

9 LEISURE, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This chapter deals with the provision of leisure facilities, facilities for active sport, play areas, countryside recreation, public open space and community facilities including schools, health facilities and community halls.
- 9.1.2 The availability and ease of access to all these facilities is an essential component of the “quality of life” within the Falkirk Council area. They are also important in meeting the immediate needs of communities for education, keeping fit and healthy and for creating a sense of community. They also have an economic impact, directly in terms of developing tourism and attracting inward investment, but also indirectly in terms of the ability of people to work.
- 9.1.3 The Scottish Executive, the SportsScotland and Scottish Natural Heritage all provide guidance on the provision of leisure, recreation and community facilities. In addition there are other relevant policy documents including Forth Valley Health Board’s Health Improvement Plan and Falkirk Council’s Community Care Plan, Access Strategy and Culture and Leisure Strategy.

- 9.1.4 In the context of this policy guidance the main role of the Falkirk Council Structure Plan will be to:
- * *provide guidance for Local Plans on more detailed policies, including the approach to defining the level of provision for facilities;*
 - * *set the strategic context for the provision of leisure, recreation and community facilities;*
 - * *indicate the general locations for any facilities of strategic importance;*
 - * *identify sensitive environmental areas where the provision of facilities would be inappropriate; and*
 - * *demonstrate that the advice given at the Scottish national level has been taken into account.*

9.2 National Planning Policy

NPPG 11 “SPORT, PHYSICAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE”

- 9.2.1 NPPG 11 issues guidance on the planning issues surrounding sport, physical recreation and open space. The guidance stresses the importance of adequate provision of these facilities in local areas. It is therefore up to local planning authorities to:
- * *determine locally what would be adequate provision;*
 - * *protect existing playing fields and sports pitches from re-development unless within the context of a strategy which will improve local provision; and*
 - * *ensure that sports centres are located in accessible locations.*

9.2.2 This approach compliments the national sports strategy produced by SportsScotland. Its main goals are to:

- * *ensure that sport is more widely available to all;*
- * *recognise and nurture sporting talent; and*
- * *sustain world class performance.*

For these goals to be achieved more people need to be more active. This in turn requires quality facilities that are convenient and affordable.

9.2.3 NPPG 11 “Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space” also gives guidance on play areas. It stresses the importance of play in child development and that safe provision needs to be made relatively close to homes. Again, Councils need to define what is considered to be an adequate provision and to protect existing areas from development.

9.2.4 Public open space such as town parks are also important in terms of the visual character of the area, assisting in tourism and the quality of life. Again, Councils need to define what is considered to be an adequate provision and protect existing provision from new development.

9.2.5 In defining what is an adequate level of provision Councils should base their assessment on local surveys of provision and need.

9.2.6 Creating local path networks is seen to achieve a number of policy objectives relating to improvements to health, better recreational opportunities, economic development benefits through tourism, helping to reduce the use of cars and improving environmental awareness.

9.2.7 NPPG 11 “Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space” states that paths are an important recreational resource and therefore the Council should:

- * *protect, keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any asserted public right of way;*
- * *include policies in local plans protecting access routes; and*
- * *identify and prioritise gaps in the route network and consider using the Council’s other legal powers to enhance the local network.*

9.2.8 The principles of sustainable development are part of UK government policy. One aspect of this is the reduction in the number and length of car trips. The guidance for land use planning is that the leisure, recreation and cultural land uses should be located within or adjacent to town centres in order to achieve this goal.

9.3 Current Situation

FACILITIES FOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION

9.3.1 The National Playing Fields Association recommends to local planning authorities that the minimum standard for outdoor playing space for sport should be between 1.6 - 1.8 Ha per 1000 population.

9.3.2 The standard that has been applied in the Falkirk Council area over a number of years is that there should be 1.6 ha per 1000 population of active open space of which 1.0 Ha per 1000 population should be for sports pitches, running tracks, etc. In addition neighbourhood sports halls should be provided 1 per 10,000 - 12,000 population.

- 9.3.3 A wide range of sporting facilities are provided within the Falkirk Council area. This includes Falkirk Council run facilities such as leisure centres, swimming pools, the stadium complex at Grangemouth and provision by sporting clubs and employers' sporting clubs. These facilities are shown on Map 9.1. Provision is concentrated in the main urban settlements, particularly Falkirk. In addition the Council manages a number of playing fields. Some of these playing fields are laid out with full sized pitches but are probably more frequently used for informal sports, and some sports facilities are also provided in public parks. (The main areas of public open space are shown on Map 9.3).
- 9.3.4 Sports facilities are also provided at the Council's primary and secondary schools. They are primarily provided for the education and sports development of school children during normal school hours. However some school facilities are used out of school hours by school sports clubs and some are available to a wider group than school children. (Location of primary and secondary schools are shown on Map 9.7).
- 9.3.5 The adequacy of provision was assessed using the SportsScotland facilities planning model. The model, for each sport, compares the estimated unconstrained demand from the population within a specified drive time of each facility with the actual "capacity" at peak times. The participation rates are established from surveys and estimates of capacity are provided from operational experience. The following provision was assessed; swimming pools, indoor sports halls, golf courses, synthetic pitches, football, rugby, hockey and cricket. For technical details of the model see "The Scottish Sports Council - Facilities Planning Model - Information digest" prepared by Kit Campbell Associates (1996).
- 9.3.6 The model was run using the capacity of existing facilities but also took into account the possible increase in capacity if the Falkirk Schools Project (FSP) school facilities were open for use by the public. Provision would not have to be altered due to any expected increase in population and as the model assumes participants drive to facilities there were no local shortfalls in provision. This is because most people in Falkirk Council area are within a 20 minute drive time of the main settlements. The model is sensitive to changes in participation rates and can not take into account the quality of provision or programming issues. For example, sports halls are used by many different sports such as 5 aside football, basketball and badminton. In practice access has to be "rationed" by the management at each hall. The model makes common assumptions as to availability whereas in reality this will vary between each sports centre.
- 9.3.7 The main conclusions from the model were as follows:
- * *Swimming Pools - There was adequate provision overall, particularly if the pools built for the new FSP secondary schools are available for public use. However, effective use of swimming pools is also sensitive to "programming" decisions, for example between training by clubs and general public use;*

