purchasing existing private stock.

4.10 LDP1 has an affordable housing policy which requires private housing sites of over 20 units to provide a proportion as affordable and special needs housing. The proportion is 25% in more pressured parts of the area, and 15% in other parts. However, relatively few units have so far been delivered through this mechanism due to the general downturn in the market. Nonetheless, given ongoing levels of housing need, it is intended to continue this policy into LDP2.

4.11 The HNDA also examines a range of specific housing needs, including those generated by the area's increasing elderly population. Some of this need can be met through adapting existing properties, and the market will also need to respond in terms of appropriately designed and located new build, which can be accommodated on general allocated sites. The current supportive policy on residential care homes will be continued into LDP2. SPP also requires the needs of gypsy/travellers to be considered. The HNDA concludes that there is no need for additional site provision. Nonetheless, the LDP1 has a policy setting out criteria for considering further privately owned gypsy/traveller sites, and this will be carried through into LDP2.

4.12

Preferred Option

Affordable housing need is assessed as 205 homes per year. The current policy of requiring private housing sites of over 20 units to contribute to affordable and special needs housing, based on a two tier quota system, would be continued. The quota for Larbert/Stenhousemuir, Rural North, and Braes and Rural South will be 25%; elsewhere it will be 15%.

Alternative

The affordable housing policy could be relaxed, either by raising the threshold above which it is applied, or by removing the requirement to contribute to affordable housing in communities where there is less of an affordability issue.

How does this differ from LDP1?

The new target for affordable homes is slightly less than the previous target of 233. The preferred affordable housing policy would be the same as LDP1. The suggested alternative would reduce the requirement on private housing sites to contribute to meeting affordable housing need.

Issue 4: Existing Housing Land Supply and 'Stalled Sites'

Key Question: How many homes will our existing housing land supply deliver?

4.13 The existing housing strategy within LDP1 identifies a significant amount of land for new housing, most of which is focused on 12 Strategic Growth Areas. Much of this land will be developed post 2020 and so will carry over into the new plan. The expectation will be that the housing strategy will be adjusted rather than radically altered for LDP2.

4.14 However, a number of sites allocated in LDP1, including some of the Strategic Growth Areas and key regeneration sites, have 'stalled' due to a variety of factors including infrastructure constraints, high development costs, low demand and continuing adverse market conditions, or delays in developers or landowners bringing them forward.

4.15 As part of the recent Housing Land Audit, these stalled sites have been reappraised to check whether they are still capable of yielding new homes in the next plan period. Figure 4.3 identifies the main stalled sites and the preferred approach to each. With some sites de-allocated and others reprogrammed, it is estimated that the existing housing land supply can deliver some 4,025 homes during the initial plan period of 2020-2030.

4.16

Preferred Option

De-allocate Strategic Growth Areas at Bo'ness Foreshore and Slamannan, sites at East Bonnybridge and Kilsyth Road, Haggs, and selected sites in the Rural South villages, as indicated in Figure 4.3.

Alternative

Other sites which are not currently progressing and have high development costs, e.g. Portdownie and Whitecross, could be de-allocated, based on a more pessimistic view of their long term viability.

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred option involves the de-allocation of certain sites in LDP1, thereby amending the spatial strategy. The alternative would see further de-allocation and divergence from the LDP1 strategy.

