

Local Transport Strategy 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is Falkirk Council's third Local Transport Strategy (LTS) and covers the period 2014 onwards. It will set out the Council's overarching transport vision:

"to provide a transport network... which allows people a reasonable choice of travel options as part of a safe, reliable, convenient, accessible and sustainable transport system".

A strategy of promoting walking, cycling, motorcycling and public transport with some car restraint will be in line with the three strategic outcomes of the Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy:

- Improve journey times and connections – to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on our high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety;
- Reduce emissions, to tackle issues of climate change, air quality, and health improvement which impact on our high level objective for protecting the environment and improving health and;
- Improve quality, accessibility and affordability, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car.

The strategy will also be in line with the vision of the Regional Transport Strategy produced by SEStran (South East Scotland Transport Partnership):

- Economy – to ensure transport facilities encourage economic growth, regional prosperity and vitality in a sustainable manner
- Accessibility – to improve accessibility for those with limited transport choice or no access to a car, particularly those who live in rural areas.
- Environment – to ensure that development is achieved in an environmentally sustainable manner
- Safety and Health – to promote a healthier and more active SEStran area population

This strategy seeks to achieve a balance in transport provision, within the resources available. The Council recognises that whilst the car fulfils an important function for a variety of journey purposes unrestrained growth in car usage cannot be accommodated indefinitely by engineering measures. Growing traffic congestion impacts negatively on all road users, will cause deterioration in air quality and quality of life, and have serious consequences for the economic wellbeing of the area.

In supporting and promoting more sustainable travel modes to encourage modal shift, whilst improving the efficiency of the road network is the policy approach being implemented through this LTS. The evaluation carried out shows that this approach best meets our objectives for transport across the Council area. It must also be acknowledged however, that whilst the policies contained in this transport strategy are designed to limit continued traffic growth, the strategy itself is unlikely to solve the growing problem of traffic congestion. Instead it is probable that traffic congestion will continue to increase across the Council area.

The LTS is set in the context of the Strategic Community Plan, Sustainable Falkirk and other partnership working in My Future's in Falkirk (MFIF), as well as the Council's emerging Local Development Plan that replaces the current Structure Plan and Local Plan. All these strategies have involved the public in their preparation.

Extensive public consultation has been carried out at each stage of developing the LTS and has significantly contributed to the overall policy direction being pursued.

Since the last LTS in 2006, there have been significant transport achievements in the Falkirk Council area (see Appendix 1). Just over £25 million has been spent on transport capital projects during this period that has enabled, among other things:

- Implemented A904 Grangemouth Road Crossing Facilities
- Implemented upgrading of Bo'ness Town Centre to benefit pedestrian environment
- Implemented Braes paths improvements resulting from community consultation
- Implemented Bo'ness / Blackness paths improvements from community consultation (excluding Blackness- Bo'ness shore route)
- Developed local networks suitable for walking around every settlement in the Falkirk Council area
- Bowtrees to Bowtrees Cottage Cycle / Footpath
- Provide Cycle Parking facilities at shopping centres, health and leisure centres
- First stage pilot project under auspices of Take the Right Route
- Improved multi user route access to Camelon and Larbert railway stations
- Produced Supplementary Planning Guidance for Developers to develop Travel Plans
- Operational car sharing database for Falkirk Council area
- Completed School Travel Assessments at all 56 Schools in Falkirk Council Area
- Install cycle parking and playground markings at 7 schools
- 20mph signing installed at all schools
- Continuing development of the cycle network within and between settlements;
- Production and adoption of a Core Paths Plan;
- Ongoing work with local schools and employers to implement travel plan initiatives;
- Extension of Larbert Station car park
- Ongoing support of tendered bus services;
- Producing the detailed design of A801 Avon Gorge Improvement scheme;
- Ongoing maintenance of the Council's road, footway, bridges and structures stock;
- Production of a Road Maintenance Plan;
- Ongoing detailed structural inspection of the street lighting stock;
- Completion of the A9 / Icehouse Brae Junction Improvement, Laurieston;
- Construction of Phase 1 of the Denny Eastern Access Road, and;
- Construction of the M876 Glenbervie Slip Roads junctions

Over the first 3 years of this LTS there may be around £21 million available for spending on transport and flooding (depending on developer contributions). In addition the Council will have Tax Incremental Funding for other large scale infrastructure projects. This strategy sets out the policies which will help deliver any projects that satisfy the five transport objectives and the Council's overarching transport vision.

Transport delivery in Scotland has changed since the publication of the last LTS with the establishment of Transport Scotland, and Regional Transport Partnerships. The Council is continuing to work with, and as part of, these organisations to deliver a safe, reliable, convenient and accessible transport system to serve the travel needs of the people of Falkirk. The policies contained within this LTS reflect national, regional, and local aspirations and will hopefully allow the steps to be taken to achieve the Council's vision for transport both in the short term and the long term.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1	This Local Transport Strategy (LTS) sets out how the transport vision for the Falkirk Council area will be achieved and the work to be implemented over the coming years. This strategy is set in the context of the Government's Transport White Paper; "Scotland's Transport Future" published in June 2004 and has been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Scottish Executive in March 2005.
1.2	A considerable amount of work has already been done through our previous Local Transport Strategies, but the increasing demand for high quality travel options, and the need to meet this demand in a sustainable way, means further work is required to minimise the negative impacts that travel can generate. This document sets out the policies that will help combat the effects of traffic growth whilst promoting sustainable active travel choices.
1.3	Chapter 2 details the vision and objectives of this Local Transport Strategy. The vision and objectives have taken their basis from those set out in the Transport White Paper and have been confirmed through public consultation exercises. An appraisal of the consultation process, in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) has been carried out and the results are contained in the appendices.
1.4	Chapter 2 also deals with the results of applying the Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidance. A copy of the screening report and responses from the statutory consultees is contained in the appendices.
1.5	Chapter 3 sets the LTS in the context of national and regional policy and explains how the LTS contributes to the wider Council vision and objectives.
1.6	Chapters 4 to 14 give a comprehensive view of the transport policies this strategy will be taking forward including the main challenges and what the future direction of transport policy in the Council area will be.
1.7	The Council has a statutory obligation to produce a Road Traffic Reduction Plan and this is contained in Chapter 15
1.8	<p>Consultation exercises have been carried out at each stage in the process of producing this LTS (the results are contained in Appendix 5). These have shaped the final form of the Council's transport strategy and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questionnaires to business stakeholders• Questionnaire for the Citizens Panel• Sixteen roadshow events around the Council area (in conjunction with the emerging Local Development Plan)• Public consultation through website and public libraries.
1.9	This Local Transport Strategy will be sent to the Scottish Government and will hopefully assist in bidding for funding for future transport projects.

2. THE VISION FOR TRANSPORT IN THE FALKIRK COUNCIL AREA

2.1	<p><i>The Council's Transport Vision is:</i></p> <p><i>To provide a transport network both within the Council area and linking to surrounding areas, which allows people a reasonable choice of travel options as part of a safe, reliable, convenient, accessible and sustainable transport system. To enable people to travel when and where they wish, regardless of their level of income, physical ability or access to a car. To achieve a transport system that caters for the car, but is not dominated by it.</i></p>
	Objectives
2.2	<p>To achieve this Transport Vision the Council has developed a number of key objectives. These objectives are based on those contained in the Scottish Governments Transport White Paper¹, and reflect the underlying themes of the Strategic Community Plans and Development Plans.</p>
	Objective 1
	<p>To Support the growth of the local economy in a sustainable way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to promote and increase the use of sustainable forms of transport to the eight strategic employment development sites. seeking to locate new development in locations that minimise the number and length of car trips.
	Objective 2
	<p>To contribute to community regeneration through promoting social inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by promoting the provision of accessible transport options, particularly to disadvantaged, remote and socially deprived areas by maximising the opportunity to travel by alternative modes of transport to the car
	Objective 3
	<p>To protect the environment by minimising the impact that transport can have on it and to improve health by promoting more active travel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by encouraging more travel by foot, bicycle, motorcycle, bus and rail by working with the health sector to encourage more walking and cycling by ensuring new transport infrastructure is delivered to support sustainable travel choices
	Objective 4
	<p>To improve safety for all those using the transport network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by working to reduce accidents by improving safety for transport users, operators, pedestrians and cyclists
	Objective 5
	<p>To improve integration between different forms of transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by working with partners to improve through-ticketing by working with partners to improve connectivity between different transport services by ensuring easily accessible and up to date information is available to enable travel decisions based on a full knowledge of the travel options available
2.3	<p>The objectives of the Local Transport Strategy must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound).</p>
2.4	<p>This Local Transport Strategy will focus on current transport policy (local, regional and national) being continued to be implemented in the Falkirk Council area. The main objective will be to promote and enhance facilities for cycling and walking and to make journeys by public transport a realistic alternative to the car for a larger section of the population in spite of reduced available funding streams.</p>
2.5	<p>We aim to discourage unnecessary car use but still acknowledge that the car may be</p>