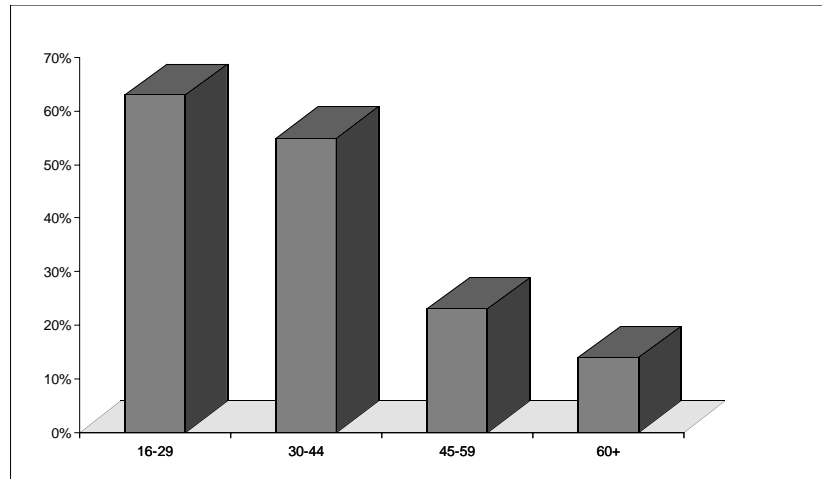
- * *Indoor Sports Halls - The standard sports hall is one that can accommodate 4 badminton courts, thus permitting a range of sports to be played. At peak times the existing provision can only accommodate 50% of the theoretical unconstrained demand. This would equate to needing about 9 or 10 new sports halls. If the new FSP schools provision is taken into account between 70% - 80% of demand can be met. However this is the demand at peak times. Seventy percent of bookings are made between 7.00pm - 9.00pm during weekdays, therefore, most of the time there would be adequate capacity in the Council's Sports Halls;*
- * *Golf Courses - Existing provision is not adequate to meet the theoretical unconstrained demand. Within the assumptions used by the model, provision would have to be increased by five 9 hole courses;*
- * *Synthetic Surfaces - Adequate provision would exist if the facilities to be provided for the new FSP Secondary Schools are available to the public;*
- * *Football Pitches - There is theoretical adequacy in the provision of football pitches. However, this does assume a standard quality of provision that in practice does not exist; and*
- * *Rugby, Cricket, Hockey - Again there is theoretical adequacy in provision. However, there is relatively low participation rates in these sports currently and so demand would be particularly sensitive to changes in participation levels.*

9.3.8 The SportsScotland model is designed to assess the provision of formal sports facilities. Some less popular sports were not assessed, neither was informal provision. The Council's standard of 1.0 ha per 1000 for active open space provision for new development (eg pitches, running tracks etc.) has been difficult to apply to all but the largest proposals for new housing development. Most new housing sites, particularly those that are infilling within urban areas are relatively small. Clearly it is not possible within these sites to make any meaningful provision for active sports.

9.3.9 The provision of facilities was also assessed through questions included in the Falkirk Council Household Survey. Questions were asked concerning the use of the Council's leisure centres, sports pitches and the use of schools as leisure facilities.

9.3.10 39% of the adult population of Falkirk Council area have used a Leisure Centre at least once during the last 12 months. This is about the usual level of usage for Central Scotland. Overall the average number of visits is 10 a year. The most significant factor in determining use is age, with younger people being more active. Socio-economic status also had some impact with ABC1 groups being slightly more frequent users. This reflects higher accessibility for all facilities by higher income groups.

Figure 9.1 - Percentage of Adult Population Using a Council Leisure Centre at Least Once During the Last 12 Months by Age Group.



Source: Falkirk Council Household Survey 1998.

Figure 9.2 - Percentage of Adult Population Using a Council Leisure Centre According to Socio-Economic Group

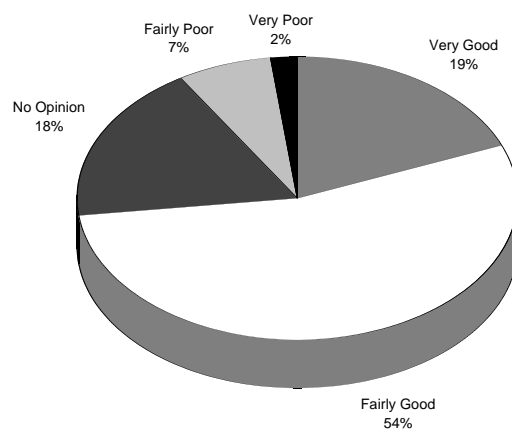
	ABC1	C2DE
Never used	56%	64%
Used at least once in 12 months	44%	36%
Average use in a year	11.5 times	9.5 times

Source: Falkirk Council Household Survey 1998

9.3.11 Only about 12% of the adult population use the Council's sports pitches, again this is about the usual level of usage for Central Scotland. The participation patterns are similar to the use of the Council leisure centres. 7% of the adult population had used schools as leisure facilities at least once in the previous 12 months. The most significant factor in participation was whether there were children in the household, implying a link with the school. This does illustrate the potential of greater out of hours usage for schools, particularly in the evening where demand is at its highest.

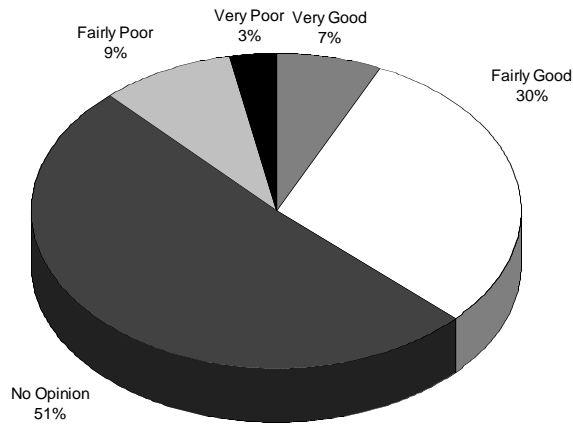
9.3.12 People were also asked to rate the level of provision of facilities in the Council area including leisure centres and sports pitches. Overall the level of provision was considered to be very good or fairly good, although there was a significant proportion of people who had no opinion. It is assumed this relates to those people who didn't use the facilities rather than a comment on the standard of provision.

Figure 9.3 - Satisfaction Rating of Adults for the Use of the Council's Leisure Centres