Figure 4.3 Stalled Sites

Site	LDP1 Ref.	Assessment	Preferred Option
Bo'ness Foreshore	**M01**	Strategic Growth Area. Concept of waterfront development remains attractive, but high development costs and market conditions render development unlikely. Focus could shift to developing and enhancing its greenspace function.	De-allocate as mixed use site apart from land along Links Road. Retain within urban limit as open space.
Drum Farm, Bo'ness	**H01/M02**	Part of Bo'ness South East Strategic Growth Area. Drum North in particular has stalled. Development costs are relatively high, but site remains attractive and likely to attract interest.	Retain as housing site and reprogramme.
Banknock	**M03/H07**	Strategic Growth Area. Banknock North is being actively progressed by developer and now has planning permission in principle. Banknock South is not currently being progressed but remains a marketable and deliverable site.	Retain as housing site and reprogramme.
Dennyloanhead	**H08**	Strategic Growth Area. Being actively progressed by developer.	Retain as housing site and reprogramme.
East Bonnybridge	**M15**	Green belt release in LDP1. This large site is heavily constrained by high pressure gas pipelines which would require to be diverted to allow development, the cost of which is likely to be prohibitive.	De-allocate as mixed use site and exclude from urban limit. Reinstate as green belt.
Kilsyth Road, Haggs	**H10**	Landowner no longer wishes to develop the site.	De-allocate as housing site and exclude from urban limit.
Broad Street, Denny	**M05**	Part of Denny South East Strategic Growth Area. Developer has withdrawn interest. Site remains a marketable and deliverable site although may have to be reduced in size to take account of flood risk.	Retain as mixed use site but reduce scale and reprogramme.
Former Denny High School	**H14**	Part of Denny South East Strategic Growth Area. In Council ownership. Remains a marketable and deliverable site.	Retain as housing site and reprogramme.
Portdownie, Falkirk	**M06**	Part of Falkirk Canal Corridor Strategic Growth Area. Not currently being actively progressed by Falkirk Council/Scottish Canals. High development costs, but development of site remains integral to canal regeneration strategy, and can be delivered in the longer term.	Retain as mixed use site but do not asume any homes delivered in the plan period.
Whitecross	**M14**	Strategic Growth Area. Developer went into administration in 2014. High infrastructure costs and land agreements to deliver strategic access are significant constraints. New masterplan required. Site requires regeneration and new settlement proposal remains potentially deliverable in the longer term.	Retain as mixed use new settlement and reprogramme.
Hillend Farm, Slamannan	**H70**	Strategic Growth Area. Low market demand in the Braes villages makes it unlikely that development of this scale would ever be viable in this location.	De-allocate most of the housing site and exclude from urban limit. Retain a smaller opportunity on the east side adjacent to Main Street.
Rural South Villages	**Various**	Low market demand in the Rural South villages has resulted in little developer interest in sites.	Retain only selected housing sites and de-allocate remainder (see Site Schedules for details).

Issue 5: Sustainable Community Growth

Key Question: Where should new homes be located?

4.17 The existing strategy for housing distributes growth across the Council area, mostly within the 12 Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), which include a mixture of brownfield regeneration sites and greenfield settlement extensions. Under Issue 4, it is suggested that the Bo'ness Foreshore and Slamannan Strategic Growth Areas be de-allocated as it is unlikely that they will be delivered even in the longer term. In addition, the Overton/Redding Strategic Growth Area will be completed before 2020. The following Strategic Growth Areas would therefore be carried through into LDP2.

- Bo'ness South East
- Banknock
- Dennyloanhead
- Denny South East
- Falkirk Canal Corridor
- Falkirk North
- Larbert North
- Maddiston East
- Whitecross

4.18 With a housing land requirement of 5,520, and an existing supply of 4,025, this means that further land for some 1,495 additional homes needs to be identified for the period 2020-2030. In considering options, Scottish Planning Policy emphasises the need to direct the right development to the right place. The aim is to create attractive new places which integrate well with existing communities, taking account of the following factors:

- Maximising the use of brownfield land before greenfield sites where possible;
- Supporting the regeneration of communities;
- Infrastructure capacity and availability;
- Environmental factors, including the setting and identity of existing towns and villages;
- Accessibility of sites, especially by sustainable means of transport; and
- Marketability and deliverability of sites.

4.19 Infrastructure capacity is a major issue in the area, with transport and education facilities particularly under pressure from sustained growth over the last 20 years. Major infrastructure upgrades are needed to deliver the growth planned through LDP1, and further investment may well be required to support further housing. The aim is to utilise spare capacity where possible.

