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Falkirk

Survey/ Issues

- Overall there is a varied supply of public open space in Falkirk in quantitative terms. The overall statistic of 10.38ha of public open space per 1000 people appears to be satisfactory; however there are notable under-provisions in many parts of the town, e.g. Grahamston/ Merchiston/ Etna Road and Bantaskine/ Woodlands which have restricted accessibility.
- 60.7% of households have access (within 400m) to a surveyed public open space, yet there are large areas of the town with no access to a surveyed public open space.
- The supply of private gardens, with an average of 148m² per household, is significantly lower than the average village supply of 384m² and also lower than the average town supply of 193m².
- The percentage of households with access (within 400m) to a fit for purpose surveyed public open space is also variable, with 58% of households having access to a fit for purpose surveyed public open space.
- There appears to be a limited quantitative provision in notable parts of the town, but generally, with the exception of a few sites, the quality of the existing open space resource is considered fit for purpose. There are many 'good' open spaces and several 'very good' open spaces, yet only a few which are considered to be lacking.
- Several of the town's settlement level public parks and gardens (e.g. sites 130, 133, 138 and 149) are considered to be of only 'fair' quality and requiring upgrading.
- There are relatively few areas with access (within 400m) to a surveyed public open space which is not fit for purpose.
- Generally the accessibility (within 400m) to surveyed public parks and gardens is low in Falkirk, with only 41.8% of households having access to a surveyed public park & garden. There are notable under-provisions in many parts of the town e.g. Grahamston/ Merchiston/ Etna Road, Bantaskine/ Woodlands and Bankside/ Middlefield, which have restricted accessibility.
- Generally there is better accessibility (within 800m) to surveyed sports areas in Falkirk, with 61.6% of households having access to a surveyed site containing a sports area. Despite this, there are variations in provision, with some neighbourhoods having restricted access (Grahamston/ Merchiston/ Etna Road, Bantaskine/ Woodlands and Bankside/ Middlefield) and a few others having multiple access (e.g. Mungal).
- There is variable access (within 400m) to surveyed playspaces, with only 42% of households having access to a surveyed playspace. Many areas within Falkirk have access to a playspace, often associated with access to a sports area (e.g. Mungal, Camelon, Carmuir, Callendar). However, for many areas, playspaces are limited, e.g. Grahamston/ Merchiston/ Etna Road, Bantaskine/ Woodlands and Bankside/ Middlefield. There are very few areas with access (within 400m) to more than one site containing a playspace.

- The majority of Falkirk (79.6% of households) has access to a surveyed green corridor or a site containing semi-natural greenspace (within 1200m). The central parts of the town tend to be under-provided, e.g. Grahamston/ Merchiston, due to their position in the urban centre, although they do have access to unsurveyed sections of the canal. The southern parts of Falkirk have multiple access to more than one green corridor or semi-natural greenspaces (within 1200m).
- The town benefits from some high-quality strategic open spaces of regional and national importance, which are important tourism attractions, as well as excellent local facilities, notably Callendar Park/ Wood and the Falkirk Wheel/ Rough Castle (potentially to be joined by the Falkirk Helix, following its £25 million lottery grant awarded through the Living Landmarks project).
- The development of the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative over the past 10-12 years has provided very good access to a network of natural greenspaces around the urban fringe.
- The canals provide excellent greenspace corridors which are valuable both as enjoyable spaces in their own right, as and links in the overall network of space within the town.

Strategy Overview

Continue to develop and link the strategic assets of Callendar Park, the Falkirk Wheel, Falkirk Greenspace Initiative sites and the canals as key attractions, whilst improving quantity, quality and accessibility at the local level through the upgrading of a selected number of local parks, augmented by some new open spaces in new developments within the areas of quantitative deficiency.

Strategy Actions

National/ Regional-level Open Space

- Produce management plans for the key attractions of Callendar Park and the Falkirk Wheel to ensure that their continued development is taken forward in a co-ordinated manner.
- Develop the Falkirk Helix area as a new strategic attraction on the east side of the town.
- In conjunction with the Helix, continue to develop the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative sites by filling gaps in the network, developing the potential of under-utilised areas such as Bantaskine Park, and improving path connections.
- Continue to enhance the quality and accessibility of the Forth & Clyde and Union canal corridors through new development and other enhancement projects.

Settlement/ Neighbourhood-level Open Space

- Improve the quality of facilities and design at a selected number of local parks so that all neighbourhoods have access to a good

local park. Selection should be based on clear criteria. Suggested seven – Dollar Park, East Carmuir Park, Dawson Park/ Cow Park, Langlees, Victoria Park, Lionthorn/ Fox Covert, Hallglen. Consider developing these in different ways to achieve diversity in provision.

- In areas with limited access to open space, identify a network of smaller 'pocket parks', either new or upgraded, to be developed in conjunction with new developments in these areas.
- Encourage the provision of allotments within the Helix and Bantaskine areas.
- Other Local Parks – make improvements to parks where fitness for purpose is less than good, as resources allow or opportunities arise.

General

- Maintain the 'good' quality standard of existing public open spaces within the settlement while targeting new provision at key areas with deficiencies in provision. Overall provision of open space in this settlement needs to be increased to provide accessible public open space for all.
- Improve the quality of sites identified as being of lesser quality through improvements in facilities and maintenance to support their function.
- Opportunities to enhance the health and well-being of the local population through improved provision to public parks, sports areas and play spaces in areas identified as being under-provided.
- Opportunities to enhance provision of links into strategic green corridors that pass through urban Falkirk and form the basis of strong green access network through the town.
- Biodiversity – make across-the-board improvements to biodiversity in all settlement/ neighbourhood level open spaces. Implement local biodiversity 'toolkit' for settlement-level spaces.
- Opportunities to enhance awareness of the cultural history and importance of the settlement through interpretation of open spaces and public art – Antonine Wall, Canal, Callendar Park, Rough Castle etc.
- Opportunities for new allotments/ community gardens as part of land allocated for new housing and as part of Falkirk Helix.