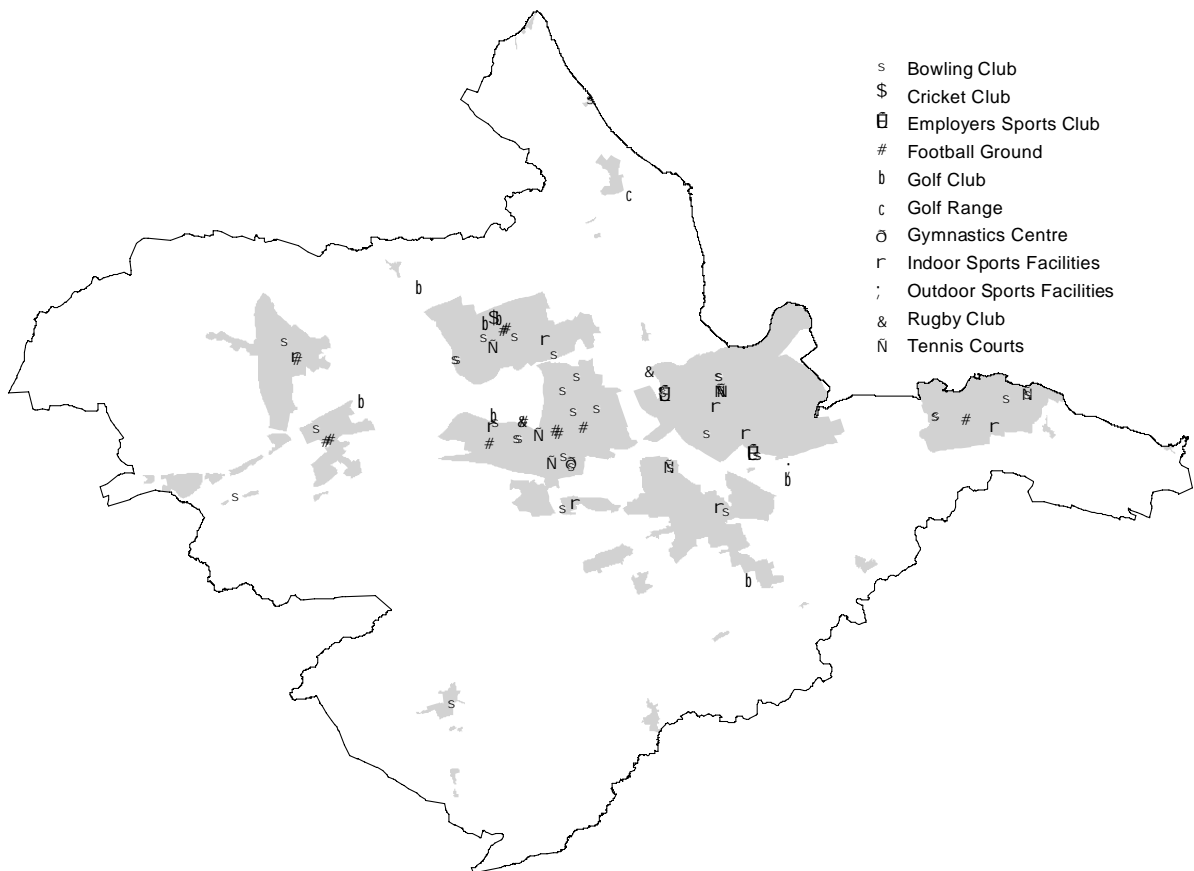
Source: Falkirk Council Household Survey 1998

Figure 9.4 - Satisfaction Rating of Adults for the Use of the Council's Sports Pitches



