

Falkirk Local Development Plan

Supplementary Guidance
SG13 – Open Space and New Development

Environmental Report
March 2014

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

SG13 - Open Space and New Development Supplementary Guidance (SG)

The SG provides the Council's guidance on the provision of open space in conjunction with new development. Specifically it advises on:

- The overall standards for provision of open space within new development
- How the requirements for open space for new development will be calculated.
- What types of open space should be provided
- Whether the open space should be provided on-site or a financial contribution towards off-site provision will be sought.
- How financial contributions towards open space will be calculated.
- The process for the delivery and subsequent maintenance of new open space.

The guidance is intended to be used in tandem with the Council's open space audit and Open Space Strategy, which will be used to identify whether on-site or off-site open space provision is more appropriate and the areas in which financial contributions towards off-site provision will be invested.

Falkirk Council Area

The Falkirk Council area extends to some 300 sq. km. and is located in the middle of Scotland's Central Belt. Despite its relatively small geographical extent, the area exhibits a considerable variety of landforms and habitats. This is in turn influenced by the its underlying geology, comprising mainly sedimentary rocks from the Carboniferous period, and the effects of glaciation, which deposited a range of drift materials and a characteristic landscape of mounds, ridges, terraces and raised beaches.

The northern part is characterised by the relatively flat and fertile carseland adjoining the Forth Estuary, supporting arable farming and some improved pasture. The adjacent estuarine mudflats and salt marsh form part of the Firth of Forth SPA, which is of international importance for wintering birds. To the east a rolling landscape of good quality agricultural land is bisected by the scenic Avon Valley. The centre of the area, which is dominated by the river valleys of the Carron and the Bonny Water, is the most urbanised, and is traversed by the Forth and Clyde and Union Canals. To the south and west, the land rises up to the more remote and less populous Slamannan Plateau and the Denny and Kilsyth Hills where rough grazing predominates with some commercial forestry.

The population of c.156,000 is focused within a network of small to medium sized towns. The principal town of Falkirk, with a population of around 38,000, is centrally located and serves as the main shopping, service and employment centre for the area. Separated from Falkirk by a narrow Green Belt are the

urban areas of Larbert/Stenhousemuir, Polmont and Grangemouth. The former two are largely residential in character, whilst Grangemouth is home to the largest petrochemical complex in Scotland. In the western reaches of the area lie the settlements of Denny/Dunipace, Bonnybridge and Banknock, whilst to the east, overlooking the Forth, sits the town of Bo'ness. Some 18 smaller village communities are scattered across the rural part of the area.

Consultation Process

In accordance with Section 15 (3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, Falkirk Council have agreed an 6 week Statutory Consultation period for Statutory responses (Scottish Ministers/ Historic Scotland (HS)/ The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage). The public consultation period will also run for a period of 6 weeks from 7th March 2014 until 18th April 2014.

Purpose of Environmental Report

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to assess the likely significance of the Open Space and New Development SG on the environment. The assessment indicates the environmental benefits and potential environmental impacts of implementing the SG.

The SEA informs the SG as part of an iterative process to ensure that environment is considered within all tiers of the SG. This approach ensures that environmental issues are identified and resolved at a Strategic Level.

State of the Environment

Baseline environmental information for the Falkirk Council area is provided Section 4 of the Environmental Report. This SG has been prepared with a full understanding of its potential effects on the environment. The environmental baseline provides a benchmark for the current environmental 'capacity' of the plan area and will inform monitoring and individual developer proposals for the area.

Likely Significant Environmental Effects of SG and Proposed Mitigation

The implementation of the SG has the potential to have significant positive environmental effects on biodiversity, population and human health, material assets and landscape through:

- Increasing the amount of open space of value to biodiversity;
- Increasing the biodiversity value of existing open space;
- Expanding and linking up habitat networks;
- Increasing recreational opportunity;
- Increasing the health and wellbeing value of new open spaces;
- Improving accessibility to fit for purpose open space of different types;

- Increasing the proportion of open spaces connected to the core path network;
- Improving townscape quality;
- Increasing the amount of open space;
- Increasing the fitness for purpose of existing open space; and
- Increasing the fitness for purpose of new open spaces.

The assessment of environmental effects of the SPG is presented in full in Section 7 of the Environmental Report.

Alternatives Considered

It is a statutory requirement of an SEA to consider alternatives to achieve the desired outcomes of the SG. The scope for considering alternatives within the SG is rather narrow as the most significant environmental choices have already been made by the Falkirk Local Development Plan and the Falkirk Open Space Strategy, both of which have undergone separate SEA procedures. The main alternatives considered were: different methods of applying the quantitative open space standards to new development; different approaches to the ownership and maintenance of open space coming forwards as part of new development; and different ways of deciding where to spend financial contributions towards the improvement of open space provided in lieu of on site open space provision. Assessment of alternatives is detailed in Section 9 of the Environmental Report.

Monitoring

Following adoption of the SG, the effects on the environment will need to be monitored. This will ensure that any unforeseen negative environmental impacts are identified and appropriate action taken. Falkirk Council will determine a suitable monitoring framework with specific indicators in liaison with the statutory consultees. Section 10 of Environmental Report sets out the proposed monitoring framework.

Next Steps

Responses received to the Environmental Report will be analysed alongside consultation responses to the consultative draft SG. If necessary changes will be made to the SG before a finalised version is presented to committee for approval and then submitted to Scottish Ministers for adoption as statutory Supplementary Guidance. Once adoption has taken place a SEA Post Adoption Statement will be issued and environmental monitoring will be agreed and implemented.

1.0 SG13 - OPEN SPACE AND NEW DEVELOPMENT - SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE (SG)

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This document has been produced to provide guidance to planners and developers on the Council's requirements for the provision of open space in new development; it is intended to provide advice on:

- The overall standards for provision of open space within new development;
- How the requirements for open space for new development will be calculated;
- What types of open space should be provided;
- Whether the open space should be provided on-site or a financial contribution towards off-site provision will be sought;
- How financial contributions towards open space will be calculated; and
- The process for the delivery and subsequent maintenance of new open space.

Key Facts

Name of Responsible Authority	Falkirk Council
Reason for PPS	The preparation of the SG is a requirement of the Falkirk Local Development Plan and supported by Scottish Planning Policy
Plan Subject	Land Use Planning/Supplementary Planning Guidance
Period Covered by Plan	The SG will cover a five year period from adoption of the LDP in early 2015
Frequency of Updates	Updates will be needed at least every 5 years to coincide with LDP preparation and may be needed more often dependent on the timing of reviews of the Open Space Strategy
Plan Area	The Falkirk Council Administrative Area
Plan Purpose	To provide guidance to planners and developers on the Council's requirements for the provision of open space in new development
Key Contact	Danny Thallon Planning Officer Falkirk Council Development Services Abbotsford House, David's Loan, Falkirk. FK2 7YZ Tel:01324 504927 Email: danny.thallon@falkirk.gov.uk

Table 1: Key Facts

2.0 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment is required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to assess the likely significance of environmental effects of the SPG.

2.1.2 The Environmental Report follows the guidance from the Scottish Government on undertaking SEA:

- Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
- Scottish Executive SEA Toolkit, September 2006
- SEA Guidance, August 2013

2.1.3 The SEA Environmental Report has been produced by Falkirk Council.

2.2 SEA Stages

2.2.1 There are a number of stages of SEA as shown in Table 2 below:

SEA Stage	SEA Process	Progress
Screening	Screening report submitted to the SEA Gateway. Determination of the requirement of SEA by Responsible Authority.	Screening report submitted to SEA Gateway on 22 May 2013
Determination	Determination is made by the Responsible Authority as to the likelihood of significant environmental effects occurring	Determination made, and submitted to the SEA Gateway on 31 July 2013, determination advertised on Council website on 15 August 2013 and in Falkirk Herald on 22 August 2013
Scoping	Identification of the environmental issues to be addressed, the scope and the level of detail required for presentation within the scoping report.	Scoping Request submitted to the SEA Gateway on 31 July 2013
Scoping Consultation	The Consultation Authorities (CA's) advise on the scope of the Environmental Report. At this stage the timescale for	Responses to Scoping Request received from Consultation

	consultation on the Environmental Report following receipt of consultation responses is determined.	Authorities via SEA Gateway on 2nd September 2013. Responses to comments received during the scoping stage are outlined at appendix 1 of this report.
Environmental Report	The consultative draft SG is assessed against the SEA Objectives and Indicators. Assessment of alternatives to the consultative draft SPG are also assessed. Requirements for mitigation and monitoring are reported.	This report
Environmental Report Consultation	The Consultation Authorities will provide a response on the Environmental Report via the SEA Gateway within 6 weeks of receipt. The CA's will advise on the content of the Environmental Report and the acceptability of the SPG. This consultation includes public consultation.	To Follow
Adoption	The SPG and the Environmental Report will be finalised taking into account the consultation responses. Once finalised, the Development Framework will be formally adopted.	To Follow
Post-Adoption SEA Statement	The SEA Statement summarises the assessment of the SPG and how the consultation responses have been taken into account.	To Follow
Mitigation and Monitoring	Following adoption, Falkirk Council will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the SPG.	To Follow

Table 2: SEA Stages and Progress

3.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 National PPS

3.1.1 The Open Space and New Development SG is informed broadly by national planning policy on open space contained within the SPP at paragraphs 154 and 155.

3.1.2 National Planning Framework 2 identifies the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) as a National Development. The SG will provide an important tool in ensuring that new open space coming forward as part of new development links in with the CSGN wherever possible or contributes towards the enhancement of the CSGN where appropriate.

3.1.3 The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) aims to change the face of Central Scotland, by restoring and transforming the landscape of an area stretching from Ayrshire and Inverclyde in the west, to Fife and the Lothians in the east. This SG will help to integrate Falkirk's new and existing urban open space into the CSGN.

3.2 Local PPS

3.2.1 The SG is informed by the Falkirk Local Development Plan and provides further detail about the implementation of Policy INF04 Open Space and New Residential Development and policy INF03 Protection of Open Space and, as statutory supplementary guidance, will form part of the Development Plan as defined by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

3.2.2 The SG is informed by The Falkirk Open Space Strategy which sets a number of council wide standards in relation to the quantity, quality and distribution of open space.

3.2.3 This SG is also informed by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Falkirk Greenspace: A Strategy for our Green Network and the Core Path Plan

3.2.4 Falkirk Council's Single Outcome Agreement sets a 20-year vision for the Council area. Part of this vision is that: "We will be healthier and live longer". This SG can help contribute towards meeting this vision.

3.2.5 Falkirk's Core Path Plan and the Local Transport Strategy (providing adequate walking and cycling links to open spaces and key facilities will help achieve the aims of the CSGN, Falkirk's SOA and this supplementary guidance).

3.2.6 The SG will replace the Public Open Space, Falkirk Greenspace and New Development Supplementary Planning Guidance which was adopted by the Council in June 2011 and currently forms a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

3.2.7 The SG will be used to inform future Development Frameworks, Masterplans and Planning Briefs produced by the Council.

3.2.8 Section 6 of this report seeks to discuss in greater detail those environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the preparation of the Supplementary Guidance.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

4.1 Legislative Requirement

4.1.1 Schedules 3 (2) and (3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of the current state of the and the environmental characteristics likely to be significantly affected by the Plan, Programme or Strategy. Detailed environmental baseline in relation to the SG is provided according to SEA topic below and is supported by graphics where required.

4.2 Biodiversity – Flora & Fauna

Current State of the Environment

Habitats

4.2.1 The Falkirk Council area has a rich diversity of habitats considering the relatively small land area. Habitats include: rivers and streams, ponds, lochs, canals and other wetlands; estuarine habitats; woodlands; farmland; grassland and meadows; heaths and upland areas; rocky outcrops, quarries and spoil heaps; peat bogs; brownfield sites and urban greenspace.