4.20 The Council has invited landowners and developers to submit sites which they wish to be considered for inclusion in LDP2 (the 'Call for Sites'). In addition, an Urban Capacity Study has been undertaken to assess the potential for sites within the urban area to accommodate residential development. All sites have been subject to assessment against a range of environmental and infrastructure criteria.

4.21 The 'Call for Sites' submissions propose some sites for housing which are currently public open space. The Open Space Strategy indicates that there is a very generous amount of open space generally across the area, and that some open space may be surplus to requirements, and could be used for housing. However, decisions about which sites should be released for development need to be made on a comprehensive basis, considering all open spaces in an area, not just the few which have come though the 'Call for Sites' process. Consequently, no view has been taken on these sites, pending this more comprehensive exercise.

Issue 5: Sustainable Community Growth

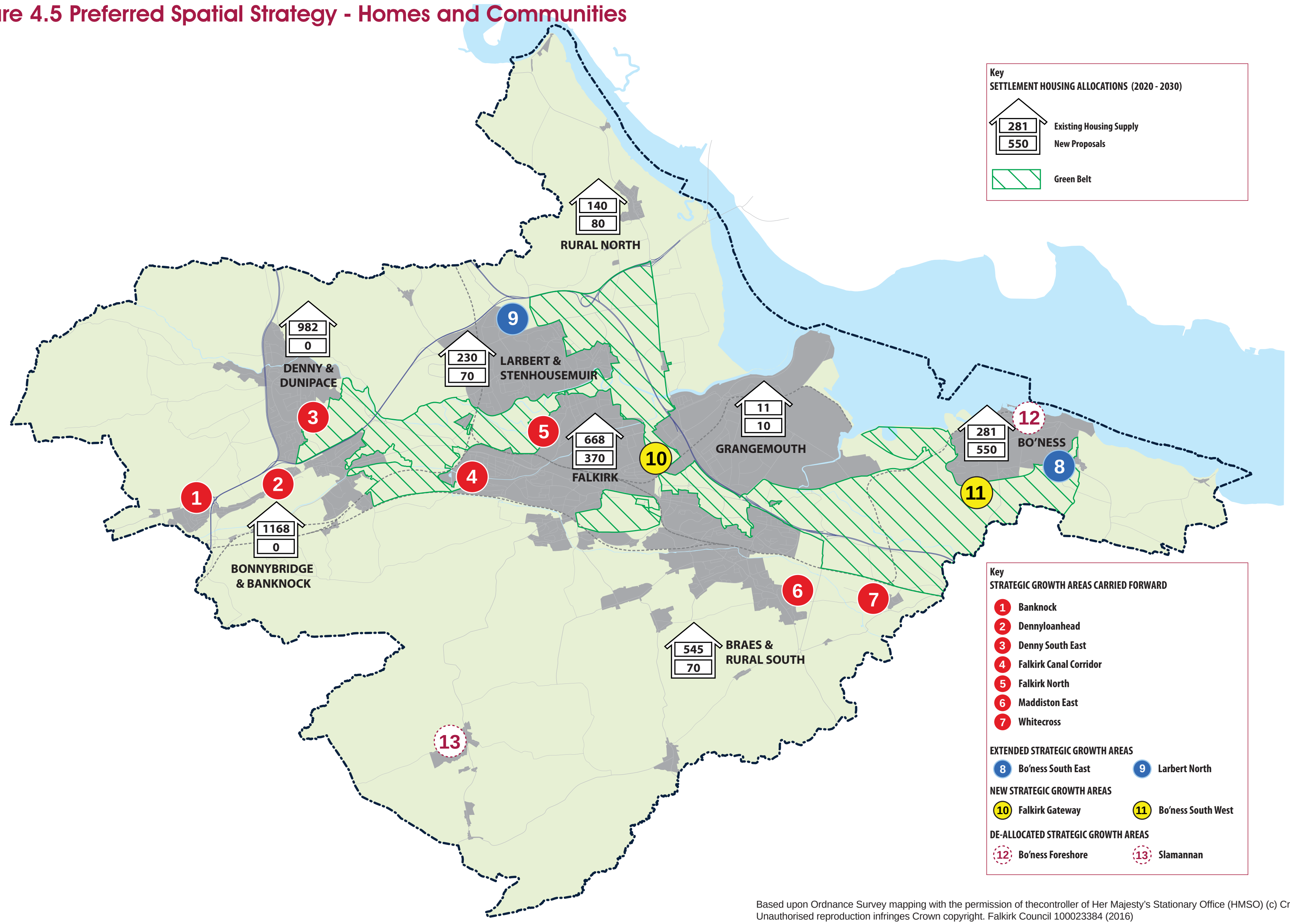
Preferred Strategy Overview

4.22 The housing choices for each settlement area are outlined on the following pages, and the scale of housing proposed in the various settlements to meet the housing land requirement is shown in Figures 4.4 and 4.5. In overall terms, two preferred new Strategic Growth Areas have been identified at the Falkirk Gateway and Bo'ness South West, replacing the de-allocated growth areas at Bo'ness Foreshore and Slamannan. In addition, there are preferred options to increase the housing content within the Larbert North and Bo'ness South East Strategic Growth Areas. Additional preferred allocations are identified for Falkirk, Maddiston and Skinflats.

Figure 4.4 Proposed Distribution of Housing Allocations by Settlement Area

	2020 - 2030			2030 - 2040
Settlement Area	**Existing Housing Supply**	**Additional Housing**	**Total**	**Growth Potential**
Bo'ness	281	550	831	**Medium**
Bonnybridge & Banknock	1,168	0	1,168	**Medium**
Braes & Rural South	545	70	615	**High**
Denny & Dunipace	982	0	982	**Medium**
Falkirk	668	370	1,038	**Medium**
Grangemouth	11	10	21	**Low**
Larbert & Stenhousemuir	230	70	300	**Low**
Rural North	140	80	220	**Low**
Windfall Allowance (50 per annum)		500	500	
Total	**4,025**	**1,650**	**5,675**	
Housing Land Requirement (including 15% flexibilty)			**5,520**	**5,520**

