

EX14. Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 Supplementary Guidance SG05: Green Infrastructure and New Development

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Development Services which sought approval of SG05: Green Infrastructure and New Development.

SG05 was new supplementary guidance. The topic of the guidance was 'green infrastructure' which was a general term to describe all natural or semi natural spaces including public parks, amenity greenspace within development, wildlife sites, sports pitches, play spaces, waterbodies, woodlands and the active travel links between these facilities.

SG05 had been prepared to help applicants incorporate well designed green infrastructure into new developments and achieve wider sustainability benefits in the process. In summary, the guidance covered:-

- how green infrastructure could be integrated into the design process, including some evaluation tools that could be used to review and improve the design and layout of a development;
- the key principles and good practice for specific types of green infrastructure which were grouped under the themes of 'Well Being, Water and Wildlife'. Various projects in the Council area had been used to showcase good practice and inspire applicants to formulate quality proposals for green infrastructure. The Helix, Forth Valley Hospital and Larbert Woods, Zetland Park, and Carron Dams Heritage Trail are just some of the local projects featured in SG05;
- requirements for the provision of recreational open space in new development;
- how compensation for the loss of recreational open space associated with a development proposal would be calculated, and
- particular requirements for the management and maintenance of green infrastructure.

Officers held a workshop in Autumn 2019 with representatives from across the Council, the development industry, and key agencies. Over 900 key agencies, organisations and individuals were notified by email of the commencement of the consultation process and the availability of consultative draft SG05 on the Council website. Press adverts were placed in the Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal and a Facebook post also advertised the start of the consultation. Consultation took place over a 6 week period between 21 January 2021 and 4 March 2021. Responses were received from the following five individuals/organisations:-

- Helen Scott
- Historic Environment Scotland
- NatureScot
- Paths for All
- Scottish Water

Detailed summaries of the comments received and the Council's draft responses were contained in an appendix to the report. The consultation process, however, did not raise substantive issues, requiring major amendments to SG05. Four of the five responses welcomed the guidance. One response conveyed an objection to the Council's preference for open space to be maintained by an appointed property factor, citing homeowners had little control over increases in factor fees. Officers responded saying that the Council already maintained a large estate of open space. Unless costs for maintenance were met in full, the Council generally did not seek to take on responsibility for maintaining new areas of open space in private housing developments.

Decision

The Executive agreed to submit SG05: Green Infrastructure and New Development, as set out at appendix 2 to the report, to Scottish Ministers and to adopt the guidance following clearance from Scottish Ministers