¹ Scotland's Transport Future, Scottish Executive, June 2004

	the only realistic option for some people and for certain types of journeys. We will also strive to manage traffic to maximise the capacity of the existing road network and providing greater public transport priority. The current level of peak time congestion in and around Falkirk cannot be sustained indefinitely through engineering solutions and should therefore try to be addressed by encouraging a shift to other modes of transport.
2.6	The approach of this strategy is to make cycling, walking and public transport more accessible through improved facilities and improved information.
2.7	A review of parking policy will be carried out to determine the necessary regime to discourage long stay commuter parking in Falkirk town centre and unnecessary car use. This will be carried out after each town centre car parking survey. Car parking charges within Falkirk Town centre are reviewed annually to determine whether any increase will be implemented. A balance has to be struck to ensure that any parking regime does not affect the economic vitality of our town centres.
2.8	The social inclusion and health benefits from promoting cycling, walking, and public transport will contribute to community regeneration and the wellbeing of the population.
2.9	By giving priority to and encouraging the use of alternative means of travel to the car we hope to reduce the rate of growth of congestion in the Council area. At present congestion tends to be a peak hour problem, however, on some of the main radial routes into Falkirk itself, congestion can lead to the peak time spreading over an extended period. Reducing the number of cars on the road will have major environmental benefits including a reduction in emissions, reduced traffic related noise and less community severance.
2.10	Reducing congestion has a positive impact on the local economy. Reducing unnecessary delays and the associated cost to business may lead to new investment or greater investment thus retaining jobs and perhaps increasing employment opportunities in the Falkirk Council area.
2.11	Safety is paramount in any strategy and we hope that through promoting cycling, walking and public transport this strategy will reduce traffic growth and subsequently reduce overall accident numbers.
2.12	For those using public transport, it is envisaged that this strategy will provide positive benefits through including initiatives to improve safety and security both on the transport mode itself and for the waiting environment.
2.13	Overall, our Transport Strategy would provide the benefits of promoting social inclusion and community regeneration, improving health and fitness, reducing the environmental impact of transport on the community, aiding the local economy, and improving transport integration and safety.
2.14	Table 2.1 below summarises the contribution the transport strategy would make to the five LTS objectives. The strategy will provide a positive contribution to these objectives.
2.15	This position is confirmed by the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) assessment which has been carried out on the strategy option. This STAG appraisal is set out in the Appraisal Summary Tables (ASTs) contained in Annex 1 .
2.16	This Local Transport Strategy sets out how Falkirk Councils transport vision will be delivered by implementing a strategy promoting cycling, walking and use of public transport whilst maximising efficient use of the road network and discouraging unnecessary use of the car.
	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</i>
2.17	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process that is used to assess the potential effects that specific plans or programmes may have on the environment. The SEA process is split into the following stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening – whereby the need for carrying out a SEA is established; • Scoping – identifies the scope and level of detail of information to be included in Environmental Report (ER) and the period for consultation on ER. There is also formal consultation with the Consultation Authorities (Scottish Ministers, Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Environment Protection Agency);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting – Consultation Authorities review ER and strategy considering the ER, the adequacy of the SEA, the effectiveness of mitigation measures and monitoring measures proposed; • Monitoring – the effects of implementing the plan / strategy must be monitored.
2.18	A screening exercise was carried and the advice given by Consultation Authorities was that there would be no overall likelihood of significant environmental effects as a result of our Strategy. Any major road schemes which may satisfy this strategy are contained within the emerging Local Development Plan and as such will be covered by the SEA that has been prepared for that plan.

TABLE 2.1 Transport Strategy Contributions to LTS Objectives

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY
1. Economy	+
2. Community Regeneration / Social Inclusion	+
3. Environment	+
4. Safety	+
5. Integration	+

+ Likely positive contribution to objective

- likely negative contribution to objective

3. POLICY BACKGROUND

	National and Regional Policy Considerations
	<i>National Planning Framework 2</i>
3.1	The National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) has the prime objective of taking forward the spatial aspects and setting out a strategy for long term development over the next 25 years. NPF2 continues the Scottish Government's commitment to realising the potential of places, highlighting economic and environmental opportunities in each and every part of Scotland.
	<i>Transport White Paper</i>
3.2	As with the NPF2, the Scottish Government has issued guidance on national transport policy. In June 2004 the Scottish Government issued its transport White Paper 'Scotland's Transport Future' which sets out the direction of transport policy in Scotland over the coming years. In the White Paper the vision for Scotland's transport future is defined as: <i>"An accessible Scotland with safe, integrated and reliable transport that supports economic growth, provides opportunities for all and is easy to use..."</i>
3.3	The objectives of the white paper are to promote economic growth, promote social inclusion, protect our environment, improve safety and to improve integration. These national objectives are reflected in our local objectives. The main target of the White Paper is stabilising road traffic volumes at 2001 levels by 2021. Falkirk Council must put in place, through Local Transport Strategy Policies, measures to achieve this.
	<i>National Transport Strategy</i>
3.4	The then Scottish Executive published the National Transport Strategy in December 2006 which has three strategic outcomes at its core: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved journey times and connections – to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on our high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety. • Reduced emissions – to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on our high level of objective for protecting the environment and improving health.. Improved quality, accessibility, and affordability – to give people the choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car.
3.5	The LTS will have a role in feeding into the national and regional transport strategy processes and it is envisaged that under this structure, local government would still deliver the majority of transport initiatives whether national, regional or local.
	<i>Scottish Planning Policy SPP and PAN75</i>
3.6	The Scottish Government published the Scottish Planning Policy in February 2010. This is supported by Planning Advice Note 75. These documents set out the role that land use planning can play in the implementation of national transport policy and advise authorities on the interpretation of transport policy. The main principles contained in the SPP and PAN 75 are as follows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guiding principle of the SPP is that development should be related to a pattern of development that reduces the need to travel, facilitates travel by public transport and freight movement by rail or water and provides safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling. Transport and Land Use have a strong influence on sustainable economic growth and therefore the LTS and Local Development Plans should be complementary and take account of Regional Transport Strategies and Strategic Development Plans to ensure consistency.
	<i>Regional Transport Strategy</i>
3.7	SEStran is a statutory partnership of 8 local authorities and covers the south-east of Scotland to deliver the aims and objectives for strategic transport in the region and assisting in delivery of regional transport projects. SEStran published its latest

	Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in 2008 and covers the period up to 2023. The current RTS is under review.
3.8	<p>The RTS is based on four high level objectives of Economy, Accessibility, Environment and Safety and Health. The RTS is also based on three specific initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region-wide initiatives affecting the whole of the SEStran area. • Initiatives for specific areas and groups aimed at accessibility and minimum levels of service. • Network based initiatives looking at infrastructure and public transport on principal travel corridors.
	Local Policy Considerations
	Strategic Community Plan
3.9	The Strategic Community Plan provides the vision and strategic priorities for the future of all communities in the Falkirk Council area and has been developed in partnership with a number of key agencies and stakeholders. The current plan covers the year 2010 to 2015.
3.10	<p>The SCP sets out the main vision for the Council area. This vision includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legacy of our past and the potential of our future are protected. • Our area is at the centre of Scottish life. • Our future is one of the most culturally diverse and distinct areas in Scotland. • Our future has investment in jobs, learning, homes and leisure for all. • Our area is the place to be in the third millennium.
3.11	In terms of transport, the SCP seeks to promote and potentially increase the use of sustainable forms of transport which minimise the impact on the environment. Implementation of the LTS therefore is fundamental to meeting this vision of the SCP.
	Development Plan
3.12	The development plan currently comprises the Structure Plan and Local Plan, however these are soon to be replaced by the Local Development Plan. The existing Structure Plan was approved in 2007 and the Local Plan adopted in 2010.
3.13	<p>The Structure Plan sets out the growth strategy for the Council area with the key elements being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrating new employment on eight major strategic development sites; • Providing sufficient new housing land to facilitate an increase in the population of the area • Identifying and applying appropriate levels of protection to landscape, ecological and heritage assets, and, • Seeking to locate new development in locations that minimise the number and length of car trips.
3.14	The Local Plan is the delivery mechanism for the strategic policies set out in the Structure Plan and Strategic Community Plan. The Local Plan supports sustainable transport through locating development sites where car trips are minimised and infrastructure is available to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of travel. Where the infrastructure is not available, through the Local Plan and Development Management process, developer contributions are sought to enable the infrastructure improvements required for cycling, walking, and public transport to be implemented.
	Local Strategies Contributing to LTS Objectives
3.15	There are various other Falkirk Council Strategy documents that contribute to the objectives of the LTS. These documents include Outdoor Access Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, the Community Safety Strategy and the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy.

4. SUSTAINABLE ACTIVE TRAVEL

Introduction / Background	
4.1	The National Transport Strategy for Scotland's vision is "...of an accessible Scotland with safe, integrated and reliable transport that supports economic growth, provides opportunities for all and is easy to use. Tackling congestion, integrating services and infrastructure, improving connections and accessibility will all encourage individuals to make different choices about their preferred method of travel".
4.2	The South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran)'s Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) contains a "...strong emphasis on Smarter Choice measures – influencing travel behaviour at the level of the individual through personalise planning and information". The RTS further states that "Increased use of walk/cycle is a win/win scenario – motorised travel is reduced and there are health benefits to the nation – the RTS encourages this".
4.3	An overarching objective for Falkirk Council in terms of Active and Sustainable Travel is to positively influence the travel choices made within the Council area. In some cases this will be achieved through provision of better infrastructure and services, driven by the needs of existing and potential users. Equally important is the effective promotion of Active and Sustainable Travel through a programme of targeted marketing.
4.4	The Council's Sustainable Transport Team covers a wide range of functions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning and delivery of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure • Promotion of Active and Sustainable Travel • School and business Travel Planning
4.5	A Travel Plan is a tool to influence travel choices, and a means to achieving Active and Sustainable Travel objectives. It is a package of measures aimed at reducing the number of car journeys; in particular single occupancy trips, to and from a development or residential area. It should encourage the use of sustainable transport and aim to reduce the impact of a development on the surrounding road network.
Achievements and Challenges	
4.6	<p>In meeting our objective of positively influencing the travel choices made within the Council area, the Sustainable Transport Team have made many notable achievements. The following identifies some of the highlights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic network improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Cycle Network Route 76 • Routes to School including 20mph zones • Community Links • Links to rail stations • Cycle parking at schools and key locations • Pedestrian and cycling signage • Walking and Cycling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walk and Talk</i> events • Partnership working with health walk providers • <i>Children's Bike Club</i> • Bike Week activities • Achievement of <i>Cycle Friendly</i> awards • Staff cycle training • Guided bike rides • School Travel Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Travel Plan pack and awards • Online support through <i>Glow</i> website • School travel assessments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walk to School</i> activities • Cycle training • Hands Up Survey • Travel Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance • <i>Positive Choice Travel</i> project launch • Travel Plan related events with local businesses • Travel Plans for major developments • Pool cars • Pool bikes • <i>TripshareFalkirk</i> • Travel Awareness and Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Take the Right Route</i> marketing campaign • Personal Travel Planning • Maps e.g. <i>Green Travel Map</i>, community guides • Website • Public events • Mass distribution of travel information
4.7	<p>The challenges facing the development of Active and Sustainable Travel in the Falkirk Council area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing perceptions through the provision of accurate and accessible information • Increasing awareness of Active and Sustainable modes of travel and their associated benefits • Making cycling and walking safer and more accessible through network improvements, signage and publicity • Securing robust Travel Plans including effective monitoring through the Planning process • Investigating and securing funding from a variety of sources when available
The Future	
4.8	<p>Falkirk Council will meet its commitment to Active and Sustainable Travel by adopting a three stage process of engagement with the communities of Falkirk:</p> <p>Step 1: Inform people about sustainable travel options</p> <p>Step 2: Encourage them to take part and</p> <p>Step 3: Identify actions they can take to change their behaviour.</p>
4.9	<p>As part of this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone will have access to information, materials and incentives to make day to day Active and Sustainable Travel a realistic choice • We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver marketing campaigns promoting Active and Sustainable modes of travel • monitor the cycling and walking network • develop the strategic walking and cycling network • deliver Personal Travel Planning • engage with schools and businesses to develop Travel Plans • undertake two Hands Up Surveys in schools per year • monitor and update information on the Take the Right Route section of the Falkirk Council website