Figure 4.5 Preferred Spatial Strategy - Homes and Communities



Bo’ness

4.23 The population of Bo’ness has declined slightly over the last five years, reflecting a low recent rate of housebuilding. Infrastructure in the town is generally under less pressure than in some other parts of the Council area. Plans for a Strategic Growth Area at Bo’ness Foreshore have stalled and although this development would have brought regeneration benefits to the town, it is unlikely to be realistic even in the longer term. It would be removed from LDP2, apart from the part of the site fronting Links Road.

4.24 The other current Strategic Growth Area is Bo’ness South East, which includes the unfinished Drum Farm development and the ongoing development at Kinglass. The completion of the Drum development should be a priority. Drum South is currently a mixed business/residential site but, given lack of business demand, there is the potential to increase the proportion of the site given over to housing (an additional 100 houses), with a reduced business element refocused on a neighbourhood centre providing services for the Drum community.

4.25 Given the relative lack of infrastructure constraints in the town, Bo’ness presents an opportunity for additional housing growth to help meet housing requirements in the wider Council area and replace the de-allocated Foreshore site. Assessment of growth options around the edge of the town suggests that a large scale green belt release south of Crawfield Road, capable of accommodating about 450 new homes, provides the best long term option for a new Strategic Growth Area. This would require a masterplan to ensure a high quality, phased development, incorporating a robust landscape framework, and upgrading of local community infrastructure as required, in consultation with the local community. The site presents a particular opportunity to expand the green network in the South Bo’ness area, with new woodland, habitat and paths, which would be secured through the masterplan.

4.26

Preferred Option

Promote a new Strategic Growth Area through release of green belt at Crawfield Road (site 102), to replace the de-allocated Bo’ness Foreshore (site 63). Continue to focus on delivering the Bo’ness South East Strategic Growth Area (sites 1, 2, 3, 64) including increased housing content within Drum South (site 64) and a neighbourhood centre to serve the wider Drum development.