4.2.2 The most extensive habitats within Falkirk Council area are improved grasslands, arable and horticultural land, built up areas and gardens. This reflects the area's intensive human occupation. Despite this, Falkirk still supports 24 of the 65 UK BAP priority habitats.

4.2.3 Habitats that have a disproportionately high representation within the area are: neutral grasslands, lowland dry acidic grassland, lowland raised and intermediate bog, mudflats, upland oakwoods, upland mixed ash woods, wet woodlands, saltmarsh, canals, and open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (brownfield sites).

4.2.4 Falkirk Council has recently updated its phase 1 habitat survey of the entire Council area. This provides up to date information about the relative extent of different habitat types and an indication of recent changes to habitat cover.

4.2.5 The priority habitat types most likely to be significantly affected by the SG are Urban Greenspace; Urban Wildlife Corridors; and Open mosaic habitat on previously developed ground (including bings); Broad-leaved & mixed woodland; and Lowland wood pastures & parkland.

Habitat Networks

4.2.6 For this area Integrated Habitat Networks have been identified for woodland, wetland, and grassland habitats. A more detailed analysis of integrated habitats in the Council area is contained within the "Falkirk

Integrated Habitat Networks” report June 2008. Table 1 below shows the 500m dispersal distance habitat networks which exist within the Falkirk Council area:

Network type	Number of networks identified	Total area of networks (hectares)	Percentage of less favoured habitat in network
Woodland generalist	2097	17460	34.8%
Broadleaved specialists	1928	6701	53.3%
Ancient broadleaved specialists	395	2961	61.6%
Wetland	2648	3434	31.1%
Grassland generalist	90	1407	28.8%
Lowland acid grassland specialist	57	1252	49.9%
Lowland grassland specialist	13	101	34.9%
Raised bogs	56	1122	17.7%

Table 1: Landscape Metrics for 500m dispersal distance habitat networks within the Falkirk Council area.

4.2.7 With appropriate habitat creation and management there is scope to increase the connectivity of these habitat networks. This would result in a reduction in the overall number of discrete networks and an increase in the average network size and ideally a decrease in the average percentage of unfavourable habitat within a network.

4.2.8 Forest Enterprise carried out a separate Integrated Habitat Network study for the Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Council areas using slightly different categorisations of network type. Networks are split into core and non core areas and defined using the following habitat types: broadleaved and yew woodland; fen, marsh and swamp; and neutral grassland. The spatial position and extent of functional integrated habitat networks were determined through a landscape ecology model from the BEETLE (Biological and Environmental Evaluation Tools for Landscape Ecology) suite of tools. Table 2 below shows the quantity of habitat and extent of close and wide habitat networks for each of the broad habitat types within the Falkirk Council area.

Habitat Type	Area of Habitat (Ha)	Number of separate habitat blocks	Area of close network (Ha)	Number of close networks	Area of wide network (Ha)	Number of wide networks
Broadleaved and Yew Woodland	3231	6614	10,604	735	57,069	123
Fen/ Marsh/ Swamp	592	514	1209	197	11,377	54
Neutral Grassland	334	287	544	121	5,110	77

Table 2: Forest Research Habitat Networks

Woodland

4.2.9 Woodland covers about 33.6km² (10.7%) of the Council area. Of this, 12.6km² are broadleaved, 13.2km² are conifer and 7.8km² are mixed woodland.

4.2.10 There are limited, but significant, areas of ancient or long-established woodland as follows:

- 27 Ancient Woodlands
- 5 Long established woodlands (semi-natural origin)
- 26 Long established woodlands (plantation origin)

4.2.11 Parkland and scattered trees cover 2km² of the area. While the nature and quality of these areas will be very variable, longer established areas of scattered trees can have significant biodiversity benefits.

4.2.12 In addition dense, continuous scrub covers about 3.2km² and can also be of significant benefit to biodiversity depending on the extent, species and location.

4.2.13 The Central Scotland Forest covers the entire Council area, and while tree coverage is presently small in area, more coverage is actively promoted. Between 1997 and 2012 approximately 1.4 million trees have been planted on an area covering 584.32ha of land within the Council area. It is worth noting that since 2008 the rate of new woodland planting has slowed to an average of approximately 5.8ha per year. This is compared to a rate of 50.5ha per year between 1997 and 2007.

Species Biodiversity

4.2.14 There are 45 UK priority species (almost 4% of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) known to occur within the Falkirk Council area. Above and beyond these there are 19 other species which feature on the

Scottish Biodiversity List. Appendix 2 of the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2013 sets out a list of priority species and their species status¹.

4.2.15 Invasive, non-native species known to occur within the Council area include:

- American mink
- Giant Hogweed
- Grey squirrel
- Himalayan Balsam
- Japanese Knotweed
- New Zealand pygmy weed
- Rhododendron ponticum
- Zebra Mussel

4.2.16 Other non-native, invasive species are likely to occur within the area.

4.2.17 The presence of invasive plant species (Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed) has been mapped along the Rivers Avon and Carron and their tributaries. Data on the extent and distribution of these species elsewhere is limited at present, although instances of invasive species are being recorded when reported. A pilot project started in 2011 to treat Japanese Knotweed on several tributaries of the River Carron and River Avon, is ongoing. It is anticipated that a strategic programme of invasive plant species control on the Carron Catchment within the Falkirk Council area will be developed by the Forth Fisheries Trust during 2013-14. Falkirk Council sprays Japanese Knotweed where it is identified on Council owned land. A survey of mink will be undertaken on the River Avon in March 2013 and mink control is ongoing or planned on the Rivers Carron and Avon. Rhododendron ponticum has been controlled in a number of key woodland wildlife sites but there is no strategic control of this species across the Falkirk Council area. The Falkirk Invasive Species Forum continues to work to progress local action to control invasive non-native species and to raise awareness of the problem of invasive non-native species.

Protected Sites

4.2.18 Falkirk Council area has a number of local, national and internationally designated sites for nature conservation.

4.2.19 International designations:

- 1 Ramsar site Firth of Forth
- 1 Special Area for Conservation Black Loch Moss
- 2 Special Protection Areas: Firth of Forth, Slamannan Plateau

1

http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/development/planning/planning_and_environment/biodiversity/biodiversity%20pdfs/action_plan/BAP2011-2014.pdf

4.2.20 National designations:

- 10 SSSI: Avon Gorge; Bowmains Meadow; Black Loch Moss; Carron Dams; Carron Glen; Darnrigg Moss; Denny Muir; Firth of Forth; Howierig Muir; Slamannan Plateau

4.2.21 Local designations:

- 62 Wildlife Sites
- 24 SINC
- 3 Local Nature Reserves

4.2.22 A relatively small number of the local sites are currently under active management.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces

4.2.23 The Open Space Audit of 596 sites undertaken in 2013 included an assessment of the biodiversity and nature conservation quality those open spaces. Of the 596 open spaces, biodiversity and nature conservation value was considered to be a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose in 137 sites. Table 3 below outlines the results of the assessment.

Hierarchy Level	Number of Spaces	Average Score (Out of 5)	Percentage of sites with Good or better Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value
National	7	4.14	100%
Regional	25	4.56	100%
Settlement	53	3.49	90.6%
Neighbourhood	52	3.19	82.7%
Sub - Total	137	3.63	89.8%
Residual open spaces	459	1.85	21.1%

Table 3: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of sites were this is a primary factor influencing fitness for purpose

4.2.24 Table 3 shows that all national and regional level open spaces have good or better biodiversity and nature conservation value. There are a small number of settlement and neighbourhood level open spaces (14 in total) which are not achieving good or better biodiversity and nature conservation value (10.2%) of the total number of open spaces where biodiversity and nature conservation value is a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose.

4.2.25 Of those open spaces where biodiversity and nature conservation value is not a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose only 21.1% (97 sites) achieved a score of good or better for biodiversity and nature conservation value in the Open Space Audit.

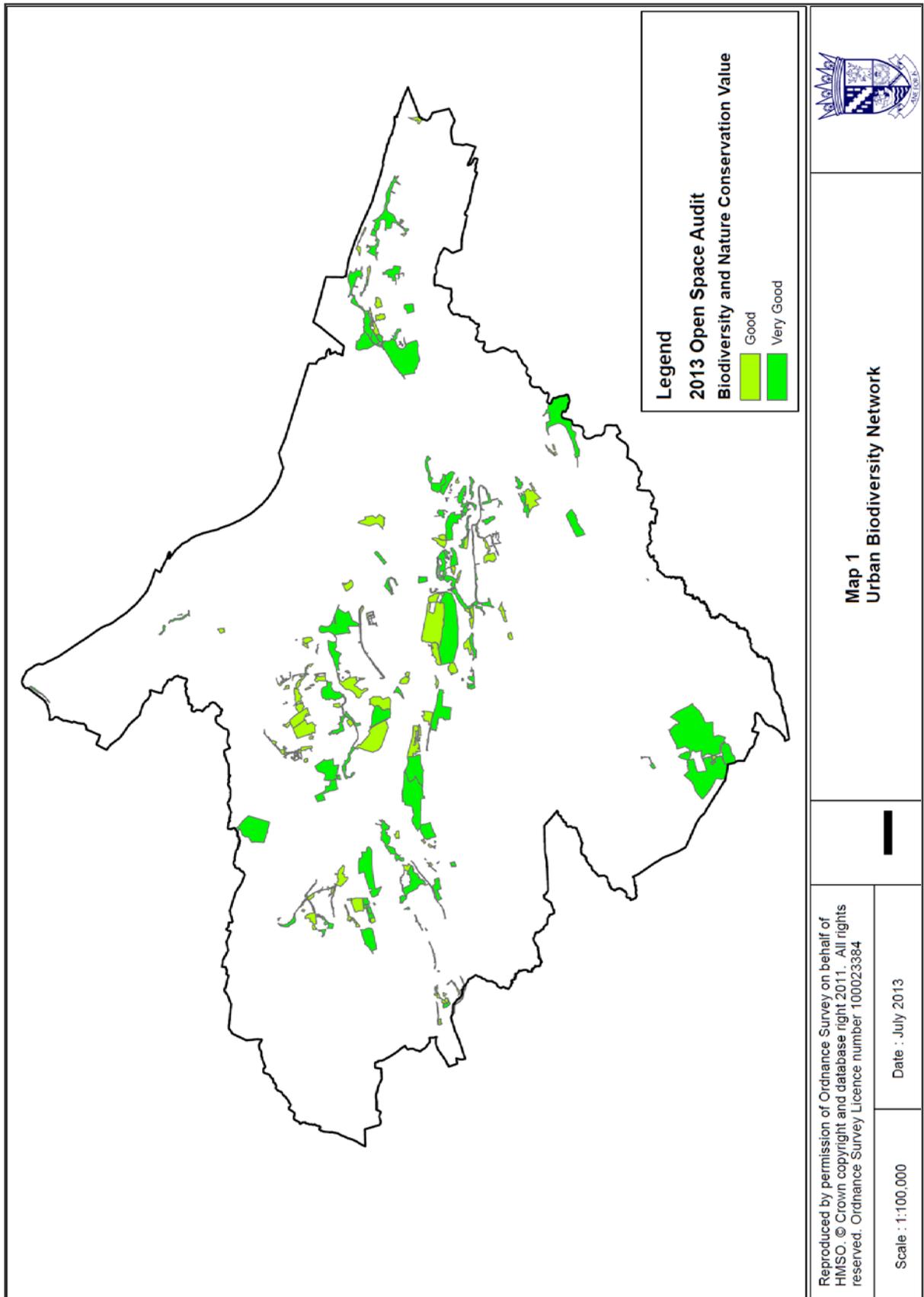
4.2.26 There are 220 open spaces which scored good or better for biodiversity and nature conservation value in the Open Space Audit. These sites could be

considered as contributing towards an urban biodiversity network and are shown in map 1 overleaf.