Source: Falkirk Council Household Survey 1998

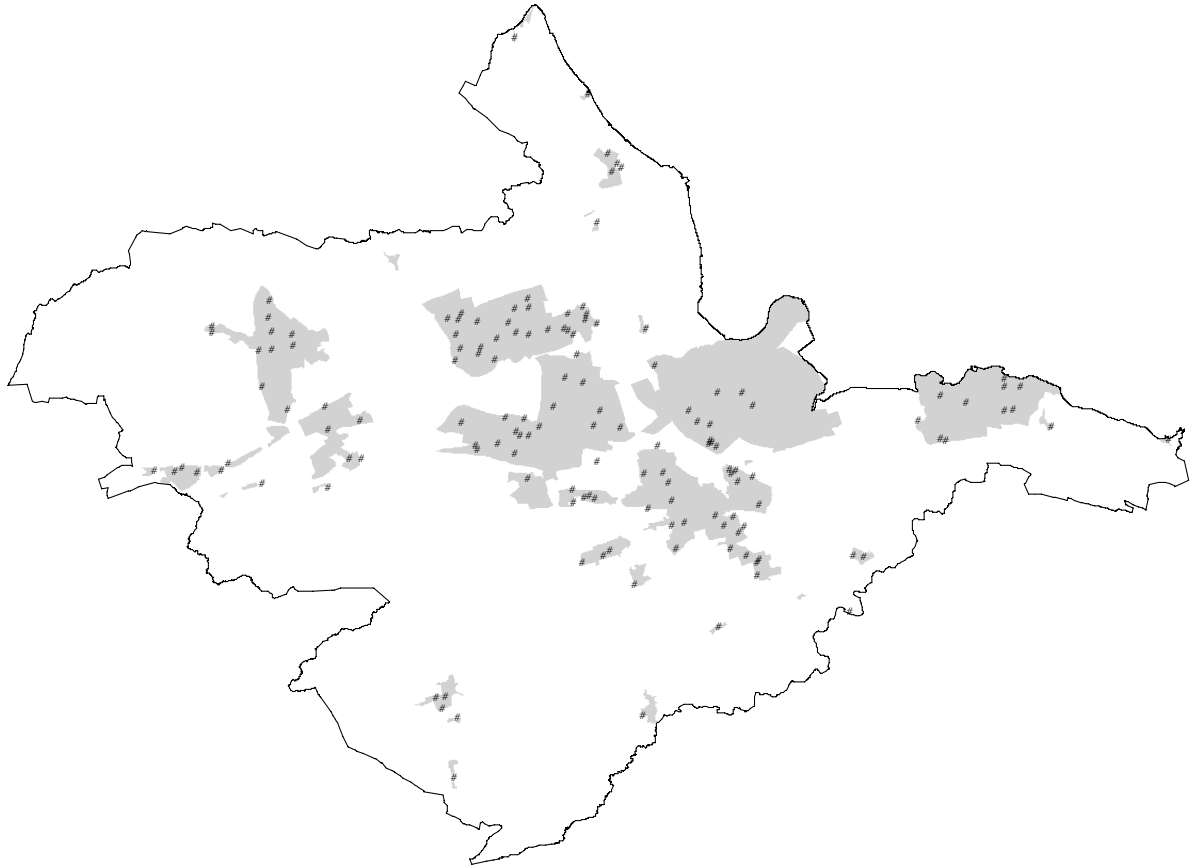
Map 9.1 Active Sports



PLAY AREAS

- 9.3.13 The National Playing Fields Association has recommend standards which state that provision should be between 0.6 - 0.8 Ha per 1000 population. This should be split into equipped play areas which should be between 0.2 - 0.3 Ha per 1000 and informal play areas of between 0.4 - 0.5 Ha per 1000. The standards recommended a hierarchy of provision for equipped play areas provided within this standard which consists of:
- * *a local area for play - 1 minute walk from houses about 100m² in size;*
 - * *a local equipped area for play - 5 minute walk from houses and about 0.4 Ha in size; and*
 - * *a neighbourhood equipped area for play - having 8 types of equipment, 15 minutes walk from houses and about 0.8 Ha in size.*
- 9.3.14 The Council's current standards closely relate to the National Playing Field Associations and state:
- * *toddlers' play area 0.2 Ha per 1000 population or 1 per 15 - 20 dwellings; and*
 - * *children's play area 0.4 Ha per 1000 population or 1 per 150 dwellings.*
- 9.3.15 The Council is responsible for 146 equipped play areas. These are shown on Map 9.2. This does not include play areas managed by factors' agents paid for by local residents or informal play areas.
- 9.3.16 The provision of 146 equipped play areas does not comply with the current Council's standards. As the number of houses is approximately 60,000 the provision would have to be increased to some 400.
- 9.3.17 The adequacy of provision was also assessed by asking questions in the Falkirk Council Household Survey and the holding of two focus groups on the provision of play areas, one with housebuilders and one with representatives of the community.
- 9.3.18 The Structure Plan Household Survey showed that the most common place for play, particularly for young children was either their own or friends back garden. About one third of children used equipped play areas to play regularly. For older children informal play areas were more popular.
- 9.3.19 The provision of play areas was considered by respondents to be fairly poor. The most common criticisms being that there were no nearby facilities, that the facilities provided were poor or the management of the facilities was poor.
- 9.3.20 This assessment was reinforced by the community focus group. The main points being that:
- * *provision must be located close by;*
 - * *management problems should be designed out from the beginning;*
 - * *the issue of ownership (i.e. Council or factored) needed to be clear; and*
 - * *it was essential to maintain high maintenance standards.*
- 9.3.21 In contrast the focus group representing housebuilders considered that:
- * *the standards were too generous and inconsistently applied by the Council;*
 - * *it would be better to have fewer play areas of high quality than many poor areas; and*
 - * *the adoption procedures should be made quicker and simpler.*

Map 9.2 Play Areas



PASSIVE OPEN SPACE

- 9.3.22 The National Playing Fields Association does not have a specific standard for passive open space such as parks and landscaped amenity areas. However, within its overall standard of 2.4 Ha per 1000 population it is recognised that in many cases such areas would be included as informal play areas e.g. kick about areas etc.
- 9.3.23 The current Falkirk Council standard is that 1.2 Ha per 1000 population be applied for the provision of passive open space within an overall standard of 2.8 Ha per 1000 population. It has to be recognised that in practice there is a degree of overlap between different types of open space.

Some playing fields are also used for informal provision and have amenity value and some areas of parks are also used for active uses. This overlap and resultant problems of definition makes it harder to compare existing provision against the Council's Standards. In addition, historic definitions between the Planning Department and the Parks Department also makes comparison difficult. In strategic terms it is the total area of land that is more important than its existing use. The use can be changed through changes in current management arrangements and therefore it will be the total provision of all types of public open space that will be assessed.

9.3.24 The total amount of public open space; including parks, playing fields, school playing fields and amenity open space, for each Local Plan area is set out in Figure 9.5 below.

9.3.25 The total provision of public open space includes playing fields, formal parks and informal amenity open space. It has been calculated from two primary sources, each of the Local Plan Reports of Survey and work carried out by Community and Leisure Services for a Draft Parks Strategy in 1997.

Figure 9.5 - Total Provision of Public Open Space

Locality	Open Space (Ha)	Population (1996)	Rate per 1000
Falkirk	220	37210	5.9
Polmont	110	17970	6.1
Bonnybridge/Banknock	20	8910	2.2
Larbert/Stenhousemuir	60	20510	2.9
Bo'ness	180	14210	12.7
Grangemouth	55	18730	2.9
Denny	45	13220	3.4
Rural area	25	12200	2.0
Total	715	143040	5.0

Source: Local Plan Reports of Survey and Draft Parks Strategy, Community and Leisure Services 1997

9.3.26 Questions relating to the use of public parks were asked in the Falkirk Council Household Survey. Sixty-six percent of the adult population have used a park at least once during the last 12 months, 30% every week or more. The main use of parks were:

Taking children to play	42%
Walking for exercise	34%
Walking through to somewhere else	18%
Walking the dog	18%
Sports and games	13%
Sitting	11%
Picnic	6%
Meeting friends	6%

- 9.3.27 Of the people who used parks, 57% walked to them and 40% drove by car. People were prepared to travel up to 20 minutes walk time (approx. 1.5 Km) to get to a park.
- 9.3.28 Three parks stood out as being the most popular and having a Council-wide catchment: Callendar Park, Zetland Park and Dollar Park. Muiravonside Country Park is also well used and is of Council-wide significance. In total 66 individual parks were mentioned by individuals answering the question as to which parks they most used or ever used. Other parks with significant local area usage were; Victoria Park, Bantaskine Park, Camelon, Easter Carmuir Park (Falkirk), Herbertshire Park (Denny), Zetland Park (Grangemouth), the Lido (Larbert/Stenhousemuir) and Douglas Park (Bo'ness). The parks in Polmont and Bonnybridge/Banknock had relatively low

levels of local use with residents using parks outside their areas.

- 9.3.29 The people who used public parks rated the Council's provision overall as fairly good. Certainly if all the areas of open space as shown in the above Figure are counted then the provision equates to 5.0 Ha per 1000 population. This is significantly in excess of the existing standards of the National Playing Fields Association and Council. However, this total figure includes large areas of woodlands (at Callendar Park, Muiravonside Country Park and Kinneil Park), which artificially increases the figure and takes no account of the quality of open space. The high average also disguises variation between the areas. However the main conclusion must be that the Council needs to concentrate on improving the quality of existing areas and local deficiencies rather than increasing provision.

