

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN REGISTER

### STRUCTURE PLAN

Plan	Approved	Contact
Falkirk Council Structure Plan First Alteration	June 2002 Finalised March 2005	Colin Hemfrey Colin Hemfrey

### LOCAL PLANS

Plan	Adopted	Contact
Falkirk Council	Finalised Draft March 2005	Alistair Shaw
Bo'ness	Oct. 1995	Alistair Shaw
Bonnybridge & Banknock 1st Alteration 2nd Alteration	March 1982 Jan. 1994 Nov. 1995	Naomi Sandilands
Denny & District	June 1996	Colin Hemfrey
Falkirk 1st Alteration	June 2000 August 2002	Alistair Shaw
Forth & Clyde Canal	Feb. 1996	Alistair Shaw
Grangemouth 1st Alteration 2nd Alteration	Feb. 1985 Oct. 1987 Feb. 1990	Catherine Devlin
Larbert & Stenhousemuir 1st Alteration	Aug. 1998 March 2004	Louise Blance
Polmont & District	Dec. 2001	Graeme Finlay
Rural	Nov. 1994	Graeme Finlay (South) Colin Hemfrey (North)

### MUNGAL RIVERSIDE PARK



SUDS ponds feature at Mungal Riverside Park

**A major new area of public greenspace has been created in North Falkirk, some 12 years after it was originally included in the Council's Local Plan.**

The Mungal Riverside Park consists of some 15 hectares of natural open space alongside the River Carron, and includes an extensive path network, new planting, and two large ponds which provide for surface water attenuation and treatment, as well as forming attractive landscape features and wildlife habitats.

The Riverside Park was first envisaged within the 1994 Rural Local Plan, as part of a new Green Belt between Falkirk and Stenhousemuir. The Falkirk Local Plan of 2000 was the key to getting the park implemented, through the allocation of the adjacent Mungal Farm site for some 500 houses. The plan required that the park be provided by the developer of the housing as planning gain. Walker Homes have now carried out the first phase of works, and Scottish Woodlands will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the area.

The Riverside Park is an important new component within the Greenspace Initiative, a long-term strategy to improve the quality of the countryside encircling the main towns in the Council area and to open it up to access by the community.



In 2008 Grangemouth High will be replaced with a new community school

## IN SHORT.....

### COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 2008

Falkirk Council is undertaking a major procurement exercise to replace four High Schools - Denny, Falkirk, Grangemouth and St Mungo's. Using the 'Non Profit Distributing Organisation' model, the new community schools are planned to open in 2008.

This is an exciting project for the area and it is expected that the new schools will become a valuable resource for the wider community.

A planning brief was prepared that sets out the planning requirements of the four schools and their associated residential development sites. Outline planning permissions were granted between December 2004 and April 2005.

Three consortia responded to the tender documents which were issued in July 2005 and the evaluation of the bids is currently on-going. A Preferred Bidder is expected to be chosen by the Council in May 2006. Once the Preferred Bidder is appointed, the final agreement is expected to be concluded in late September. Detailed planning applications for the four schools are expected to be submitted over the summer.

## FALKIRK COUNCIL

# Development Plan update

Issue 7

Spring 2006



**Falkirk Council**

Development Services

Abbotsford House

David's Loan

Falkirk FK2 7YZ

## FALKIRK PLAN PROGRESS DELAYED BY HABITATS RULING

**Approval of the Falkirk Council Structure Plan Alteration by the Scottish Executive has been held up by a ruling of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) which has implications for the way in which development plans are handled. This will have a knock on effect on the Council's Local Plan programme.**



Aerial view of the Firth of Forth SPA

The ECJ ruling, issued in October 2005, states that the transposition of the EU Habitats Directive into UK legislation was deficient by not requiring development plans to be subject to appropriate assessment of their implications for European nature conservation sites (otherwise known as Natura 2000 sites). The Executive confirmed in December 2005 that development plans that are currently with them for approval will be subject to delay while the implications of the ruling are considered.