4.2.27 Of the 596 open spaces surveyed as part of the 2013 audit 169 of them had previously been surveyed as part of the 2007 Open Space Audit. Of those 169 sites surveyed as part of the 2007 audit, biodiversity and nature conservation value was considered to be a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose in 67 sites. Table 4 below shows that the average biodiversity and nature conservation value score for those 67 sites has improved by a third of a point since 2007 with 27 sites improving their scores and only 4 deteriorating.

Average score 2007	3.66
Average score 2013	3.99
Sites improving	27
Sites deteriorating	4

Table 4: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value 2007 audit comparison.



4.3 Population and Human Health

Current State of the Environment

Quality of Accessibility within Open Space

4.2.1 The Open Space Audit of 596 sites undertaken in 2013 included an assessment of the quality of accessibility within those open spaces. The quality of accessibility was considered to be a primary factor affecting the fitness for purpose in all 596 sites. Table 5 below the results of the assessment.

Hierarchy Level	Number of Spaces	Average Score (Out of 5)	Percentage of sites with Good or better Quality of Accessibility
National	7	3.71	100%
Regional	28	3.04	71.4%
Settlement	159	2.79	62.3%
Neighbourhood	402	2.47	47.5%
Total	596	3.63	53.2%

Table 5: Quality of Accessibility

4.3.2 The table above shows that the higher an open space is in the hierarchy, the more likely it is to score good or better for quality of accessibility and that over half of all sites score good or better for quality of accessibility.

4.3.3 Of the 596 open spaces surveyed as part of the 2013 audit 169 of them had previously been surveyed as part of the 2007 Open Space Audit. Table 6 below shows that the average quality of accessibility score for those sites has improved by 0.14 since 2007 with 40 sites improving their scores and 38 deteriorating.

Average score 2007	2.64
Average score 2013	2.78
Sites improving	40
Sites deteriorating	38

Table 6: Quality of Accessibility 2007 audit comparison.

Accessibility to Open Space

4.3.4 The accessibility to Open Space of different types was previously analysed as part of the preparatory work for the 2010 Falkirk Open Space Strategy. The Strategy sets a number of accessibility targets for different types of open space. The following table shows how the Council area performed at the time.

Walking distance target	Percentage of population who meet this target (Overall)	Percentage of population who meet this target (Towns)	Percentage of population who meet this target (Villages)
Within 400m of a fit for purpose open space	56.6	57.3	46.9
Within 400m of a park	42.2	43.0	30.6
Within 400m of a playspace	47.3	46.7	56.4
Within 800m of a sports area	66.0	64.9	82.2
Within 1200m of a Natural/Semi Natural Open Space	78.1	79.2	61.6

Table 7: Accessibility to different types of open space

4.3.5 It is worth noting that the analysis of accessibility above was based on the 179 sites surveyed as part of the 2010 Strategy. This accessibility analysis will be re-run in early 2014 based on the 596 sites which were surveyed as part of the 2013 open space audit.

Health and Wellbeing Quality of Open Space

4.3.6 The Open Space Audit of 596 sites undertaken in 2013 included an assessment of the quality of accessibility within those open spaces. The health and wellbeing quality was considered to be a primary factor affecting the fitness for purpose in all 363 sites. Table 8 below the results of the assessment.

Hierarchy Level	Number of Spaces	Average Score (Out of 5)	Percentage of sites with Good or better Health and Wellbeing Quality
National	7	4.43	100%
Regional	28	3.75	96.4%
Settlement	157	3.10	81.5%
Neighbourhood	170	2.62	57.1%
Sub-Total	362	2.95	71.5%
Residual open spaces	234	2.00	17.1%

Table 8: Health and Wellbeing Quality of sites were this is a primary factor influencing fitness for purpose

4.3.7 The table above shows that the higher an open space is in the hierarchy, the more likely it is to score good or better for health and wellbeing quality and that over two thirds of sites which have health and wellbeing quality as a primary factor affecting their fitness for purpose score good or better for health and wellbeing quality.

4.3.8 Of the 596 open spaces surveyed as part of the 2013 audit 169 of them had previously been surveyed as part of the 2007 Open Space Audit. Of those 169 sites surveyed as part of the 2007 audit, health and wellbeing quality was considered to be a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose in 155 sites. Table 9 below shows that the average health and wellbeing score for those 155 sites has improved by 0.44 since 2007 with 62 sites improving their scores and only 11 deteriorating.

Average score 2007	2.73
Average score 2013	3.17
Sites improving	62
Sites deteriorating	11

**Table 9: Health and Wellbeing Quality 2007 audit comparison.
 Landscape**

4.4 Material Assets

Current State of the Environment

Active travel links

4.4.1 Falkirk Council maintains some 400km of paths throughout the area. A further 14.2 km are maintained by Callendar Estate. Falkirk Council has signed 291 km of its core path network.

4.4.2 These are mainly core paths, and include the local path networks developed around many of the area's communities (e.g. Denny, Tamfourhill, Stenhousemuir, Airth, Dunmore, Skinflats, Maddiston, Westquarter, California and Bo'ness). There are also good networks around key visitor attractions such as Callendar House, Park and Woods, Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway, Bo'ness waterfront, Antonine Wall, Falkirk Wheel and Roughcastle. A good network of linkages between communities has also been established. Routes along the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals, the Rivers Carron and Avon, the Forth Estuary, old railway lines and quiet country roads, currently form the main spines of these linkages.

4.4.3 Table 10 below shows the number of open spaces which are connected to the core path network.

	Number of open spaces
Are crossed by the core path network	184
Within 50m of the core path network	366
Within 100m of the core path network	448

Table 10: Open Spaces connected to the core path network

Participation in outdoor recreation

4.4.3 The Scottish Household survey monitors how often people make visits to the outdoors and how often people visit their nearest usable greenspace. There is no disaggregation of the figures to a local authority level so it is difficult to discern what local participation in outdoor recreation actually is.

4.4.4 If the Falkirk area is similar to the overall Scottish average then participation in outdoor recreation will be as indicated in the tables below:

Frequency of visits made to the outdoors	Percentage
One or more times a week	42
At least once a month	19
At least once a year	20
Not at all	20

Table 11: Participation in outdoor recreation

Frequency of how often uses nearest useable greenspace	Percentage
Every day / Several times a week	28
Once a week	14
Once a month	12
Less often	14
Not at all	32

Table 12: Use of nearest usable greenspace

Green Infrastructure in Open Space

4.4.5 The Scottish Government’s ‘Green Infrastructure & Place-making’ document indicates that green infrastructure can deliver on functions and services such as shelter, access and travel, sustainable urban drainage, pollution mitigation, biodiversity conservation and food production – as part of a wider ecosystem.

4.4.6 No study has been yet been undertaken to ascertain what extent Falkirk’s open space resource delivers these functions

Townscape Quality

4.4.7 General quality of the urban environment is very variable. Whilst there are some areas of high quality that project a positive image (e.g. Falkirk Town Centre, Callendar Park), the area’s industrial background, insensitive past development and road improvements have all contributed to a level of fragmentation and neglect in the townscape.

4.4.8 This variability in quality has made it more difficult to raise standards of design in new development. However, some key recent developments (e.g. Falkirk Wheel, Falkirk Stadium, Drum Farm) have set a new benchmark for quality in design and landscaping.

4.4.9 As elsewhere there is a problem with “volume builder” housing which does not aid settlement identity or distinctiveness. Again, the recent development at Drum Farm, Bo'nness may set a new benchmark.

4.5 Landscape

Current State of the Environment

Quantity of Open Space

4.5.1 The quantitative audit of Open Space (which was last carried out in 2009 using aerial photography from 2006) categorised all open space within 1200m of a settlement according to the typology set out in Planning Advice Note 65 and identifies, in table 13, the following amount of open space in the Falkirk Council area:

Open Space Type	Area (Hectares)	Hectares/1000 people
Public Parks and Gardens	840.66	5.62
Private Gardens or Grounds	1827.57	12.21
Amenity Greenspace	928.09	6.2
Playspace for children and teenagers	3.08	0.02
Sports Areas	353.88	2.36
Green Corridors	52.04	0.35
Natural/Semi Natural Greenspace	4036.83	26.97
Other Functional Greenspace	76.67	0.51
Civic Space	4.64	0.03
Total	8123.46	54.27
Population (2006 estimate):	149,680	

Table 13: Quantity of open space Falkirk Council wide

4.5.2 Of 596 sites surveyed as part of the open space audit in 2013 the following amounts of open space are available within each settlement area:

Settlement Area	Area of Open Space (Hectares)	Population (2011 mid year estimate)	Hectares of open space/1000 people
Bo'ness	243.7	14528	16.8
Bonnybridge & Banknock	124.8	12739	9.8
Denny	154.3	13484	11.4
Falkirk	729.8	38311	19.0
Grangemouth	83.0	16990	4.9
Larbert & Stenhousemuir	223.3	24698	9.0
Polmont	273.7	21743	12.6
Urban Area	1832.5	142492	12.9
Rural Area	525.0	11888	44.2
Falkirk Council	2357.6	154380	15.3

Table 14: Quantity of Open Space within different settlement areas

Village Name	Area of Open Space (Hectares)	Population (2011 mid year estimate)	Hectares of open space/1000 people
Airth	8.9	1696	5.2
Allandale	1.5	276	5.4
Avonbridge	1.2	667	1.8
Blackness	11.7	147	79.6
California	2.4	750	3.2
Dunmore	0.3	70	4.3
Greenhill	1.9	50	38
Letham	2.7	181	14.9
Limerigg	283.1	229	1236.2
Muirhouses	40.9	236	173.3
Shieldhill	10.1	2265	4.5
Skinflats	1.3	293	4.4
Slamannan	10.2	1358	7.5
South Alloa	2.6	98	26.5
Standburn	21.0	152	138.2
The Loan	2.8	35	80
Torwood	55.1	201	262.4
Whitecross	2.6	783	3.3

Table 15: Quantity of Open Space within different villages

4.5.3 At 15.3 hectares per 1000 people the 2013 Open Space Audit has identified a significant increase in the rate of open space per 1000 people from that identified in the 2007 audit (9.6 ha per 1000 people). This change is methodological rather than representative of a sea change in open space provision across the Council Area. The 2007 audit measured the amount of public open space within urban or village limits (as defined in the Local Plan), whereas the 2013 audit allocated all surveyed open spaces to a settlement. This change in methodology was made to ensure that spaces such as Callendar Park or Kinneil Estate which serve a function as urban open space but are outside the urban limit can influence the overall figure.

4.5.4 It is worth noting that the open space audit surveyed approximately 30% of the total open space resource within 1200m of a settlement boundary this is partly because the total amount of open space within 1200m of a settlement boundary does not represent the total amount of open space which is publicly accessible. During preparatory work for the open space audit Council officers identified 834 individual open space sites. These sites were sieved using the following criteria for inclusion in the audit:

- All open spaces classified as public park or garden;
- All open spaces classified as play space;
- Amenity open spaces where there is no secondary function and the site area is above 0.1 hectares;

- All public sports areas – Private sports areas have been excluded e.g. Grangemouth Rugby Club, Stenhousemuir Cricket Club;
- Natural/Semi Natural/Green Corridors where there is no secondary function (unless that secondary function is an amenity open space of over 0.1Ha) and the site area is above 1 hectare;
- All churchyard/cemeteries;
- School Grounds/Institutional Grounds with a secondary function; and
- All allotments.