Existing Housing Supply 2020-2030	Additional Housing 2020-2030	Growth Potential 2030-2040
281	550	Medium

Alternatives

1. Extend the Bo’ness South East Strategic Growth Area to include land at North Bank Farm (site 103), involving green belt release
2. New Strategic Growth Area to the east of the town at Carriden/Muirhouses (sites 104,105).
3. Consolidation, focusing on the delivery of the existing Bo’ness South East SGA, with no new allocations.

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred option differs from LDP1 in that it removes Bo’ness Foreshore, and promotes a new Strategic Growth Area at Crawfield Road instead. It also changes the balance of uses on the allocated Drum Farm South site, with more housing in place of business use. The first two alternatives would involve different greenfield expansion options of varying scale. The third alternative would be involve no change from LDP1.

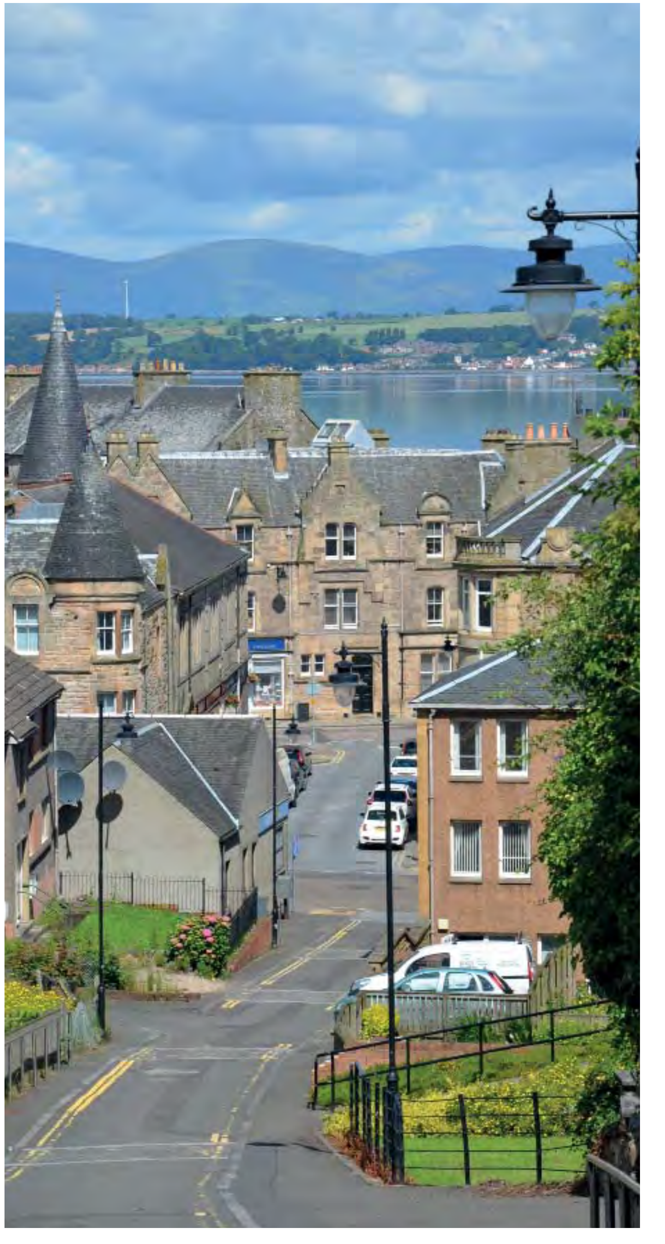