The Council submitted the Structure Plan Alteration to the Executive in March 2005, and had hoped to have the Executive's proposed modifications to the document by autumn 2005, with final approval by the end of 2005. This would have allowed the new Council wide Local Plan, also finalised in March 2005, to proceed through the deposit stage to a public local inquiry in 2006, with adoption in 2007.

However, with proposed modifications not yet issued, approval seems now unlikely before the summer. This means the Local Plan, which has to conform to the Structure Plan, will not be placed on deposit for formal objections until later in 2006. The inquiry for the Local Plan will slip to 2007, with adoption no earlier than 2008. The ECJ ruling is likely to mean that the Council will have to undertake an 'appropriate assessment' of the impacts of the Structure Plan and Local Plan on Natura 2000 sites, over and above the Strategic Environmental Assessment that has already been carried out.

Before progressing the Local Plan to deposit stage, the Council will also have to incorporate consequential changes arising from any modifications which the Executive have made to the Structure Plan.

## FALKIRK COUNCIL'S EMERGING DEVELOPMENT PLAN - KEY MILESTONES

	STRUCTURE PLAN	LOCAL PLAN
June 2002	Falkirk Council Structure Plan approved	
May 2002		Falkirk Council Local Plan commenced
Summer 2002		Local Plan Issues consultation
November 2003		Consultative Draft Local Plan published
January 2004	Structure Plan 1st Alteration commenced	
June 2004	Consultative Draft Structure Plan 1st Alteration published	
March 2005	Finalised Draft Structure Plan 1st Alteration published	Finalised Draft Local Plan published
2006?	Proposed Modifications published	
2006?	Structure Plan 1st Alteration approved by Scottish Executive	
2006?		Amendments made to Finalised Draft Local Plan to conform to any Structure Plan changes.
2006?		Local Plan placed on deposit for objections.
2007?		Local Plan Inquiry
2008?		Local Plan Adoption

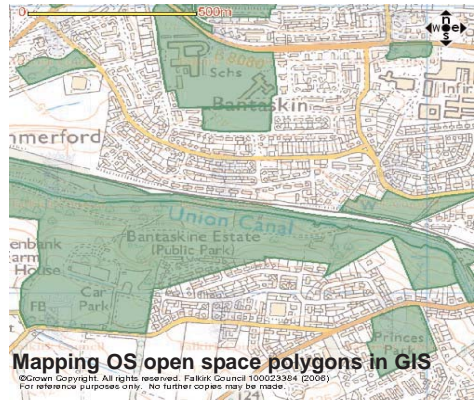
#### Contact Numbers :

Alan Rodger	Unit Manager	Tel: 01324 504710
Alistair Shaw	Dev Plan Co-Ordinator	Tel: 01324 504739
Colin Hemfrey	Dev Plan Co-Ordinator	Tel: 01324 504720
Graeme Finlay	Senior Planning Officer	Tel: 01324 504738
Louise Blance	Senior Planning Officer (Job Share)	Tel: 01324 504717
Catherine Devlin	Senior Planning Officer (Job Share)	Tel: 01324 504719
Naomi Sandilands	Planning Officer	Tel: 01324 504927
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## Open Space Strategy

Falkirk Council has now started the first stage in the process to produce an open space strategy. This is a key strategy that will ensure Falkirk Council meets the requirements of national planning guidance NPPG11/ PAN65.

As the provision of quality open space contributes towards other key agendas such as sustainable development, healthy living, environmental education, recreational access and improving local biodiversity, it is also anticipated that this strategy will inform, and be informed by a range of other key council strategies.



The open space strategy has been divided into two parts - the first stage is to carry out an audit (of the quantity and quality) of existing open space, which will then inform the full strategy.

Forth Valley GIS has been commissioned to carry out a desk-top quantitative audit classifying open spaces according to the PAN 65 typology. This is expected to be completed by the end of October 2006. The result will be a GIS data-set available to all Falkirk Council staff to view via the on-line GIS service.