Design and Aesthetic Quality of Open Space

4.5.5 The Open Space Audit of 596 sites undertaken in 2013 included an assessment of the design and aesthetic quality of those open spaces. Of the 596 open spaces, design and aesthetic quality was considered to be a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose in 434 sites. Table 16 below the results of the assessment:

Hierarchy Level	Number of Spaces	Average Score (Out of 5)	Percentage of sites with Good or better Design and Aesthetic Quality
National	3	4.3	100%
Regional	5	3.6	100%
Settlement	76	2.6	56.6%
Neighbourhood	350	2.0	23.4%
Sub - Total	434	2.2	30.1%
Residual open spaces	162	2.4	46.3%

Table 16: Design and Aesthetic Quality of sites where this is a primary factor influencing fitness for purpose

4.5.6 It can be seen in the table above that the vast majority of open spaces where design and aesthetic quality is a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose are neighbourhood open spaces and that a small proportion of these sites are achieving a score of good or better for design and aesthetic quality. Indeed the average score for neighbourhood level open spaces where design and aesthetic quality is a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose is lower than the average score for those open spaces where design and aesthetic quality is not a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose.

4.5.7 Of the 596 open spaces surveyed as part of the 2013 audit 169 of them had previously been surveyed as part of the 2007 Open Space Audit. Of those 169 sites surveyed as part of the 2007 audit, design and aesthetic quality was considered to be a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose in 89 sites. Table 17 below shows that the average design and aesthetic quality score for those 89 sites has improved by 0.51 since 2007 with 41 sites improving their scores and only 4 deteriorating.

Average score 2007	2.02
Average score 2013	2.51
Sites improving	41
Sites deteriorating	4

Table 17: Design and Aesthetic Quality 2007 audit comparison.

Fitness for Purpose of Open Space

4.5.8 The ultimate quality of a site relates to how it serves the needs of the community i.e. its fitness for purpose. The characteristics of an open space and, therefore, what it is judged against are very different depending on where it sits in a hierarchy of importance and what type of open space it is; e.g. the factors determining the fitness for purpose of a public park of national importance and an amenity greenspace of neighbourhood importance are very different. A more detailed explanation of the methodology used is contained within the 2013 Open Space Audit Report. The 2013 audit has made an assessment of the fitness for purpose of 596 open spaces across the Falkirk Council area shown in table 18 below:

Hierarchy Level	Number of sites surveyed	Average Score	Area covered by sites in hectares	Percentage of total sites scored "good" or better fitness for purpose	Percentage of total area which scored "good" or better fitness for purpose.
National	7	3.9	196.7	100%	100%
Regional	28	3.4	1116.2	78.6%	82.1%
Settlement	159	2.8	655.2	42.1%	50.8%
Neighbourhood	402	2.3	289.5	15.7%	18.5%
Total	596	2.5	2357.6	26.7%	63.6%

Table 18: Fitness for purpose

4.5.9 The table above shows that although only 26.7% of the sites surveyed scored good or better fitness for purpose, they represent 63.6% of the total area of open space surveyed. This table also shows that generally the higher an open space is in the hierarchy, the more likely it is to score good or better fitness for purpose.

4.5.10 The quality of open space is not uniform across the Council area. The following table shows the percentage of open spaces which scored good or better fitness for purpose across the hierarchy in different settlement areas.

Hierarchy	National	Regional	Settlement	Neighbourhood	Total Area
Settlement Area					
Bo'ness		100%	40%	23.3%	69%
Bonnybridge and Banknock	100%	33.3%	18.2%	8.1%	42.7%
Denny		50%	50%	9%	48%
Falkirk	100%	85.7%	52.9%	15.9%	70%
Grangemouth		100%	28.6%	22%	39.8%
Larbert and Stenhousemuir		66.7%	33%	14%	40.5%
Polmont	100%	100%	45.2%	13%	66.6%
Rural Area	100%	80%	41.9%	21.4%	73.8%
Urban Area	100%	78%	42.2%	15%	61%
Falkirk Council	100%	78.6%	42%	16%	63.6%

Table 19: Quality of Open Space across different settlement areas

4.5.11 This table shows that in Bo'ness, Falkirk, Polmont and the Rural Area over two thirds of the open space resource scored good or better fitness for purpose, however in Bonnybridge and Banknock, Denny, Grangemouth and Larbert and Stenhousemuir only between 39.8% and 48% of the open space resource scored good or better fitness for purpose. The Rural area has the highest percentage of the total area of open space which scored good or better fitness for purpose (73.8%) whereas Grangemouth has the lowest percentage (39.8%)

4.5.12 Bo'ness, Grangemouth and Polmont have the highest percentage (100%) of regional level open space which scored good or better fitness for purpose, whereas, Bonnybridge and Banknock has the lowest percentage (33.3%)

4.5.13 Falkirk has the highest percentage (52.9%) of settlement level open space which scored good or better fitness for purpose, whereas, Bonnybridge and Banknock has the lowest percentage (18.2%)

4.5.14 Bo'ness has the highest percentage (23.3%) of neighbourhood level open space which scored good or better fitness for purpose, whereas, Bonnybridge and Banknock has the lowest percentage (8.1%)

4.5.15 Of the 596 open spaces surveyed as part of the 2013 audit 169 of them had previously been surveyed as part of the 2007 Open Space Audit. Table 20 below shows that the average fitness for purpose score for those 169 sites has improved by 0.19 since 2007 with 90 sites improving their scores and 46 deteriorating. The percentage of the 169 sites which achieved good or better fitness for purpose increased from 29.6% in 2007 to 39.5% in 2013. The percentage of the total area covered by sites audited in 2007 which achieved good or better fitness for purpose has increased from 54.5% in 2007 to 68.7% in 2013.

Average score 2007	2.60
Average score 2013	2.79
Percentage of total number of sites “good” or better fitness for purpose 2007	29.6%
Percentage of total number of sites “good” or better fitness for purpose 2013	39.5%
Percentage of total area of sites audited in 2007 with “good” or better fitness for purpose in 2007	54.5%
Percentage of total area of sites audited in 2007 with “good” or better fitness for purpose in 2013	68.7%
Sites improving	90
Sites deteriorating	46

Table 20: Fitness for Purpose 2007 Audit Comparison

4.6 Summary of likely future changes to environment without the Supplementary Guidance

4.6.1 In the absence of this SG, the Public Open Space, Falkirk Greenspace and New Development SPG will continue to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.6.2 Whilst the current SPG seeks to tackle many of the same environmental problems which the new SG will tackle it does so based on the understanding of environmental problems which flowed from the 2007 Open Space Audit. This Audit data was not as comprehensive as the recently completed 2013 audit and is now also nearly 7 years old.

4.6.3 This SG will have a statutory status and will form part of the Development Plan rather than a material consideration. This will improve the weight given to open space matters in planning decisions. In its absence therefore, the weight given to open space matters in planning decisions will not be enhanced.

5.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THE SPG

5.1 Biodiversity – Flora & Fauna

Habitats

5.1.1 Management of parks and other open spaces do not always take account of biodiversity and works to benefit it.

5.1.2 Developer contributions in lieu of provision of on-site open space are not routinely being used to enhance the value of priority habitats in and around the urban area.

Habitat Networks

5.1.3 Open space in new development is not always planned to the benefit of wider habitat networks which may surround the development site.

5.1.4 Open space which forms part of a wider habitat network is being lost to development.

Woodland

5.1.5 The rate of new woodland planting in the Falkirk Council area has reduced significantly in recent years.

Species Biodiversity

5.1.6 Key actions of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan are under funded to the detriment of priority species and species of conservation concern.

Protected Sites

5.1.7 Management plans for protected sites are not implemented fully due to lack of funding to the overall detriment of the conservation status.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces

5.1.8 The Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces where this is not a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose (Settlement and Neighbourhood level Parks and all Sports Areas, Play Spaces, Amenity Open Spaces, School Grounds, Church Grounds, Cemeteries and Allotments) is generally very low with only 21.1% of 459 sites achieving a score of good or better.

5.2 Population and Human Health

Quality of Accessibility within Open Space

5.2.1 The quality of accessibility within neighbourhood level open spaces is of particular concern with only 47.5% of sites scoring good or better for quality of accessibility.

Accessibility to Open Space

5.2.2 Existing open spaces are distributed disproportionately around the area meaning that some places are not within an acceptable walking distance of different types of open space.

5.2.3 Based on analysis of the 2007 open space audit less than half of the population was within 5 minutes walk of a park.

5.2.4 The analysis of accessibility to open space is based on an incomplete dataset of 179 sites. Further network analysis will be undertaken to understand the scale of the problem and results are expected in the spring of 2014.

Health and Wellbeing Quality of Open Space

5.2.5 The health and well being quality of neighbourhood level open spaces where this is a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose (Public Parks, Play Spaces, Sports Areas, Natural/Semi Natural Greenspaces and School Grounds) is of concern with only 57.1% of sites scoring good or better for health and wellbeing quality.

5.2.6 The Health and Wellbeing Quality of open spaces where this is not a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose (Amenity Open Spaces and Allotments) is generally very low with only 17.1% of 234 sites achieving a score of good or better.

5.3 Material Assets

Active travel links

5.3.1 In some areas there are still inadequate walking and cycling links to good quality, usable open space and this will need to be addressed. Ensuring good walking and cycling links to open space, and in particular open space near where people live, can make a significant contribution towards targets to, (1) get more people participating in outdoor recreation, and (2) get more people travelling by active modes.

Participation in outdoor recreation

5.3.2 Stated levels of participation in outdoor recreation in Scotland is not particularly high. Levels of participation in outdoor recreation in Falkirk are

unknown.

Green Infrastructure in Open Space

5.3.3 Existing open space may not be functioning as effectively as it might be as green infrastructure.

Townscape Quality

5.3.4 Open space within new development has an important role to play in defining townscape quality. Opportunities to provide open space in new development which helps to deliver the Scottish Governments policy as stated in Designing Streets may not presently be being explored as rigorously as they should.

5.4 Landscape

Quantity of Open Space

5.4.1 Although there is generally an abundance of open space across the Council area (15.3 hectares per 1000 people), there are localities where this is not the case, most notably in Grangemouth (4.9 hectares per 1000 people).

Design and Aesthetic Quality of Open Space

5.4.2 The design and aesthetic quality of neighbourhood level open spaces where this is a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose (Public Parks, Amenity Open Spaces and School Grounds) is notably low with only 23.4% of them achieving a score of good or better.

5.4.3 The design and aesthetic quality of settlement level open spaces where this is a primary factor affecting fitness for purpose (Public Parks, Amenity Open Spaces and School Grounds) is a little better with 56.6% of them achieving a score of good or better, however it is still a cause for concern.

Fitness for Purpose of Open Space

5.4.4 The majority of settlement and neighbourhood level open spaces across the Council area are not fit for purpose at 57.9% and 84.3% respectively.

5.4.5 There is a significant disparity in the fitness for purpose of open space across different settlements within the Council Area. There is a significantly higher percentage of fit for purpose open space within Bo'ness, Falkirk, Polmont and the Rural Area (66.6% - 73.8%) than there is in Bonnybridge and Banknock, Denny, Grangemouth and Larbert and Stenhousemuir (39.8% - 48.0%).

6.0 CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OBJECTIVES,

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section seeks to identify those environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the preparation of the SPG and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

6.2 Biodiversity - Flora & Fauna

Environmental protection objectives

Habitats

6.2.1 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 5 May 2004 and effective from November 2004 it introduces a wide range of protection and enforcement measures to safeguard and enhance wildlife. In addition to new measures to protect wildlife and habitats, under this Act biodiversity is identified as a responsibility of public bodies and they have a duty to conserve biodiversity whilst exercising their functions.