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver Bikeability Scotland cycle training and develop a programme of led cycle rides with partner organisations and volunteers. • Undertake a review of the School Travel Plan surveys.

ACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICIES	
ASTP1	The Council will continue to promote and increase awareness of Active and Sustainable Transport.
ASTP2	The Council will continue to enhance, where possible, the existing path network and develop multi-use paths and improved pedestrian and cycling signage as a major contribution to the network.
ASTP3	The Council will improve the pedestrian and cycling environment in heavily used areas and will ensure that new developments and new traffic management and maintenance schemes encourage and enable easy access by foot and cycle.
ASTP4	All new developments which meet the requirements for a transport assessment will be required to produce a Travel Plan, to ensure easy access by Active and Sustainable modes.
ASTP5	The Council will help to develop Travel Plans for new and existing businesses; and will continue to support schools in the development and implementation of School Travel Plans.
ASTP6	The Council will work with schools and other partners to educate children about the benefits of walking and cycling and encourage them to walk and cycle to and from school wherever possible.

5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Introduction / Background	
5.1	An attractive and convenient public transport system is an essential component of a transport policy encouraging more sustainable travel. The Falkirk Council area has, at present, a reasonably efficient and frequent bus service throughout most of its area.
5.2	The Falkirk Council area also benefits from having 5 railway stations located on the Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling triangle. These stations provide inter-urban travel and connect Falkirk north to Aberdeen and Inverness and south to Glasgow, Edinburgh and beyond. Rail is an important form of transport for commuting between Falkirk, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Rail also provides for some local travel between stations in the Council area but this is limited compared with the service the bus network provides for local journeys.
5.3	Taxis also play a valuable part in public transport provision and are used in conjunction with other forms of transport. They also perform a key role in short local journeys. The Falkirk Council area has a fleet of 528 licensed vehicles of which around 101 are wheelchair accessible.
Achievements and Challenges	
5.4	The convenience of travelling by car makes using public transport less attractive than car travel. Public transport suffers from perceived issues of journey reliability, poor quality or infrequent services, and high fares. In the Falkirk Council area most of the smaller towns and villages have a direct transport link to Falkirk. Journeys by public transport are generally longer than that by car which can make public transport less attractive.
5.5	In order to mitigate the concerns any passengers may have on personal security public transport interchanges and waiting areas should, where possible, be designed to minimise these concerns.
5.6	Raising awareness of how to access information on current public transport services will hopefully improve the use of public transport. The difficulty is that for those who have never used their local bus service before, it can be difficult to find out where bus services operate.
5.7	Public transport can be difficult or impossible for people with disabilities, or parents with pushchairs to use. However this should be addressed by the Disability Discrimination Act and Equalities Act.
5.8	For rail, an additional barrier is presented by the pedestrian bridges crossing the rail lines themselves. For example, at Falkirk High and Polmont stations access to the Glasgow bound platforms for wheelchair bound passengers are circuitous in order to avoid pedestrian bridges with steps (although an improvement on what existed previously). For taxi use, both cost and physical accessibility issues tend to present the main barriers to usage.
5.9	The key to meeting the challenge of increasing public transport use and reducing travel by car is therefore to make public transport as frequent, safe, convenient, value for money and reliable as possible. To achieve this information needs to be easily understood and easy to access in a number of formats and the services offered must serve the origins and destinations people want to travel between. Reliability needs to

	be improved needs to be built into the transport system this could be achieved by allowing public transport vehicles to bypass the worst congestion, making service times more predictable throughout the day.
	<i>Bus Travel</i>
5.10	To improve public transport information we are continuing to maintain bus timetable displays and approximately 50% of bus stops in the Council area have information at them. Information is currently provided by Traveline Scotland, the national travel information database of which the Council is a shareholder via a 24hr a day helpline, website and mobile phone application.
5.11	The Council has complied with the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 requirement to produce a public transport information strategy. This strategy details what local bus information should be made available to the public and the way in which this information should be provided. The objective of the strategy is to help existing public transport users and target non-users to help increase patronage.
5.12	Both the Transport Act 1985 and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 place a requirement on the local authority to provide a policy document for the procurement of public transport services and to formally consult on this. The Council has produced such a document detailing its policy and procedures on procuring public transport services for the Council area.
5.13	In terms of integration, the Council continues to support the SEStran (South East Scotland Transport Partnership) OneTicket initiative. This enables through tickets to be purchased through out the south east of Scotland and therefore should make interchange between services more straightforward.
5.14	To ensure safety for those travelling by public transport, the Council continues to maintain and improve street lighting. This is a key element in helping to minimise the fear of using public transport at night and is particularly relevant for the walking routes to and from bus stops and at the stop itself.
	<i>Rail Travel</i>
5.15	To facilitate more travel by rail the Council has worked with the rail industry to increase the car parking provision at Falkirk High and Polmont stations, an additional 50 spaces were provided at Falkirk High with an extra 100 at Polmont. Both car parks are currently well used. An additional 58 car parking spaces are planned at Falkirk High Station. With the aid of funding from SEStran a new 244 space car park was constructed at Larbert Railway Station in 2007 and is currently well used.
5.16	In the Council's emerging Local Development Plan land is currently safeguarded for rail station sites at Bonnybridge and Grangemouth.
5.17	Travel by train has been steadily growing since the mid 1990s with substantial growth in the last few years. Since the publication of the previous LTS in 2006 there has been an 11% increase in patronage. Larbert has seen the highest individual station growth with a rise of just over 51% over the same time period. This growth is illustrated in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Rail Travel To and From Stations in Falkirk Council Area

Total Patronage					
Year	Larbert	Camelon	Falkirk(2)	Polmont	Total
1997/98	266,751	45,432	1,085,066	346,269	1,743,518
1998/99	280,637	51,522	1,116,504	355,848	1,804,511
1999/00	299,741	48,844	1,191,325	384,199	1,924,109
2000/01	331,471	54,834	1,198,556	408,021	1,992,882
2001/02	339,912	61,493	1,195,985	436,943	2,034,333
2002/03	344,145	60,952	1,221,377	452,450	2,078,924
2003/04	398,287	72,986	1,323,516	502,543	2,297,332
2004/05	427,937	82,958	1,492,852	586,796	2,590,543
2005/06	469,311	89,934	1,523,772	586,796	2,669,813
2006/07	493,107	90,478	1,548,961	617,754	2,750,299
2007/08	549,268	96,593	1,593,205	634,741	2,873,808
2008/09	610,166	97,293	1,548,900	640,081	2,896,440
2009/10	659,899	92,071	1,515,017	652,190	2,919,177
2010/11	711,469	98,606	1,518,225	661,055	2,989,356
2011/12	747,710	104,505	1,495,482	687,881	3,035,578

Sources: British Rail, ScotRail

	<i>Concessionary Travel</i>
5.18	Transport Scotland provide free concessionary bus travel for elderly and disabled residents throughout Scotland.
	<i>Taxi Travel</i>
5.19	Taxis and private hire vehicles play an important role in public transport provision in that they complement most other modes of travel by efficiently providing links at the beginning, end or between sections of a journey. Falkirk Council currently has 442 taxis and 86 private hire licenses. There are 101 wheelchair accessible vehicles within the fleet. There are 17 taxi ranks across the Council area with a small number of private ranks also operating at locations such as large supermarkets and Central Retail Park.
5.20	In 2002 the Council introduced the restriction that new taxi licenses would only be issued to accessible vehicles. The objective of this was to encourage a greater number of accessible vehicles so taxis are better able to serve the travelling public regardless of any disability. The Council runs a Taxi Forum that meets around twice a year to consult with the taxi trade and work to provide a high quality service.
5.21	In terms of integration between taxi and other transport modes, 4 of the 5 railway stations have taxi ranks serving them and a rank adjacent to Falkirk bus station caters for integration with travel by bus.
	The Future
5.22	Funding sources will be sought to provide new bus shelters and infrastructure upgrades. Travel information will be provided through timetable cases at bus stops, and real time information. The Council will also continue to work with bus operators to provide information and service enhancements. The Council will implement the recommendations of the Public Transport Information Strategy to improve ease of access to information thus enabling people to make the choice of travelling by public transport where feasible.

