

Homes and Communities - Housing

HC01 Housing Land

1. The housing supply target is 6,894 homes for the period 2017–2030. To meet this target, the Council will support residential development as indicated generally in the Spatial Strategy and as detailed in the Proposals and Opportunities Schedule and Settlement Statements, and on suitable windfall sites which satisfy Policy HC02.
2. The Council will maintain at least 5 years' supply of effective housing land to ensure that the Housing Supply Target is met in full over the development plan period. The Housing Land Audit is the primary source of evidence for monitoring the availability of effective housing land.
If, during the period of the plan, a shortfall in the 5 year supply of effective land emerges, additional sites for housing will be supported where the proposal would constitute sustainable development, having regard to the relevant criteria in Scottish Planning Policy and other LDP policies. In such circumstances, the scale of the proposed development relative to the scale of the shortfall will be a material consideration. The Council may also impose specific time limits on any planning permissions granted, to ensure that housing is delivered to a timescale that will address the identified shortfall.

4.30 The approach to housing land provision is set out in the Spatial Strategy, including the overall housing supply target, the housing land requirement which includes a flexibility allowance, and how this requirement is expected to be met through sites carried forward from LDP1, new sites, and windfall sites. In addition, Scottish Planning Policy requires that the Council maintains a 5 year effective land supply. Should a shortfall in the supply occur during the plan period, additional sites may be considered where they meet the criteria set out in Policy HC01.

**HC02 Windfall Housing**

Housing development on sites within the Urban and Village Limits, which are not identified as LDP proposals, will be supported where:

1. The site is brownfield or, if greenfield, will meet the terms of the Policy PE16 on protection of open space;
2. Housing is compatible with neighbouring uses and a satisfactory level of residential amenity can be achieved;
3. The site enjoys good accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling to shopping, recreational and other community facilities;
4. Existing infrastructure, such as transport, drainage, education and healthcare has the capacity to accommodate the proposed development, or can be upgraded through appropriate developer contributions, as required by Policy IR02;
5. The site is not at risk of flooding in terms of Policy PE24; and
6. The proposed development complies with other LDP policies.

4.31 Appropriate opportunities for housing development in addition to those specifically identified in the LDP may arise within the urban area over the period of the plan. These 'unplanned' sites will typically be on brownfield sites, and continue to make a significant contribution to housing supply in the area. The LDP assumes that such sites will yield a contribution of around 650 homes over the period 2017-2030 on the basis of historic trends, and an allowance for this has been built into the Spatial Strategy. Policy HC02 sets out criteria for assessing the suitability of windfall sites for residential development.

Homes and Communities - Housing

HC03 Affordable Housing

Housing developments of 20 units and over will provide affordable housing as set out below. The approach to provision should comply with Supplementary Guidance SG06 'Affordable Housing'.

Settlement Areas	Percentage of affordable housing on site
Larbert/Stenhousemuir Rural North Braes and Rural South	25%
Bo'ness Bonnybridge and Banknock Denny Falkirk Grangemouth	15%

4.32 Affordable housing is housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment demonstrates the continuing need for new affordable housing in the area. Out of the 6,894 homes required by the Housing Supply Target between 2017-2030, 3171 of these are anticipated to be affordable. A proportion of this affordable housing may be delivered by other mechanisms such as buybacks. While a substantial amount of social housing is being delivered by the Council and housing associations, private housing development also needs to contribute through the provision of a proportion of affordable units as set out in Policy HC03. SG06 'Affordable Housing' sets out in detail the types of housing which will be considered as affordable, and the options and mechanisms for complying with this requirement.



HC04 Housing Density and Site Capacity

1. The density and overall capacity of housing sites should be determined by a site planning process, based on the placemaking principles set out in Policy PE01, and in particular prior consideration of:

- The context of the site and the character of the surrounding area;
- Existing natural and built features which require to be retained within an appropriate setting;
- Open space, flooding and surface water management, and other green infrastructure requirements;
- Landscape impacts and associated mitigation requirements;
- Other site constraints; and
- Residential amenity, with particular regard to privacy, daylighting and suitable provision of private garden ground.

