

Place and Environment - Natural Environment

PE17 Open Space and New Development

New development should contribute positively to the provision of open space in the area and support the objectives of the Open Space Strategy. Accordingly:

1. Where appropriate, proposals for new development should include public open space to create a sense of place, integrate the site with the wider green network, promote physical activity, sport and active travel, enhance biodiversity, and manage water within the site; and
2. Where the quantity, quality or accessibility of recreational and sport open space and play facilities in the locality is insufficient to meet the recreational needs of proposed new residential development, as informed by the standards in the Open Space Strategy, the proposal should address the identified deficiencies through either the provision of new on-site recreational and sport open space, or contributions to the improvement of off-site open space.

The detailed planning and design of new open space within new developments, including the methodology for determining and addressing recreational open space deficiencies, should accord with SG05 'Green Infrastructure and New Development'.

4.17 New development should generally incorporate open space. The provision of open space should be guided by a design-led approach which captures the specific character and opportunities presented by the site, and looks at how open space can contribute to sustainability and placemaking in the development. The recreational needs of residents should also be addressed with reference to the standards set out in the Open Space Strategy. Where there are local deficiencies in provision these can be met either through new open space on the site, or financial contributions to upgrade existing off-site open space. SG05 'Green Infrastructure and New Development' provides more detailed guidance on the methodology for determining the provision of open space within developments.

PE18 Landscape

1. The Council will seek to protect and enhance landscape character and enhance landscape quality throughout the Council area in accordance with Supplementary Guidance SG09 'Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations';
2. Development within Local Landscape Areas should be designed to minimise any adverse effects on the landscape character and scenic interest for which the area is designated ; and
3. Development proposals which are likely to have significant landscape and visual effects must be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment demonstrating that, with appropriate mitigation, a satisfactory landscape fit will be achieved.

4.18 The Falkirk area has a varied landscape, whose quality and character is important to the setting of settlements, and the area's image and identity. Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) identify the most important local landscapes (Denny Hills, Slamannan Plateau/Avon Valley and South Bo'ness). However, in line with the European Landscape Convention, there is a need to recognise the value of all landscapes within the area, and to take account of this in assessing development proposals. Supplementary Guidance SG09 'Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations' therefore provides information on forces for change, sensitivities and development guidance for all Landscape Character Areas.



Place and Environment - Natural Environment

PE20 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

1. There will be a presumption against the removal of safe and healthy trees, non-commercial woodlands or hedgerows, where such removal would be detrimental to landscape, local amenity, nature conservation, recreation or historic environment interests, or erosion and natural flood management. Criteria in the Scottish Government's policy on Control of Woodland Removal will be used to determine the acceptability of woodland removal;
2. Ancient, long-established and semi-natural woodland, including sites identified in the Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory, will be protected as a resource of irreplaceable value;
3. In areas covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or Conservation Area, development will not be permitted unless it can be proven that the proposal will not adversely affect the longevity, health or stability of trees, or their landscape, biodiversity or historic value. Where appropriate, other endangered trees or woodlands which have amenity, cultural or historic importance will be protected through the designation of further TPOs;
4. Development which is likely to affect trees should comply with Supplementary Guidance SG10 'Trees and Development'. A Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan will be required to inform the design, together with a Tree Protection Plan. Where development is permitted which will involve the loss of trees or hedgerows of amenity value, the Council will normally require replacement planting on site comprising similar species and numbers to the trees and hedgerows removed;
5. The enhancement and management of existing woodland and hedgerows will be encouraged. Where the retention of a tree group or woodland area is integral to a development proposal, developers will be required to prepare and implement an appropriate Management Plan;

6. The provision of new trees and woodland in association with new development will be encouraged in accordance with Supplementary Guidance SG05 'Green Infrastructure and New Development'; and
7. There will be a preference for the use of locally native species in new and replacement planting schemes, or other species where these are integral to an historic landscape.

4.21 Trees and woodlands have many benefits, including timber production, placemaking, landscape enhancement, screening, shelter, biodiversity value, carbon fixing, air quality improvement, natural flood management, recreation and opportunities to interact with nature. Hedgerows similarly have important benefits for landscape enhancement, screening, biodiversity, and air quality improvement. Protection of existing trees and woodland will be a priority, and the principles of the Scottish Governments Policy on 'Control of Woodland Removal' will be followed where woodland is affected. In addition, a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are in force across the Council area, as shown on the Proposals Map. New development will be expected to contribute to woodland and green network objectives through management and new planting as appropriate.

PE21 Promotion of Forestry and Woodland

1. The Council will promote the Falkirk Forestry and Woodland Strategy by:
 - Encouraging sustainable forestry that delivers a range of economic, social and environmental benefits, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, in accordance with the Strategy; and
 - Taking the Strategy into account in responding to consultations on proposals for felling, planting and restocking; in making planning decisions on woodland removal or creation; and making decisions on the Council's woodland projects.

4.22 Woodland cover, and the proportion of woodland brought under management, has increased in the Falkirk area over recent years, contributing significantly to the green network and bringing multiple benefits. The Falkirk Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2015-2055 provides a long term vision for the management and expansion of our woodland resource, including opportunities and constraints for new planting.