5.23	The Council will work in partnership with SEStran and bus operators to introduce Real Time Passenger Information.
5.24	The Council will continue to upgrade the traffic signal controlled junctions on its radial routes to improve access for buses into and around the town centre.
5.25	An extension to the parking provision at Falkirk High Station, with an additional 58 spaces, identified for construction within the next 5 years.
5.26	The Council where possible and practicable introduce bus lanes on the A803 Glasgow Road corridor.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICIES	
PT1	The Council will continue to work with local bus operators to ensure the bus network, and services offered, are as comprehensive as funding allows and meet the needs of the travelling public when making journeys in and beyond the Falkirk Council area.
PT2	The Council will continue to work with local bus operators and Traveline Scotland to provide the public with easily understood and easily accessible travel information in a variety of formats.
PT3	The Council will continue to provide new and upgraded public transport infrastructure as funding permits to provide a safe, clean and convenient travel experience.
PT4	The Council will work with bus operators to secure the upgrading of Falkirk Bus Station to improve interchange facilities if opportunities occur.
PT5	The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, SEStran, local authorities and public transport operators to promote and implement regional and national initiatives.
PT6	The Council will continue to work with the taxi trade to ensure the people of Falkirk benefit from an accessible, high quality service.
PT7	The Council will continue to work with the Scottish Government and rail operators to improve access to railway stations and encourage more travel by train.

6. ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

Introduction / Background	
6.1	The Council supports a variety of initiatives that positively contribute to the social inclusion and community regeneration agendas by widening travel choice. For example Order of Malta Dial-A-Journey Ltd, operates a door-to-door fully accessible transport service for people with disabilities across the Falkirk Council area.
6.2	The Blue Badge parking scheme enables people who cannot walk more than short distances to park close to their destination. There are currently just under 8,500 registered Blue Badge holders in the Falkirk area who benefit from being able to use specially designated spaces, park free in Council car parks and unrestricted parking on-street (provided they do not cause an obstruction or hazard). The Council also provides, where appropriate, on-street disabled parking bays in residential areas to assist those with limited mobility to park close to their home.
6.3	The Shopmobility service, operated by Order of Malta D-A-J, complements the above initiatives. It provides a free electric scooter or wheelchair loan service to people visiting the town centre. The service is offered in Falkirk town centre, Stenhousemuir and Larbert.
6.4	Taxicard (subsidised taxi service) is designed to benefit those who cannot use conventional public transport.
6.5	The street environment should also be as accessible as possible for people with limited mobility. This will involve the provision of facilities such as dropped crossings etc. and an ongoing programme to ensure that all traffic signal junctions are compliant with the Equalities Act 2010.
Achievements and Challenges	
6.6	The need for accessible transport is likely to increase over time as future forecasts indicate the trend in the UK is for an ageing population. At the same time people have higher expectations regarding where, when and how they travel. The demand for more accessible transport services is therefore likely to grow.
6.7	The challenge will be to provide the types of services, the quality expected, and the flexibility to meet individual needs and to ensure quality of life within available transport budgets. The Council is trying to create a streetscape that, by the provision of suitable facilities at crossings, assists those with limited mobility or visual impairment. These facilities are required across the Council area. There is also an increasing demand for access to the countryside for people with limited mobility.
6.8	Travel trends also change over time and adapting to meet these new changes can be challenging. An example of this is that in recent years the usage of Dial-a Journey has fluctuated. The reasons for this can be complex and may include a wider provision of low floor buses and wheelchair accessible taxis.
6.9	The current Dial-A-Journey service was renewed in 2013.
6.10	As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, the Council produced an Outdoor Access Strategy 2005-2010. This strategy recognises the demand for accessible routes to enable people with limited mobility to enjoy the outdoor areas within and surrounding our towns and villages. This strategy has been superseded by Falkirk Greenspace – A Strategy For Our Green Network.

The Future	
6.11	Falkirk Council will continue to review the provision of the travel needs of those with mobility issues in the Falkirk Council area.
6.12	A review is currently underway regarding the whole issue of disabled parking spaces in residential areas. The objective of this review is to ensure that the qualifying criteria is such that the service is targeted toward those most in need and doing so in a way that represents best value. Work will carry on to install dropped crossings at identified locations across the Council area and to ensure the Council's traffic signal junctions comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and Equalities Act.
6.13	Falkirk Council's emerging Green Space Strategy will connect areas of natural, semi-natural, and man-made open spaces within our towns and villages and will create links to the wider countryside to create an accessible green network for all.
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT POLICIES	
AT1	The Council will work in partnership with organisations to ensure the provision of high quality accessible transport is available for those unable to use conventional public transport in the Falkirk Council area.
AT2	The Council will continue to support the provision of the Shopmobility service to enable those with mobility difficulties to access the facilities of Falkirk town centre.
AT3	The Council will work to implement, where reasonable and practical, access for all, in line with the Council's emerging Green Space Strategy, to assist people with limited mobility in accessing the outdoor areas around the settlements of Falkirk Council area.
AT4	The Council will continue to provide facilities, such as dropped crossings, to make the street environment accessible for all.

7. MOTORCYCLING

Introduction / Background	
7.1	Motorcycling is becoming increasingly popular for commuter and leisure trips. Falkirk Council recognises this choice and believes that motorcycling has a role to play within the transport system. The theme of this strategy therefore is to facilitate safer motorcycling as a choice of travel within a safe and sustainable transport system.
7.2	Motorcycling is the term used to describe motorcycles, mopeds and scooters and these offer a number of benefits for riders. They can offer a low cost alternative to the car, providing independence and mobility, and widening employment opportunities, especially where public transport is limited. They can also provide quicker travel for riders in congested traffic conditions and make efficient use of road space by taking up significantly less space than cars, a benefit which is magnified during peak periods when there are considerable numbers of single occupancy vehicle trips being made. Furthermore, many riders just enjoy motorcycling for the pleasure it gives them.
7.3	Motorcyclists are vulnerable road users; we therefore, must try to make motorcycling a safe, enjoyable experience for those who choose this mode. This means taking account of the needs of motorcyclists, promoting safety measures and mainstreaming motorcycling, so that its needs are considered as fully as any other transport mode. It is important this work is carried out using data led analysis of the current situation.
7.5	In recent years, whilst the casualty rate for motorcyclists has decreased, the actual number of accidents involving motorcycles has increased. This reflects the growing number of people opting to use this mode of transport.
7.6	Motorcyclists contribute the largest number of killed and injured casualties to the overall figures after car drivers and occupants. Motorcyclists are more at risk of being killed or injured in a road traffic accident than any other type of vehicle user.
Achievements and Challenges	
7.8	The two main concerns for motorcyclists are road safety and secure and convenient parking facilities.
7.9	The Council therefore will work to ensure as safe a road environment as possible can be provided and high quality parking facilities for motorcycles are available at major shopping, leisure, health, employment and transport facilities. Motorcycles take up much less space than cars and can therefore be accommodated relatively easily in both new and existing streetscapes as well as dedicated parking areas.
7.10	Road maintenance plays an important part in assisting motorcyclist safety and maintenance work should be completed to a high standard to minimise potential problems arising from poor quality reinstatements.
7.11	A number of other areas need to be considered in providing for motorcycling. Road and traffic calming schemes should be designed and implemented with motorcycles in mind. This should include both the layout and the materials used. All work should preferably comply with the standards set out in the IHIE Guidelines for Motorcycling (April 2005).
7.12	Currently provision for motorcycles within the Falkirk area has been limited, however with the increase in congestion and fuel costs there has been considerable growth in ownership levels of motorcycles. The Council recognises the need to cater for the motorcycle.
The Future	
7.14	Falkirk Council will ensure that maintenance of the network will support and assist motorcyclists, and where possible for new developments public utilities are located in footways and service strips to minimise risk associated with utility reinstatements in the carriageway surface.
7.15	Motorcycle parking should be considered as part of the parking requirements for new

	developments and should be included in the Council's Parking Standards contained with its Design Guidelines. Similarly, the Council will seek to provide secure parking for motorcycles at railway stations to facilitate integration between travel modes and will establish the feasibility of providing locker facilities for the purpose of storing motorcycle clothing and helmets.
7.16	Motorcycling can make a significant contribution to meeting sustainable transport objectives and working towards community regeneration. The main challenge therefore is to ensure motorcycling becomes a mainstream element of the transport network.
7.17	In terms of road safety, the Council is keen to work with motorcycle representative groups such as the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) and the British Motorcyclists Federation (bmf) to identify and address specific road safety issues for motorcyclists within the Council area.
7.18	Falkirk Council will review whether to allow motorcycles the use of bus priority lanes for this group where it is deemed safe and appropriate, and subject to there being no adverse safety issues introduced by such a practice. All new bus lane schemes will consider the feasibility of permitting use by motorcycles.

MOTORCYCLE POLICIES	
MC1	The Council will continue to work to provide high quality maintenance of roads, and operation of the network, to assist in providing a safe and comfortable network for motorcyclists in line with IHIE Guidelines for Motorcycling.
MC2	The Council will seek to ensure public utilities are located in footways and service strips where possible to minimise the risk presented by carriageway utility reinstatements and utility covers to motorcyclists.
MC3	The Council will require new developments to provide secure parking for motorcycles in line with the Council's Design Guidelines.
MC 4	The Council will review parking facilities for motorcycles and will endeavour to provide secure motorcycle parking at key locations such as town centres, health facilities and railway stations.
MC5	The Council will consult with motorcycle groups and other interested parties to identify and address specific road safety issues for motorcyclists.