2. Where housing capacity figures set out in the Proposals and Opportunities Schedule have yet to be informed by an approved detailed masterplan, they will be regarded as indicative, pending the preparation of such a masterplan. However, where a proposed site capacity exceeds that set out in the Schedule, this will need to be fully justified through a design statement, which addresses Policy PE01 and the factors listed in sub section (1) above.

4.33 The appropriate capacity for housing sites needs to be determined through a detailed masterplan which is informed by the relevant design and placemaking principles. Where a site has been allocated in the LDP, but has not yet been fully masterplanned, the capacity stated in the Proposals and Opportunities Schedule will be an indicative estimate, based on a brief appraisal of the site location and constraints, and typical housing densities. It will need to be confirmed by a detailed masterplan, which could result in an amended figure.

HC05 Housing in the Countryside

Proposals for housing development in the countryside of a scale, layout and design suitable for its intended location will be supported in the following circumstances:

1. Housing required for the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential;
2. Restoration or replacement of houses which are still substantially intact, provided that the restored/ replacement house is of a suitable size and design;
3. Conversion or restoration of non-domestic farm buildings to residential use, including the sensitive redevelopment of redundant farm steadings;
4. Appropriate infill development;
5. Limited enabling development to secure the restoration of historic buildings or structures; or
6. Small, privately owned gypsy traveller sites which comply with Policy HC09.

Detailed guidance on the application of these criteria will be contained in Supplementary Guidance SG01 Development in the Countryside.

4.34 Given Falkirk's high accessibility to the whole of the Central belt there is pressure for new housing in the countryside. In pressurised areas such as Falkirk, SPP warns that it is important to protect against unsustainable growth in car-based commuting and the suburbanisation of the countryside. Policy HC05 recognises that there are various circumstances that housing in the countryside may be appropriate.

Infrastructure and Resources - Infrastructure

IR03 Education and New Housing Development

Where there will be insufficient capacity within catchment schools to accommodate children from proposed new housing development, or where Council nursery provision will be adversely affected, developer contributions will be sought in line with Policy IR02 to mitigate these impacts. In the rare circumstances where such mitigation cannot be achieved in a manner which is consistent with the Council's education policies, the proposed development will not be supported.

4.55 The Council has invested substantially in the school estate over recent years, and further investment will need to take place over the period of the plan, the key elements of which are outlined in the Spatial Strategy. School capacity remains an issue in many areas and Policy IR03 will be applied to ensure that pupils generated by development can be accommodated. Developer contributions will be sought to fund capacity enhancement where appropriate, but this may not always be possible. The Council also has a responsibility to provide an increasing number of nursery places. Again developer contributions will be sought to mitigate the cost of meeting the requirement for nursery provision arising from new development.



IR04 Community Facilities

- Proposals involving the loss of existing community facilities will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
 - There is no longer a need for the facility;
 - The facility is no longer financially viable; or
 - The services offered by the facility will be delivered satisfactorily in alternative ways.
- Proposals for new community facilities will be supported where:
 - In the case of proposals generating significant footfall, the sequential town centre first approach is met;
 - In other cases, there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling;
 - The proposal is compatible with the surrounding area in terms of scale, character and design; and
 - The proposal complies with other LDP policies.
- Proposals for major new public buildings, major community facilities or major commercial developments which are publically accessible, should incorporate a Changing Places toilet.

4.56 Communities benefit from a range of community buildings including those from which the Council or Falkirk Community Trust delivers services, as well as the many buildings owned and managed by private organisations for a variety of beneficial community activities. While these community assets are very important, rationalisation may sometimes be necessary due to issues of financial viability or to achieve more cost efficient ways of delivering services. Policy IR04 sets out a framework for considering applications which involve loss of community facilities. The policy also provides criteria for considering proposals for new community facilities, ensuring that they are located in appropriate and accessible places. The provision of Changing Places toilets will be a requirement in all major new public buildings, major community facilities and large commercial developments which are visited by large numbers of members of the public, for example leisure and arts centres, hospitals and large enclosed shopping centres. Changing Places toilets are toilets with the equipment, space and environment to cater for people with profound and multiple learning difficulties and more complex physical disabilities. Criteria for the design of Changing Places toilets are set out in BS8300.