Habitat Networks

6.2.2 The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) is usually thought of in connection with the implementation of a series of protected sites - Special Areas of Conservation or Natura 2000 sites. However, both Article 3 and Article 10 of the European Habitats Directive make reference to improving the 'ecological coherence' of that series of sites. For a site to be ecologically 'coherent' it needs to have links outside its designated area, in order to ensure that all habitats and species can be maintained in favourable conservation status in the long term.

6.2.3 Scottish Planning Policy states that authorities should take: *"A strategic approach to natural heritage in which wildlife sites, landscape features and other areas of open space are linked together in an integrated habitat network can make an important contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of local biodiversity. Planning authorities should seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore links which have been broken."*

Woodland

6.2.4 The vision of the Scottish Forestry Strategy is that, by the second half of the 21st century, woodlands will have expanded to around 25% of Scotland's land area. In 2007 this figure stood at 17%. This will mean the creation between 10000ha and 15000ha of new woodland per year.

Species Biodiversity

6.2.5 There is a legal obligation to ensure that species-specific surveys are undertaken for European and UK Protected Species to ensure that no wildlife laws are broken by any development proposals.

6.2.6 The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) implements the Government's commitment to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It identifies priority habitats and species for the UK.

6.2.7 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is a Scottish Government initiative to provide a long term framework for protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Scotland. It targets the Scottish Biodiversity List. www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk.

6.2.8 Falkirk Local Biodiversity Action Plan delivers the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Scottish Biodiversity Strategy at local level.

6.2.9 Natural Heritage Futures-East and West Central Belt was recently published by SNH and provides a vision of sustainable land use and development. It seeks to reverse trends in decreasing diversity, loss of habitat and loss of local character. The key priorities are an integrated approach to all land-uses and the need for dialogue to ensure this co-ordinated approach.

6.2.10 The Population Status of Birds in the UK: Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007 is newly published by the RSPB and identifies UK bird species in terms of conservation concern with Red List species being of highest concern.

Protected Sites

6.2.11 There are a number of European and UK designated sites within the Falkirk Council area. Further regional protection is provided by the non-statutory Wildlife Sites and Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces

6.2.12 Scottish Planning Policy (2010) indicates that linking green spaces in and around settlements through green networks can deliver benefits for people and nature. By encouraging connectivity between habitats, green networks can improve the viability of species and the health and viability of previously isolated habitats and ecosystems, supporting adaptation to climate change. It also states that lochs, ponds, watercourses and wetlands also form valuable landscape features, recreational resources and wildlife habitats and should be protected and enhanced wherever possible both as part of developments and green networks.

6.2.13 One of the strategic objectives of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy is 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.

How objectives have been taken into account

Habitats, Species Biodiversity & Protected Sites

6.2.14 New development sites have generally been identified through the Falkirk Local Development Plan. Where this has taken place sites have been subject to a process of strategic environmental assessment and where negative environmental effects have been identified, mitigation has been proposed to ensure no significant effect on habitats, species or protected sites.

6.2.15 Where new development sites come forward as infill or windfall development their development will be regulated by policies within the LDP which protect habitats, species and protected sites. Sites will also be required to conform to the Council's SG on Biodiversity and Development which provides practical advice on appropriate surveys to undertake and how to design sites to avoid adverse impact on habitats, species and protected sites and enhance the biodiversity potential of the site.

Habitat Networks

6.2.16 The Open Space and New Development SG encourages new open space to connect to the wider green network where appropriate and to incorporate existing on site features of biodiversity value into on site open space.

Woodland

6.2.17 The SG promotes woodland creation through allowing structure planting of sufficient value to biodiversity and which connects to wider habitat networks to count towards meeting a site's open space requirement.

6.2.18 The SG also promotes woodland creation through allowing contributions in lieu of on site provision of open space to go towards woodland planting opportunities elsewhere in the green network.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces

6.2.19 The SG encourages developers to put forward open space proposals for their site which responds to the opportunities of the site including the identification of opportunities to link the development to the existing green network.

6.2.20 The SG allows for financial contributions to be made by new developments towards the improvement of off site open space's biodiversity and nature conservation value as an alternative to on site open space provision.

6.3 Population and Human Health

Environmental protection objectives

Quality of Accessibility within Open Space

6.3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (2010) indicates that supplementary guidance should set out specific requirements for the provision of open space as part of new development and make clear how much, of what type and quality and what the accessibility requirements are. It further sets out that new open space and other facilities should be accessible on foot and bicycle and located where they can be served by public transport. Authorities are encouraged to improve access to existing areas of open space via green networks and paths.

6.3.2 The SPP also states that wherever possible, planning authorities should identify opportunities to create and enhance networks between open spaces and avoid fragmentation.

6.3.3 National Planning Framework 2 identifies the Central Scotland Green Network as a development of national importance. It states that the CSGN will comprise a strategic network of woodland and other habitats, active travel routes, greenspace links, watercourses and waterways, providing an enhanced setting for development and other land uses and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation and cultural activity.

6.3.4 One of the strategic objectives of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy is 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.

6.3.5 Another strategic objective of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy is 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.

6.3.6 The Falkirk Open Space Strategy sets an aspirational standard of all development having access to 5 hectares per 1000 people of different types of open space.

6.3.7 The Falkirk Open Space Strategy sets a number of accessibility standards for provision of open space relating to maximum walking distance to open space which is fit for purpose and maximum walking distances to public parks, playspaces, sports areas and natural/semi natural greenspace or green corridors.

Accessibility to Open Space

6.3.8 Scottish Planning Policy states that open spaces should be: *“accessible, safe, welcoming, appealing, distinctive and well connected.”*

Within settlements there should be spaces that can be used by everyone regardless of age, gender or disability. Statutory equal opportunities obligations should be taken into account when planning for open space and physical activity. There are two main constraints on accessibility - physical constraints such as distance, degree of personal mobility and severance by roads, railways or other barriers, and social and cultural constraints such as fear of crime and other concerns over personal safety. These issues should be considered in the siting and design of open space. New open space and other facilities should be accessible on foot and bicycle and located where they can be served by public transport. Authorities are encouraged to improve access to existing areas of open space via green networks and paths.”

Health and Wellbeing Quality of Open Space

6.3.8 The Scottish Government has set out 15 National Outcomes that it wants to work towards over the next 10 years, including to “live longer healthier lives”

6.3.9 One of the 12 strategic objectives of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy is to strengthen and promote the contribution of Falkirk’s parks and open spaces to people’s health and well being.

How objectives have been taken into account

Quality of Accessibility within Open Space

6.3.10 The SG allows for financial contributions to be made by new developments towards the improvement of off site open space’s quality of accessibility as an alternative to on site open space provision.

Accessibility to Open Space

6.3.11 The SG sets out a mechanism for assessing whether new development conforms to the accessibility standards set out in the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.

6.3.12 The SG encourages open space coming forward as part of new development to link into the wider greenspace network where appropriate, this will contribute towards the enhancement of the Central Scotland Green Network.

6.3.13 The SG allows for financial contributions to be made by new developments towards the improvement of the greenspace network in the vicinity of the site as an alternative to on site open space provision.

6.3.14 The SG allows for financial contributions to be made by new development towards the improvement of access networks connecting open spaces as an alternative to on site open space provision.

Health and Wellbeing Quality of Open Space

6.3.15 The SG allows for financial contributions to be made by new developments towards the improvement of off site open space's contribution to peoples' health and wellbeing as an alternative to on site open space provision.

6.4 Material Assets

Environmental protection objectives

Active travel links

6.4.1 One of the Scottish Government's national indicators is to increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport.

Participation in outdoor recreation

6.4.2 One of the Scottish Government's national indicators is to increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors.

Green Infrastructure in Open Space

6.4.3 Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking encourages the consideration of green spaces and connections as infrastructure because simple things like trees, greenspaces and watercourses can provide valuable services in an ecological way.

Townscape Quality

6.4.4 Through Scottish Planning Policy and Designing Places, the planning system defines the five qualities of successful places: Identity, safe and pleasant, ease of movement, a sense of welcome, adaptability and good use of resources.

How objectives have been taken into account

Active travel links

6.4.5 The SG encourages open space proposals which maximise opportunities to link into the Central Scotland Green Network and the Core Path Network.

Participation in outdoor recreation

6.4.6 The SG encourages the provision of new functional open space and directs contributions in lieu of on site provision towards the improvement of existing open spaces. Provision of new open space and improvement of existing open space will both encourage participation in outdoor recreation.

6.4.7 Improvements to the existing active travel network are encouraged by the SG. The SG also encourages open space proposals to maximise opportunities to link into the active travel network. Both of these things will encourage participation in outdoor recreation.

Green Infrastructure in Open Space

6.4.8 The SG encourages the location of SUDS within on site open space where it has high amenity or biodiversity value. The SG also encourages open space proposals which maximise opportunities to link into the Central Scotland Green Network and to the Core Path Network. The SG should therefore encourage new open space to perform a role as green infrastructure.

Townscape Quality

6.4.9 Where there is a quantitative deficiency in open space provision in a particular locality the SG gives priority to the provision of new on site open space on site as part of new development.

6.5 Landscape

Environmental protection objectives

Quantity of Open Space

6.5.1 Scottish Planning Policy indicates that Local Development Plans or supplementary guidance should set out specific requirements for the provision of open space as part of new development and make clear how much, of what type and quality and what the accessibility requirements are. On and off site provision should be considered, depending on the specific site circumstances.

6.5.2 The Falkirk Open Space Strategy sets an aspirational standard of all development having access to 5 hectares per 1000 people of different types of open space.

Design and Aesthetic Quality of Open Space

6.5.3 Scottish Planning Policy indicates that open spaces should be well designed, built to a high standard and capable of adaptation to reflect changes in the needs and requirements of users and that they should also be accessible, safe, welcoming, appealing, distinctive and well connected.

Fitness for Purpose of Open Space

6.5.4 Scottish Planning Policy (2010) sets out that Planning authorities and developers should aim to create new open spaces which are fit for purpose, maintained and sustainable over the long term.

6.5.5 The overarching vision of the Falkirk 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. The Strategy sets a priority action of achieving good quality in open spaces that fall below the threshold.

How objectives have been taken into account

Quantity of Open Space

6.5.6 The SG translates the 5ha/ 1000 people standard of the Open Space Strategy into a requirement per new house in applications for new development. The balance promoted by the SG between on site open space provision and off site open space and green network improvement, will contribute towards the 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.

Design and Aesthetic Quality of Open Space

6.5.7 Policy INF04 indicates that new open space should be well designed; appropriately located; functionally sized and suitably diverse to meet different recreational needs. The SG encourages the provision of both active and passive open space and provides guidance on a minimal functional size for different types of open space.

Fitness for Purpose of Open Space

6.5.8 The SG sets out specific requirements for the provision of open space as part of new development and makes clear how much, of what type and quality and what the accessibility requirements are. The SG also considers the circumstances where on and off site provision is appropriate depending on specific site circumstances.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE SG

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The purpose of the SEA assessment is to highlight any aspect of the elements which make up the plan which have the potential for environmental effects (both positive and negative).

7.2 Assessment Methodology

7.1.2 The assessment of the SG is based on a matrix approach assessing the alternative approaches the SG could recommend against the SEA topics which have been 'scoped in' to the assessment. The assessment matrix is presented in Section 7.3 below.

