

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: FALKIRK OPEN SPACE STRATEGY FINALISED DRAFT
Meeting: LEISURE, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
Date: 16 FEBRUARY 2010
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. On 17th February 2009 the Environment and Heritage Committee instructed officers to proceed with public consultation of the consultative draft Open Space Strategy.
- 1.2. The consultation period which ran to 30th November 2009 is now over and this report summarises the comments received during the consultation period and recommends changes to the Open Space Strategy before it is considered for formal adoption.

2. FALKIRK OPEN SPACE STRATEGY BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 11 Open Space and Physical Activity requires that local authorities must now take action to undertake an open space audit covering all types of open space and prepare an open space strategy in order to deal strategically with open space provision.
- 2.2. A corporate steering group undertook the technical work which involved a three stage process:
 - Preparing a quantitative **Audit of Open Space**.
 - Preparing a **Qualitative Assessment** of the value of the identified open space to the community.
 - Preparing a draft **Open Space Strategy** for consultation purposes.

3. VISION

- 3.1. The overarching vision of the consultative draft Open Space Strategy is to secure long-term improvement to the quality of Falkirk's open spaces, so that they can provide a modern, sustainable and diverse resource for the benefit of the communities they serve.
- 3.2. A subset of 12 strategic objectives are presented to guide the implementation of the Open Space Strategy:
 1. To ensure that Falkirk's parks and open spaces are of a sufficient diversity, quality and distribution to meet the needs of local biodiversity and the needs and aspirations of local communities.

2. To maximise access to a parks and open space resource that serves all sections of the population, and all user groups, without unacceptable adverse impacts.
3. To strengthen and promote the contribution of Falkirk's parks and open spaces to people's health and well being.
4. To protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage resources offered by Falkirk's parks and open spaces to both people and wildlife.
5. To maximise opportunities for Falkirk's parks and open space to contribute to education and life-long learning for all and broaden understanding of the significant benefits to the environment.
6. To foster community pride and 'ownership' by engaging and involving local communities in the design, management and care of both existing and new parks and open spaces.
7. To ensure that the parks and open space resource can address the needs of the expanding population of the Falkirk area in the future, without unacceptable adverse impacts.
8. To underpin a strategic approach towards improving the parks and open space resource that will support applications for external funding and attract inward investment for both existing and new spaces.
9. To strengthen the contribution that Falkirk's parks and open spaces offer to wider regeneration and economic benefits, without unacceptable adverse impacts.
10. To protect Falkirk's parks and open space resource from inappropriate development.
11. To raise the awareness and profile of Falkirk's parks and open spaces with visitors, at a local and national level through improved marketing and promotion initiatives.
12. To inform decisions on the disposal or development of open space.

4. STANDARDS

- 4.1 The consultative draft Open Space Strategy set a number of standards proposed for adoption by the Council:

- A baseline standard for public open space provision within settlements should be 5 hectares per 1000 people or 50m² per person. (The current level of provision is 11.39 hectares per 1000 people or 114m² per person)
- All public open spaces should be fit for purpose. Public open space should be of good average quality to be considered fit for purpose.
- People should be no more than 400m (5 minutes walk) from a surveyed open space which is fit for purpose.
- People should be no more than 400m (5 minutes walk) from a public park.
- People should be no more than 400m (5 minutes walk) from a play space.
- People should be no more than 800m (10 minutes walk) from a sports area.
- People should be no more than 1200m (15 minutes walk) from a natural/semi natural open space.

5. CRITERIA FOR THE DISPOSAL OF OPEN SPACE

- 5.1 The consultative draft Open Space Strategy also recommends criteria which should be taken into account before any Council owned open space is considered for sale. These criteria can be seen at page 36-37 of the consultative draft Open Space Strategy. In summary these criteria effectively require demonstration that an open space is not providing, and is not deemed likely to provide, benefit to the local community.

6. INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT STRATEGIES

- 6.1 Priority improvements are recommended for each of the towns and villages across the Falkirk area. These have been assessed against a detailed analysis of the quantity, quality and distribution of open space provision and opportunities for improvements. The background analysis for each settlement is contained in Appendices D1 and D2 of the consultative draft, with the improvement actions for each town and village being summarised in Figure 7.8 A-Y.

7. ASSESSMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL OPEN SPACES

- 7.1 In order to assess the quality of open space within the Council area a representative sample of open spaces of different size, type and location were selected by Council officers for qualitative assessment. A total of 176 open spaces were assessed for quality against seven distinct criteria: Accessibility; Health and Wellbeing; Cleanliness and Maintenance; Biodiversity and Nature Conservation; Cultural Heritage and Local History; Community Involvement; and Design and Aesthetic Qualities.

- 7.2 The qualitative assessment of a site relates to how it serves the needs of the community - or ultimately its "fitness for purpose". However, the characteristics of an open space and, therefore, which quality criteria it should be judged against are very different depending on the importance of the open space and what function it serves. Some of the seven quality criteria were considered to be primary factors influencing the fitness for purpose of a particular site, and some were considered to be less important and therefore secondary. As previously detailed in the Falkirk Open Space Strategy Progress Report, presented to Committee in September 2007, officers worked together with specialist landscape consultants to define, for the first time, primary criteria influencing the fitness for purpose of all 176 sites. This was based on where sites sat in a hierarchy of importance and what function they served and can be seen at Table 5.3 in the consultative draft Open Space Strategy.
- 7.3 The assessment of each open space not only makes an assessment of its fitness for purpose but also includes an analysis of the main good and bad points of each open space and makes recommendations as to how it could be improved.

8. 5 YEAR ACTION PLAN

- 8.1 The consultative draft Open Space Strategy contains a 5 year action plan which sets out in Table 8.1 actions to complete the statistical base of the consultative draft Open Space Strategy, followed by actions to address quantitative, qualitative and accessibility issues across the Falkirk area.
- 8.2 In order to implement the action plan it will be necessary to report annually on the progress and develop funding priorities over time.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Letters advertising the consultation period and where to find a copy of the consultative draft Open Space Strategy were sent to 385 separate addresses including: community councils; area forums; schools, national stakeholders, local open space interest groups, tenants and residents groups, and planning and development consultancies.
- 9.2 Copies of the consultative draft Open Space Strategy were placed in all Council Libraries and One Stop Shops as well as at Abbotsford House and the Municipal Buildings.
- 9.3 Exhibition boards were taken around a number of public events which were already taking place during the consultation period in Bo'ness, Falkirk and Bainsford. Presentations were offered to all area forums and community councils. Approximately 1000 questionnaires were distributed at those events.
- 9.4 A dedicated webpage was set up on the Falkirk Council website which the Open Space Strategy could be accessed from and comments on any aspect of the strategy could be lodged. This webpage was advertised in the local press together with locations where a hard copy of the Open Space Strategy could be found.
- 9.5 Questions about the use of open space were put in the Household Survey which took place in summer 2009. The Household survey is a key source of information for the preparation of the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