Map 9.3 Public Open Space



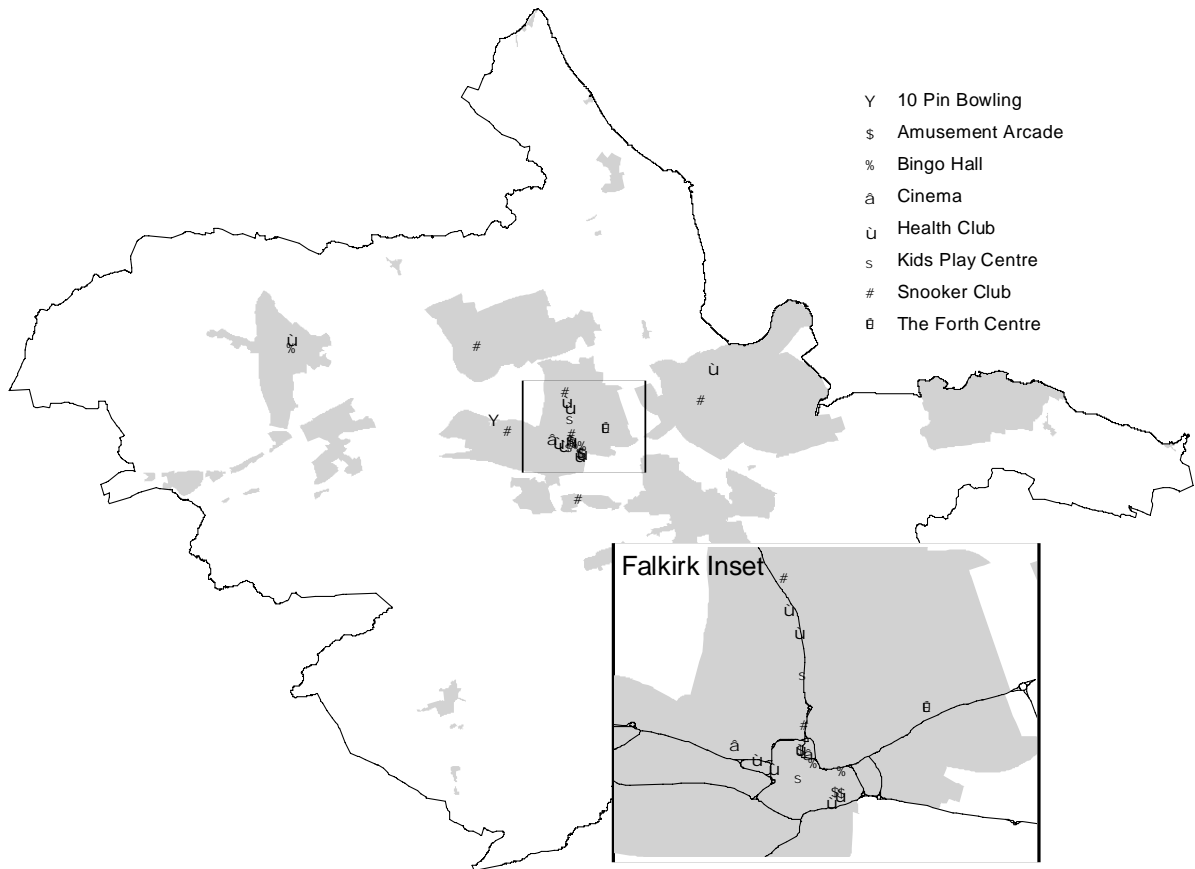
COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION

- 9.3.30 The countryside is the location for a number of recreational activities, the most common being walking. The popularity of walking is increasing and similar trends can be seen in cycling and horse-riding. A survey for SNH carried out in 1991 estimated that each week Scottish residents take more than 2 million walks in the countryside. Over 90% of these walks are in lowland locations. Countryside recreation and access is therefore of importance to the residents of the Falkirk Council area.
- 9.3.31 The Falkirk Council area has over 200 footpaths recorded on its footpath register and Catalogue of Rights of Way. Provision for off road facilities for cyclists are currently restricted to canal towpaths and urban parks. There are fewer areas where public facilities exist for horse riders. For the less able, the canal towpaths are currently the only routes suitable for wheelchair use.
- 9.3.32 Countryside access tends to be used as a general and all embracing term. In practice there are relatively few paths where the public have a right to enter land. There is however much informal access to the countryside which may or may not be tolerated by the owner. The common law legal tests as to what constitutes a right of way are strict and this may explain this situation. The emphasis that public policy is placing on access to the countryside and the work undertaken by SNH and the Land Reform Policy Group indicate that the Scottish Parliament will be investigating the issue. It is therefore likely that there will be significant changes affecting Local Authority powers and access provision.
- 9.3.33 The Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 gives Falkirk Council various duties and powers in relation to access. To better implement these powers and in anticipation of future changes an Access Forum has been set up and an Access Strategy produced.
- 9.3.34 The main objective is to create a network of strategic and local paths, close to where people live, developed in a planned and co-ordinated manner for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and the less able without compromising the needs of those who live and work there.
- 9.3.35 The Council's Development Plans have a role to play in assisting in the implementation of the Access Strategy, particularly with regard to safeguarding existing or proposed paths and ensuring new development takes into account the need for countryside access which could include the use of planning conditions or agreement.
- 9.3.36 The objectives of improved countryside access will also inter relate with other policy objectives of the Structure Plan which include encouraging tourism, healthier lifestyles, reducing disadvantage and inequality and reducing car use.

PRIVATE SECTOR LEISURE

- 9.3.37 Most of the private sector leisure provision that currently exists relates to the main urban areas and has tended to be concentrated in Falkirk. These are shown on Map 9.4 and consist of ten pin bowling, cinema, bingo halls, health clubs and snooker clubs. There is also the Coasters Arena, KC Kids Play and Party Centre and Mega Zone in Grahams Road.
- 9.3.38 More recently the Council has received informal inquiries and planning applications for larger scale private sector leisure facilities such as multiplex cinemas. (e.g. Central Retail Park and at Coasters, Grangemouth Road).
- 9.3.39 Apart from the golf courses shown on Map 9.1 (Active Sports) there are currently no large scale leisure activities that are usually found in a countryside location such as motor sport, paint-balling etc. in operation within the Falkirk Council area. There are however a number of smaller operations.
- 9.3.40 The Forth and Clyde and Union Canals are a major asset to the area. British Waterway's £78m Millennium Link project aimed at restoring coast to coast and city to city navigation across Central Scotland creates a number of wider leisure and tourism opportunities.
- 9.3.41 The main sites with development opportunities have been identified in the Canal Corridor Development Framework, the Falkirk Local Plan First Review and the Polmont Local Plan 2nd Review (Finalised Draft).
- 9.3.42 Other major leisure opportunities relate to the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway and Bo'ness Waterfront area. The previous Structure Plan also identified Rough Castle and Tamfourhill and Callendar Park as priority areas for tourism and leisure development. Further information on tourism is contained in Chapter 1, Employment.

Map 9.4 Private Sector Leisure & Recreation



COMMUNITY HALLS AND OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS

9.3.43 This sub section deals with the provision of community halls, (including community centres, church halls and other public halls), town halls, libraries, cemeteries and other public buildings such as Council offices and police stations etc.

9.3.44 Falkirk Council's current planning policy is to protect existing community uses from re-development proposals or changes of use. In the Council's previous Leisure and Recreation Plan the provision of community halls was based on 1 per 4/5000 population.

9.3.45 Map 9.5 shows the location of the main community halls. In addition there are also 2 sites allocated for community halls in Local Plans; at Lionthorn and Stenhousemuir. The Council owns 27 community halls usually managed by volunteer management committees. There are also some 18 Community Education Centres or wings and also some school halls can be used during outwith school hours. There are some 84 church halls and 48 other halls within the Council area. These are mostly available only to particular organisations eg TAVR drill hall, scouts or guides or Masonic hall etc.