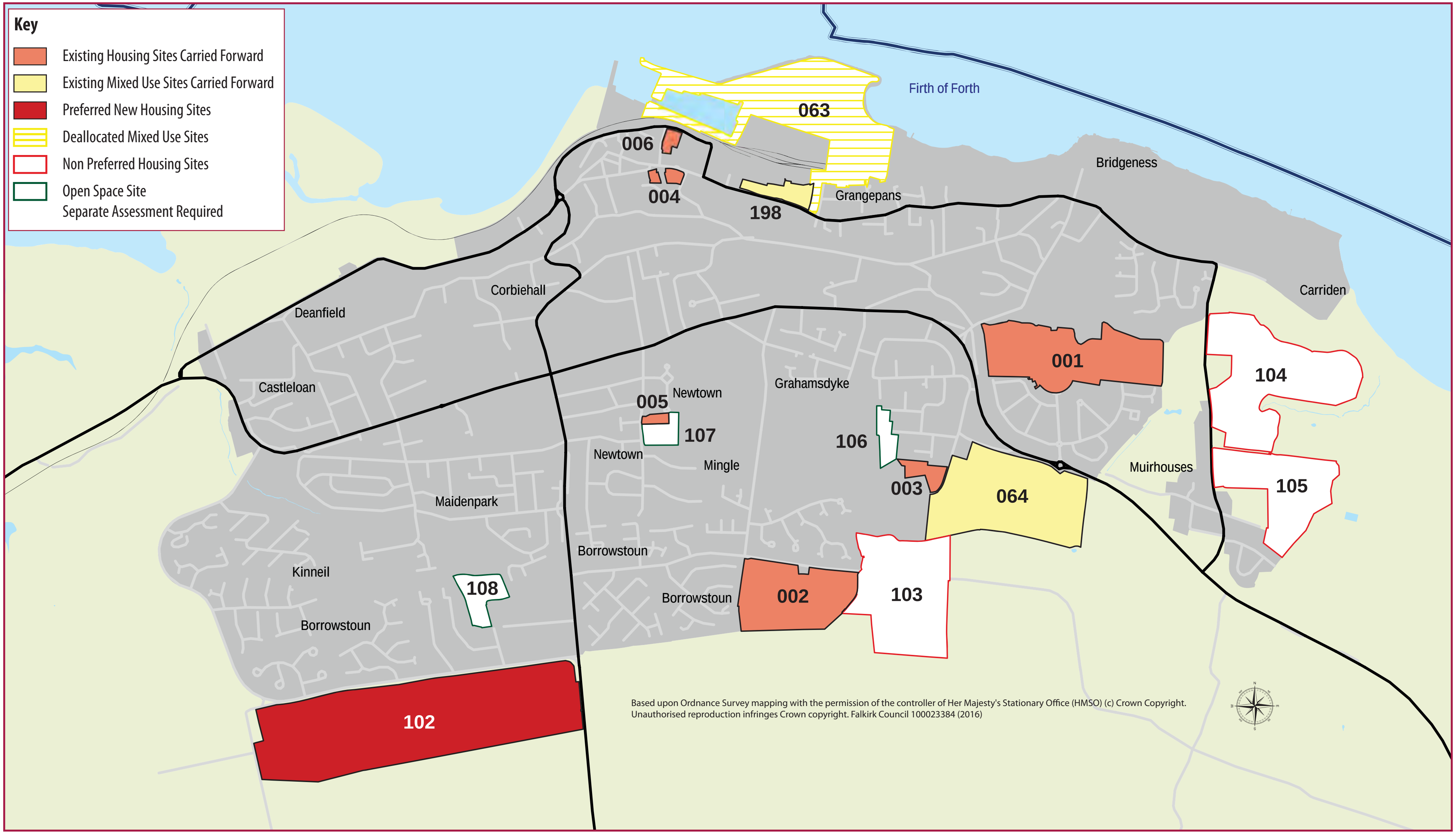


Figure 4.6 Bo'ness Housing



Bonnybridge and Banknock

4.27 The population of Bonnybridge and Banknock has been fairly stable over the last five years, and housebuilding has been limited. The western part of the A803 corridor is the major focus of growth in LDP1 through two Strategic Growth Areas at Banknock and Dennyloanhead which will be built out mostly during the 2020-2030 period, but will continue into the 2030-40 period. This will need to be accompanied by significant improvements to transport and education infrastructure. In Bonnybridge, the current proposed eastern expansion is suggested for deletion from the LDP due to pipeline constraints. Further developer interest has focused on High Bonnybridge, but education, historic environment and transport constraints do not favour this direction of growth. Given the high level of housing commitments in the area, the preferred approach is not to promote any further growth.