10. CONSULTATION RESULTS

10.1 In total 95 separate responses were received commenting on 56 individual open spaces within the Council area. The open spaces generating the most responses were:

| Name of Open Space | Number of Responses | Suggestions for improvement |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Kinneil Estate, Bo'ness. | 9 | Improved maintenance of woodland and paths; introduce wildflower meadows; more dog/litter bins; regular patrols to deter vandals; major investment and promotion as a visitor attraction; signpost walks; relocate the swingpark. |
| Zetland Park, Grangemouth | 8 | Reduce level of dog fouling and litter; introduce adequate parking; redevelop tennis courts; light the kiddies cycle track; introduce more flowerbeds, seating and picnic tables; fill in the old boating pond and redevelop; re-establish the boating pond; make fountain operational; employ a park warden. |
| Dollar Park, Falkirk. | 8 | Increase the use of the house; introduce a visitor attraction; open up the walled garden; improve maintenance. |
| Bantaskine Estate, Falkirk. | 5 | Some ground to be allocated for allotment use; more frequent grass cutting; more historical interpretation boards; smooth paths to enhance accessibility; erect vehicle barrier to prevent fly tipping. |
| Callendar Park, Falkirk. | 4 | A place to park and lock bicycles; refurbish the toilet block; upgrade the crazy golf. |
| Victoria Park, Bo'ness. | 3 | Remove litter and cut grass more regularly; tarmac sloping paths; pollard the sycamores; clear undergrowth; grass the banking, introduce floral planting; renovate the old fountain. |
| Laurie Park, Brightons. | 3 | Update play facilities for 3-10 age group; introduce skate facilities; provide a supervisory presence; provide a multi use games area. |

10.2 Although the individual comments are helpful, the numbers of respondents to each open space are considered to be too low to be able to draw any accurate statistical conclusion about whether the quality scoring for each site should be revised to reflect the public's value of the site. As such, no changes to the quality scoring of each site are recommended.

10.3 Suggestions for improvements to individual open spaces have been reviewed and where appropriate, these will be incorporated into the recommendations for each

individual open space. Comments on individual open spaces are available on request and are a background paper to this report.

- 10.4 13 responses were received to the Open Space Strategy itself including 4 from national stakeholders, 5 from community councils and 4 from private individuals/ companies. Summaries of comments received and a proposed Council response are included at [Appendix 1](#) to this report. Consequential modifications to the Open Space Strategy are included at [Appendix 2](#) to this report.
- 10.5 National stakeholders were broadly supportive of the Open Space Strategy but were concerned about: the length of the document, the open space standards (particularly relating to natural/semi natural greenspace) and the fact that community involvement was not seen as a primary criterion affecting the fitness for purpose of individual open spaces.
- 10.6 National stakeholders also suggested an alteration of the criteria for the possible disposal of open space to include an additional criterion determining whether the spaces in question can meet another open space need; and an alteration to one of the 12 strategic objectives of the strategy to ensure the protection and enhancement of landscapes, townscapes and key views.
- 10.7 It is acknowledged that at 98 pages the Open Space Strategy is a large document but it is considered that it contains an appropriate level of detail to allow local people to be able to see how the strategy affects the open spaces that they use. Removing all of this detail to an appendix, as suggested by a number of respondents, risks watering down the Open Space Strategy to a point where it becomes bland and generic. In practice, the removal of detail to an appendix will become a barrier to the widespread use of that information rather than a way of making the strategy itself a more accessible and active working document.
- 10.8 The comments about the need to have more ambitious accessibility standards to natural/ semi natural greenspace are noted. However, 78.1% of residents within the towns and villages of the Falkirk area have acceptable access to a surveyed natural/ semi natural open space. Increasing this level to 100% to meet the open space standard suggested in the consultative draft strategy requires an ambitious programme of action. It is considered that progress towards meeting the current target should be monitored over the next 5 years and, if necessary, this accessibility standard can be reappraised when the Open Space Strategy is reviewed in 5 years time.
- 10.9 Community involvement was not originally considered to be a primary factor affecting the fitness for purpose of any open space as it did not affect the open space's ability to function appropriately e.g. if a sports area is accessible, clean, well maintained and contributes towards health and wellbeing then it is functioning properly as a sports area and is fit for purpose irrespective of whether the local community is involved in the management of the area.
- 10.10 The point national stakeholders were making, however, is that the primary function of an open space is to serve the local community, and if they are not involved in the management and use of the open space then that open space is failing to achieve its primary function. Including community involvement as a

primary criteria affecting fitness for purpose would also allow community value to affect assessments of quality as suggested by SPP11.

- 10.11 Taking community involvement into account as a primary criterion affecting the fitness for purpose of an open space would have the following affect:

| Hierarchy. | Percentage of open spaces which are fit for purpose. | Community Involvement is a Primary Criterion. | Community Involvement is not a Primary Criterion. |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| National (7) | 100% | 100% | 0% |
| Regional (24) | 96% | 92% | 4% |
| Settlement (104) | 69% | 64% | 5% |
| Neighbourhood (41) | 33% | 29% | 4% |
| Total (176) | 65% | 62% | 3% |

- 10.12 It is recommended that community involvement is considered to be a primary factor affecting the fitness for purpose of all open spaces. As a consequence of this, the Open Space Strategy should aim to promote community involvement in open spaces as a way of increasing the overall fitness for purpose of its open space resource. This could take many forms e.g. local management groups, residents' action groups, project specific groups. It should be noted that, if this recommendation is accepted, then it will be likely to change the percentage of the population who are within 400m of a fit for purpose open space. The degree of change will require further detailed analysis.

- 10.13 Community councils primarily restricted their comments to the individual open space strategies for the towns and villages within their area. Where appropriate, it is recommended that individual open space strategies are altered to reflect local aspirations.

- 10.14 A number of private individuals/ companies made comments relating to how certain pieces of open space had been categorised in the quantitative audit and suggested new opportunities for improving open space provision. Where appropriate, it is recommended that the quantitative audit is altered to correct mistakes and individual open space strategies are altered to highlight further opportunities for open space enhancement.

11. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that an environmental report be prepared alongside the Open Space Strategy. The environmental report identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of the implementation of the Open Space Strategy and its reasonable alternatives.

- 11.2 The environmental effects of the implementation of the Open Space Strategy are essentially positive e.g. on biodiversity, quality and liveability of settlements, human health and landscape quality. No significant adverse environmental effects are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the strategy.

