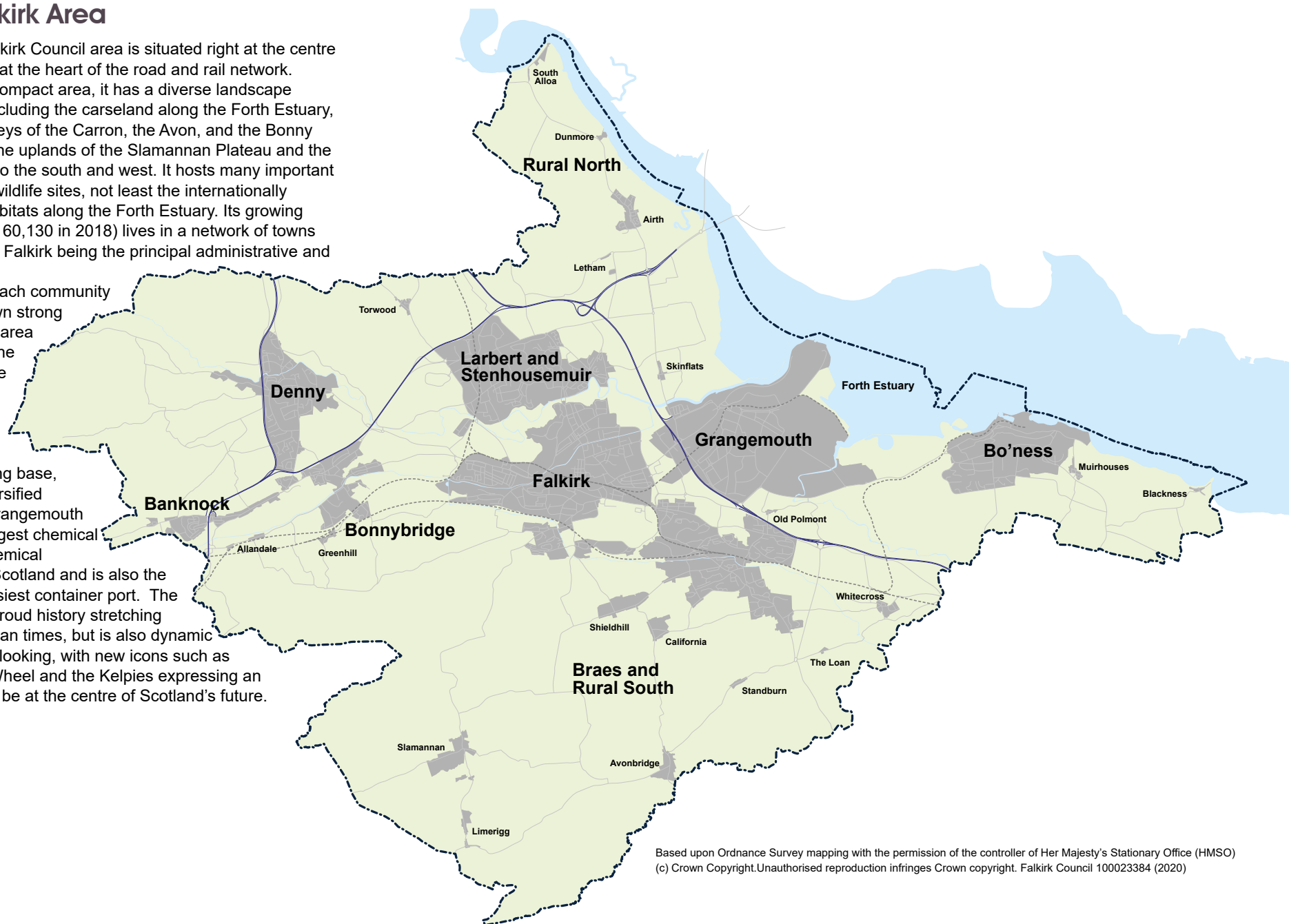


2. VISION



The Falkirk Area

2.01 The Falkirk Council area is situated right at the centre of Scotland, at the heart of the road and rail network. Although a compact area, it has a diverse landscape character, including the carseland along the Forth Estuary, the river valleys of the Carron, the Avon, and the Bonny Water, and the uplands of the Slamannan Plateau and the Denny Hills to the south and west. It hosts many important designated wildlife sites, not least the internationally important habitats along the Forth Estuary. Its growing population (160,130 in 2018) lives in a network of towns and villages, Falkirk being the principal administrative and service centre, but each community having its own strong identity. The area was one of the cradles of the industrial revolution, and retains a strong manufacturing base, within a diversified economy. Grangemouth hosts the largest chemical and petrochemical complex in Scotland and is also the country's busiest container port. The area has a proud history stretching back to Roman times, but is also dynamic and forward looking, with new icons such as the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies expressing an aspiration to be at the centre of Scotland's future.



