

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA
MANAGEMENT PLAN
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 6 AUGUST 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, approved and adopted in 2010, set out the principles for the production of a Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) in accordance with national guidance. The preparation of a CAMP is also a condition of grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme for Falkirk town centre. The purpose of this report is to present the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP for approval.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP, as shown in Appendix 1 of this report, has been produced to meet these objectives and was submitted, as a draft, to support the Council's recent Round 2 bid for THI status in the May 2013.
- 2.2 It sets out:
- **a context** within which the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area can thrive and prosper, achievable through partnership working between the various public and private stakeholders, property owners and local businesses; and
 - **best practice guidance** in terms of design and maintenance of buildings, public realm and open spaces within the conservation area and also identifies opportunities for enhancement.
- 2.3 The guidance also applies to Council services and statutory undertakers when carrying out works and re-iterates national and local policy implications as well as Article 4 Direction changes recently approved by Scottish Ministers in February 2013.
- 2.4 The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP itself raises no new policy issues and follows extensive consultation on the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal. There is therefore no requirement to undertake further consultation.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP provides a resume of, and further guidance on, a range of legislative and policy considerations as set out below.
- 3.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, provides the legislative framework surrounding listed buildings and conservation areas, setting regulatory measures covering development and statutory designations.
- 3.3 In addition, The Historic Environment Amendment Act 2011 introduced new measures and gave planning authorities new regulatory powers over development in the historic environment. Recent changes brought into force by the General Permitted Development Order 2011 have simplified planning controls by effectively removing householders' permitted development rights from conservation areas by statute. Falkirk Council has also secured changes to the Article 4 Direction powers covering Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area recently approved by Scottish Ministers in February 2013.
- 3.4 In their consideration of applications for development affecting conservation areas, listed buildings and other elements of the historic environment, planning authorities are directed towards a policy framework which includes The Scottish Historic Environment Policy, 2011, the combined Scottish Planning Policy 2010 and Historic Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note series.
- 3.5 The Planning Advice Note (PAN 71), Conservation Area Management states that:
- “When effectively managed, conservation areas can anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, generate wealth and prosperity and add to quality of life. To realise this potential, many of them need to continue to adapt and develop in response to the modern day needs and aspirations of living and working communities”.*
- 3.6 Falkirk Council's Development Plan and Local Development Plan Proposed Plan set out specific planning policies on enhancement and protection of the built heritage as well as general policies to guide development. A series of Supplementary Planning Guidance notes provide more detailed policy guidance on particular design topics. The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP provides detailed information on applicable local policies and guidance.

4. FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1 Whereas the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal provides information on the special historical, architectural, spatial and topographical features of the conservation area including analysis of building conditions and an assessment of the local and national significance of the conservation area, the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP, as appended, provides further detailed guidance to property owners, occupiers and their agents on the local and national planning policies and procedures to be followed when making alterations to land and premises in the conservation area.

4.2 The main subject areas of the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP include:

- definition of a conservation area and purpose,
- context and background to the Falkirk Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), and designation of the conservation area,
- key features of the conservation area,
- legislation, national and local policy framework,
- conservation area management in practice including guidance on what will be considered in determining an application for development, enforcement powers and repairs notices, what works will need planning permission and what information needs to be provided by applicants,
- enhancement opportunities including grant aid, recommended general and specific improvements and need for maintenance strategies,
- energy efficiency and traditional buildings,
- contacts and sources of further guidance,
- general design guidance on repair and replacement of historic windows; and
- general design guidance on shop fronts.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP will support the co-coordinated delivery of heritage led regeneration in the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. It will also meet the aims and objectives of the proposed Falkirk Town Centre THI and CARS schemes throughout the life-span of this initiative (approximately 5 years from late 2013 – 2018).
- 5.2 Development Services Planning Officers and stakeholder organisations will provide support to members of the public and owner / occupiers including more detailed advice on the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP when required from a specialist Urban Design and Development Management viewpoint. Officers can also assist other colleagues operating within Falkirk town centre, most notably THI staff, as well as Falkirk Delivers personnel, and Business Improvement District (BID) partners.
- 5.3 Awareness raising and promotion of the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP will be facilitated through a number of measures including:
- publication and distribution of a full colour A5 brochure for all address properties in Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area (circa 350 properties);
 - download availability on Falkirk Council's website;
 - copies will be available at Development Services, Falkirk Library, Falkirk One Stop Shop, Falkirk Delivers offices, and the future THI office location;

- inclusion in the Falkirk THI grant and information packs, to be drafted Autumn 2013, to ensure applicant and grant compliance with conservation standards raised in the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP;
- availability as part of Falkirk Delivers and BID information;
- provision of annual surgeries and drop in events for owner/ occupiers, shop-owners, awareness training for planning staff and/or elected members if required; and
- application of the Falkirk Town Centre CAMP in the day to day Development Management role of pre application and planning application and enforcement processes.

5.4 The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP will be reviewed on an on-going basis and, if required, adapted to meet its objectives for the protection and enhancement of a sustainable, thriving and distinctive conservation area.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 **Policy:** The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP meets the objectives of the Council's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Plan. It also contributes to the aims of the Development Plan, Built Heritage Strategy, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, as well as Urban Regeneration, Employment and Training, My Future's in Falkirk and Falkirk Delivers. It formed part of the documentation supporting the Falkirk Town Centre THI Round 2 bid submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in May 2013.

6.2 **Legal:** None.

6.3 **Financial:** None. Enhancement projects would require to be brought forward through the development of funding partnerships.

6.4 **Personnel:** The Falkirk Town Centre CAMP would form a material consideration as part of the Development Plan and Development Management process and assist planning officers in their duties.

7. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Executive approves the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan.

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Director of Development Services

Date: 31 May 2013

Contact Officer: Ruth Smith, Planning Officer (Urban Design), Ext 4715.

APPENDIX 1.

Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2012 – Main Issue 13 (Cultural Heritage).
2. Falkirk Built Heritage Strategy, 2006.
3. Scottish Historic Environment Policy 2011
4. Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Historic Scotland's guidance note series
5. Planning Advice Note 71, Conservation Area Management

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers should contact Ruth Smith, Planning Officer (Urban Design) on 01324 504715