12. IMPLICATIONS

Financial: No direct implications, but the strategy is intended to inform future operational priorities for open space development and enhancement.

Legal: The preparation of an Open Space strategy is a requirement of Scottish Planning Policy 11. The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that an environmental report be prepared alongside the Open Space Strategy.

Policy: The strategy directly addresses the themes of the Strategic Community Plan 2005-10. The strategy will inform the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the Local Development Plan. It will also provide a robust evidence base to inform future Parks Development Plans and other leisure related strategies.

Personnel: No implications.

13. RECOMMENDATION

13.1 That Committee:

- (i) Refers to the Policy and Resources Committee a recommendation to approve the Falkirk Open Space Strategy subject to the modifications outlined in Appendix 2.

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Director of Development Services

Maureen Campbell.

Director of Community Services

Date: 08/02/10

Contact Officers: Danny Thallon, Planning Officer, ext 4927.
John Banks, Parks and Recreation Manager, ext 0923.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS.

1. Consultative Draft Falkirk Open Space Strategy.
2. Consultative Draft Falkirk Open Space Strategy – Environmental Report.
3. Compendium of comments on individual open spaces.

Anyone wishing to inspect either of the background papers should contact Danny Thallon on ext 4927.

APPENDIX 1

COMMENTS RECEIVED AND PROPOSED RESPONSES.

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Historic Scotland

Comment: Historic Scotland ask for the Antonine Wall WHS to be included within the list of heritage assets in para. 3.4.1

Any proposals for access improvements in and around Blackness Castle should be discussed with Historic Scotland. Any proposal affecting the Antonine Wall WHS should be discussed with Historic Scotland.

Proposed Response: The Antonine Wall WHS will be added to the list of heritage assets in paragraph 3.4.1. Any specific proposals will be discussed with Historic Scotland at the appropriate time.

Scottish Natural Heritage

Comment: The strategy could highlight further the benefits of bringing together various Council departments to enable closer interdepartmental working, as well as emphasising the aspiration to make more of section 75 agreements to benefit the wider open space networks.

The objective to complete the qualitative assessment of all of the open spaces within the Falkirk Council area, along with setting clearly linked outcome targets and indicators is commended. Also commended is the overall objective that all open space will eventually achieve all three standards of distance, quality and quantity, although there may be room to increase the strategy's aspirations with regard to open space standards.

Proposed Response: The benefits of bringing together various Council departments to enable closer interdepartmental working will be emphasised within the strategy. The role of section 75 agreements will be explored further in the forthcoming Open Space and New Development Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPG).

The strategies aspirations with regard to open space standards will be reviewed when the Open Space Strategy itself is next reviewed. It will not be possible to assess the relative progress that the Council has made towards achieving these standards until the suggested 5 year action plan is implemented.

Greenspace Scotland

Comment: At 98 pages, the Open Space Strategy is too long. It is suggested that many of the maps (which at the scale offered by the document are difficult to interpret) are moved to a series of annexes. Keep the strategy strategic - settlement specific analysis

and recommendations should be an annex to the strategy. If no changes are made, then a short summary document should be produced.

Proposed Response: It is acknowledged that at 98 pages the Open Space Strategy is a large document but it is considered that it contains an appropriate level of detail to allow residents of Falkirk to be able to see how the strategy affects the open spaces that they use. Removing all of this detail to an appendix, as suggested by a number of respondents, risks watering down the Open Space Strategy to a point where it becomes bland and generic. In practice, the removal of detail to an appendix will become a barrier to the widespread use of that information rather than a way of making the strategy itself a more accessible and active working document.

A short summary document will be produced in due course.

Sportscotland

Comment: The document in question appears to include a very thorough assessment of each settlement within Falkirk in terms of open space. It is understood that it is Falkirk Council's intention to produce a Sports Pitches Strategy at some point in the near future. This will be able to provide a more comprehensive analysis of Falkirk's sports pitches, the preparation of which Sportscotland would wish to be involved. However, the Open Space Strategy has considered the potential impact of future developments and considers how an increase in population would create a demand for open space and sports areas. This consideration is supported by Sportscotland.

The emphasis the Open Space Strategy places on connectivity and green corridors is welcomed by Sportscotland. Cycling and walking should actively be encouraged through SPGs. There is also a strategic principle to focus on community-led projects which is supported.

As the focus of Sportscotland in terms of land use is primarily associated with sports pitches / facilities it is believed that input would be more beneficial with regard to a Sports Pitches Strategy, which Sportscotland would encourage the council to produce. The detailed analysis of openspace contained within the Open Space Strategy will be a valuable resource / first step which should assist in the creation of such a strategy.

In terms of sports pitches provision Falkirk Council should also take into consideration the findings of the recent planning appeal which considered the application for development at Firs Park.

Proposed Response: Support is welcomed.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Airth Parish Community Council

Welcomed the Council's commitment to conserving and in some cases improving the play areas and garden spaces etc. Areas of concern would be connected to the present financial constraints which cause the Council to find additional capital through the sale of surplus land. For that reason comments are confined at this point to highlighting the parks and open spaces which are believed to be essential to the wellbeing of our communities. Where Falkirk Council has identified improvements our support is offered and where possible in terms of taking the lead in applying for grant from outside bodies, assistance is offered again.

Airth:-

- The work to be carried out in the recreation ground (identified as area 82 on the Airth site plan) is recognised and the fact that the playing fields will be secure is welcomed. Also note that there will shortly be an increase in the play equipment at the Wilderness Park.
- The area shown at Shore Road identified as the Rose Garden and the section used as a flower bed were identified in a recent planning application and it was minuted at the Regulatory Committee meeting at that time that this land should never be sold for housing purposes. This should continue to be the case. The Rose Garden has been cared for by the residents of Shore Road for a number of years who use it as a place for quiet reflection.
- The grassed area and flower beds at the South End of the High Street are essential for various reasons but most recently as the focal point for the village Christmas Tree and lights which are provided by the residents of the Parish themselves.
- A large section of the grassed area (identified as area 83 on the site plan) opposite Graham Terrace has been reserved as an extension to the burial ground and must be retained for this purpose. Any attempt to enhance the area with the provision of new facilities and improvements to the footpaths is supported.
- The South Green Drive Residents Association have gathered sufficient funds to create a Community Garden and Children's play area on the section identified as area 93 on the site plan and with Council's consent will begin work in 2010.
- The Airth Castle Woodlands section (identified as area 84 on the site plan) is now established as a haven for many types of wildlife, deer, owls, buzzards etc. Any change to the woods would have a major environmental impact on the Village.