8.	ROAD SAFETY AND NETWORK MAINTENANCE
Introduction / Background	
8.1	Safety must be the top priority of any transport strategy. Local authorities have the duty to carry out studies into road accidents and to take measures as seem appropriate to prevent them.
8.2	The Road Safety Plan 2012 sets out the common goal of road accident casualty numbers and severity reduction in the Falkirk Council area. This plan has now been reviewed and updated to reflect the latest position on casualty statistics and is presented in Appendix 4.
8.3	<p>The work carried out under network management is integral to improving road safety across the Council area. An important part of the roads and transport function carried out by the Council is implementing traffic management schemes. This work covers a wide range of projects as is demonstrated by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic management schemes with objective of improving road safety; • Traffic management schemes with objective of improving network operation; • Road lining and signing schemes; • Introducing Traffic Regulation Orders to improve network efficiency and safety, for instance parking regulations or banning turning movements; • Installing new street infrastructure such as pedestrian crossings, traffic islands and bollards, and; • Responsibility for the Council's traffic signal installations.
Achievements and Challenges	
8.4	The current casualty rate for the Falkirk Council area is approximately 17% lower than the Scottish average (249 compared to 301 for the five-year average casualty rate per 100,000 population at the end of 2010). For all casualties the overall pattern is that of continued reduction. This is demonstrated by the fact that the average number of casualties has fallen by 35% when comparing the 1981-1985 and 2006-2010 periods.
8.5	<p>Route Accident Reduction Plans have been implemented for 6 routes. This involved the examination of routes chosen based on a suitable measure of accident rate, the development of which related to the local sections of the following roads:</p> <p>A9 Edinburgh-Perth A803 Edinburgh-Glasgow A904 Falkirk-Bo'ness-South Queensferry A905 Stirling-Edinburgh (Low) B902 Falkirk-Bellsdyke B816 Falkirk-Bonnybridge</p>
8.6	<p>The Council has implemented schemes to reduce the likelihood of accidents. These schemes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A803 Bellevue Street – Traffic Islands • B902 Traffic Signal Improvements at David's Loan, Bankside and Dalderse Avenue junctions. • Pelican Crossing at the Sensory Centre in Camelon • Glenyards Traffic Signals, Bonnybridge. • 20mph zones at all schools • A9 / Icehouse Brae Roundabout • Various pedestrian refuge islands throughout the Council area.
8.7	<p>The major challenges in promoting road safety and accident reduction are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The variety of factors which come into play e.g. weather conditions, driver behaviour etc. • Consistent data quality is essential especially as education, enforcement, engineering and encouragement aspects of road safety work becomes increasingly "evidence led"

8.8	The Council is working with other interested agencies intend to improve road safety by focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education; • Enforcement; • Engineering, and; • Encouragement
8.9	A final factor in the challenge facing accident reduction is that of funding. A number of studies have been carried out across the Council area that have identified remedial actions required to improve safety. The main challenge is to prioritise any road safety initiatives within available budgets.
8.10	The major challenges facing network management are to deal with the large amount of requests received annually for improvements in the road network and prioritising schemes within available budgets. The vast majority of this work tends to be reactionary.

The Future – Road Safety

8.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotland's Road Safety Framework has a target for casualty reduction of 30% fewer people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 2015 compared to the period of 2004-2008, and 40% by 2020. Falkirk Council aims to contribute to this by maintaining the rate of casualty reduction of six per year with emphasis being placed, as far as reasonably possible, on reducing the numbers of those seriously injured or killed. • Liaison will continue with Police Scotland, Forth Valley Health Board and other agencies to promote and encourage good road safety practices. • The Council has published a Community Safety Partnership Strategy (2011-2014). The strategy covers a wide range of areas including road safety. The LTS will continue to contribute to the continued development and implementation of this Strategy and in joint working help ensure benefits of improving road safety can be achieved.
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The Future - Network Management

8.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic management schemes will continue to be implemented across the Council area as need is identified and as funds permit. • This will include accident remedial schemes, implementation of signing and lining with the associated Traffic Regulation Orders and provision of crossing facilities among other measures. • A framework for prioritising schemes will be developed to ensure those most needed are given the appropriate priority. • Falkirk Council will continue to upgrade its traffic signalled controlled junctions.
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ROAD SAFETY AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT POLICIES

RS1	The Council will liaise with other interested agencies with a view to maximising its contribution to the accident reduction effort. Priority will continue to be given to accidents of higher severity within its own area.
RS2	The Council will continue to carry out studies into accidents within its area and will give priority to the implementation of remedial measures at identified problem sites when allocating resources from its capital programme.
NM1	The Council will work with partner agencies to ensure the road network is as efficient and safe as possible by implementing traffic management schemes where necessary and feasible.
NM2	The Council will work to ensure road signing across the Council area is direct, easy to follow and comprehensive to minimise traffic circulation and make driving around the area safe and commodious.

9.	ROAD NETWORK REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE
Introduction / Background	
9.1	<p>Falkirk Council's road network and maintenance is concerned with asset management. The assets the Council is currently responsible for include²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 936.5km of carriageway • 1,644km of footways and footpaths • 320 bridges and culverts • 20,672 street lights • 950 road signs • 25 car parks • 64 sets of traffic signals • 30,621 road gullies
9.2	The main benefit of effective road network review and maintenance is that those travelling in and around Falkirk can do so efficiently, conveniently and safely regardless of their choice of mode of travel.
9.3	Falkirk Council's assets are inspected regularly and maintenance carried out to enhance the lifespan of the asset. Minor repairs can reduce the future need to carry out major repairs thus extending the residual life of the carriageway or structure. If minor works are ignored, eventually the road surface breaks up completely or a bridge or retaining structure will require major strengthening work. The implications of this are significant both in monetary terms and in potential risk and disruption to the public using the network.
9.4	One of the main objectives of the LTS is to try to reduce car use in favour of the more sustainable modes of transport and part of the effective management of the road network is to consider the need for improving both local and strategic roads. Network improvements should be considered where they allow access to improved services and facilities thus improving the quality of life for residents, strengthening the economy or providing environmental or safety benefits.
9.5	Falkirk Council is responsible for local roads in our area while Transport Scotland is responsible for the trunk road and motorway network. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Transport Scotland and other parties to progress any strategic scheme that is mutually beneficial to all parties.
9.6	The main benefit of effective road network review and maintenance is that those travelling in and around Falkirk can do so efficiently, conveniently and safely regardless of their choice of mode of travel.
Achievements and Challenges	
9.7	<p>Despite the budget pressures presented in maintaining the network and road infrastructure, the Council has achieved a significant amount since 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 52km of footways have been surfaced or had surface treatment. • 30.4km of carriageway has been² resurfaced with just under 19km being surface dressed. • All bridges with a 3 metre or greater span have been structurally assessed. Any failures addressed by either strengthening works or the introduction of a weight restriction. • Replaced 2,867 deteriorated lighting columns and upgraded the associated cable network. Over 93% of reported lighting faults were repaired within the 5 day target. • There have been two road major improvement schemes implemented since the last Local Transport Strategy. The A9 Laurieston Bypass / Icehouse Brae Roundabout and the M876 Glenbervie Slip Roads.

² Falkirk Council Road Asset Management Plan 2010/13

9.12	The greatest challenge facing the Council is to continue to provide effective road network review and maintenance is budget pressure. With the ever increasing pressure on budgets for both capital works and revenue for ongoing maintenance, even in the short term, the condition of the network infrastructure will deteriorate. This in general will see a decrease in the condition of the network, street lighting and bridges stock. It may also increase the number of liability claims submitted to the Council.
9.13	Falkirk Council produced a Roads Asset Management Plan in November 2010. The plan presents a detailed analysis of the condition of the road network and infrastructure within Falkirk Council and presents robust budget proposals for addressing the maintenance backlog and providing a suitable maintenance regime for maintaining the Council's assets.
9.14	There is currently an annual revenue budget for bridge and structure maintenance of £156,000. This figure ensures a safe and fit for purpose level of maintenance but, overall, the fabric of our bridge stock is deteriorating. This has major repercussions for the bridges capital budget (currently £700,000 per annum). The ongoing work is adequate to keep the stock of bridges and structures safe. However, with sufficient funding, the stock could be brought up to a good standard of repair.
9.15	For street lighting, despite a substantial capital investment in lighting improvements over recent years, the overall condition of the lighting stock continues to deteriorate. The present level of funding (£700,000 capital and just over £800,000 revenue in 2012) assumes a column life expectancy of approximately 60 years, as against an anticipated life span of 30 years.
9.16	A major challenge facing the Council in providing high quality street lighting service is the current increases in the price of energy. It currently costs the Council in the region of £900,000 per annum in energy cost for streetlighting. These costs will need to be met and, in a climate of increasing budgetary constraints,
The Future	
9.17	Road and footway maintenance will continue to be provided to a high quality on a rolling programme of works. A Road Maintenance Plan has been developed and contributes to the Council's Asset Management Plan.
9.18	The main changes proposed for maintaining the bridge and structures stock in the near future will seek to change traditional bridge maintenance procedures into an asset management process and will mean major changes in the way structures are inspected, costed, valued and how work is prioritised.
9.19	The Council will continue to inspect its stock of retaining walls affecting highways to qualitatively assess their structural integrity.
9.20	The Council will continue its streetlighting structural inspections and target columns that have failed a visual inspection. It will enable more accurate prioritisation within the column replacement programme.
9.21	The Council will continue to work with partner agencies to promote a number of new road improvement schemes on the local, strategic and trunk road networks.

ROAD NETWORK REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE POLICIES	
NWK1	The Council will give priority to investment in the maintenance of the road and footway network in order to maximise safety and convenience for all network users in an environmentally responsible way.
NWK2	The Council will continue to implement good asset management practices to ensure the structures stock is maintained to a safe and fit purpose and will endeavour to enhance this infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future customers.
NWK3	The Council will seek to prioritise investment in street lighting in order to continue with the electrical and structural testing programmes and to

	ensure these are carried out to required frequencies, and to accelerate the street lighting column replacement programme.
NWK4	The Council will work with other authorities, Transport Scotland and developers to deliver network improvement schemes which contribute to the safety of the network reduce congestion or improve accessibility thus strengthening the economy as part of a package of measures that support sustainable transport.