7.3 SEA Objectives

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
Improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of existing open spaces within the Council area	Will the alternative improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of existing open spaces within the Council area?
Help to implement the aspirational projects set out in the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan	Will the alternative help to implement the aspirational projects set out in the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan?
Increase the rate of woodland planting across the Council area	Will the alternative increase the rate of woodland planting across the Council area?
Help to secure the appropriate management of sites protected for their nature conservation value	Will the alternative help to secure the appropriate management of sites protected for their nature conservation value?
Ensure open spaces are of a sufficient diversity, quality and distribution to meet the needs of local biodiversity.	Does the alternative encourage the needs of local biodiversity to be taken into account in the location and design of new open space?
Enable new open space to contribute towards the wider Falkirk Integrated Habitat Network.	Does the alternative promote the integration of new open space into the wider habitat network? Does the alternative help to expand and connect the integrated habitat network?
Population and Human Health	
Improve access to different types of open space	Will the alternative promote access to open space of different types? Will the alternative assist in meeting the accessibility standards to different

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions
	types of open space set out in the Open Space Strategy?
Improve quality of accessibility within existing open spaces	Will the alternative improve the quality of accessibility within existing open spaces?
Ensure open space is appropriately located within new development	Will the alternative assist in meeting the accessibility standards to different types of open space set out in the Open Space Strategy?
Maximise the contribution that new and existing open space makes towards peoples' health and wellbeing	Will the alternative improve the health and wellbeing quality of existing and new open space?
Material Assets	
Increase opportunities for walking and cycling.	Will the alternatives increase the opportunities to walk and cycle?
Promote access for all	Will the alternatives improve access for all ages and abilities?
Promote the use of green infrastructure in developing and enhancing open spaces.	Will the alternatives promote green infrastructure? Will the alternative help promote place-making?
Landscape	
Enhance the overall fitness for purpose of existing open spaces.	Will the alternative enhance the overall fitness for purpose of existing open spaces?
Ensure new open spaces are fit for purpose.	Will the alternative ensure new open spaces are fit for purpose?
Ensure each community has access to 5ha/1000 people of open space.	Will the alternative help to ensure each community has access to 5ha/1000 people of open space?
Enhance the design and aesthetic quality of open spaces	Will the alternative improve the design and aesthetic quality of existing and new open spaces?
Ensure appropriate public open space maintenance	Will the alternative help to ensure the appropriate maintenance of open space?

Table 21: SEA Objectives and Assessment Questions

Significant positive effect	Positive effect	Neutral effect	Unknown effect	Negative effect	Significant negative effect
++	+	N	?	-	--

Table 22: SEA Assessment Matrix Key

7.4 SEA Assessment Matrix

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
<p>Quantity Option 1A: New development to provide open space at a rate of 70m² / dwelling.</p>	+	+	+	+	<p>As all new residential development will be required to provide either on-site open space or contributions to improvements of off-site open space there is a potential for: positive effects on biodiversity (through the creation of new spaces with biodiversity value; the improvement of existing spaces of biodiversity value; the creation of new habitat which extends the integrated habitat network), population and human health (through the improvement of overall access to different types of open space; the creation of new open spaces which improve people's health and well being; and the improvement of the health and wellbeing value of existing open spaces.) material assets (through increasing the number of open spaces in close proximity to the core path network; and extending the core path network; the provision of new fit for purpose open spaces which enhances townscape value) and landscape (through increasing the amount of open space in the Council area; and the creation of new fit for purpose open space of high design and aesthetic quality)</p>	<p>Increasing the rate which new development is required to provide open space will increase the magnitude of all of these positive environmental effects</p>
<p>Quantity Option 1B: New development only to provide open space where settlement has less than 5ha/1000 people</p>	--	--	--	--	<p>Of the major settlements in the Council area, only Grangemouth has less than 5ha/1000 people of open space. This option would result in the majority of new development not being required to provide on or off site open space. Where new development was allowed without the provision of new open space or the improvement of existing open space this would lead to increased</p>	<p>Do not choose this option</p>

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
					<p>pressure on existing open spaces which would need to serve an ever increasing population This in turn would have a cumulatively significant negative effect on biodiversity (through increasing demand for natural/semi natural open space to be converted to meet demand for more formal open space provision) and landscape (through gradually eroding the fitness for purpose of existing open spaces) It could also lead to the creation of new residential neighbourhoods with no on site open space this could cause cumulatively significant negative effects on material assets (through the reduction of overall townscape value)</p> <p>If the majority of new development is not required to provide new open space then access to open spaces of different types within an acceptable walking distance is likely to reduce over time, this will have a cumulatively significant negative effect on population and human health.</p> <p>The requirement for new development to offer appropriate links to existing walking and cycling networks in surrounding areas is established through policy INF07 of the LDP and this will remain regardless of which alternative is chosen, this will have a neutral effect on material assets.</p>	
<p>Quantity Option 1C: New residential development to provide open space at a rate of 112m²</p>	++	++	++	++	<p>The same environmental effects as option 1A above are predicted however they will all be of a greater magnitude.</p>	
<p>Quantity Option 2A:</p>	++	--	--	++	<p>The smallest amount of open space a 20 unit development would</p>	<p>Consider applying a different</p>

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
<p>Developments of 20 housing unit equivalents or less will be expected to provide a financial contribution towards upgrading of off site open space rather than on site provision</p>	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	<p>be required to provide would be 420m² of active open space and 980m² of passive open space. 420m² is above the minimum functional size of an equipped play space and 980m² is only 20m² short of the minimum functional size of an informal play/recreation space. This requirement would be likely to generate only new open space which was functional, fit for purpose and of real value to biodiversity. Consequently significant positive effects on biodiversity and landscape are predicted. This option is likely to mean that the creation of less new open space in rural areas (where housing developments tend to be of a smaller size) this may gradually erode the number of people with access to different types of open space within an accessible walking distance and cause cumulatively significant negative effects on population and human health. It could also lead to the creation of new residential neighbourhoods in rural areas with no on site open space this could cause cumulatively significant negative effects on material assets (through the reduction of overall townscape value)</p>	<p>threshold for communities where there is a lack of existing open space.</p>
<p>Quantity Option 2B: Developments of 10 housing unit equivalents or less will be expected to provide a financial contribution towards upgrading of off site open space rather than on site</p>	N	-	-	-	<p>The smallest amount of open space a 10 unit development would be required to provide would be 210m² of active open space and 490m² of passive open space. 210m² is well below the minimum functional size of an equipped play space and 490m² is below the minimum functional size of the majority of passive open spaces. The only exception would be civic space, semi natural open space and green corridors. This requirement could lead to proposals for new, non-functional open space which was neither fit for purpose nor of any particular value to biodiversity, consequential neutral</p>	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
provision					effects on biodiversity and negative effects on landscape are predicted. This option is likely to mean that the creation of less new open space in rural areas (where housing developments tend to be of a smaller size) this may gradually erode the number of people with access to different types of open space within an accessible walking distance and cause negative effects on population and human health but of a lesser magnitude than option 2A. It could also lead to the creation of new residential neighbourhoods in rural areas with no on site open space this could cause negative effects on material assets of a lesser magnitude than option 2A (through the reduction of overall townscape value)	
Quantity Option 2C: There is no threshold below which only financial contribution towards upgrading of off site open space will be sought	N	+	+	--	Having no threshold could lead to developers proposing the creation of inappropriate, non functional open spaces as part of their development which were neither fit for purpose nor of any benefit to biodiversity. Consequential neutral effects on biodiversity and cumulatively significant negative effects on landscape are predicted. This option would however ensure that open space was provided in association with new development in rural areas with consequential positive effects on population and human health (through improving access to different types of open space) and material assets (through improving townscape quality)	
Quantity Option 2D: Developments of 20	++	++	+	++	The smallest amount of open space a 20 unit development would be required to provide would be 420m ² of active open space and	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
<p>housing unit equivalents or less will be expected to provide a financial contribution towards upgrading of off site open space rather than on site provision except where housing is proposed in a community which is already deficient in open space</p>					<p>980m² of passive open space. 420m² is above the minimum functional size of an equipped play space and 980m² is only 20m² short of the minimum functional size of an informal play/recreation space. This requirement would be likely to generate only new open space which was functional, fit for purpose and of real value to biodiversity. Consequently significant positive effects on biodiversity and landscape are predicted. This option is likely lead to the creation of new open space in areas where the standard for open space provision is not currently met, cumulatively this could have significant positive effects on population and human health (through increasing recreational opportunity). It could also promote the creation of new areas of open space in communities where the standard for open space provision is not currently met this could have positive effects on material assets (through the improvement of overall townscape value)</p>	
<p>Quantity Option 3A: Open space requirement must be met on site in full</p>	+	+	++	+	<p>This option is likely to have a positive effect biodiversity (through increasing the amount of open space of value to biodiversity), population and human health (through improving accessibility to open space) and landscape (through increasing the amount of open space) and cumulatively significant positive effects on material assets (through improving townscape quality) For this option however in situations where a contribution towards the improvement of an off-site open space would be of greater benefit to the community than provision of a new one (there is a local abundance of open space but it is not fit for purpose), positive environmental benefits will not be able to be maximised.</p>	<p>Allow a mix of on and off site contributions to meet overall open space requirement</p>

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health		Material Assets		Landscape		Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
Quantity Option 3B: Entire open space requirement to be met through improvements to existing sites	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	Any investment into the improvement of existing open space is likely to have positive effects on biodiversity (through increasing the biodiversity value of existing open space) population and human health (through improving access to fit for purpose open space) material assets (through creation of missing links in the access network and improvement of path networks) and landscape (through improving the quality of open space which is not currently fit for purpose) However, by prohibiting the creation of new open space as part of new development there could be cumulatively significant negative effects on population and human health (through inadequate access to open space of different types within new development) material assets (through reduction in townscape quality in new development) and landscape (through the reduction in the rates of open space provision within the Council area)	Allow a mix of on and off site contributions to meet overall open space requirement
Quantity Option 3C: Open space requirement can be met by a mixture of on site provision and off site improvement	++	++		++		++		This option is likely to have cumulatively significant positive effects biodiversity (through increasing the amount of open space of value to biodiversity and increasing the biodiversity value of existing open space); population and human health (through improving accessibility to fit for purpose open space of different types); material assets (through improving both existing townscape quality and that in new developments); and landscape (through increasing the amount of open space and the fitness for purpose of existing open space)	
Quantity Option 4A: Open Space	?	?		?		?		It is unknown whether this option will yield more or less open space than option 3B or 3C as data relating to the building of house types	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
requirement a flat rate regardless of house size or type					and sizes is not routinely collected or analysed	
Quantity Option 4B: Open Space requirement a scaled rate based on house type	?	?	?	?	It is unknown whether this option will yield more or less open space than option 3A or 3C as data relating to the building of house types and sizes is not routinely collected or analysed	
Quantity Option 4C: Open Space requirement a scaled rate based on house size (number of bedrooms)	?	?	?	?	It is unknown whether this option will yield more or less open space than option 3A or 3B as data relating to the building of house types and sizes is not routinely collected or analysed	
Quantity Option 5A: All open space can contribute towards a development's overall requirement.	-?	-?	-?	-?	Non functional open spaces tend to be less expensive to provide than functional open space. This option would be likely to see an increase in the proportion of non functional open space provided as part of development and a consequential decrease in functional open space. This would be likely to produce negative effects on biodiversity (through a reduction in the biodiversity value of open space in new development); population and human health (through reduction in access to fit for purpose open space); material assets (through reduced townscape value in new development); and landscape (through a reduction in the overall proportion of fitness for purpose open space) These effects may or may not become cumulatively significant over time.	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
Quantity Option 5B: Only functional open space can contribute towards a development's overall requirement	+	++	-	+ +	This option would be likely to produce a reduction in the proportion of small areas of landscaping and structure planting which come forward as part of development. This has the potential to have a negative effect material assets (through reducing the townscape value of new development) and landscape (through reducing the amount of visual screening of new development). If only functional open space can come forward as part of development then this is likely to have a significant positive effect on population and human health (through increasing the health and wellbeing value of new open spaces) and landscape (through increasing the fitness for purpose of new open spaces) . Functional open space also includes semi natural spaces and green corridors so a positive effect on biodiversity is recorded.	Modify policy to accept: structure planting and landscape features as contributing towards the open space requirement if they have high biodiversity value or contribute towards the enhancement of the integrated habitat network; on site path infrastructure which links the development site into the core path network
Quantity Option 5C: Both functional open space and non functional open space which has a high biodiversity value; contributes towards the enhancement of the integrated habitat network; or links the development to the core path network.	++	++	+	++	This option differs from 5B above in that it encourages: the provision of small areas of landscaping and structure planning which are designed to be of benefit to biodiversity; the provision of path networks which link into the wider core path network . This will reduce the negative effects on material assets (though improving townscape quality) and landscape (through increasing the amount of landscaping and structure planning coming forward as part of new development) to a point where they are negligible. It will also maximise the positive effects on biodiversity to a point where they are significant and have a positive effect on material assets (through expanding the core path network).	
Quantity Option 6A:	+	--	N	N	Passive open space is generally less expensive to install and	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
Open space requirement relates to any kind of functional open space					maintain therefore this option is likely to see an increase in the proportion of passive open space provided as part of new development and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of active open space provided. This will have a negative effect on population and human health which could become cumulatively significant. Passive open space is however, generally better for biodiversity so an increase in its provision would have positive effects	
Quantity Option 6B: Open Space requirement comprises both active and passive open space	N	N	N	N	No environmental effects predicted.	
Network Option 1A: Developers do not need to consider how their on site open space links to the green network or the active travel network.	N	N	N	N	No environmental effects predicted.	
Network Option 1B: Developers need to explore opportunities to link on site open space into the green network	++	++	N	N	Potential for cumulatively significant positive effects on biodiversity (the expanding and link up habitat networks) and population and human health (through expanding opportunity to access recreation)	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
Network Option 1C: Developers need to explore opportunities to link on site open space into the core path network	N	++	++	N	Potential for cumulatively significant positive effects on population and human health (through expanding opportunity to access recreation) and material assets (through increasing the proportion of open spaces connected to the core path network)	
Network Option 1D: Developers need to explore opportunities to link on site open space into both the green and core path networks	++	++	++	N	The benefits of both options 1B and 1C will both be realised.	
Financial Contribution Option 1A: Financial Contribution can be invested anywhere within the Council Area.	++	++	++	++	Any financial contribution towards the improvement of open space could potentially have positive effects on biodiversity, population and human health, material assets and landscape . In this option, financial contributions can be directed to where they are most needed within the entire Council area, so the potential for positive effects is significant. These significant positive effects will not necessarily benefit the residents of the development which provided the financial contribution in the first place. It is arguable, therefore, whether this option would meet the tests of reasonableness set out in Planning Circular on developer contributions. This may not be a reasonable alternative.	
Financial Contribution Option 1B: Financial	+	+	+	+	Any financial contribution towards the improvement of open space could potentially have positive effects on biodiversity, population	