4.28

Preferred Option

Focus on delivering the existing Banknock and Dennyloanhead Strategic Growth Areas (sites 7, 8, 65). The sites at East Bonnybridge (site 77) and Kilsyth Road (site 9) are de-allocated.

Existing Housing Supply 2020-2030	Additional Housing 2020-2030	Growth Potential 2030-2040
1168	0	Medium

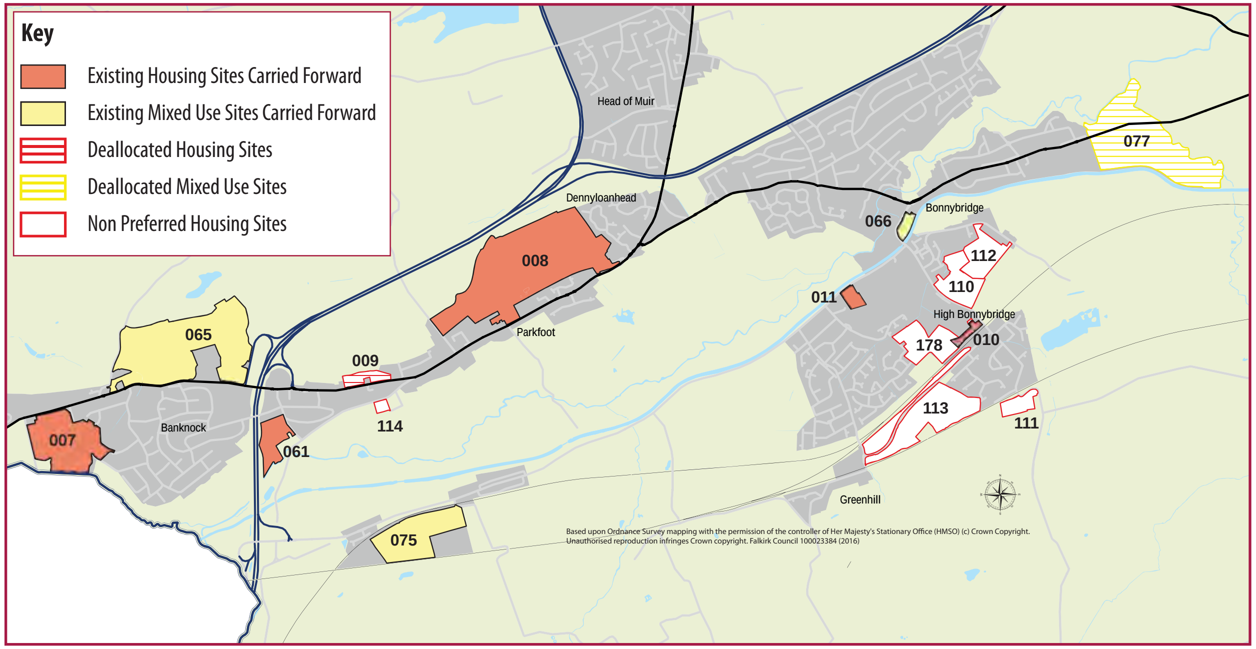
Alternatives

1. New Strategic Growth Area at High Bonnybridge incorporating large greenfield sites at Broomhill Road (sites 110, 112) and/or Reilly Road (113)
2. Minor settlement extensions at Longcroft Holdings (site 114) and/or Hillview Road, High Bonnybridge (site 111).

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred option differs LDP1 in that sites at East Bonnybridge and Kilsyth Road are removed. The alternatives would involve further greenfield expansion of varying scales.