- 9.3.46 Map 9.6 indicates public buildings, showing Council offices, libraries, job centres, police station and citizens advice bureaux etc. The map shows that most facilities are concentrated in the Town and District Centres of the main settlements in the Council area.
- 9.3.47 A study in 1997 for the Assessors Office revealed the expected operational life of the Council's cemeteries. These are shown in fig. 9.6 below. New provision is currently being explored for Bo'ness, Slamannan and Polmont to address predicted shortfalls.
- 9.3.49 The Council operates 3 Town Halls; Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness. 22% of the adult population had visited one of the Council's Town Halls at least once in the last year.
- 9.3.50 Forty-four percent of the adult population have used one of the Council's libraries at least once in the last 12 months. Provision was generally considered to be very good or fairly good.

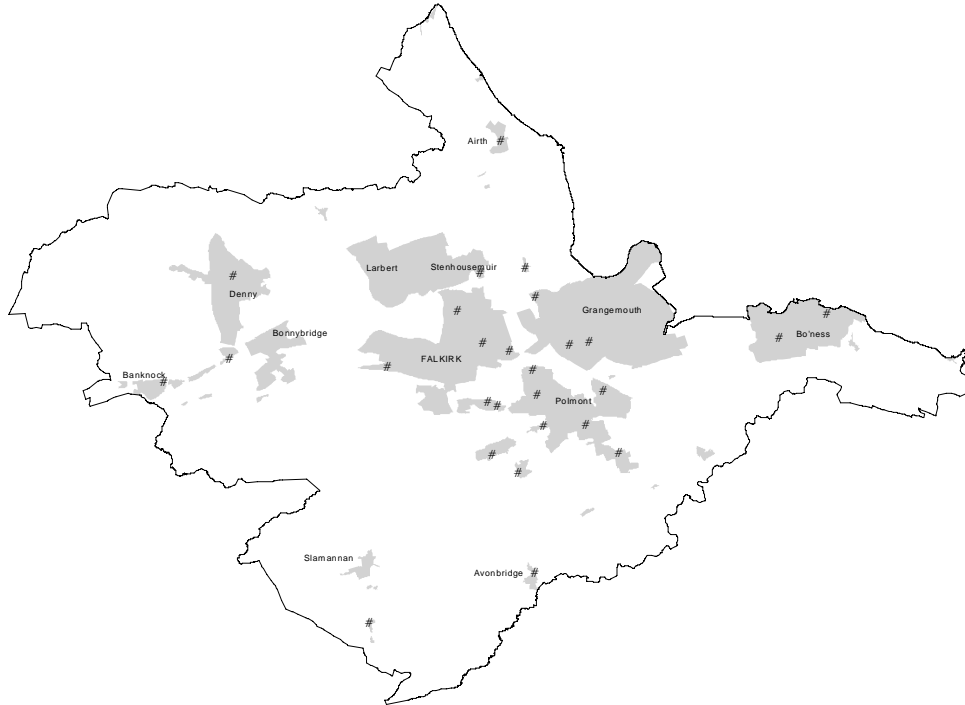
Figure 9.6 - Operational Life for Council Cemeteries

Airth	25 yrs
Bo'ness	5 yrs
Grandsable	8 yrs
Slamannan	2 yrs
Muiravonside	6 yrs
Hills of Dunipace	15 yrs
Larbert	17 yrs
Camelon	20 yrs
Polmont	15 yrs

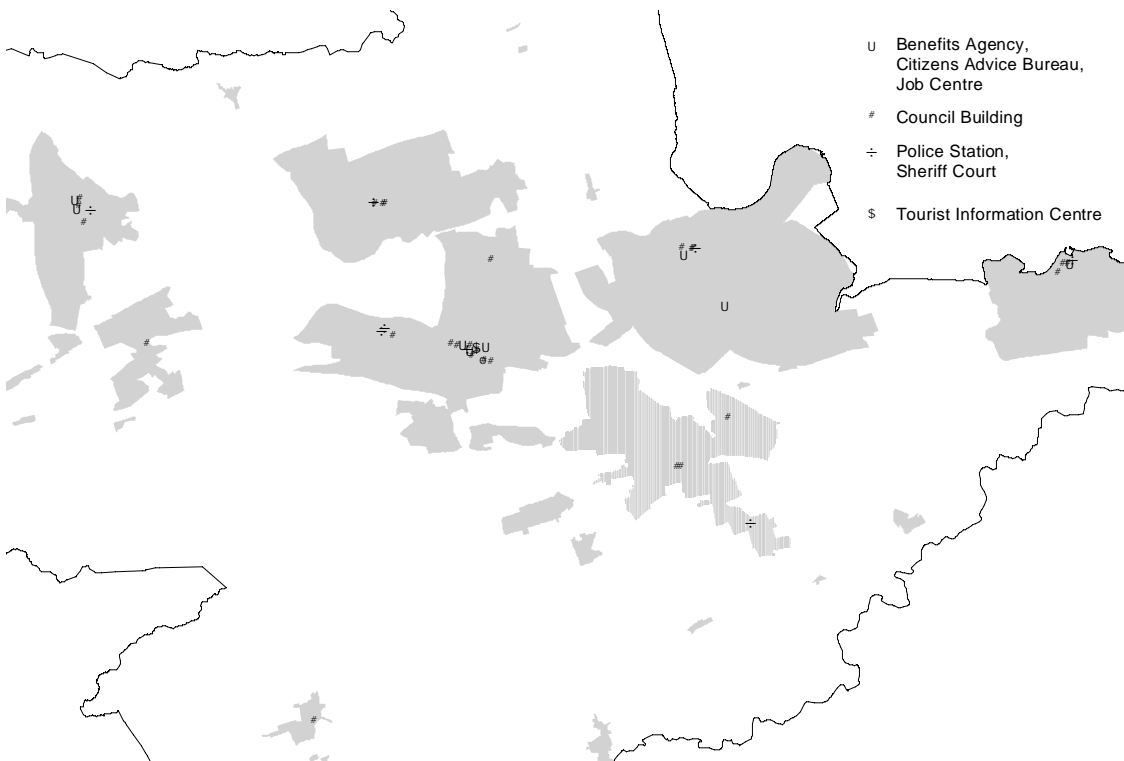
Source: Falkirk Council, Community and Environmental Services 1999

- 9.3.48 There were questions concerning the provision of Community Halls, Town Halls and Libraries in the Falkirk Council Household Survey. Of those who had an opinion, the provision of Community Halls was considered to be fairly good. However, 50% of people asked had no opinion. When the full range of halls is taken into account the total number would appear adequate, however, much of the total provision is old and small and frequency of use highly variable for Council owned facilities.
- 9.3.51 In the Initial Consultation stage of the Structure Plan comments were received about the lack of library provision in the Polmont area. The household survey reveals that library users in the Polmont area use instead Falkirk, Grangemouth or the mobile facilities. The overall use of the library service does not seem to be affected but they use the service less frequently than other areas.