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
Contribution to be put towards improving the area's performance against the standards set out in the open space strategy as closely as is feasible to the donor development site.					and human health, material assets and landscape. Whilst the financial contributions will not necessarily be able to be directed towards where they could be of most benefit and therefore positive effects will be of a lesser magnitude, the effects will benefit the residents of the development which supplied the financial contribution.	
Ownership and Maintenance Option 1A: Ownership of the Open Space is left with the residents and maintenance takes place through a factoring agreement.	?-	?-	?-	?-	Factoring arrangements can often break down leading to new open space not being maintained or managed, this could have a consequential negative effect on biodiversity, population and human health, material assets and landscape.	Mechanisms should be put in place to allow the Council to assess the robustness of the proposed factoring arrangement.
Ownership and Maintenance Option 1B: Ownership of the Open Space is passed to the Council who will carry out maintenance	+	+	+	+	Appropriate management and maintenance of open space throughout its lifetime will lead to positive effects on biodiversity, population and human health, material assets and landscape	
Ownership and Maintenance Option 2A: No financial	--	--	--	--	This option would encourage more open spaces to be passed to the Council for adoption, however, without suitable funding of the enhanced maintenance cost, the revenue budgets of the Council	A proportion of any increased revenue the Council receives from the increase in population

Alternative	Biodiversity	Population and human health	Material Assets	Landscape	Assessment Commentary	Proposed changes to the PPS or proposed mitigation
contribution is required to go towards the maintenance cost of new open space to be passed to the Council for adoption					are likely to come under increased pressure which could lead to cumulatively significant negative effects on biodiversity, population and human health, material assets and landscape	caused by the new development should be ring fenced for open space maintenance.
Ownership and Maintenance Option 2B: A financial contribution equivalent to 10 times the annual maintenance cost of the open space to be passed to the Council for adoption is required.	-	-	-	-	<p>This option would be likely to encourage developers to provide new open space which was passed to residents and managed through a factoring agreement rather than passing it to the Council for adoption as the up front costs would be less.</p> <p>10 times the annual maintenance cost of the open space seems an arbitrary figure. There will be revenue implications for the Council starting 10 years after adoption of the open space with subsequent negative effects on biodiversity, population and human health, material assets and landscape</p>	The number of times the value of the annual maintenance cost could be increased to cover any likely shortfall in funding, however the more money required the more likely developers are to chose a private factoring arrangement with its associated negative environmental effects
Ownership and Maintenance Option 2C: A financial contribution equivalent to the lifetime annual maintenance cost of the open space to be passed to the Council for adoption is required.	-?	-?	-?	-?	This option would be even more likely to encourage developers to provide new open space which was passed to residents and managed through a factoring agreement rather than passing it to the Council for adoption, as the up front costs would be less.	This option would only work if developers were compelled to pass new open space to the Council for adoption as well as paying a financial contribution equivalent to the lifetime annual maintenance cost of the open space

8.0 MITIGATION

8.1 Biodiversity - Flora and Fauna

8.1.1 The implementation of this SG is not likely to have any significant negative environmental effects on biodiversity.

8.2 Population and Human Health

8.2.1 The implementation of this SG is not likely to have any significant negative environmental effects on population and human health.

8.3 Material Assets

8.3.1 The implementation of this SG is not likely to have any significant negative environmental effects on material assets.

8.4 Landscape

8.3.1 The implementation of this SG is not likely to have any significant negative environmental effects on landscape.

9.0 ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

9.1 Reasons for Selecting the Alternatives

9.1.1 Although the SEA process has enabled the identification of the alternatives which have the greatest environmental benefits, the selected alternative is not always the most environmentally beneficial alternative, social and economic factors have also influenced decision.

9.2 How the assessment was undertaken

9.2.1 The approach to assessment was assess each option against the SEA Objectives (see Section 7.3) then to consider how each will be likely to perform and how they can be altered to enhance performance.

9.3 Possible Alternatives

Quantity Option

9.3.1 For quantity option 1, alternative C was assessed as having the greatest environmental benefit, however it was considered that the higher open space requirement set by alternative C did not take account of the proportion of Open Space across the Council area which was non functional and was also economically unsustainable so alternative A which had a lower open space requirement, and better reflects the pattern of open space provision across the Council area was selected.

9.3.2 For quantity option 2, alternative D was assessed as having a greater potential environmental benefit than alternatives A, B or C and was selected as the preferred alternative.

9.3.3 For quantity option 3, alternative C was selected as it had the greatest potential environmental benefit

9.3.4 For quantity option 4 alternative B was selected. It was not possible to predict the environmental effect of these alternatives so environmental considerations did not influence the selection procedure.

9.3.5 For quantity option 5, alternative C was assessed as having a greater environmental benefit than alternatives A or B and was selected as the preferred alternative.

9.3.6 For quantity option 6, alternative B was assessed as having a lesser adverse environmental effect than alternative A and was therefore selected as the preferred alternative.

Network Options

9.3.7 For network option 1, alternative D was assessed as having a greater environmental benefit than alternatives A, B or C and was selected as the preferred alternative.

Financial Contribution Options

9.3.8 For financial contribution option 1, although alternative A was assessed as having the greatest potential environmental benefit, alternative B was selected for reasons of environmental justice and because it more closely reflected the tests of reasonableness set out in the Planning Circular on developer contributions.

Ownership and Maintenance Options

9.3.9 For ownership and maintenance option 1, alternative B was assessed as having a greater environmental benefit than alternative A, however due to problems of legal enforcement neither of the alternatives were selected as preferred.

9.3.10 For ownership and maintenance option 2, alternative B was assessed as having the least potential for negative environmental effects and was therefore selected as preferred.

10. MONITORING

10.1 Legislative Requirement

6.1.1 Monitoring of the environmental performance of the Plan during its life is a key requirement of SEA. The SEA Act schedule 3 para 9 requires ‘a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with section 19’. The monitoring measures proposed are based on the different environmental issues identified as potentially being subject to significant environmental effects from the Local Development Plan.

10.2 Monitoring Proposals

10.2.1 Table 23 overleaf sets out the details of the proposed monitoring to monitor the achievement of the SEA objectives, the rationale for the selection and the methods and measures of monitoring. Monitoring will be conducted by the Council, in their capacity as the Responsible Authority for this SEA. Periodic monitoring reports will be produced to monitor progress with at least one timetabled for production before the 5 year periodical review of this SG.

Table 23: Monitoring Proposals

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			
Improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of existing open spaces within the Council area	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of existing open spaces which have received financial contributions from developments approved since the adoption of the SG.	The SG can improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of existing open spaces through leveraging financial contributions from new development in lieu of on site open space provision. By monitoring whether the biodiversity and nature conservation value of sites which have received investment via an SG contribution has improved since that investment we will be able to tell if this SEA objective is effectively being met.	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
Help to implement the aspirational projects set out in the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan (FABAP)	Projects set out in the FABAP which have been brought about via contributions secured through this SG	If this SG enables projects set out in the FABAP then this SEA objective will be met.	Through liaison with the Council's biodiversity officer.
Increase the rate of woodland planting across the Council area	The rate of woodland planting across the Council area	If the rate of woodland planting increased then this could, in part be attributable to monies received through this SG	This data is currently collected by the Central Scotland Forest Trust

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
	Projects involving woodland planting which have been brought about via contributions secured through this SG	If this SG enables projects which increase the rate of woodland planting then this SEA objective will be met.	Through liaison with the Council's developer contributions implementation group
Help to secure the appropriate management of sites protected for their nature conservation value	Number of sites protected for their nature conservation value which have active management plans	If the number of sites protected for their nature conservation value with active management plans increased then this could, in part be attributable to monies received through this SG	Through liaison with the Council's biodiversity officer
	Financial contributions secured which have been put towards: the development of management plans for sites protected for their nature conservation value; or the ongoing management of sites protected for their nature conservation value	If this SG enables the development of management plans or the ongoing management of sites protected for their nature conservation value then this SEA objective will be met.	Through liaison with the Council's developer contributions implementation group and biodiversity officer.
Ensure open spaces are of a sufficient diversity, quality and distribution to meet the needs of local biodiversity.	No baseline currently exists to quantify whether the existing open space resource is of a sufficient diversity, quality and distribution to meet the	Without suitable baseline information monitoring cannot be carried out.	None proposed.