It is agreed that in Douglas Avenue and Castle Drive, Sneddon Place and Castle Avenue there is an under provision of open space and play areas. Airth Parish Community Council would support Falkirk Council in attempts to find outside funding to provide these facilities.

The Community Council has in the past put forward a strong case for improvements to public transport to improve access to both Falkirk and Grangemouth for recreational

and sports facilities in both towns. Falkirk Council's attempts to improve the provision of public transport to these centres is supported.

Dunmore:-

There are a number of sites which are of concern to the residents of Dunmore Village. They would argue that these areas be retained and improved to retain the Historic character of this community.

- There is an area of Council owned land in front of M'Dina and its new build neighbour, which provides a sweep of grass and flowers at the entrance to the village. An application has been submitted to purchase the land for use as gardens. The residents believe this area must be retained by the Council.
- There is a private section of land on which the Bowling Club has their rented clubhouse. The residents along with members of the Bowling Club have sought funding from Falkirk Council to purchase and retain this area for community use. If funding cannot be found by the Council the community would be willing to take the lead, with Council assistance to seek external funding.
- The area known as the old Woodyard has been identified by Falkirk Council as surplus to requirement and could be offered for sale as a housing plot. The residents are concerned that new build of this nature could change the culture of the village which would lose some of its historic ambience. They would ask Falkirk Council to retain the woodyard and allow the residents to seek funding to turn this into a Community Garden.
- The community would support the Council in any attempt to improve provision through consideration of a Community Woodland, protection of rights of way and provision of a new right of way and the provision of an interpretation panel on the cultural history of the Model Village and its surroundings.

Letham:-

The two open space areas identified as No7 and No72 should be protected and in the case of No. 7 Letham Cottages backcourts should be improved.

Falkirk Council's concern regarding the piecemeal erection of fences on the backcourt area is shared. A footpath which circles the area and passes close to toilet and kitchen windows is not the most desirable aspect of the backcourt and Falkirk Council are supported in any attempt to improve this situation.

South Alloa:-

The area of open space identified as No77 has been improved through the efforts of the community in South Alloa and should be protected and improved to a high standard.

It is noted that there is interest in developing the Marley site for housing. There will be a substantial increase in population and this will require a major increase in the provision of open space and sports and play facilities In South Alloa.

Attempts to maximize opportunities for a green coastal corridor and potential of the foreshore setting are supported.

Airth Parish Community Council supports the Council's vision and will help, where possible, to secure funding to achieve improvements to the sports/play areas and open space provision in Airth Parish.

Attempts to identify as surplus to requirements and to sell off any areas essential to the social wellbeing of our communities will not be supported.

Proposed Response: Comments regarding individual open spaces and open space strategy for Airth, Dunmore, Letham and South Alloa area noted.

Additional comments will be added to the South Green Drive Qualitative Assessment to reflect that local residents have sufficient funds to create a community garden and children's play area on this site.

The Open Space Strategy does not indicate which areas of open space are provided protection. That is a function of the Local Plan. The areas which are suggested for protection in Dunmore are not currently designated as protected open space by the Local Plan, however, a level of protection should be afforded via policy EQ12 Conservation Areas

Site 72 in Letham is already designated as a protected open space in the Local Plan. Site 7 is not a protected open space in the Local Plan, however, a level of protection should be afforded via policy EQ12 Conservation Areas.

Site 77 in South Alloa is already designated as a protected open space in the Local Plan. Improvements to the site by the Local Community are noted and these will likely be acknowledged when the qualitative assessment of the site is reviewed within the next 5 years.

Comments regarding the Community Council's intention to resist the sale of land which is surplus to requirements are noted. However, it is not the function of the Open Space Strategy to identify where open spaces are surplus to requirements.

Blackness Community Council

Supported the proposals shown on the map, in particular the need to improve the foreshore footpath from Blackness to Bo'nness.

They also like to bring to attention the need for reinstating the footpath from the Champany Inn to Blackness School. This would connect the A904 to Blackness Village and its open spaces. This footpath used to exist and the curbstones can still be seen in places. This improvement would aid accessibility by providing a safer environment for walkers, runners, etc.

Proposed Response: Physical and financial constraints mean that the reinstatement of a footpath along this road from Blackness School to Champany Inn would be unfeasible.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council

The Community Council has for some time been concerned about the continued loss of open space as a result of housing and other developments in the local area. The Community Council has also been concerned about the quality of existing open space in the local area. This document is important in ensuring that a strategic framework is in place for the local area to preserve and provide opportunities to enhance open spaces which are of importance to the growing local community.

The Community Council raised a number of local issues including ongoing residential developments in Torwood, felling of trees in Torwood, the zoning for housing at the development sites on the former RSNH site and the reduction and quality of open space in Stenhousemuir Town Centre.

The Community Council also looked forward to being consulted and working with Falkirk Council on the implementation of the actions identified in the strategy.

Proposed Response: Comments noted.

Readingmuirhead and Wallacestone Community Council

The study material is very detailed. However this in turn makes it overwhelming to digest.

Residents of this area would be disappointed to find themselves in a larger group with Polmont and would prefer to be able to see detail for their own villages.

There is a wealth of information in the strategy for the dedicated reader will reveal interesting facts and promote dialogue.

Generally speaking, people are pleased with the overall strategy though there are those who doubt the wisdom of the spending involved. This will be especially true given the current economic climate and it is expected that the time lines may have to be reviewed.

With reference to the specific questions, there would seem to be little to complain about in general.

Controls on disposal of open space are to be welcomed as it is too easy to build on garden ground or green belt land.

It would appear that the prison grounds are not in this draft.

Whilst the strategy is generally likely to be welcomed the report presentation should have been more user friendly. Perhaps several smaller reports (reportlets?) assembled from the greater bulk here and aimed at the specific town or village would be better. I also wonder if the feedback you seek might be better collected from 'on the street' interviews with those who will actually be out there using the facilities as opposed to representatives or indeed those who can be bothered to write to you. I note that the attendance at the show was very small too.

Proposed Response: Section 7 of the Open Space Strategy does present bite sized sections relevant to the area or village concerned. In the case of Readingmuirhead and Wallacestone, these are admittedly presented in a larger group with Polmont, but this is

because they represent a contiguous urban area rather than a group of separate villages, hence the need to view the sites as a whole. Splitting the report to include individual sections for areas which are part of a contiguous urban area would lengthen the document still further.

Approximately 100 responses were received to an open space survey during the consultation period.

It is acknowledged that the Open Space Strategy is a large document but it is considered that it contains an appropriate level of detail to allow residents of Falkirk to be able to see how the strategy affects the open spaces that they use. Removing all of this detail to an appendix, as suggested by a number of respondents, risks watering down the Open Space Strategy to a point where it becomes bland and generic. In practice, the removal of detail to an appendix will become a barrier to the widespread use of that information rather than a way of making the strategy itself a more accessible and active working document.