10. PARKING

Introduction / Background	
10.1	The management of town centre parking has historically been introduced to deal with the demand for parking in town centres. Town centres, have limited scope for increasing parking provision so parking management is one of the few measures available to the Council to limit the demand.
Achievements and Challenges	
10.2	The challenge facing Falkirk Council is to balance the demand for parking with town centre provision. It also has to balance the effect of any restrictions on the vitality and viability of town centres. The main difficulty facing the Council is that a large proportion of town centre parking is outwith its control.
10.3	Parking surveys have been carried out in all of the towns in the Falkirk Council area and the overall outcome is that the demand has yet to outstrip the supply. However, there are areas of parking pressure within each settlement where demand does exceed provision at peak times.
10.4	The majority of town centre parking is short to medium term and there is a generally high turnover of cars per space.
10.5	Car parking standards for new developments are set out in the Council's Design Guidelines and Scottish Planning Policy. Within the Falkirk town centre boundary a developer contribution should be sought for any shortfall in the provision required by any new development. The contributions will be used to enhance sustainable travel modes (cycling, walking, public transport etc.).
The Future	
10.6	To maintain the current vitality and viability of town centres, other than Falkirk town centre, parking charges will not be used as a method of managing car parking.
10.7	Falkirk Council will continue to monitor town centre parking and consider the management of car parks in town centres and those at railway stations.
10.8	We will continue to monitor on-street parking in residential areas close to railway stations to establish any problems and identify possible solutions.

PARKING POLICIES	
PK1	The Council will work to ensure short stay shopping and tourist journeys are accommodated in order to protect the viability and vitality of the town centre while discouraging commuter car travel especially to central areas which have higher levels of accessibility by alternative modes of transport.
PK2	The Council will work to provide car parks that are safe and incorporate the best features to ensure personal security for all users.
PK3	The Council will work to ensure information about car parks is widely available and signing to car parks is direct and easy to follow.

11. TOWN CENTRE ACCESS

Introduction / Background	
11.1	Rising car ownership and car use has contributed to growing pressure on town centre parking resources. This is not just the case in Falkirk but also in the other towns in the Council area. However, the overall demand has yet to outstrip the supply.
Achievements and Challenges	
11.2	<p>To achieve good town centre access we must try to balance the consequences of encouraging additional car trips into town centres on a network that exhibits peak time congestion. For instance improving the radial routes into Falkirk will increase the demand for the available town centre parking. It will also contribute towards community severance and have an adverse impact on walking, cycling and public transport use.</p> <p>It is important to recognise that town centres are important as they can contain retail and employment centres and substantial populations and for them to remain economically viable they will require an effective transport system, including good transport links and parking availability.</p> <p>We must, at the same time, promote and support increased visits to town centres on foot which will involve making the pedestrian experience a pleasant and safe one.</p> <p>The main challenge is therefore to strike a balance that caters for the needs of all town centre users.</p>
11.3	<p>Since the publication of the last Local Transport Strategy there has been considerable investment in town centres in the Council area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new town centre has been built in Stenhousemuir, including a major foodstore, and additional town centre parking. • Additional retail units and associated car parking have been built in Bonnybridge. • A new foodstore has opened in Grangemouth.
The Future	
11.4	<p><u>Falkirk Town Centre</u> Falkirk town centre has about 6,500 parking spaces for public or retail use. The 5 main radial routes into Falkirk town centre about 100,000 vehicles per day.</p> <p>As a result of the volume of traffic peak time congestion is experienced on most if not all of the radial routes. This congestion can be managed in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional road construction or parking provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not always cost effective or long term solution ○ Parking should support the town centre whilst still meeting the Council's wider transport objectives. • Provision of alternative modes of travel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primarily through bus enhancements. The use of bus services to offset traffic growth is difficult in that issues of cost, timetable or service coverage arise. ○ Promotion of bus lanes, linked traffic signals and junction designs which will offer better journey times into the town centre making public transport more attractive than taking the car. • Promotion of pedestrian links/ streetscape initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Signing and the provision of adequate routes and appropriate surfacing material.
11.5	<p><u>Grangemouth Town Centre</u> The regeneration of Grangemouth town centre is still very much an aspiration of the</p>

	<p>Council. The works would involve linking the new food superstore with the town centre. The proximity of Falkirk town centre to Grangemouth shouldn't be ignored with the two main links being the A904 and A9 Laurieston bypass which suffer peak time congestion. The provision of new infrastructure to link Grangemouth and Falkirk is being promoted through the TIF scheme.</p> <p>Enhancing this infrastructure will also improve public transport links between the two town centres. There is a high frequency of service that currently exists between the town centres although some of the residential areas do not have the same level of frequency.</p>
11.6	<p><u>Denny Town Centre</u> The redevelopment of Denny town centre is now progressing. Demolition works have been undertaken to progress the replacement of the town centre / Church Walk blocks.</p> <p>The current proposals involve altering the traffic management within the town centre removing a significant number of vehicle movements from the Stirling Street leg of Denny Cross. The new traffic system and eventual completion of the Denny Eastern Access Road will help reduce the current congestion at Denny Cross.</p>
11.7	<p><u>Bo'ness Town Centre</u> The Bo'ness Townscape Heritage Initiative has been completed. Falkirk Council will investigate the enhancement of Bo'ness bus station and will work with others to deliver any improvements.</p>
11.8	<p><u>Stenhousemuir Town Centre</u> Stenhousemuir town centre has been regenerated and now boasts a large food retail store, various other retail and banking facilities and a town centre car park. Other infrastructure includes a new access from King Street, a new community centre and health centre. Larbert and Stenhousemuir is currently a Smarter Choices / Smarter Places location where cycling and walking are being promoted including to and from the town centre. Initiatives will be continually reviewed and implemented that will further encourage these sustainable modes of travel.</p>

TOWN CENTRE ACCESS POLICIES	
TCA1	The Council will work with partner agencies, developers, businesses and retailers to improve the accessibility, efficiency and environment of town centres across Falkirk Council area.
TCA2	The Council will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and other agencies to promote initiatives to encourage the use of sustainable travel to and from town centres.

12.	REGIONAL TRANSPORT
Introduction / Background	
12.1	Falkirk Council is one of eight local authorities forming the statutory South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran). SEStran has prepared a Regional Transport Strategy, outlining policies that affect the members of the partnership on a cross boundary basis, or which can bring benefits as part of a widely applied package of measures. The current RTS is being updated and revised to reflect the latest national and regional thinking.
Achievements and Challenges	
12.2	<p>Since 2006 Falkirk Council has received funding from SEStran for a number of regional transport schemes including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding towards the design of the A801 River Avon Gorge Scheme. • Larbert Railway Station Car Park (on Foundry Loan) • Falkirk High Station Car Park (land acquisition, ground stabilisation) • Various Sustainable and Community Initiatives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cycle storage ○ Routes to stations ○ Footway / footpath improvements ○ Walk and Talk events <p>Since 2007 SEStran has had no capital funding to distribute to its local authority members for transport schemes.</p>
12.3	As a consequence of promoting greater use of rail, problems with parking have arisen at Falkirk High, Polmont and Larbert stations. Similarly, local roads carry strategic and regional trips and it is difficult to separate these trips from other local road based journeys.
12.4	On a daily basis 14,200 people enter the Falkirk Council area for work or study and 22,300 leave for the same purposes ³ . The Falkirk Council area is therefore a net exporter of people for work and study, 81% of these trips are made by car, this gives an indication of the scale of commuting by car to and from the Council area. The surrounding Council areas are responsible for most of the in commuting to the Falkirk area, whilst Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and West Lothian are the most popular destinations for out commuting.
12.5	The use of the private car accounts for 89% of commuting trips into Falkirk and 75% of commuting trips out. Buses account for 5% of in commuting and 8% of out commuting while trains account for 2% of in commuting and 13% of out commuting ⁴
12.6	<p>Falkirk Council's area also contains nationally significant freight resources in the shape of Grangemouth Docks, their connecting road and rail lines and adjacent freight centres. These play an important role on the local economy, while reinforcing the Council area's links with surrounding communities. Various distribution centres in and around Grangemouth demonstrate the role this Council area has come to play in regional and national transport.</p> <p>The importance of the port of Grangemouth has been recognised by the Scottish Government and SEStran in various publications and studies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning Framework 2 – published by the Scottish Government • Foodport: Connecting Food Port Regions Between and Beyond – Published by SEStran
The Future	
12.7	Falkirk Council will continue to work in partnership with SEStran and relevant local

	authorities to address any cross boundary transport issues.
12.8	Falkirk Council will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and with bus operators to improve cross boundary bus and rail services which form strategic links to other areas.
<i>Rail Travel</i>	
12.9	Falkirk Council through SEStran funding has delivered new car parking at Larbert Station. We are currently progressing additional parking at Falkirk High Station. We will continue to investigate parking requirements at railway stations where a need is identified.
12.10	The Council will also assist the Scottish Government in considering new stations where these can be justified and accommodated without adversely affecting wider train operations. An appraisal will have to be carried out to highlight the benefits and disbenefits any new railway station would bring to the area.
12.11	Rail freight plays an important role in and around Grangemouth. The Scottish Government has supported this in the past by the use of Freight Facilities Grants. The Scottish Government has highlighted through the National Planning Framework: Project 5 – Grangemouth Freight Hub the importance of freight and Grangemouth including improved rail facilities within the port.
<i>Bus Travel</i>	
12.12	Buses offer some potential for long to mid distance travel. At present, Falkirk is poorly served by strategic bus/ coach services, most of which bypass the area on the motorway network. These services do not always offer realistic alternatives to the quicker and more direct rail services. There may be potential to improve strategic coach/ bus links and Falkirk Council will work in partnership with other agencies to explore these possibilities
<i>Road Travel</i>	
12.13	The main road connections out of the Falkirk Council area are formed by Motorways and Trunk Roads. These are the responsibility of Transport Scotland. These routes although strategic in nature do offer connections to the local network. The interchanges between the strategic and the local networks are very important.
12.14	Falkirk Council will continue to work in partnership with Transport Scotland and other service providers to bring forward necessary improvements and alterations to the interchanges between the strategic and local road networks. Improvements will seek to bring greater efficiency to the networks and mitigate problems where they arise.
12.15	Falkirk Council will also work with Transport Scotland and other agencies to improve trunk road corridors where these support the wider development aspirations of Falkirk Council and various interventions are mentioned in the current Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Plan.
12.16	Some local roads serve strategic roles. The A9 towards Stirling (which carries around 10,000 vehicles per day). It offers connection to Stirling and the M9 at Pirnhall. The A801 offers links to the M8 corridor and West Lothian from the Forth Valley. 15-20% of traffic is HGVs. Much of the 14km length of the route was upgraded decades ago, leaving some 3.2km of poor quality link. This link contains the valley of the River Avon that, due to its topography, presents the most significant barrier to completing the final section of the upgrade.
12.17	The A801 offers a significant opportunity to improve strategic connections between the M8 and M9 corridor and has been identified in NPF2 and the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review. It also offers the possibility of a high quality bypass of the west Edinburgh motorway network. It is the only route offering the potential of a dedicated, high quality link that does not impact on the already congested motorway links around Edinburgh. Falkirk Council will continue to work in partnership with Transport Scotland, West Lothian Council and SEStran to deliver the required upgrade of this route.
<i>Freight</i>	