Map 9.5 Community Halls



Map 9.6 Public Buildings



EDUCATION FACILITIES

9.3.52 Falkirk Council is the Education Authority and therefore has a statutory duty to provide primary and secondary school education. In addition it provides nursery education, adult education and other specialist services. Apart from the Council, the private sector provides nursery facilities and there is Falkirk College as the area’s main college of further education. As planning authority the Council must ensure that adequate educational facilities exist to serve new development.

9.3.53 Map 9.7 shows the location of primary schools, the existing secondary schools and the new FSP schools. In addition there are 6 nursery schools and 4 special schools. Many of the schools either have nursery classes or special units attached to them.

9.3.54 There are also a number of proposals related to secondary schools which will impact on provision in the future. Dawson Park and Woodlands will be re-developed for other uses. A new secondary school is being built in the Polmont area. Larbert High, Graeme High and Bo’ness Academy are also being re-developed largely on existing or adjacent sites. The new schools have been designed to allow for combined use of some of the sports facilities at out of hours times. This has been taken into account in the assessment of sports provision.

9.3.55 A comparison between the existing capacities and current school rolls is shown in Figure 9.7 below. The population predictions set out in Chapter 8 indicates that the number of children of school age is likely to fall. Therefore overall there would appear to be adequate provision of school places.

Figure 9.7 - School Capacities in the Falkirk Council Area

	Current roll	Capacity
Secondary Schools	8,542	11,137
Primary Schools	12,412	18,360

Source: Falkirk Council, Education Services 1998/99

9.3.56 However, there are a number of factors that might alter this situation, particularly in relation to Primary School provision. The capacity is likely to reduce in the long term because of the need to have smaller class sizes and the Education Service's long term aim of removing mobile classrooms. Also, it is not satisfactory to bus primary school pupils long distance, therefore, excess capacity in primary school places in one area of the Council can not necessarily assist a school becoming overcrowded in another area. Finally, popular schools may be subject to placing requests from pupils outside the school's catchment area.

9.3.57 This means that whilst overall there is adequate capacity, particular localities do have limitations to the capacities of their primary schools. This generally relates to Larbert/Stenhousemuir, Polmont and Falkirk where most residential development has previously been concentrated. Unless capacities are increased this could place a restriction on new residential development within the catchment areas of primary schools in these areas.

Figure 9.8 - Primary Schools with Projected Roll exceeding Capacity by 95%

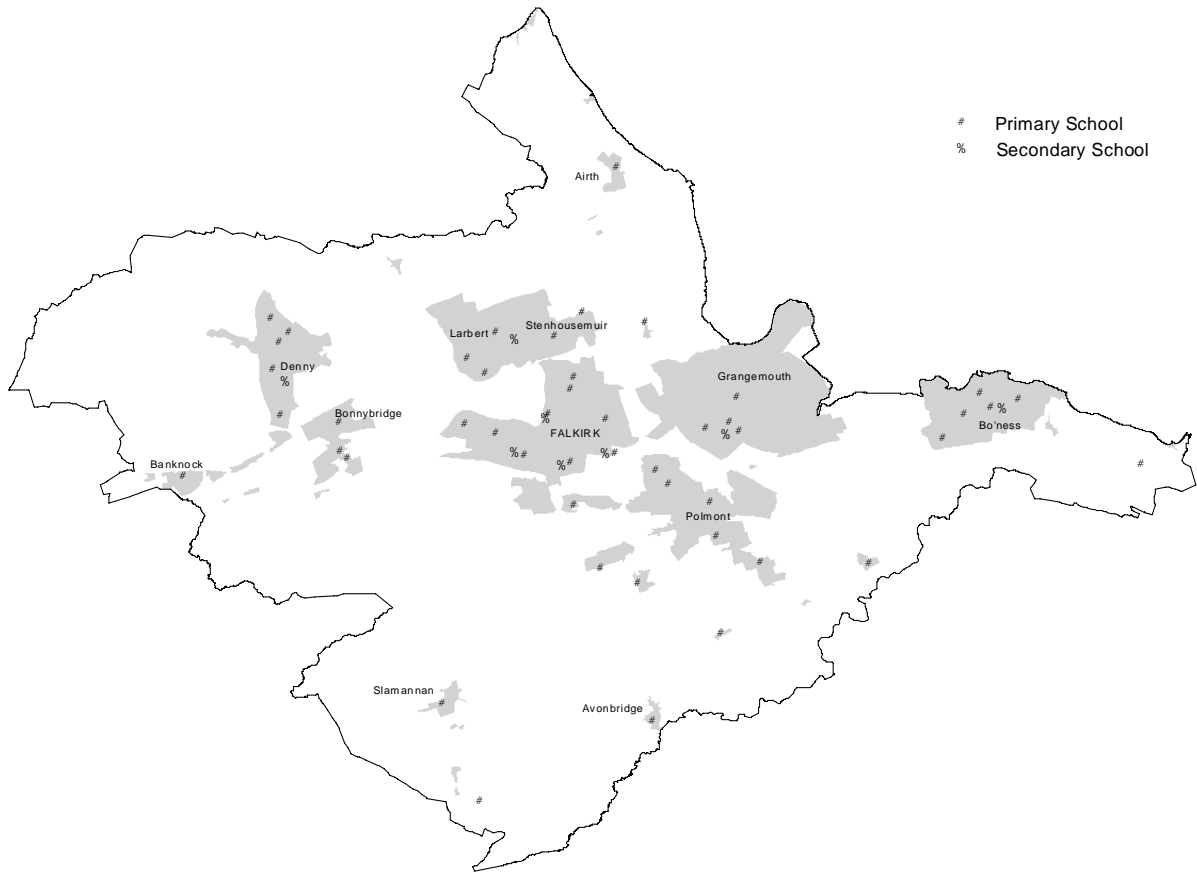
Primary School	Highest Projected Roll	Capacity	%
Comely Park	498	462	108%
Wallacestone	485	462	105%
Carron	503	495	102%
Stenhousemuir	564	578	98%
Larbert Village	256	264	97%

Source: Falkirk Council, Education Services 1998

Note: Projected roll takes into account future residential development commitments at June 1997 and looks forward to 2003.

9.3.58 Using schools out of hours as community facilities clearly has many benefits. Some schools are already used for such activities and increasing the combined use of schools would ensure a more efficient use of land and property assets. However, there are frequently practical problems in terms of the design of individual schools, security problems and extra staff costs.

Map 9.7 Primary/Secondary School Location



HEALTH FACILITIES

9.3.59 Health and care facilities are provided by the National Health Service, Falkirk Council Social Work Services and Housing Services, the private sector in terms of nursing and residential homes and the voluntary sector.