A short summary document will be produced in due course.

Shieldhill and California Community Council

Shieldhill: -

1. The use of both Shieldhill Playing Fields (116) and Shieldhill School Playing Fields (118) is severely restricted due to poor drainage. This should be noted in your assessments of these sites and addressed in any future improvements.
2. Mention is made of some “small amenity open spaces” and that “a quality survey of these spaces should be considered prior to addressing potential under provision”. Attention in particular is drawn to High View Gap Site which is considered to be a large site centrally located and in need of urgent improvement.
3. Maintenance – a problem over the past 10 years has been the maintenance of several open spaces within the village. The Strategy should acknowledge this and assist in finally resolving the matter satisfactorily.
4. There is a small site which has been missed at Vorlich Drive.
5. Westerglen (117) is allocated in the Falkirk Council Local Plan as “RC.SHIE1 – Community Open Space /Recreational Area” and as such should be highlighted in green as open space on the Strategy Plan/Map for Shieldhill page 78. The site should also be highlighted for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity following a report prepared the Bio-diversity Officer for Falkirk Council.
6. Within the last two years there has been pressure to build on the periphery at the eastern and western ends of the village. There should be no further encroachment into the surrounding countryside as stated in the Falkirk Council Local Plan.
7. Access to Bellsrig Wood via right of way from Cross Brae (adjacent to shop) should be reinstated.

8. Completion of path at Bridge 57 connecting Shieldhill to Union Canal – “Old Drove Road” is requested.

California

Proper provision of recreational and community facilities should be developed hand in hand with housing developments. Any planning gains should be utilised for the benefit of California village. Developments should be completed satisfactorily e.g. roads and pavements properly completed, maintenance of open spaces addressed and factors in place before developers leave sites. It is the Council’s responsibility to ensure that the developments are built are in accordance with the plans approved.

The development of Bellsrig Wood and Burnside Woodland have been important additions to open space provision around California and are to be commended.

Proposed Response: Poor drainage will be noted on both sites 116 and 118 and addressed in future improvements

3 out of the 4 surveyed open spaces in Shieldhill score less than good for cleanliness and maintenance. It seems reasonable therefore that improvement of the cleanliness and maintenance of open spaces in Shieldhill is added as a specific strategy action.

The qualitative assessment of open space is not intended to be comprehensive although that is one of the long term aspirations of the Open Space Strategy. The site at Vorlich Drive (and others in Shieldhill and California) will be added in a future review of the Open Space Strategy)

The entirety of site 117 will be highlighted as open space on the strategy plan for Shieldhill

The reinstating of access to Bellsrig Wood and improvement of access from Shieldhill to the Union Canal will be added as specific strategy actions.

PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Blair Dewar

The need for local parks and the costs involved with maintaining a large number of parks is expensive. The Council should concentrate more on larger parks. Reasons for this would be to provide a larger range of play equipment and potentially parking spaces. If there were fewer parks then it would be cost effective in maintenance as well. Also with larger parks and parking spaces people are more likely to make use of them.

Main concern is Larbert/Stenhousemuir. It is now one of the largest areas in Falkirk and is continually growing. There are a number of very small play areas, local parks but these are of poor quality. The new Kinnaird Village area should have a large core park or area park set up.

Callendar Park and Zetland Park play areas are good but have limited facilities and are overused. A large park with a variety of equipment for smaller kids and larger kids and also equipment geared towards fitness is needed.

Otherwise the Council should develop Crownest park more. A park that families could go out for the day and spend it there, picnic tables, toilets, refreshments, variety of play equipment etc.

Proposed Response: The points are noted. There is a large new woodland park being planned at the former RSNH site, this will help to serve the growing population of the Larbert and Stenhousemuir area.

I Shanks

Sought the reclassification of land in his ownership which had been identified as part of the site at Little Denny Reservoir (Site 59) suggesting that it should be excluded from the functional open space.

Proposed Response: The site boundary of Little Denny Reservoir will be altered to remove Mr Shank's land.

BUSINESSES

Kemfine Ltd

Kemfine seek the reclassification of land in their ownership at Earls Road in Grangemouth which has been identified in the quantitative audit as playing fields as private grounds or gardens.

Proposed Response: The sites in question will be reclassified in figure GRA.1

Hargest and Wallace

On behalf of HM Investments Limited it is requested that consideration is given to a proposal which would increase access to open space at Foggermountain, by Avonbridge i.e. the proposed partial infilling with inert waste material of a pond at the former opencast quarry at Foggermountain, by Avonbridge.

It is intended to partially infill the larger pond with inert material which will have the effect of reducing the overall water depth. It is proposed to fill in the deep northern sector of the pond resulting in a re-profiled water body with a more irregular northern shoreline and a corresponding small reduction in the total water surface area. Mineral soil contained in the spoil heap to the north of the pond will be used to dress off the engineered infill that will be planted with a range of appropriate tree and shrub species.

The proposal will create a more natural, gently sloping shoreline that will be planted with a variety of native marginal and emergent species providing new habitats for a range of aquatic species.

Access provision around the pond will be incorporated into the design. Furthermore access would be provided to the overall site. The proposal has substantial benefits in terms of open space access, biodiversity as well as health and safety.

Proposed Response: This proposal presents the opportunity to enhance access to natural/semi natural open space in Avonbridge and potentially create a further regionally important open space. Residents of Avonbridge do currently have access to a natural/semi natural open space through the River Avon Heritage Trail, but the creation of this new open space would enhance this provision further.

The individual open space strategy for Avonbridge will now be revised to include a specific action to improve access to the Foggermountain site, should planning permission for the proposal be gained and funding found for the project in the future.

Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions

Question 1: Paragraph 2.2.4 shows the other strategies and plans that have been taken into account during the preparation of the Open Space Strategy. Do you think there are any other local related plans and strategies which the Council should take into account in preparing its Open Space Strategy?

SNH - The Falkirk Core Paths Plan could be useful to illustrate and assess connectivity between open spaces. The developing Central Scotland Green Network is important to refer to, ensuring the strategy links in with, and supports, a wider green network. The Council should also look at opportunities to link the strategy, and its implementation, to the Single Outcome Agreement. SNH has developed proposed SOA indicators for greenspace, which focus on the % of households within 5 minutes walk from good quality greenspace, and levels of satisfaction with the management of local greenspace.

Greenspace Scotland - Suggested the addition of references to National Planning Framework 2

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The Community Plan is not referred to nor are the Local Community Plans

Proposed Response: NPF2, the Strategic Community Plan and Local Community Plans will be referenced in paragraph 2.2.4. As the Core Path Plan is not yet adopted it will not be added to this list.

