

# DEVELOPMENT PLAN *Update*

Issue 24 | January 2022



Falkirk Council  
Development Services

## CLIMATE CHANGE - WHAT CAN PLANNING DO?

The COP26 summit in Glasgow has raised awareness of the need for action on climate change. How can planning nationally and here in Falkirk contribute to our net zero carbon targets and climate change resilience?

Draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was published in November 2021 and places climate change objectives firmly at the heart of the future spatial strategy for the country. [You can view and comment on it here.](#)

Locally, LDP2 has a number of important policies and proposals which are trying to support change:

Ensuring that new development is accessible to facilities by sustainable modes of transport to reduce the need to travel by private car, as part of the move towards 20 minute neighbourhoods;

Supporting new walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure;

Supporting the re-use of vacant and derelict land across the Council area. This is tracked in our annual [Vacant and Derelict Land Survey](#);

Encouraging residential development in town centres, and making best use of town centre land and buildings;

Requiring renewable energy technologies such as heat pumps and solar/PV to be incorporated in new development;

Protecting and extending our green network to promote nature restoration and carbon sequestration, for example through woodland creation or peatland restoration;

Ensuring that new development avoids areas of high flood risk;

Providing supportive policies for renewable energy developments such as wind farms in appropriate locations.

### Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Supplementary Guidance SG14  
November 2021



Energy policies in LDP2 are also supported by Supplementary Guidance: SG14 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy.

In addition:

- The Falkirk/Grangemouth Investment Zone has a strong focus on promoting a just transition of the Grangemouth industries to net zero. Grangemouth is the largest single industrial emitter of CO2 in Scotland so this is identified a national priority in draft NPF4;
- Forth Valley for Net Zero was launched in August 2021 before COP26 by Falkirk Economic Partnership and is a partnership of businesses, local councils, and third-sector organisations;
- Falkirk Council is starting to prepare a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) which will aim to establish local authority area-wide plans and priorities for systematically improving the energy efficiency of buildings, and decarbonising heat.

# PLANNING REFORM – WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR FALKIRK?

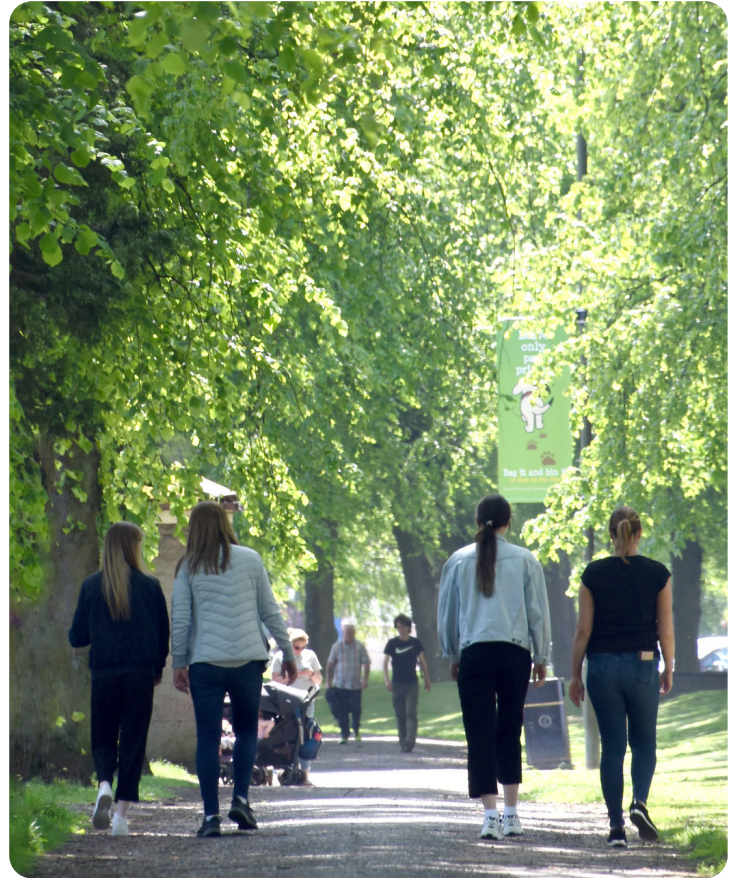
The planning system in Scotland is changing significantly as a result of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The implementation of the Act by the Scottish Government has been delayed by the Covid 19 pandemic, but below we highlight progress with some key aspects and what it means for Falkirk.

## Draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) out to consultation

NPF4 is a really important new planning document for Scotland, setting out a spatial strategy for the whole country. It is currently out for consultation, and subject to parliamentary scrutiny, until 31 March 2021. Importantly, it will now be part of the statutory development plan and contains detailed policies for assessing planning applications that would previously have been contained in local development plans. It also sets out targets for the amount of future housing in each local authority area, including Falkirk. As such, it represents a more centralised approach to planning in Scotland. You can view and comment on draft NPF4 [here](#). It is expected to be finally approved in summer 2022.

## Regional Spatial Strategies – working with our Forth Valley neighbours

Regional spatial strategies are to be prepared by planning authorities in regional groupings to provide a spatial vision for their regions and identify strategic developments. Falkirk Council has worked with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils over the last year to produce an indicative regional spatial strategy for the whole Forth Valley region, which emphasises the importance of the area and the opportunities which exist to develop and promote our collective assets, such as the River Forth, our vibrant network of towns, our great greenspaces, our manufacturing centres such as Grangemouth, our tourism assets, and our location at the hub of the transport network in Scotland. We expect to continue to work together over the coming years to prepare a more formal document.



## Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP) 3 – kicking off in 2022

LDP2 was adopted in 2020, and we are presently preparing for LDP3, the process for which will start in 2022. In 2022 we expect to publish and consult on a Development Plan Scheme which will set out the programme and how we intend to involve stakeholders. LDP3 will follow the new procedures introduced by the 2019 Act.

## Local Place Plans – communities producing their own plans

Communities will now have the ability to produce their own local place plans which will be taken into account in preparing the local development plan. The Council intends to raise awareness of this opportunity among communities over the coming months, and set out what support it can offer to communities who want to prepare such plans. A brief guide is being prepared, and a survey is being undertaken to gauge interest and awareness among community councils.



# LDP2 – WHAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE ON DELIVERY?

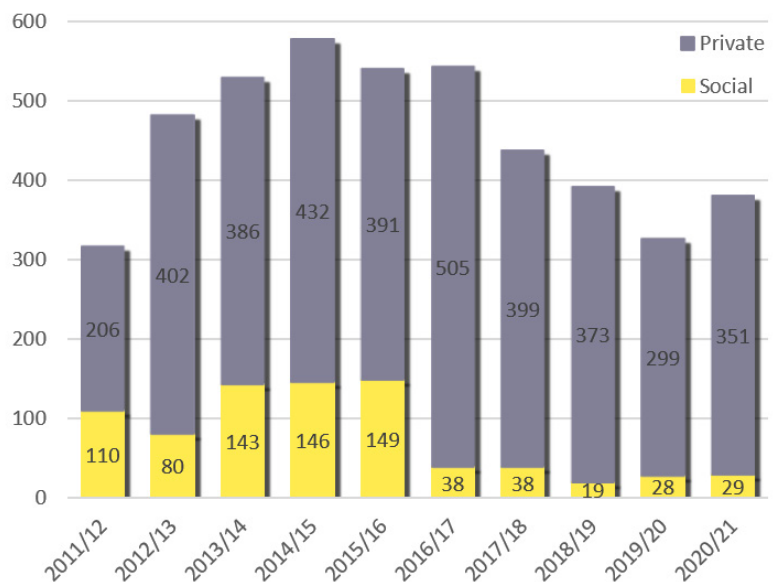
[LDP2](#) was adopted in August 2020 and the focus now is on getting its policies and proposals delivered. We have now adopted nearly all of our [14 Supplementary Guidance notes](#) which flesh out some of the policies within LDP2. Progress on the ground is summarised below:

## Housing

Annual housing completions in the area have been falling in the last few years, reaching a Covid-affected low of 331 homes in 2019/20, which is well below our current target LDP target of 530. But 2020/21 completions are up to 380, showing some recovery. Some of our larger allocated sites have been delayed by complex issues and constraints, which we believe will be resolved in time, and all of our 12 Strategic Growth Areas are making some form of progress. Our latest [Housing Land Audit](#) shows we have a total housing land supply of around 7,000 houses. Some 2,760 are programmed to be built over the next five years of which just over 1000 would be in the affordable sector.