Infrastructure and Resources - Infrastructure

IR05 Travel Hierarchy and Transport Assessment

1. Development proposals should support a hierarchy of travel which maximises the extent to which its travel demands are met first through walking, then cycling, then public transport and finally through use of private cars.
2. Transport assessments will be required for development proposals where the impact of the development on the transport network is likely to result in an increase in the number of trips, such that there will be significant impact on the operation of the transport network, requiring mitigation. Assessments will focus on the hierarchy of travel and should include, where appropriate:
 - Travel plans;
 - Safety audits of proposed mitigation measures; and
 - Air quality impact assessments.
3. The Council will only support development proposals where the transport assessment and travel plan have been appropriately scoped, the network impacts properly defined, and suitable mitigation measures identified.

4.57 Transport assessments are vital to ensuring that the transport network can accommodate new development, and in ensuring that sustainable modes of transport (active travel and public transport) are prioritised. Transport Assessments must be prepared in line with the current Transport Assessment Guidance published by Transport Scotland (current version published 2012). Travel Plans should accord with the Council's SPG on Travel Plans. The scoping of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans should be agreed with Falkirk Council prior to the submission of planning applications.

IR06 Active Travel

1. The Council will safeguard, improve and extend the network of active travel routes, with particular emphasis on the core path network. Development proposals should contribute to active travel infrastructure, either through direct provision or developer contributions, and should address the following requirements, as appropriate:
 - Support objectives set out in Travel Plans;
 - Support the Falkirk Greenspace Strategy by improving the extent and connectivity of routes within the green network;
 - Safeguard and improve existing active travel routes affected by the development, including the provision of temporary alternative routes where routes are disrupted by construction;
 - Provide linkages to the existing active travel network in the vicinity of the site and to schools, community facilities, local amenities and public transport; and
 - Provide appropriate additional infrastructure such as cycle parking, seating and signage.
2. The design of routes, including line, construction, surfacing, and, where appropriate, lighting should be specified within proposals and should:
 - Be appropriate to the location and intended use of the routes;
 - Promote safe use of the routes;
 - Facilitate, where appropriate, access to a wide range of users including pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired;
 - Promote ease of maintenance; and
 - Meet relevant standards where routes are to be adopted by the Council.

4.58 Active travel includes walking and cycling, for both functional and recreational purposes, and brings multiple environmental and health benefits. The Council's Core Paths Plan identifies an integrated system of top-tier routes, both urban and rural, extending to some 250 miles, in addition to which there is an expanding network of local routes which are connecting our communities to places they want to go. It is essential that active travel options are available for new development and that development contributes to the network of routes where opportunities arise. New routes should be appropriately designed and specified. Proposals should accord with the detailed guidance on active travel routes within SG05 'Green Infrastructure and New Development'.

IR07 Bus Travel

Development should benefit from good access to bus services, taking account of the 400 metre maximum walking distance required by Scottish Planning Policy. Measures to secure this should be assessed and agreed through Travel Plans and may include:

1. Links to existing bus stops, or the provision of new bus stops
2. In the case of larger developments, inclusion of routes suitable for provision of bus services through the development; and
3. Provision of financial contributions to support the delivery of bus services serving the development.

4.59 Buses are a vital element in the sustainable transport network. They are flexible and adaptable, and require relatively little specialist infrastructure when compared to rail transport. It is therefore important that new development has good access to bus services. Travel plans will specify requirements, which may include providing appropriate pedestrian routes to new or existing bus stops or, in the case of larger developments, making provision for new bus routes within the development, or providing contributions to support the delivery of bus services.