12.18	Road based freight is an important component of overall traffic. The M80, M9 and A801 all carry significant amounts of road freight. Some 15-20% of traffic on these routes is goods traffic, operating over mid-long distances. Locally, routes such as the Laurieston bypass, Grangemouth Road and A803 carry between 5 and 10% freight traffic.
12.19	It is important to recognise the role that freight plays and the impacts it has on our communities and our local economy. Falkirk Council plays an active role in the SEStran Freight Quality Partnership. This partnership includes local authorities, Scottish Government, Forth Ports, Road Haulage Association, Freight Transport Association and Freight Companies (both road and rail).
<i>Other Regional Issues</i>	
12.20	Falkirk Council works with SEStran, the Scottish Government and other agencies to bring forward schemes and initiatives that offer cross boundary benefits. Falkirk Council currently participates in Tripshare, a car share scheme established by SEStran. This Council is also working to deliver a Round the Forth access initiative for cyclists and walkers. SEStran is considering expanding real time information at bus stops across the region.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT POLICIES	
RT1	The Council will continue to contribute and work in partnership with SEStran.
RT2	The Council will continue to participate in the development process for regional and national transport policies.
RT3	The Council will continue to work with partner agencies to secure the implementation of the A801 Avon Gorge scheme
RT4	The Council will work with the Transport Scotland to promote improvements to the trunk road network and its connections to the local road network to maximise safety and minimise congestion.
RT5	The Council will continue to work with other local authorities and agencies as appropriate to bring forward and deliver cross boundary initiatives where these arise.
RT6	The Council will work to progress locally based schemes such as safe routes to stations and bus corridor improvements, which positively contribute to regional travel.

13.	FREIGHT
Introduction / Background	
13.1	Freight is fundamental to the performance of the economy through the movement of goods, materials and products. The logistics of freight deliveries are an integral part of modern life and must be accommodated by the transport network if we are to support and strengthen local, regional and national economies. This should, however, be balanced against measures to minimise the impact that freight movements can have on local communities. The Council will work with partners including the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, SEStran and My Future's in Falkirk (MFIF) to address freight issues.
Achievements and Challenges	
13.2	Falkirk Council area is located at the hub of the Scottish transport network with good access to the strategic road and rail links. These provide direct and fast access to Scotland and the north of England. This is a key factor in the location of a number of industries which require large scale freight movements. The main challenge for the Council is to support the freight industry and enable it to carry out its functions in a way that minimises negative impacts on the wider community.
13.3	The Grangemouth Freight Hub has been identified in the National Planning Framework 2 as a scheme of national importance. To deliver the freight hub various transport interventions will be required including: improved railhead access within the port and electrification of the Grahamston line, better connections to the M9, better links to the M8 and the south via the A801, and improvements to the local road network including the separation of community traffic and dock traffic.
13.5	There also exist a number of freight transfer facilities that allow transfer of goods from road to rail and from rail to road. (e.g. WH Malcolms and formerly TDG Nexus)
13.6	Grangemouth is Scotland's largest port and main container port, and handles approximately 9 million tonnes of cargo through the dock facilities each year.
13.7	The Council has reviewed HGV signing from the motorway into Grangemouth splitting Grangemouth into distinct areas. This takes into account changes in accessing a number of industries giving the most appropriate HGV route to each area. Falkirk Council has also provided HGV signing around town centre areas for access to retail service areas.
13.8	Where possible, the Council has strengthened all its bridges to take 44 tonne lorries. Where routes are inherently incapable of catering for HGVs, such as over a weak bridge, an appropriate weight restriction has been implemented.
13.9	The Forth & Clyde and Union Canals are a major feature of the Council area, forming an east-west corridor running through many of its communities. Built between 1750 and 1830, the canals were central to the area's industrial pre-eminence in the 18th and 19th centuries, and form a distinctive element in both the urban and rural landscape. The canals basically operated as the motorways of their day carrying predominantly freight. At present the canals are predominantly used for leisure purposes.
13.10	Lowland Canals Freight Action Plan Phase 1 was published in January 2006. The purpose of this study was to identify existing businesses near the canal that might make use of the canal network for the transport of raw materials, products or waste, and to identify potential canal side commercial, freight facilities and wharf sites. The study concluded that there was potential for various industrial sites to utilise the canals for freight movement.
The Future	
13.11	The Council working in partnership with other agencies will continue to promote Grangemouth as Scotland's main integrated sea, rail and motorway port facility. The Council will also help Scottish Government agencies deliver the Grangemouth Freight

	Hub including the necessary infrastructure.
13.12	There are currently no designated quality lorry park facilities within the Council area. This is a matter that the Council would be keen to work with industry and freight bodies to identify the need for, and an appropriate location for, such facilities if required.
13.13	The Council will support the protection and enhancement of the operational capacity of the canals for freight use, including the development of any necessary freight transfer facilities.

FREIGHT POLICIES	
F1	The Council will work in partnership with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and Freight Operators to deliver improvements to the local road network, including the separation of community traffic and freight traffic, reducing the unnecessary impacts of freight movements primarily through signing appropriate routes, whilst recognising the essential role freight plays in supporting the wider economy.
F2	The Council will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and freight operators to seek opportunities to mitigate the impacts of freight vehicles, either by identifying routes that are appropriate for them to use, or by improving routes where specific issues have been identified.
F3	The Council will work with Scottish Canals and other organisations to encourage the use of the canals for freight use, including the development of any necessary freight transfer facilities.
F4	The Council will support and encourage business in providing facilities for freight within the Council area such as freight transfer and quality lorry parking.

14. AIR QUALITY AND NOISE

Introduction / Background	
14.1	In comparison to the main cities in Scotland, the Falkirk area does not suffer from prolonged traffic congestion. Where traffic congestion does occur however, such as in town centres and along radial corridors into those central areas, problems can be considerable at peak times. This can often result in pockets of localised air pollution and excessive noise thus affecting the quality of life for those living and working within these areas.
14.2	The two main pollutants associated with tailpipe road traffic emissions are nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) and particulate matter (PM ₁₀). Studies have found that the majority of nitrogen oxides come from road transport, with smaller amounts coming from domestic heating and such things as air transport. Emissions of carbon monoxide and volatile compounds are also related to road transport but have decreased significantly in the recent years.
14.3	Different vehicles emit different amounts of nitrogen oxides and particles. Larger and older vehicles, particularly diesel, produce more nitrogen oxides than new vehicles. New vehicles are 'cleaner' because of new technology, such as catalytic converters. Air quality has improved greatly over the last 10-15 years as a result of technological improvements and tighter legislation which has led to significantly reduced emissions. However, increasing traffic levels and possible under-performance of some recent EURO standards may off set these gains unless more is done.
14.4	Falkirk Council has a duty under the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess local air quality for seven pollutants. The Scottish Government requires the Council to follow the Local Air Quality Management process which consists of a series of reports. If the modelling and / or monitoring done during this process establishes that national air quality objectives are not being met the Council is required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The Council has a duty to work towards achieving the air quality objectives.
14.5	In relation to road transport emissions, as a result of the review and assessment process Falkirk Council declared, in March 2010, Air Quality Management Areas for nitrogen dioxide in Falkirk Town Centre and around Haggs (J7 of M80). In 2011 the Council approved the declaration of an AQMA west of Banknock for PM ₁₀ . It is unlikely that road traffic tailpipe emissions are the most significant contributor to this AQMA.
14.6	The LTS seeks to assist in reducing traffic related emissions through implementing initiatives such as the provision of improvements to public transport as well as cycling and walking for shorter, more local, journeys.
14.7	Road traffic noise has two main components, mechanical noise associated with engine and transmission and the "rolling noise" of the vehicle, the latter is due to the frictional contact between the road and the tyres and the aerodynamic noise caused by the vehicle passing through the air. The noise levels caused by traffic are dependent on the speed and the number of vehicles using the road. Other factors are road surfaces and the immediate topography of the street.
14.8	Rough road surfaces cause more noise than smooth ones, asphalt surfaces generate less noise than other conventional surfaces. Nearby high walls or buildings also reflect noise causing an increase in the overall noise level. Also, noise from smoothly passing traffic is less than noise from interrupted flow due to the change in engine speed and use of low gears.
Achievements and Challenges	
14.9	Two-thirds of the trips made by Falkirk Council residents are undertaken by car yet 31% of households do not own a car. Apart from the fact that a transport network and local