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Developing a Vision: Challenges and Opportunities

2.02 Place. Falkirk has some great places to live, work and visit, as evidenced by the increasing desire of people to come to the area. The area has been physically transformed over the last forty years, through regeneration of many of our towns and villages, new residential neighbourhoods, and the growth of a fine network of greenspaces in and around them, exemplified by the Helix. The area supports a range of habitats and species that are locally, nationally and internationally important. The value of our historic environment has been increasingly acknowledged, and our canal corridor is coming back to life. The Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies are internationally recognised icons, and symbolise this renewed sense of identity. But the process of regeneration is far from complete. Our town centres in particular need ongoing investment to help them adapt to economic change and remain attractive places and focal points for our communities. Placemaking must be at the heart of any future vision for the area, to build on and reinforce the positive changes achieved in recent years.

2.03 Housing. Our population is growing, and is projected to continue to increase over the plan period, albeit at a slower rate than before. Delivering new housing of the necessary scale in the right place is not easy. New housing frequently raises local environmental concerns. Local infrastructure is at or near capacity in many locations, whilst in others the housing market may not be strong enough to make development viable. A number of our major residential proposals have stalled as a result. However, we must plan positively to create significant new housing to meet the needs of local people and incomers alike. We have to ensure that infrastructure is available or can be provided, that sites can be delivered and, above all, that they will be sustainable places that function well.

2.04 Economy. The area's manufacturing and logistics sectors are of national significance, focused on Grangemouth's petrochemical complex and port, both of which have seen major investment. Grangemouth is also attracting interest from the energy sector. There are opportunities for further large scale investment and job creation, but the future success of the Grangemouth Investment Zone will depend on innovation, new technology, diversification and improved infrastructure. Other sectors, such as business services, are under-represented and there remains a need to diversify the business base. Tourism is a significant recent growth area. Falkirk is now a popular visitor destination, and there is a need to further develop visitor infrastructure to maximise the benefit to the local economy. In support of these growth and diversification aspirations, there is a good portfolio of sites available to accommodate new development, but these are affected by a variety of infrastructure constraints. Some were allocated in very different market conditions and their vision and rationale needs to be reappraised.

2.05 Infrastructure. Although our area enjoys a central location in Scotland and has excellent accessibility, further investment in infrastructure is needed to support our growth aspirations, not least to address outstanding constraints in the strategic and local road network, and to deliver a new flood defence system for Grangemouth. Our Tax Increment Finance (TIF) programme will help to secure some of these improvements, but additional resources are needed to allow the full potential of the area to be realised, and to unlock some of our major residential sites, through investment in the transport network, drainage infrastructure, schools, and site preparation. At a time of reducing public finance, there is a need for the public sector to utilise its land and buildings more effectively to deliver services.

2.06 Energy and Climate Change. Climate change continues to drive the need to move towards a low carbon economy. This has implications for the location and design of future development and transport, and the use of natural resources. Our area has a role to play in promoting further opportunities for low carbon energy and heat, within a more decentralised energy network, but the impact of the environment and communities must be carefully considered in developing the necessary infrastructure.



Policy Context

2.07 The **National Planning Framework (NPF3)** and **Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)** set the national planning priorities which LDP2 has to take into account. They promote a vision of Scotland as:

- A successful sustainable place;
- A low carbon place;
- A natural resilient place;
- A connected place.

For our area, NPF has a particular focus on the role of Grangemouth in the national economy, and on the Central Scotland Green Network, which the Falkirk area is at the heart of. SPP sets out a range of policies on topics such as sustainability, placemaking, town centres, new homes, energy, waste, transport and green infrastructure. The Falkirk area lies adjacent to the upper Forth Estuary, and so the **National Marine Plan** is relevant. Co-operation between terrestrial and marine planning processes is necessary along the coast and particularly in the intertidal zone.

2.08 Local priorities are set out in the **Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery Plan 2016-2020 (SOLD)** which promotes a vision of the area as **'the place to be'**. It identifies an agenda for action for the Community Planning Partnership, and lists the following desired outcomes:

- Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live;
- We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment;
- Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults;
- Our population will be healthier;
- People will live full, independent and positive lives within supportive communities; and
- Our area will be a safer place to live.

LDP2 will have a key role to play in delivering the spatial planning aspects of these outcomes.

2.09 The **Economic Strategy for Falkirk 2015-2025** aims to promote:

- **Growth** in the local economy, boosting business formation and growth, fostering innovation, and ensuring a skilled workforce;
- **Investment** to enhance the area's infrastructure, attract business and realise in full the area's economic potential, with the Grangemouth Investment Zone being a key focus for action; and
- **Inclusion** such that all communities can access opportunities and make a full contribution to the area's economy.

There are numerous other plans and strategies which are of relevance to LDP2. These are referred to as appropriate throughout the document.



The Vision

2.10

The place to be:
a dynamic and distinctive area
at the heart of Central Scotland
characterised by a network
of thriving communities set
within high quality greenspaces,
and a growing economy which is
of strategic importance in the
national context, providing
an attractive, inclusive and
sustainable place in which
to live, work, visit and invest.