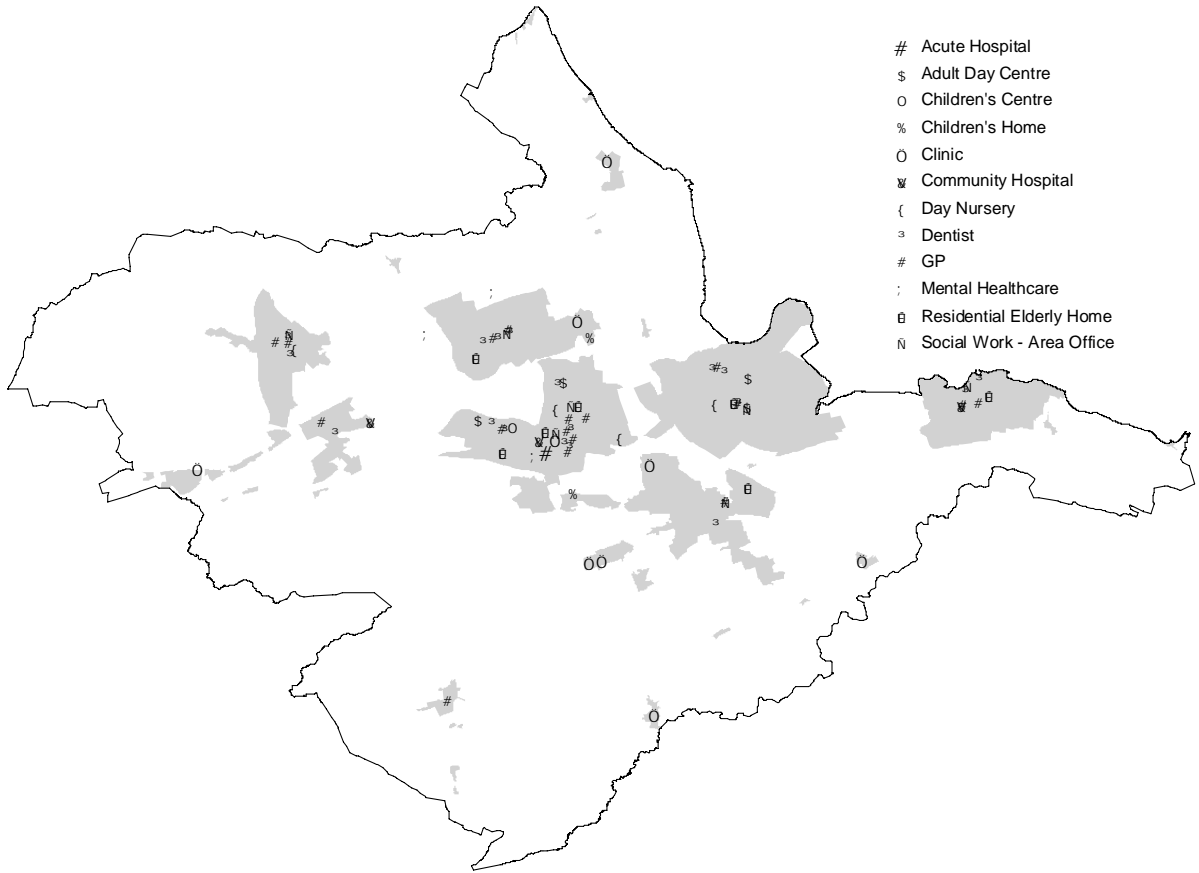
9.3.60 The Forth Valley Health Board is responsible for the planning of the National Health Service provision whereas Falkirk Council, through statutory Community Care plans is responsible for planning social/care services.

9.3.61 Map 9.8 shows the full range of health facilities ranging from hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists and the Council's own care provision. Provision is centred in the main settlements with a concentration of facilities within Falkirk.

9.3.62 In health terms Falkirk Council area is in general typical of Central Scotland. However, in UK and European terms this area has a relatively poor health record. Falkirk Council area has slightly higher standardised mortality rate than the Scottish average. The main causes of premature death are from coronary heart disease, cancer and stroke.

- 9.3.63 As the population ages there will be an increased burden of disease. However, this is not just an issue for the provision of facilities. Health is related to a whole range of factors including lifestyle, income levels and the general environment.
- 9.3.64 The Health Service in Falkirk has been re-organised and now consists of a Primary Care Trust providing mental health services, community health services, local health co-operatives (GP's and Dentists etc.) and community hospitals. Forth Valley Acute Care Hospital Trust will provide the main general hospital services e.g. Falkirk Royal Infirmary.
- 9.3.65 Bellsdyke Hospital and Royal Scottish National Hospital in Larbert provide care for people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities respectively. The intention is that these facilities close and care be provided within the community. This will have significant implications for the Council's care and housing services as well as the economic impact of the closure of these hospitals. The Council is developing a day care service at Etna Road, Falkirk which will partially replace the day care service provided at Bellsdyke.
- 9.3.66 Part of the reason for the re-organisation of local health services is to enhance the role of primary care. This may have implications for the use of land and property and the adequacy of existing facilities. The Health Board is currently undertaking an audit to assess the suitability of its local premises to accommodate future trends in care.

Map 9.8 Health Facilities



9.4 Summary of Main Findings

9.4.1 The Council is a significant provider of facilities for sport, play areas, public open space, schools and other community facilities. In general, the total provision of land and property assets for these facilities is adequate and would also be able to meet future needs. However, this general statement needs to be qualified. For each of the different facility types there are localised problems of deficiency and variability in quality across the Council area. The strategic issue for the Council is how to better use its existing land and property assets and improve the quality of provision rather than having to increase the quantity of provision.

9.4.2 Of all the types of community facilities the provision of play areas is the issue which has the most problems in terms of quantity and quality of provision. The household survey revealed a high level of dissatisfaction with the existing provision. Discussions with housebuilding companies also revealed a dissatisfaction with the Council's current policies and practices. The provision of play facilities is therefore an important issue for the Council to address.

9.4.3 Countryside access is an issue where there is considerable latent demand and likely legislative changes. Policies in the Structure Plan and Local Plans will have a role to play in implementing the Council's Access Strategy.

9.4.4 The current provision of private sector leisure facilities is relatively small scale and concentrated in Falkirk town centre. With leisure spending predicted to rise in the future it is likely that the private sector will come forward with more proposals. Planning policies must accommodate this pressure in ways that maximise the benefits to the local economy but minimises the impact on the environment.

9.4.5 The majority of public buildings are concentrated within or adjacent to Falkirk town centre and the district centres. The centres therefore perform an important civic and cultural role as well as the provision for shopping. This wider role of centres is an opportunity that needs to be supported by the policies of the Structure Plan. The exception to this pattern is Polmont and the Braes where public and community facilities, like shopping provision is more dispersed among former village centres.

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