	<p>services based on car transport produces social exclusion particularly for those without access to a car, there are also significant environmental impacts. Car use contributes greatly to climate change; affects human health through local air pollution, noise and discouraging exercise; and damages ecosystems through pollution and other indirect effects.</p>
14.10	<p>The main challenge therefore is to encourage increasing number of trips to be made by the more sustainable modes. In the face of rising car ownership, and perhaps more significantly, rising car usage, the work carried out under the LTS is even more important in order to help meet the air quality objectives for the Falkirk Council area. The key policies of the LTS to encourage more active travel through walking, cycling and use of public transport, improving health, strengthening the economy and improving the environment are entirely consistent with the aims of the Council's forthcoming Air Quality Action Plan.</p>
14.11	<p>The Further Assessments for the Falkirk Town Centre and Haggs AQMAs have been completed. These reports confirmed the need for the current AQMAs, although recommended that PM₁₀ is added to the Falkirk Town Centre declaration and that the hourly AQMA is revoked.</p> <p>The Assessments showed that road traffic emissions are a significant source of NO₂ and PM₁₀ in the AQMAs, along with congestion playing a role in Falkirk Town Centre. The reports looked at future concentrations taking into account anticipated changes such as improvements to EURO emission standards and transport infrastructure, such as the Edinburgh to Glasgow rail electrification scheme. The reports concluded that to achieve the air quality objectives additional measures beyond these expected changes are required.</p> <p>The results from 2010 show that the AQMAs remain justified, although are likely to have been impacted by the cold, still, weather conditions experienced during the year. Meteorological conditions can have a significant impact on inter-year variation of pollutant concentrations.</p>
14.12	<p>The Council's 2013 Progress Report (appraised by the Scottish Government) has not recommended any further Detailed Assessments. Monitoring continues at many sites outside the AQMAs to ensure that the appropriate objectives continue to be met.</p>
14.13	<p>The Council is also currently involved in a vehicle emissions testing initiative whereby motorists can have their vehicle tested to check its emissions output. This test is free. The initiative also involves warning motorists who idle their engines unnecessarily, particularly near sensitive areas such as schools. Other areas being targeted are bus stations, taxi ranks and with the public in general. The project is run jointly with three other Councils and is funded by the Scottish Government.</p>
The Future	
14.14	<p>No specific transport projects have been identified at the present time to directly address air quality or noise matters. A large number of projects and initiatives being implemented under the LTS however, should operate to improve air quality and also reduce noise. These include the wide range of initiatives to encourage people to travel by modes other than the car, such as supporting and promoting cycling and walking and using public transport.</p>
14.15	<p>Continued maintenance to improve the quality of road surfaces will operate to reduce both noise and emissions by reducing unnecessary braking and acceleration. The campaign to reduce unnecessary engine idling and emissions testing will continue.</p> <p>The Council is in the process of developing measures for its air quality Action Plans. These will aim to reduce pollutant concentrations such that the NO₂ and PM₁₀ objectives are met.</p>

AIR QUALITY AND NOISE POLICIES	
AQ1	The Council will continue to monitor and analyse air quality data throughout the Council area in compliance with the requirements of the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent regulations.
AQ2	The Council will work with partner agencies, to implement transport initiatives to assist in improving air quality and to work towards achieving the air quality objectives through the measures that will (in due course) be outlined in the air quality Action Plans.
N1	The Council will work in partnership with the Scottish Government and other agencies to meet its obligations under the EU Environmental Noise Directive.

15. ROAD TRAFFIC REDUCTION

<p>This road traffic reduction section has been produced in light of the findings of, and guidance contained within, the Scottish Executive's report Term Commission for the Evaluation and Review of Local Authority Road Traffic Reduction Targets published 2006.</p>
<p>Traffic growth has been highlighted as one of the key issues of the consultation undertaken in support of this strategy. The Council's own traffic monitoring indicates that although the traffic growth fluctuates between positive and negative growth year on year the long term trend (1991-2011) shows a growth in the region of 1.8% per annum on all roads (including Motorways and Trunk Roads) and 1.2% per annum on local roads. The traffic growth is based on data the Council collects for its urban and rural network and information Transport Scotland collect for the trunk road and motorway network.</p>
<p>Of the five objectives of the Council's Transport Vision (paragraph 2.2), three are of particular relevance to road traffic reduction. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the growth of the local economy in a sustainable way; • To protect the environment by minimising the impact that transport can have on it and to improve health by promoting more active travel; and, • To improve safety for all those using the transport network.
<p>Continued traffic growth presents significant challenges to community regeneration, social inclusion, economic growth, safety, health and the environment in the Council area. Traffic growth and the subsequent congestion is an issue that was identified in the various consultation exercises carried out and addressing these concerns through sustainable transport policies is a key theme of this Strategy. The road traffic reduction objective for Falkirk Council area is therefore:</p> <p><i>To restrain the rate of traffic growth across the Falkirk Council area to improve the quality of life for those living, working and visiting the area.</i></p>
<p>It is essential that this Strategy takes cognisance of the growth strategy outlined the Council's Development Plan as significant housing and business land allocations will bring with them not only a strengthening economy for the area but also growing traffic levels, resultant congestion and increasing challenges in ensuring personal accessibility, community regeneration and safety.</p>
<p>Any measures that are carried out as a result of the policies contained within this strategy will seek to reduce the increase in traffic growth whilst supporting the economy of the area, however, they are unlikely to have any long term significant impact on the continuing trend of traffic growth and subsequent congestion.</p>
<p>The 2006 Transport Strategy set out the following road traffic reduction target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrain traffic growth at 1% per annum
<p>This current strategy sets out the following targets:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrain traffic growth to 1% per annum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrain car parking demand to 2006 levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce air quality action plans to reduce pollutant concentrations such as NO₂ and PM₁₀ in the Air Quality Management Areas that have been identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to reduce road accidents to levels below the national average figures issued by the Scottish Government.
<p>Restraining traffic growth to 1% per annum is in line with the target set out in the Indicators of Sustainable Development for Scotland by the Scottish Executive that aims to stabilise traffic growth at 2001 levels. (See NTS)</p>

Existing and Forecast Traffic Levels

The Council has over 100 permanent count sites for automatic traffic counting (ATC) across the Council area which are counted every month. The remaining links in the Council area are monitored on average every two years (see [Appendix 3](#)). This information and the traffic growth figures are contained in Appendix 2.

	1990	1997	2002	2007	2012
Total Traffic	1,830,578	2,344,998	2,,730,129	2,975,444	2,895,273
Local Traffic	798,640	1,003,847	1,104,326	1,157,524	1,028,424

	Total Traffic Growth	Local Traffic Growth
1990-2012	2.64% p.a.	1.31% p.a.
1997-2012	1.56% p.a.	0.16% p.a.
2002-2012	0.605% p.a.	-0.687 p.a.
2007-2012	-0.54% p.a.	-2.23% p.a.

Table 15.1

The figures in the Table 15.1 above suggest that we have restrained traffic growth in the Falkirk Council area through implementing our Local Transport Strategy in 2006. However, as mentioned previously the long term growth in the Council area continues to rise at a rate of 1.3% per annum on the local road network. There are various reasons for the recent fluctuations between positive and negative growth including the current economic climate and the continued rise in fuel prices.

Other factors taken into account in setting this target are the Development Plan growth strategy, and also Falkirk's geographic position in Central Scotland.

In putting into place measures to encourage the use of alternative modes of travel to the car and thus reduce traffic flows, Falkirk Council hopes to achieve a number of significant benefits for those living, working and visiting the area. These benefits include:

- Less time spent in congestion
- Reductions in air pollution and noise from traffic
- Reduced community severance for areas where main routes travel through residential areas.
- Improving the health and fitness of the population by encouraging more walking and cycling and less car use.

All these factors add up to an improved quality of life. The business community benefits by reducing the delays, caused by congestion, for goods and employees. It also should help people access employment, health, shopping and leisure opportunities regardless of having access to a car.

The impacts of this strategy will extend to other transport modes. Current subsidised bus services could become commercially viable and bus operators may be in a position to increase the frequency of specific services. There may also be an increased demand for provision of additional walking and cycling across the Council area.

Table 15.2 below summarises the linkages between the overall road traffic objective and the performance indicators being used to measure progress and examples of the type of project which will be implemented through the LTS to work towards this objective.

Consultation

Consultation with the business community and the general public (through the Citizens Panel and Evening Roadshow Events) has taken place. Further consultation on the draft strategy will take place before the Road Traffic Reduction Plan is finalised in the published Local Transport Strategy.

The responses submitted as part of these consultation exercises have generally supported the overall approach of the strategy, although at present no specific comments were made on road traffic reduction.

Monitoring
Monitoring to enable annual reporting on progress towards the RTRA target will be carried out on an ongoing basis as part of the Council's established traffic count programme. The traffic count monitoring programme for the Council is extensive, covering over 100 permanent traffic count sites, and this information will be used to determine progress on the target.
A quality assurance system is in operation as part of the count programme which ensures that any failed counts are detected thus enabling a recount to be carried out for that site within specified periods to ensure any overall omissions in the count programme are kept to a minimum.
The success of implementing the Road Traffic Reduction Plan will be reported annually on the Council's Information Bulletin.
Forecasting Details
The prediction of future travel patterns and traffic growth has been used in the preparation of the existing Local Plan. Falkirk Council is currently preparing a new Local Development Plan which will incorporate both the existing Structure Plan and Local Plan.
This Local Transport Strategy will be published before the proposed Local Development Plan has been adopted.
Future travel patterns and traffic growth predictions will be updated when the growth strategy set out in the new Local Development Plan has been approved and adopted.

Road Traffic Reduction Targets				
Reduction Objective:	Key LTS Performance Indicators	Data Source	Baseline Position	Local Target
To restrain traffic the rate of traffic growth across the Council area	Traffic volumes on key links	Automatic traffic count data	1.84% p.a. (1991-2011)	Restrain growth to 1.5% p.a.

Table 15.2 – Road Traffic Reduction Targets