2.11 The vision reflects the strength of the existing communities which make up our area, and the desire to maintain and improve their identity, vitality and quality of life. It reflects an aspiration to continue the process of transformation and regeneration, through growth, investment, new homes and new jobs. It reflects our desire for an environmentally sustainable future, where our assets and resources are carefully managed for generations to come.

2.12 The vision can be broken down into nine objectives which are illustrated in the table on the following page.

Thriving Communities	LDP2 OBJECTIVES	WHERE WE WILL BE IN 2040?	WHAT COMMUNITY PLANNING OUTCOMES WILL THIS DELIVER?	WHAT PARTS OF THE PLAN WILL DELIVER THIS?
	Enable continued population and household growth , and the delivery of housing to meet the full range of housing needs.	Our population will have increased to 170,870 by 2039. A wide choice of new market and affordable housing will be available to meet the needs of local people and incomers, across all of our communities. New homes will have provided the stimulus for regeneration of major brownfield sites.	Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live. People will live full independent and positive lives within supportive communities. We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Housing Policies: Homes and Communities
	Build sustainable attractive communities which are distinctive, safe and pleasant, welcoming, adaptable, resource efficient and easy to move around in.	Communities will have grown in a way that is sensitive to their identity and setting. Through careful masterplanning we will have created sustainable new residential neighbourhoods that are great places to live.	People will live full independent and positive lives within supportive communities. Our population will be healthier. Our area will be a safer place to live.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Housing Policies: Place & Environment Policies: Homes and Communities Policies: Infrastructure and Resources
	Provide infrastructure to meet the needs of an increasing population and further improve the area's connectivity .	Strategic transport and flood defence infrastructure will have been delivered to unlock the growth potential of the area, particularly the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zones. A co-ordinated approach will have ensured that investment in local community infrastructure has kept pace with growth.	Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live. We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment. Our population will be healthier. Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults. Our area will be a safer place to live.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Infrastructure Policies: Infrastructure and Resources

Growing Economy	LDP2 OBJECTIVES	WHERE WE WILL BE IN 2040?	WHAT COMMUNITY PLANNING OUTCOMES WILL THIS DELIVER?	WHAT PARTS OF THE PLAN WILL DELIVER THIS?
	Foster economic growth, investment and inclusion , reinforcing the area as a strategic component of the Scottish economy.	The area will have a dynamic, diverse, and resilient low carbon economy. The success of the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zones will have grown the area as a national hub for manufacturing excellence and innovation, and port and logistics activity, complemented by a broader business base and a thriving visitor economy.	Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live. We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Business Policies: Jobs and Economy
	Make our town centres vibrant and viable focal points within our communities.	Falkirk Town Centre will be the best town centre of its kind in Scotland, its regeneration opportunities having delivered new cultural, residential and office uses to complement its established retail function. District and local centres will provide residents with access to quality convenience shopping and services within a high quality environment.	We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment. People will live full independent and positive lives within supportive communities.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Town Centres Policies: Jobs and Economy
	Capitalise on the area's tourism potential and build a strong visitor economy.	The Falkirk area will be one of the top visitor destinations in Scotland, with a fully integrated network of attractions, activities and supporting infrastructure. A regenerated canal corridor will sit at its heart.	We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Business Policies: Jobs and Economy

Sustainable Place	LDP2 OBJECTIVES	WHERE WE WILL BE IN 2040?	WHAT COMMUNITY PLANNING OUTCOMES WILL THIS DELIVER?	WHAT PARTS OF THE PLAN WILL DELIVER THIS?
	Support a low carbon, circular economy and build resilience to climate change .	Renewable energy and heat will be embedded within new developments and a full range of sustainable transport choices will be available for all communities. A network of appropriately located waste management facilities will deal with waste sustainably. Investment in flood mitigation, especially at Grangemouth, and appropriate location of new development, will have strengthened our resilience to heightened flood risk.	Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment Our area will be a safer place to live.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Energy Policies: Infrastructure and Resources
	Extend and improve the green network and protect the area's natural environment and resources.	We will have a high quality, well maintained and fully connected network of multifunctional greenspaces which has conserved and enhanced our biodiversity, offers local people exceptional recreational opportunities, and increases our resilience to climate change. Our air and water quality will have improved. Mineral extraction will have been managed carefully to avoid damage to the environment and communities.	Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live. We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment. Our population will be healthier. People will live full, independent and positive lives within supportive communities. Our area will be as safer place to live.	Spatial Strategy: Place Spatial Strategy: Green Network Spatial Strategy: Minerals Policies: Place and Environment Policies: Infrastructure and Resources
	Protect, enhance and promote our historic environment .	All our historic environment assets will be valued, protected and promoted as a vital contributor to placemaking and economic growth. The Antonine Wall World Heritage Site will be sensitively managed and more widely appreciated as a heritage asset of international importance. Our buildings at risk will have been restored and given new life and new uses.	We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment and employment.	Spatial Strategy: Place Policies: Place and Environment