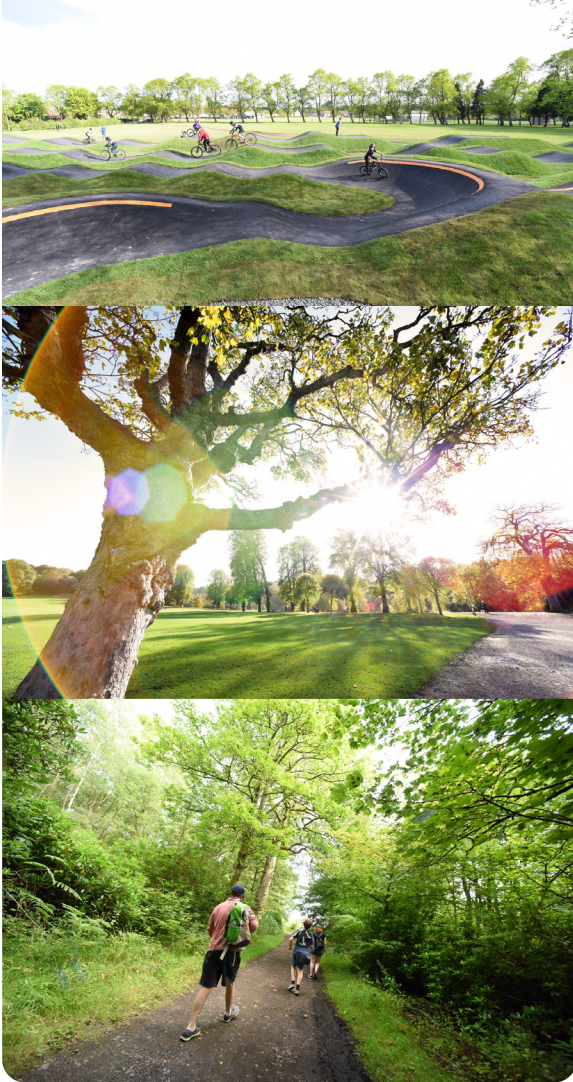
### Housing Completions to June 2021



## Infrastructure

Progress is being made on a number of the strategic infrastructure proposals identified in LDP2:

- Improvements to the A904/A9 in the vicinity of the Westfield roundabout, expected to start next year, have been boosted by a grant of £20m from the UK Levelling Up Fund which will help fund the iconic Westfield active travel crossing;
- Upgrading of M9 Junction 5 is also to commence in 2022;
- Land acquisition to enable the Denny Eastern Access Road is ongoing via CPO procedures;
- Tenders have been returned for the upgrade to M80 Junction 7 at Haggs;
- Bus partnership fund award of £0.5m to Forth Valley Bus Alliance covering improvements to key journey corridors;
- Proposals for a Falkirk Central Sustainable Travel Hub and Falkirk to Grangemouth Green Corridor included in the Falkirk/Grangemouth Investment Zone Growth Deal;
- Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme outline design is being developed;
- Upgrading of Denny, Maddiston and Kinnaird Primary Schools to deal with capacity pressures from new development is in hand;
- Falkirk Community Hospital and Primary Care Premises Programmes are underway.



## Greenspace

A range of green network improvements identified in LDP2 are being progressed with multiple objectives to improve open space quality, combat climate change, encourage active travel, and restore nature and biodiversity. Many of these have been at least partly funded by developer contributions. Progress includes:

- The regeneration of Zetland Park is well advanced;
- The Forest Estate Plan, which will see improvements made to Council owned urban woodlands across the area, is underway with the North Falkirk section completed;
- The Bo'ness Greenways project which is enhancing the John Muir Way along Bo'ness Foreshore is ongoing;
- Enhancements to Herbertshire Castle Park in Dunipace have been completed;
- Funding from the vacant and derelict land investment programme has been secured to transform the Lionthorn Policy Bing in Falkirk into an attractive recreational greenspace with the work due to be carried out in 2022.

## Business

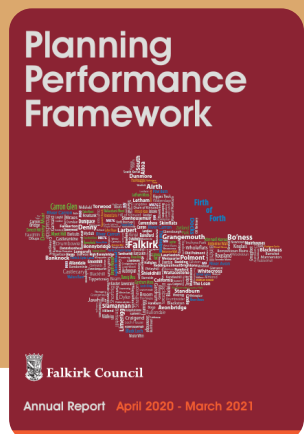
The economic challenges facing our Town Centres have been exacerbated by Covid 19, but a lot of business support has to been provided and a number of short and long term initiatives are being progressed. We have carried out a Town Centres Health Check to assess the state of play in the main centres post pandemic.



Our Employment Land Audit shows that some 20 hectares of land have been developed for new business and industry use over the last five years. We have a marketable employment land supply of 274 hectares across 32 sites, of which 89 hectares are considered to be immediately available.



You can read more about what the planning service has been up to over the year 2020/21 by taking a look at our Planning Performance Framework.



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