Question 2: The Open Space Strategy sets an aspirational target for all development – both existing and new – to have access to a minimum of 5ha of public open space per 1000 people (50m²/person), do you think this is an appropriate standard? What alternative standard would you set?

SNH - Although the final SPP11 did not set any minimum standards, the recommended 60m² per dwelling could be seen as minimum to aim for. Given that the quality of open space is vital to its contribution to people's quality of life it is important to ensure that only public open space that is 'fit for purpose', and preferably that is also actively managed for community benefit, is included when assessing open spaces against this standard.

Greenspace Scotland - The strategy actually sets a much more subtle standard than this (referencing quality and distance thresholds). We would support this approach and strongly urge Falkirk Council to stress this combined and considered standard (from our experience elsewhere, an excessive focus on quantities of open space can result in innovative proposals which would deliver higher quality greenspace and greater community benefit being rejected). Additionally, it would be good to have a clear rationale developed and stated within the strategy for those circumstances where the Falkirk standard would not apply in its entirety (e.g. where lower quantities of space might be accepted in return for particular quality improvements) – this is touched upon in section 7.4.1 but needs to be expanded.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The target seems acceptable. It would be most unlikely that everyone would want to take advantage of available open space at the same time, but even so, the targets set seem reasonable.

Proposed Response: The mechanisms for delivery of this quantitative open space standard and rationale for exceptions to the standard will be outlined in the forthcoming Open Space and New Development Supplementary Planning Guidance Note.

Question 3: Table 5.3 shows how the Council has defined the fitness for purpose of different types and hierarchies of open space. Do you think the Council has defined the primary and secondary criteria which determine how quality relates to fitness for purpose correctly for each open space type and hierarchy? How would you define primary and secondary criteria differently?

SNH - Given the importance of contact with nature, especially for children, biodiversity and nature conservation should be a primary consideration for parks and gardens at the settlement and neighbourhood levels, and for schools. It is disappointing to see community involvement as a secondary criterion across all open space types. Good community involvement is an important aspect of ensuring greenspace is 'fit for purpose' and is central to a number of the strategies aims. Consideration must be given to where this should be primary criterion.

Greenspace Scotland - Surprised to see that community involvement is only rated as a secondary criterion for all typologies and scales. Community involvement is a primary objective in many areas of local authority and partner activity and, particularly in the more local/neighbourhood scales of sites, an important pre-requisite for long-term success and sustainability of greenspace and other open spaces (this is picked up in the analysis presented in the strategy – sites with the highest levels of community involvement are generally the best). Community involvement is also a significant measure in the Green Flag assessment process used elsewhere in the strategy as an indicator of quality.

Proposed Response: Community involvement will be instated as a primary criterion affecting the fitness for purpose of all open spaces.

Question 4: The Council is aiming to ensure that all of its Open Spaces are fit for purpose. The Council has decided that only open spaces of good overall quality should be considered to be fit for purpose. Do you think that this is an appropriate standard of quality? What alternative standard would you set?

SNH - Yes, this is an appropriate standard of quality. The assessment of fitness for purpose must include a measure of users' views and aspirations.

Greenspace Scotland - Agree with the Council's stance on fitness for purpose.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The standard required to be attained will depend on the resources available to achieve a level considered 'fit for purpose' of any particular open space.

Proposed Response: Support is welcomed

Question 5: The Council has made a number of recommendations for improving open space quality at section 5.7, do you think that these recommendations are appropriate? What alternative recommendations do you think should be made?

SNH - The recommendations state that improvements are required but do not suggest specifically what improvements could be made, which could be taken from the list of issues arising.

Greenspace Scotland - Some of the categories against which recommendations are being made seem to have been interpreted in a narrow way. Accessibility is about much more than physical access; health is about more than physical activity for example.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The recommendations for improving open space will depend on the resources available

Proposed Response: Specific improvements will be identified by a corporate steering group which will oversee the implementation of the Open Space Strategy.

Issues such as territoriality and ease of travel to sites will be looked at in a future review of the Open Space Strategy and will be added to the “Addressing Study Limitations” section of table 8.1

The qualitative assessment recognises that health is about much more than physical activity.

Question 6: Table 5.5 shows the standards of accessibility which the Council has set for different open space types. Do you think that these are appropriate standards?

SNH - The standard for access to Green corridors or natural/semi natural greenspace should be more ambitious (as should some other standards in the strategy). Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard sets a benchmark for access to natural greenspace as follows:

“an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home.”

Table 5.5 equates a 5 minute walk to 400m. Is important to state whether the assessment of access standards is based on a straight line ‘buffer’ around sites or is assessed using ‘network analysis’ to give real walking distances. If ‘network analysis’ is used then a 400m threshold is fine, but if a ‘buffer’ is used then the lowest threshold should be 300m, with others reduced accordingly. Is also important to consider a minimum size for these thresholds. While this may not be too important for ‘playspace’, it is suggested that a minimum size of 2ha should be applied to public parks, gardens or amenity spaces. For significant sites, particularly country parks and town parks, it may be appropriate to look at whether Green Flag status could be used as a quality standard.

Greenspace Scotland - These are not accessibility standards – they are distance thresholds and form part of an accessibility standard but this has also to look at ease of travel to sites (not just distance) and may need to look at local ‘territoriality’ issues – especially in smaller communities which are close neighbours. It is not clear to us why the threshold for natural/semi-natural spaces is so much greater than the others – not least since a threshold of 800m seems to be suggested in the section on disposal of spaces.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – Most open space within Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood is readily accessible. Cleanliness can only be

achieved by educating the public to be more aware of their responsibilities, which can be a difficult task.

Proposed Response: The standard for access to green corridors or natural/semi natural greenspace is currently set at 1200m or 15mins walk. Currently 78.1% of residents within the towns and villages of the Falkirk area meet this standard. Increasing this level to 100% to meet the open space standard suggested in the consultative draft strategy requires an ambitious programme of action. It is considered that progress towards meeting the current target should be monitored over the next 5 years and, if necessary, this accessibility standard can be reappraised when the Open Space Strategy is reviewed in 5 years time.

Assessment of accessibility standards is based on network analysis.

There are 67 surveyed open spaces which are under 2ha, 37 of those are not playspaces. No minimum size has been set before surveying open space as there are a number of smaller open space areas which provide a valuable resource to the community. Not including open spaces under 2ha in size would produce an inaccurate picture of the pattern open space distribution in the Council area.

The methodology for the assessment of quality has been derived from a number of recognised methodologies, including the Green Flag award, but has been tailored to meet the diverse range of open spaces across the Council area.