Figure 4.7 Bonnybridge and Banknock Housing



Braes and Rural South

Maddiston and Rumford

4.29 Maddiston has grown significantly over the past five years with the building out of the Parkhall Farm site. LDP1 identified further sites at Parkhall and Toravon as part of the Maddiston East Strategic Growth Area which will continue into the LDP2 plan period post 2020. A permanent extension to Maddiston Primary School will be required to accommodate this growth, but thereafter there will be very limited capacity for any further developments, unless a new primary school is built or there is major catchment rezoning.

4.30 There have been expressions of interest in developing major sites to the east, north and south of the village, but in the light of school capacity constraints, and the scale of recent growth, the preferred approach is consolidation rather than further expansion. Nonetheless, the former Fire Service HQ is an important brownfield site at the heart of the village, which should be a priority for redevelopment, and could accommodate some housing as well as business/retail/community uses, utilising such limited capacity as may be available in the school.

4.31

Preferred Option

Focus on delivering the East Maddiston Strategic Growth Area (sites 33-37), together with limited additional housing as part of the former Maddiston Fire Station site (site 140).

Existing Housing Supply 2020-2030	Additional Housing 2020-2030	Growth Potential 2030-2040
124	70	Low

Alternatives

1. Extend the Maddiston East Strategic Growth Area, involving additional greenfield release to the north (site 142) or north west (site 189).
2. New Rumford East Strategic Growth Area, involving large scale greenfield release for mixed use extending north to the Union Canal (site 141).
3. Moderate settlement extension to the west of Maddiston at Greenwells Farm (sites 138, 139)
4. New Maddiston South Strategic Growth Area, involving greenfield release at Gillandersland (site 144).

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred option involves no change from LDP1, other than the indication of mixed use potential within the Maddiston Fire Station site. The alternatives would involve greenfield expansion of varying scales.

Braes and Rural South

Polmont, Laurieston and Westquarter

4.32 The population of Polmont has been stable over the last 5 years, with relatively little housebuilding. Two residential opportunities are identified in LDP1 at the site of the former Whyteside Hotel, and at Lathallan House. The major area of planned growth for Polmont in LDP1 is the long standing business site at Gilston. The option exists to release a greater or lesser proportion of this large site for residential development. However, the Council's view is that this prime business site is of a scale and location that is unique in the area and offers long term flexibility to accommodate inward investment of different formats. As such, residential development is not favoured. The other expressions of interest have been for a greenfield site at Station Road, and an area of green belt at Polmont Park, neither of which is favoured. No opportunities have arisen at Laurieston and Westquarter, where the green belt continues to constrain growth.

4.33 **Preferred Option**

No further housing development beyond currently allocated sites,.

Existing Housing Supply 2020-2030	Additional Housing 2020-2030	Growth Potential 2030-2040
82	0	Low

Alternatives

1. New Gilston Strategic Growth Area, with residential use introduced as part of the mix of uses within the current business site (site 95).
2. Moderate settlement extension to Polmont, involving greenfield release at Station Road (site 136).
3. Moderate settlement extension to Polmont, involving green belt release at the Polmont Park (site 195).

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred option involves no change from LDP1. The first alternative would involve a change of use of the Gilston site from exclusively business to mixed business/residential. The other alternatives would involve further greenfield expansion and green belt release of varying scales.

Wallacestone, Redding and Reddingmuirhead

4.34 The communities of Redding and Reddingmuirhead have seen major population growth over recent years through development at Overton and Redding Park. Expressions of interest have been submitted for sites in this area but none are considered to offer logical or desirable options for growth. The preferred approach is not to promote any further growth.

4.35 **Preferred Option**

No further housing development beyond currently allocated sites.

Existing Housing Supply 2020-2030	Additional Housing 2020-2030	Growth Potential 2030-2040
7	0	Low

Alternatives

1. New Wallacestone Strategic Growth Area, involving greenfield expansion at Standrigg Road (site 147).
2. Minor settlement extension at Redding Park North (site 145).
3. Allocation of greenfield site for residential use at Redding Road (site 146).

How does this differ from LDP1?

The preferred option involves no change from LDP1. The alternatives would involve additional housing allocations.