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
	needs of local biodiversity. No monitoring is therefore proposed.		
Enable new open space to contribute towards the wider Falkirk Integrated Habitat Network.	Size of the integrated habitat network and percentage of network which is of favourable status	If new open space coming forward as part of new development expands the size of the integrated habitat network, or financial contributions in lieu of on site provision are used to expand the size of the integrated habitat network then this SEA objective will be being met.	Falkirk Council does not currently plan to update the data it holds on the integrated habitat network in the short to medium term. It may be that the data is updated as part of the research being undertaken to underpin the Central Scotland Green Network. In the absence of any new data we will keep a record of where improvements have taken place which were intended to expand the size of the IHN either on new development sites or through financial contributions received in lieu of on site provision.
	Use of integrated habitat network data	If IHN data is being regularly used to inform the design of open space proposals for new development then this will ensure that this SEA objective is being met	Through liaison with the Council's biodiversity officer and development management officers.
Population and Human Health			
Improve access to different	Percentage of households	If performance against this	Through undertaking spatial analysis

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
types of open space	with access to different types of open space within an acceptable walking distance as defined by the Open Space Strategy	indicator improves then this SEA objective will be being met.	of data collected to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.
Improve quality of accessibility within existing open spaces	The quality of accessibility in existing open spaces which have received a financial contribution from developments approved since the adoption of the SG	The SG can improve the quality of accessibility of existing open spaces through leveraging financial contributions from new development in lieu of on site open space provision. By monitoring whether the accessibility quality of sites which have received investment via an SG contribution has improved since that investment we will be able to tell if this SEA objective is effectively being met.	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
Ensure open space is appropriately located within new development	The percentage of households within new developments approved since the adoption of the SG which meet the standards for acceptable walking distance to different types of open space as defined by the	If a high proportion of households within new developments meet the standards for accessibility to different types of open space set out in the Falkirk Open Space Strategy then this SEA objective will be being met.	Through undertaking spatial analysis of data collected to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
	Falkirk Open Space Strategy		
Maximise the contribution that existing open space makes towards peoples' health and wellbeing	The health and wellbeing quality of open space in new developments which have been approved since the adoption of the SG	If new open space scores well in future quality assessments for health and wellbeing then this SEA objective will be being met.	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
	The health and wellbeing quality of existing open spaces which have received a financial contribution from developments approved since the adoption of the SG	The SG can improve the health and wellbeing quality of existing open spaces through leveraging financial contributions from new development in lieu of on site open space provision. By monitoring whether the health and wellbeing quality of sites which have received investment via an SG contribution has improved since that investment we will be able to tell if this SEA objective is effectively being met.	
Material Assets			
Increase opportunities for walking and cycling.	Number of open spaces connected to the core path network	If this number increases then this SEA objective is being met.	Through GIS analysis and liaison with the Council's outdoor access team.
Promote access for all	The quality of accessibility in existing open spaces which have received a financial	The SG can improve the quality of accessibility of existing open spaces through leveraging financial	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
	contribution from developments approved since the adoption of the SG	contributions from new development in lieu of on site open space provision. By monitoring whether the accessibility quality of sites which have received investment via an SPG contribution has improved since that investment we will be able to tell if this SEA objective is effectively being met.	the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
Promote the use of green infrastructure in developing and enhancing open spaces.	No monitoring propose. Suggestions from consultation authorities and other consultees would be welcomed		
Landscape			
Enhance the overall fitness for purpose of existing open spaces.	Quality and fitness for purpose of existing open spaces which have received financial contributions from development approved since the adoption of the SG	The SG can improve the quality and fitness for purpose of existing open spaces through leveraging financial contributions from new development in lieu of on site open space provision. By monitoring whether the quality and fitness for purpose of sites which have received investment via an SPG contribution has improved since that investment	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
		we will be able to tell if this SEA objective is effectively being met.	
Ensure new open spaces are fit for purpose.	Quality and fitness for purpose of new open spaces created since the adoption of the SG		Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
Ensure each community has access to 5ha/1000 people of open space.	The ratio of open space provision within each settlement	The SG has translated the 5ha/1000 people standard into an open space requirement for new developments. The SG also encourages on site provision in areas where current provision is below the 5ha standard. Through monitoring the respective ratios of open space provision within each settlement we will be able to understand whether standards are being improved in areas of existing deficiency and whether this SEA objective is being met.	Through analysing data collected in the quantitative audit of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
Enhance the design and aesthetic quality of open spaces	The design and aesthetic quality of existing open spaces which have received financial contributions from development approved since	The SG can improve the design and aesthetic quality of existing open spaces through leveraging financial contributions from new development in lieu of on site	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
	the adoption of the SG	open space provision. By monitoring whether the design and aesthetic quality of sites which have received investment via an SPG contribution has improved since that investment we will be able to tell if these SEA objectives are effectively being met.	
	The design and aesthetic quality of new open space created since the adoption of the SG		Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy
Ensure appropriate public open space maintenance	The management and maintenance quality of existing open spaces which have received financial contributions from development approved since the adoption of the SG	The SG can improve the management and maintenance quality of existing open spaces through leveraging financial contributions from new development in lieu of on site open space provision. By monitoring whether the cleanliness and maintenance quality and management quality of sites which have received investment via an SPG contribution has improved since that investment we will be able to	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
		tell if these SEA objectives are effectively being met.	
	The management and maintenance quality of new open space created since the adoption of the SG	New open spaces provided as part of new development are required to either have robust and certain factoring agreements in place to ensure satisfactory maintenance and upkeep or be passed over to the Council for adoption, maintenance and in some circumstances ownership. By monitoring the cleanliness and maintenance quality and management quality of new open spaces provided since the adoption of this SG we will be able to tell if this SEA objective is being met.	Through analysing data collected in the qualitative assessment of open space which is undertaken to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy

11.0 NEXT STEPS

11.1 Consultation

11.1.1 The consultative draft SG along with this Environmental Report has been made available to the public as well as the Consultation Authorities (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland) for comment, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, 2005.

11.1.2 The public consultation and Statutory Consultation will run for a period of 6 weeks. Comments and responses to this Environmental Report will be considered following these consultation periods, so that any revisions can be made before the SPG is finalised and adopted.

11.2 Adoption of SPG

11.2.1 Following the consultation and any necessary modifications, a finalised SG will be presented to Falkirk Council's Executive committee for endorsement. The SG will then be passed to Scottish Ministers along with the LDP for formal approval.

11.3 SEA Post-Adoption Statement

11.3.1 Shortly after approval, the SEA Post-adoption Statement will be produced. The Statement sets out how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Framework, how the findings of the Environmental Report have been taken into account, and how the consultation responses have been addressed.

11.3.2 The SEA Post-adoption Statement will also finalise the framework for monitoring the environmental effects of the SG's implementation and the responsibilities for monitoring.

Appendix 1 – Record of Scoping Comments

Consultation Authority	Comment	Response
Historic Scotland (HS)	As you will be aware, in our response to the scoping consultation (dated 17 June 2013) we noted that the guidance would in itself be unlikely to have a significant effect on the historic environment. I therefore note that the historic environment has been scoped out of the assessment and I am content to agree with this view.	Comment noted.
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	We are of the opinion that the SG may have some positive effects in relation to soil and climatic factors (climate change adaptation- i.e. flood risk). We would therefore advise the Falkirk Council to take a precautionary approach in relation to flood risk and consider including this as part of the assessment as the SG could play a positive role in the management of flood risk in the Falkirk area.	<p>The protection of open space is dictated by policy INF03 of the LDP rather than this SG.</p> <p>The Scoping report indicated that the SG might provide advice on how to incorporate areas of flood risk into on site open space. The consultative draft SG does not do this. We are therefore of the view that this SG will have no effect on the water environment, soil or climatic factors (through mitigation of flooding).</p>
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	<p>We don't think Material Assets should be scoped out and suggest it is scoped in so the following factors can be assessed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. active travel links; 2. access for all ages and abilities; 3. increased participation in outdoor recreation; 4. the use of green infrastructure in developing and enhancing open spaces and the role it can play in place-making. 	Material Assets has been scoped into the Environmental Report.

Consultation Authority	Comment	Response
SNH	<p>It would be useful if the supplementary guidance could provide more guidance on the different types of greenspace infrastructure that can be used to enhance open spaces and biodiversity. We recommend that you look at the Scottish Government's 'Green Infrastructure & Place-making', 'part one' of which provides some useful graphics that you may want to incorporate into your document.</p>	<p>The SG encourages the location of green infrastructure within open spaces through: allowing SUDS to contribute towards meeting a sites open space requirement if it has high amenity or biodiversity value; and encouraging developers to put together an open space proposal which maximises opportunities to link the development into the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) and the Core Path network.</p>
SNH	<p>Relationship with other plans and strategies We recommend you make reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk's Single Outcome Agreement (there is a strong link between open space, health, quality of life, access and biodiversity). • Falkirk's Core Path Plan and the Local Transport Strategy (providing adequate walking and cycling links to open spaces and key facilities will help achieve the aims of the CSGN, Falkirk's SOA and this supplementary guidance). • CSGN (the CSGN will help areas such as Falkirk to enhance and develop their open spaces). 	<p>Comment noted. Reference has been made in the Environmental Report to these documents</p>
SNH	<p>Existing environmental problems - We suggest you include a heading for Material Assets and include the following text: <i>"In some areas there are still inadequate walking and cycling links to good quality, usable open space and this will need to be addressed. Ensuring good</i></p>	<p>Comment noted. This text has been included in the existing environmental problems section of the Environmental Report (see paragraph 5.3.1)</p>

Consultation Authority	Comment	Response										
	<p>walking and cycling links to open space, and in particular open space near where people live, can make a significant contribution towards targets to, (1) get more people participating in outdoor recreation, and (2) get more people travelling by active modes.”</p>											
SNH	<p>Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by the supplementary guidance - We suggest you include the following under a heading titled Material Assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the extent and distribution of footpaths and cycle-paths in and around settlements. Information on the number of people who access the outdoors. 	<p>Comment noted. This information has been included in the Environmental Report (see section 4.4)</p>										
SNH	<p>Alternatives, mitigation and enhancement - We welcome the proposal that the supplementary guidance will present a number of different options as to how an individual site’s open space requirement is calculated, and that each option will be environmentally assessed.</p>	<p>Support welcomed.</p>										
SNH	<p>Environmental objectives and assessment questions - we suggest you add the objectives and assessment questions detailed below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="495 954 1494 1342"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="495 954 925 994">Objective</th> <th data-bbox="925 954 1494 994">Assessment Question</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 994 925 1142">Avoid damage or disturbance to designated wildlife sites and protected species?</td> <td data-bbox="925 994 1494 1142">Will the alternatives avoid damage to designated wildlife sites? Will the alternatives avoid damage to protected species?</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 1142 925 1217">Increase opportunities for walking and cycling.</td> <td data-bbox="925 1142 1494 1217">Will the alternatives increase the opportunities to walk and cycle?</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 1217 925 1292">Access for all</td> <td data-bbox="925 1217 1494 1292">Will the alternatives improve access for all ages and abilities?</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="495 1292 925 1342">Promote the use of green</td> <td data-bbox="925 1292 1494 1342">Will the alternatives promote green</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Objective	Assessment Question	Avoid damage or disturbance to designated wildlife sites and protected species?	Will the alternatives avoid damage to designated wildlife sites? Will the alternatives avoid damage to protected species?	Increase opportunities for walking and cycling.	Will the alternatives increase the opportunities to walk and cycle?	Access for all	Will the alternatives improve access for all ages and abilities?	Promote the use of green	Will the alternatives promote green	<p>Comment noted. With the exception of avoiding damage or disturbance to designated sites and protected species, these SEA objectives and assessment questions have been added to the Environmental Report.</p> <p>Development affecting designated sites is controlled through policy GN03 Biodiversity and Geodiversity of the LDP and SG08 Local Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites. It is not considered that the provision of</p>
Objective	Assessment Question											
Avoid damage or disturbance to designated wildlife sites and protected species?	Will the alternatives avoid damage to designated wildlife sites? Will the alternatives avoid damage to protected species?											
Increase opportunities for walking and cycling.	Will the alternatives increase the opportunities to walk and cycle?											
Access for all	Will the alternatives improve access for all ages and abilities?											
Promote the use of green	Will the alternatives promote green											

Consultation Authority	Comment		Response
	infrastructure in developing and enhancing open spaces.	infrastructure? Will the alternative help promote place-making?	open space as part of new development or the improvement of existing open space has any significant potential to damage or disturb designated sites or protected species.