The second stage will be the qualitative assessment of the value of the open space, taking place into 2007. With a full quantitative and qualitative audit completed this will inform the strategy which is expected to be prepared in 2007/08.



The park and woodland of Callendar House

## Built Heritage Strategy



B-Listed Building in Airth Conservation Area

Following an extensive consultation process the Built Heritage Strategy was approved by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in January 2006. Through the Strategy Falkirk Council and its partners wish to engage more positively with the enhancement of the built heritage, as well as continuing the statutory protective role that is currently undertaken.

## Outdoor Access Strategy

The Outdoor Access Strategy was formally approved by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in January 2006. The Strategy aims to guide the way in which Falkirk Council and its partners take forward plans for access in the area from 2005-2010.

It focuses on non motorised access to the countryside, and reflects the increasing priority of access issues with the enactment of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. In addition to recreation and enjoyment of the environment, well planned and managed access can contribute to social inclusion, improve health, support sustainable transport networks and improve quality of life.

Falkirk Council wishes to remain a lead local authority in Scotland in terms of countryside access network delivery. Progress on targets set in the June 2001 Countryside Access Strategy has been impressive with the vast majority being

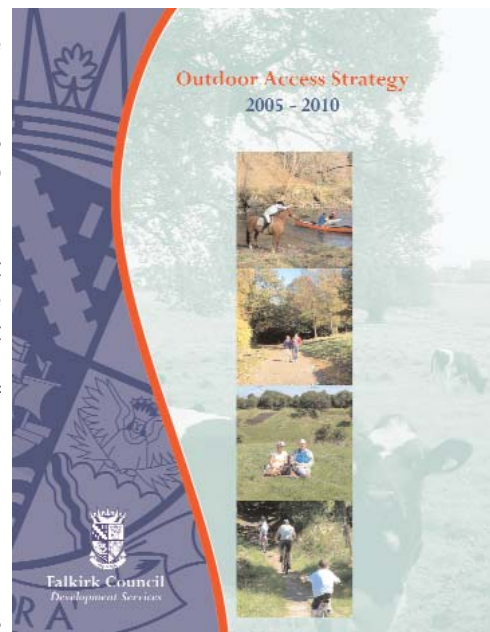
The focus of this strategy is on protecting, enhancing and monitoring the existing built heritage and a process of review to identify potential candidate sites, buildings or areas.

The Strategy sets out a priority programme of action involving the Council, the community, property owners, other agencies and funding partners. The assumption is made that the outstanding commitments from the Council's Structure and Local Plans, covering conservation areas, listed buildings and other areas of townscape value, will form the key priorities for action. Wherever possible, an attempt is made to allocate a priority or timescale to each of the actions.

The Strategy will also serve as a support document for bids to external funding agencies, both for existing projects and where opportunities are identified.

either fully or partially achieved. Most notable features are local path networks developed around main communities, good networks around many key visitor attractions, and good linkages between communities. Routes along the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals, the Rivers Carron and Avon, the Forth Estuary, old railway lines and quiet country roads have also been implemented.

Part I of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 came into force on 9th February 2005, giving people a right of responsible access to most land and inland water in Scotland. This legislation places an extensive range of new statutory duties on Local Authorities. One of the statutory duties requires the Council to produce a Core Path Plan (CPP) which will involve extensive consultation with the community. Following consultation on access provision, a Draft CPP will be produced by the end of 2007 and will go out to formal consultation. A Local Inquiry will be required if there are formal objections.