Ease of travel to sites and territoriality will be looked at as factors affecting accessibility in a future review of the Open Space Strategy.

The recommended distances used for accessibility standards are based in combination on existing UK, national and Falkirk access standards, other open space strategies, past experience, and a desire to be pragmatic. Consultation on the Open Space Strategy and research undertaken for the Falkirk Council Household Survey has indicated that there is no public appetite to reduce acceptable distance thresholds to below 1200m for natural/semi natural open space or green corridors.

The reference to a threshold of 800m to a natural/semi natural open space or green corridor in the criteria for disposal is a typographical error and this will be changed to 1200m.

Question 7: Table 7.1 sets 12 strategic objectives which the Open Space Strategy aims to meet. Do you think that these are appropriate strategic objectives? What other strategic objectives would you set?

SNH - The protection and enhancement of landscapes, townscapes and key views could also be included, for instance, within point 4.

Greenspace Scotland - These look appropriate and are a good way of capturing the breadth of aspirations of the strategy.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The objectives listed seem to cover all that is required

Proposed Response: The protection and enhancement of landscapes, townscapes and key views will be included within objective number 4.

Question 8: The overarching vision of the Open Space Strategy is to secure the long-term improvement to the quality of open spaces in the Falkirk Council area so that they can provide a truly sustainable and diverse resource for the benefit of the communities they serve. Do you think this is an appropriate overarching vision? What alternative overarching vision would you suggest?

SNH - Accessibility is clearly an important element, and could be included in the vision e.g. ‘...improvement to the quality and accessibility of open spaces in the Falkirk Council area...’

Greenspace Scotland - This vision is entirely appropriate.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The vision seems appropriate and relevant.

Proposed Response: Reference will be made to accessibility in the overall vision.

Question 9: Section 7.4 sets out the concepts and aims of the Open Space Strategy. Do you think these concepts and aims are appropriate? What alternative concepts and aims would you suggest the Open Space Strategy tries to achieve?

SNH - The concepts and aims appear appropriate. In particular, the aspirations relating to public transport, green networks, the Green Flag Award and the online educational resource are commended.

Greenspace Scotland - The concepts and aims seem to be appropriate but it is important to stress that improvement in sites which are currently underperforming in whatever way should not be to the detriment of those sites which are rated as ‘good’.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – Some of the accessibility thresholds are difficult to attain especially in the earlier built up areas due to the high density of housing etc but some small pockets of open space are available but possibly not to the size or quality that is required but with no obvious alternative.

Proposed Response: An overall aim of the open space strategy is to ensure that all open spaces are fit for purpose. Achieving this aim will not only involve improving the quality of poorly performing open spaces, but will also involve maintaining the quality of better performing open spaces to make sure that they retain their fitness for purpose.

Question 10: Table 7.3 sets out what are considered to be the limitations of the current study and identifies actions needed to address these limitations. Do you think the limitations of the strategy have been fully defined and if not what other limitations have you noticed? Do you think the actions needed to overcome the limitations of the strategy are appropriate? Are there other alternative actions you think would be appropriate?

SNH - Along with the Core Paths Plan, other data sets that may support the strategic aims and objectives include the Integrated Habitat Network and the Phase One Habitat Survey.

Greenspace Scotland - The identified limitations seem to cover most concerns. The following suggestions might help:

- Problems with the ‘urban limit’ may be best addressed through consideration of a buffer zone of 500m in-line with the typology mapping approach used elsewhere in Scotland.
- Issues around spaces and sites which have been missed could be addressed through increased community involvement in the process of audit – by working with local communities it should be possible to identify which spaces are valued at a local level. This will also increase the information available on quality, accessibility etc and can inform future iterations of the audit and strategy.

Proposed Response: Table 7.3 already recognises at point 6 that the Core Path Plan and Integrated Habitat Network Study should be integrated into the Open Space Strategy in due course.

Problems with the urban limit have been addressed by extending the quantitative audit to 1200m from the urban limit to take into account the variety in access standards set for different functions of open space.

Question 11: Table 7.6 sets out the criteria which should be met before the disposal of open space. Do you think these criteria are appropriate? What other criteria do you think should be met?

SNH - The opportunity for any developer’s contributions to be targeted for other open space improvements should be explored.

Greenspace Scotland - These criteria seem to be acceptable in as far as they go (see comment against Q6 re inconsistency of thresholds). However, SPP11 clearly states:

‘There is a presumption against development on open spaces which are valued and functional, or which are capable of being brought into functional use to meet a need identified in the open space strategy’

The current criteria do not seem to cover the concept highlighted above. An additional criterion determining whether the spaces in question can meet another open space need should be added to the list.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The criteria stated seem appropriate.

Proposed Response: Capital receipts received from the sale of Council owned open space are not currently ring fenced for reinvestment into other open spaces. This issue will be looked at as part of the Council’s Asset Management Strategy.

An additional criterion determining whether the spaces in question can meet another open space need will be added to the list.

The list of criteria will be headed as table 7.6

Question 12: Section 7 sets out conceptual strategies for each town and village within the Council area. Do you think that the survey issues have been appropriately defined? Do you agree with the strategy overview? Do you think the suggested strategy actions are appropriate?

SNH - The detail of the individual settlement strategies, along with maps indicating areas for improvement is commended.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The suggested strategy actions seem appropriate.

Proposed Response: Support is welcomed

Question 13: Appendix B shows the site assessments for each of the open spaces assessed during the qualitative assessment of Open Space. Do you agree with the assessment of quality? Do you agree with the assessment of the main benefits and detractors of the open space? Do you agree with the main design opportunities and constraints of the open space? Do you agree with the proposed recommendations observations and strategy for the open space?

SNH - Generally agree with the detailed assessments carried out.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – It is difficult to agree or disagree with the figures stated therefore we can only assume they are correct.

Proposed Response: Support is welcomed

Question 14: Table 8.1 shows a 5 year action plan for implementing the Open Space Strategy. Do you agree with the definition of priority actions and timetable for implementation? What alternative priority actions or implementation timetable would you suggest?

SNH - Yes – overall the priorities and timetable for action is good. Actions under ‘addressing limitations’ and ‘updating and monitoring change’ could be more clearly linked. It is important that both the quantitative and qualitative datasets that underpin the strategy are maintained and updated regularly.

While it is important to focus on improvements – and the priority actions identified do have this as a focus – it is also important that on-going maintenance of spaces ensures they continue to be fit for purpose. The table should include one or more actions focussing on developing approaches to ongoing management and maintenance to ensure quality is maintained. SNH are currently undertaking research into approaches to long-term management of greenspace.

Greenspace Scotland - Our only concerns over the proposed action plan are:

- The absence of any indication of who will deliver these actions. Actions should be assigned to Falkirk Council services and to partner organisations.
- The lack of clear linkages between actions and objectives. It would also help if the links between these actions and the 12 strategic objectives were more explicit.

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The five year action plan seems a bit difficult for the layman to understand.

Proposed Response: Table 8.1 will be revised to include actions focussing on developing approaches to ongoing management and maintenance to ensure quality is maintained. Table 8.1 will also be revised to make a clearer link between actions and objectives.

Once a corporate steering group is formed to oversee the implementation of the Open Space Strategy it will become clearer which Council Services are responsible for delivering individual actions.

Question 15: Do you have any other comments on any aspect of the Consultative Draft Open Space Strategy?

SNH - We look forward to working with Falkirk Council to develop, implement and monitor this strategy.

Greenspace Scotland - Only to restate our view that a document of this size and complexity is unlikely to be widely read and that something must, therefore, be done either to simplify the strategy or to capture the key points in a more user-friendly format

Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council – The five year action plan for the Open Space Strategy together with the complete document seems a bit difficult for the layman to understand. It is a very complex and comprehensive compilation and is dependant on the current and future economic situation for delivery.

Proposed Response: A short summary document will be produced in due course.

APPENDIX 2

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONSULTATIVE DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Paragraph 2.2.4 Add reference to NPF2, the Strategic Community Plan and the six Local Community Plans in the text box

Reason: In response to comments by SNH, Greenspace Scotland and Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council

Paragraph 3.4.1 Add the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site to the list of heritage assets

Reason: In response to comments by Historic Scotland.

Table 4.1 & 4.2 Add note indicating that 1ha is equal to 10,000m²

Reason: In response to comments by Readingmuirhead and Wallacestone Community Council

Table 5.3 Include Community Involvement as primary criteria affecting the fitness for purpose of all open space types and hierarchies. Make consequential changes to fitness for purpose assessments of all surveyed open spaces and maps showing accessibility in relation to fitness for purpose.

Reason: In response to comments by SNH and Greenspace Scotland

Table 7.1 Delete objective number 4 and replace with:

“To protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage, landscape and townscape resources and key views offered by Falkirk Council’s parks and open spaces for both people and wildlife.”

Reason: In response to comments by SNH

Paragraph 7.3 Delete text box and replace with:

“The overarching vision of this Open Space Strategy, which embraces all twelve core objectives, is to secure the long-term improvement to the quality and accessibility of Falkirk’s open spaces, so that they can provide a truly sustainable and diverse resource for the benefit of the communities they serve.”

Reason: In response to comments by SNH

Table 7.3 Add additional row as follows:

| | Limitation | Action Needed |
|-----|--|--|
| 10. | The accessibility standard does not consider issues such as ease of travel to sites and territoriality especially in smaller communities which are close neighbours. | Investigate ease of travel and territoriality to all surveyed open spaces and formulate an appropriate accessibility standard based on this research |

Reason: In response to comments by Greenspace Scotland

Paragraph 7.6 Delete bullet point 3 in the text box and replace with:

“Have all green corridors and natural/ semi-natural greenspace or sites containing significant quantities of semi-natural greenspace within 1200m walking distance of the site been surveyed for quantity, quality and accessibility?”

Add additional bullet point to text box as follows:

“Can the open space be brought into functional use to meet a need identified in the open space strategy?”

Head the text box as Table 7.6 Criteria for Disposal of Open Space

Reason: In response to comments by SNH and Greenspace Scotland

Table 8.1 Insert new action under Addressing Study Limitations for implementation in years 4 and 5:

“Explore how the issues of ease of travel to sites and territoriality affect access to open space.”

Insert new section entitled management and maintenance and add actions focussing on this.

Insert new column detailing which strategic objective the actions relate to.

Reason: In response to comments by Greenspace Scotland

Paragraph 8.3 Add sentence which emphasises the benefits of closer interdepartmental working.

Reason: In response to comments by Scottish Natural Heritage

Conceptual Strategy – Avonbridge

Figure 7.7J (AVN.6) Insert “Improve Access to Open Space” arrow between Avonbridge and Foggermountain.

Insert under Strategy Actions – General:

“Improve access between Avonbridge and Foggermountain, should planning permission for the proposal be gained and funding found for the project in the future.”

Reason: In response to comments by Hargest and Wallace

Conceptual Strategy – Shieldhill

Figure 7.7R (SHIE.6) Indicate the entirety of site 117 as Open Space

Insert “Improve Access to Open Space” arrow between Shieldhill and Bellsrig Wood.

Insert “Improve Access to Open Space” arrow between Shieldhill and the Union Canal along the Old Drover’s Road (through site 117)

Insert under Survey/Issues:

“Cleanliness and Maintenance of surveyed open spaces is rated as fair in 3 out of 4 of the surveyed open spaces in Shieldhill.”

Delete 1st bullet point under Strategy Actions - National/Regional-Level Open Space and replace with:

“Both Hallglen Canal Corridor and Westquarter offer green corridor and natural/ semi-natural open space facilities which are within 20 minutes walk. Connections to these should be strengthened where necessary including the completion of the path at Bridge 57 connecting Shieldhill to the Union Canal.”

Insert under Strategy Actions – General:

“Improvement of the Cleanliness and Maintenance of open spaces which score less than good (115,116& 117) should be a particular focus for investment.”

“Improve access between Shieldhill and Bellsrig Wood”

Reason: In response to comments by Shieldhill and California Community Council

Figure SHIE1 Reclassify the entirety of site 117 as Natural/Semi Natural Open Space.

Reason: In response to comments by Shieldhill and California Community Council

Figure GRA1 Reclassify the entirety of the land at Glensburgh Park which has previously been classified as a sports area or a public park and garden as private grounds and gardens.

Reason: In response to comments by Hargest and Wallace

Site 59 Exclude land in the ownership of Mr I Shanks from the boundary of Little Denny Reservoir

Reason: In response to comments by Mr I Shanks

Site 93 Insert under additional comments

“The South Green Drive Residents Association have gathered sufficient funds to create a Community Garden and Children’s play area on the site and with Council’s consent will begin work in 2010.”

Reason: In response to comments by Airth Parish Community Council

Site 116 Insert under Main Detractors of Open Space

“Poor Drainage”

Insert under Recommendations / Observations / Strategy

“Improve drainage”

Reason: In response to comments by Shieldhill and California Community Council

Site 118 Insert under Main Detractors of Open Space

“Poor Drainage”

Insert under Recommendations / Observations / Strategy

“Improve drainage”

Reason: In response to comments by Shieldhill and California Community Council