## Development Plan Monitoring Report 2005

The third monitoring report of the Falkirk Council Development Plan has been prepared. Previous Monitoring Reports have been confined to tracking the progress of the Falkirk Council Structure Plan but this is the first which monitors indicators drawn from both the Structure Plan and the Finalised Falkirk Council Local Plan. Key highlights from this year's report are:

- ❖ The most recent official population estimate remains at the 2004 figure of 147,460, but this is expected to rise further when the latest estimate comes forward in April. The population increase is almost entirely due to in-migration from surrounding areas and if this continues at recent rates the Structure Plan population target for 2020 may have to be revised.
- ❖ House building maintained its recent high activity rates, reaching 925 completions in 2004-5. If current completion rates continue the Structure Plan 1st Alteration requirement of 13,800 new dwellings will be reached earlier than anticipated. It is also becoming evident that house building is being

more evenly spread around the Council area, with areas such as Bonnybridge /Banknock and Denny capturing a higher proportion of activity than in earlier periods.

- ❖ Numbers in employment continue to rise (+1,300 between 2003 and 2004) and unemployed continue to fall (overall rate reduced from 3.0% to 2.6% 2004-5). While these reflect economic activity levels not seen in a generation Falkirk is nevertheless lagging behind national trends in these indicators.
- ❖ The retail sector continues to be strong and contributes to Falkirk being the 8th most popular retail destination in Scotland, well ahead of rival centres like Stirling and Livingston. Since the retail floorspace survey undertaken in 2004 around 5,000sqm of convenience floorspace has been added to the Council's stock and further additions are expected over the next few years in Redding, Grangemouth, Stenhousemuir and Denny.
- ❖ The amount of vacant and derelict land has decreased from 279 hectares to 189 hectares between

2002 and 2005, which partly reflects a buoyant local economy but also success for policies steering development to brownfield sites.

- ❖ Enhancement measures to 'green' the Falkirk environment have continued their progress. In 2005 a further 59,000 trees were planted through the Central Scotland Forest and Falkirk Greenspace initiatives. Since 1997 these initiatives have contributed to a 12 per cent increase in woodland cover in Falkirk Council area.
- ❖ The Council is a national leader in the development of countryside access networks and the Development Plan plays a major role in providing the land use context for the Council's Outdoor Access Strategy. The Council area has 125kms of maintained access routes ranging from local networks around towns to strategic linkages between communities, of which 7.5kms of route were upgraded in 2004/5 and a further 7kms are programmed for upgrading in 2005/6.

For further information contact Colin Hemfrey.

## Business Property Strategy

The Business Property Strategy (BPS) was formally approved by Falkirk Council's Policy and Resources Committee in January 2006. It was developed by the Council in conjunction with Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley and is a key project within My Future's in Falkirk.

In 2004 the Council and Scottish Enterprise appointed consultants (DTZ Pidea Consulting) to undertake a full review of business property in the Falkirk area. The Review highlighted the strengths of Falkirk with its complementary combination of manufacturing and distribution sectors combined with strategic accessibility and multi-modal transportation options of road, rail sea and air. It did however highlight a likely shortfall of premises in the key sectors of offices, light industry and distribution to satisfy inward investment enquiries or demands from indigenous companies seeking new premises.



The redundant Alcan site provides an excellent opportunity for business and industrial development, with the new ASDA distribution centre in the foreground.

This review has provided the basis for defining both a Strategy and an Action Plan to address property needs in the Falkirk area now and in the future.

The Action Plan is founded on three main objectives:

- ❖ **Land Supply** Ensure sufficient land is available for business development on an on-going basis to meet market needs.
- ❖ **Property Supply** Ensure sufficient suitable property of good quality is brought to market to meet business, development needs for offices, light industrial, general industrial and warehousing/distribution uses.
- ❖ **Information and Marketing** Ensure accurate information on property and land supply is readily available to businesses and business developers, and the Falkirk area is promoted effectively as a business location.

The Action Plan will address a five year period but will be reviewed and updated annually against broader economic targets. A full audit of the Council's existing business property has been already been undertaken, and some of this property will be marketed to release finance to meet other targets identified. In order to support enquiries on business property and land, the Council is in the process of making this information available online at [www.falkirkonline.net](http://www.falkirkonline.net). For more information contact Property Services on 01324 59 0900.

Finalised Built Heritage and Outdoor Access strategies will soon be available in full on the Council web site: [www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk)