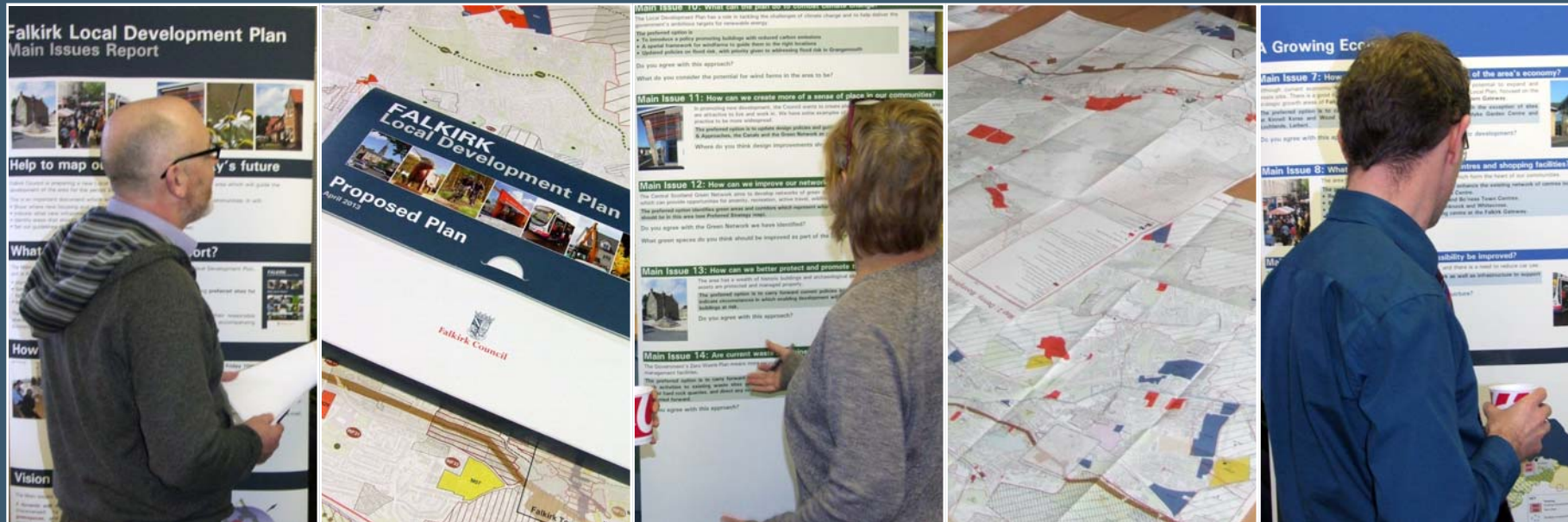


FALKIRK

Proposed Local Development Plan



STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY WITH PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

February 2014



Falkirk Council

FALKIRK PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY WITH PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Conformity has been prepared to meet the terms of Part 2 Section 18 (4) (a) (i) and Section 19 (4) of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 which requires planning authorities to submit a report (i) outlining the extent to which they have consulted with and involved the wider public in preparing the Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP); and (ii) how this consultation conforms with the intentions outlined in the 'participation statement' contained in the current Development Plan Scheme. The Statement of Conformity is one of a suite of documents which accompanies the submission of the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers.

Falkirk Council is committed to encouraging interest in the LDP process and undertaking meaningful consultation and engagement with as many people as possible.

The current Development Plan Scheme is the Falkirk Development Plan Scheme March 2013 (4th Revision) produced in March 2013. The 'participation statement' is set out in Section 6 - 'Getting People Involved in the Local Development Plan'. This details the principles for community engagement, who would be consulted, and how and at what stage this would take place.

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2. ACTIONS AT KEY STAGES OF LDP PREPARATION

Extensive engagement was undertaken at both the pre Main Issues Report (MIR) and MIR stages of the process, followed by the more formal representation period at the Proposed Plan stage. The process has been guided at all stages by the statutory requirements of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008. However, the Council has gone beyond the statutory minimum requirements, where appropriate, having regard to the Scottish Government's National Standards for Community Engagement, Planning Advice Note (PAN) 81 - Community Engagement, and Falkirk Council's 'Principles for Community Involvement'.

A summary of activities is outlined below. Appendix 1 provides much more detail, and indicates how the specific commitments made in the participation statement have been carried through in practice. Appendix 2 highlights how the Council's 'Principles of Community Involvement' have been addressed.

Pre-Main Issues Report Consultation – May - December 2010

The focus at this early stage in the LDP process was on involving and engaging stakeholders and the general public as early as possible in seeking opinion to identify and discuss key issues and options. This included an 'Issues and Sites Questionnaire', early engagement with key agencies, a series of key topic stakeholder workshops led by an independent facilitator, training for community councils undertaken by Planning Aid for Scotland, presentations to business groups and the Falkirk Secondary Schools Council and an education project with primary school children (undertaken by Planning Aid for Scotland). The database of consultees was also extended to try to encourage involvement by a broader range of participants, and a Development Plan newsletter was issued advising of progress. The 'Issues and Sites Questionnaire' included a 'call for sites' to ascertain and understand the full extent of interest in potential development sites.

A detailed report of all activities undertaken and a summary of feedback is outlined in Falkirk Local Development Plan Technical Report 10: Pre-Main Issues Report Consultation Summary (November 2011).

Consultation on Main Issues Report - November 2011 - February 2012

This stage represented the first formal consultation stage inviting responses to the Main Issues Report which was published in 2011 and made widely available in paper and electronic form. In addition to statutory notices and a mailing to all stakeholders and customers, a series of stakeholder workshops was held, as well as drop-in community roadshows at 18 locations across the Council area and presentations to community councils. The consultation was supported by a Development Plan newsletter and web-based information. Over 600 people were engaged through these events, with 1030 written responses being received.

A detailed report of all activities undertaken and a summary of feedback is outlined in Falkirk Local Development Plan Report of Consultation on Main Issues Report (August 2012) (Core document CD14).

Consultation on Proposed Plan - April - June 2013

Formal consultation on the Proposed Plan took place between the 26 April and 7 June 2013. Again the document was made widely available, publicised through adverts, a mailing, and the web site. A further Development Plan newsletter, summarising the content of the plan, was issued. As required by legislation, the Council also neighbour notified all neighbours of sites proposed for development in the plan. A total of 1,159 submissions were received.

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3. CONCLUSION

As shown above, and in Appendices 1 and 2, the Council has carried out consultation on the LDP in accordance with the commitments made in its participation statement within the Development Plan Scheme. As well as fulfilling statutory requirements with regard to consultation at the MIR and Proposed Plan stages in the LDP process, extensive additional engagement was undertaken at the pre-MIR and MIR stages to ensure that stakeholders had every opportunity to participate.

APPENDIX 1

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Stage : Pre-Main Issues Report (MIR)

What we said we would do	What we did
Publicise Development Plan Scheme by placing it on-line and in libraries and other deposit locations and distributing copies to all on the consultation database.	The Council's first Local Development Plan Scheme was published in March 2009 marking the commencement of the Local Development Plan process. The DPS has been reviewed three times since. Paper copies of the first DPS were widely distributed to those on the customer database, as well as being made available through libraries, one stop shops and the Council's web site. Subsequent editions have been made available via the web site and libraries, with their content summarised through successive Development Plan Newsletters.
Update and develop stakeholder database.	The Development Plan customer database is our main method of communication with stakeholders, and has been added to and updated on an ongoing basis. Close attention was paid to the profile of the database and a number of additional entries made to ensure as broad a representation as possible of interests, including race, age, disability and gender equality.
Consult on the scope and issues to be covered in the plan.	This was done through the 'Issues and Sites Consultation', which was issued to the all on the customer database in May 2010, and three topic based stakeholder workshops held in May/June 2010. In addition, there were individual meetings with key agencies and other selected bodies important to the Falkirk Council context from August 2009.
Consult on the scope of Strategic Environmental Assessment.	A Scoping Request was forwarded to the SEA Gateway on 11 February 2011 and a response received on 18 March 2011. The 'Sites and Issues Consultation' and the Environment & Green Network stakeholder workshop also sought comments on the scope of environmental issues to be considered through the plan.
Invite developers and landowners to submit development proposals for consideration - 'call for sites'.	The 'Sites and Issues Questionnaire' included a 'call for sites' with an opportunity for individuals or organisations to put forward potential development sites or proposals for consideration by the Council.
Hold topic focus groups with key stakeholders.	A series of three facilitated workshops was held over three days during May and June 2010, covering the main topic areas of Environment & Green Network; Economy; and Community Growth and Infrastructure. An invited audience of key agencies and other stakeholders, including community and business representatives, were asked to review previous development plan progress, consider future challenges, identify key issues and explore ideas about how these should be addressed through the LDP process. An independent external facilitator was commissioned to lead the workshops and report back on findings.
Organise training for community councils and others on engagement in the MIR stage.	A training session aimed at broadening participants' understanding of the development plan preparation process was delivered by Planning Aid for Scotland in June 2010. The day was attended by 20 people and included workshops covering the role of community councils in the development planning and development management process. A presentation to the Falkirk Business Panel Leadership Group was made in June 2010. This explained the LDP process and issues to be considered.

APPENDIX 1

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Stage : Pre-Main Issues Report (MIR)

What we said we would do	What we did
Carry out specific youth engagement exercise.	A presentation to Falkirk Secondary Schools Council followed by a discussion about key issues was made in November 2010. The School Council meets six times per year to discuss a range of issues and share ideas. It plays a major role in Falkirk Council's consultation processes with school communities. Planning Aid for Scotland undertook an education project (under the IMBY Education Programme) with the Primary 7 classes at Wallacestone Primary School between November and December 2010. The aim was to introduce primary children to the concept of spatial planning from the perspective of exploring how their local area was shaped. As the programme progressed, the children were asked to work up and present their proposals for a vacant site close to the school.
Issue Development Plan Newsletter and review Council web site to update all stakeholders on progress.	A newsletter issued in summer 2009 publicised and summarised the first DPS. This explained the new development planning system and timetable for preparing the new local development plan and key stages in the process. This was done in tandem with the creation of a new series of pages on the Council's website devoted to the LDP processes. A second newsletter issued in summer 2010 focused on the pre-MIR consultation. A further newsletter in summer 2011 provided a progress update. Newsletters were sent to everyone on the customer database and ensured that all were kept up-to-date with the process.

APPENDIX 1

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Stage : Main Issues Report (MIR)

What we said we would do	What we did
Advert, press release and letter to all stakeholders.	Adverts about the MIR consultation, including details of roadshow events were placed for two consecutive weeks in November 2011 in the Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal. Notice of the MIR, details of the consultation and a copy of the Development Plan Newsletter were sent to all on the customer database. The roadshow events were also advertised on an ongoing basis in the local events section of the Falkirk Herald and the Council's web site. An article about the MIR and roadshow events appeared in the December 2011 edition of the Council's 'Falkirk Council News' which is distributed to all households in the Council area. In addition, posters advertising the MIR and roadshow events were displayed at a number of prominent locations throughout the area. Throughout the 12 week consultation period, the consultation exercise was highlighted on the front page of the Council's website, providing details of the various events with links to the LDP webpage where the MIR, all other associated documents and response forms were available.
Make documents and response forms available online, in libraries and other deposit locations.	Hard copies of documents and response forms were available at the Council offices, libraries and one stop shops. Electronic copies were available on the web site, including pdf. and online interactive (OLDP) versions.
Minimum 12 week period for engagement.	The consultation period extended for 12 weeks from 18 November 2011 to 10 February 2012.
Hold area-based exhibitions and workshops across Council area.	A total of 18 community roadshow events were held across the Council area in various local venues including supermarkets. The roadshow events were 'drop in' sessions through which we engaged with over 600 people. Three themed workshops covering Sustainable Place, Thriving Communities and Growing Economy were held in the early part of 2012. Representatives of key agencies, businesses and community councils were invited to discuss the Council's preferred options for tackling main issues.
Hold workshops with community councils and other community groups where requested.	A total of seven community councils took up the offer of presentations on the MIR, with around 140 people attending.
Issue Development Plan Newsletter to provide concise summary of Main Issues Report.	This edition (Winter 2011/2012) contained information about the MIR including a summary of the main issues, details of community roadshow events and information about where the MIR could be seen. The Newsletter was sent to everyone on the customer database and was also made available in libraries and other Council offices.

APPENDIX 1

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Proposed Plan

What we said we would do	What we did
Advert, press release and letter to all stakeholders, including those who commented on the MIR.	In addition to adverts placed for two consecutive weeks in the Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal, a press release was issued for publication in both papers. A letter advising of the publication of the proposed plan was sent to everyone on the customer database which included key agencies, community councils and respondents to the MIR.
Make documents and objection forms available online, in libraries and other deposit locations.	Hard copies of documents and representation forms were available at the Council offices, libraries and one stop shops. Electronic copies were available on the web site.
Publicise summary of all comments on the MIR.	A Report of Consultation on the Main Issues Report was published in August 2012. This contained details of the various consultation activities together with summaries of feedback received from various groups, organisations and individuals. In addition, a detailed summary of all representations to the MIR together with the Council's responses was made available on the Council's web site.
Notify neighbours and owner/occupiers of proposed sites.	In accordance with The Town & Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008, planning authorities are required to notify neighbours (within 20m) of sites which are allocated for development and which if implemented would have a significant effect on the use and amenity of that site and neighbouring land. Notifications were sent to approximately 2000 addresses and included all proposals with defined boundaries, with the exception of those under construction. This was a total of 98 sites.
Formal period of at least six weeks for representations.	The consultation period extended for six weeks from 26 April to 7 June 2013. A total of 1,159 representations were received.
Issue Development Plan Newsletter to provide concise summary of Proposed Plan.	The Spring 2013 edition of the Newsletter contained a concise summary of the Proposed Plan focusing on the spatial strategy and what it means for communities. The Newsletter, which also contained information about making representations, was sent to everyone on the customer database.

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT OF LDP CONSULTATION AGAINST PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PURPOSE

Principle	Action
To be clear about whether we are informing, consulting or engaging, and not to consult when decisions have already be taken.	At each consultation stage, the purpose of the stage relative to the overall process was made clear. For example, participants in the MIR consultation were made aware that we were consulting on ideas, initial proposals and options, and that nothing was 'set in stone'.

INVOLVEMENT

Principle	Action
To identify who might be interested and encourage involvement. Try to overcome any barriers to prevent exclusion.	Whilst development planning might not be of immediate interest to a large section of the local population, we endeavoured to reach as many people as possible through adverts, posters, roadshow, newsletter and website. The inclusion of supermarkets and shopping centres in our roadshow programme proved particularly successful at communicating with people who are not currently aware of the development planning system. As part of the preparations for the MIR we extended our customer database to include groups whom we considered to be under-represented in previous consultation exercises. Accessible locations were chosen for our consultation roadshow events.

METHODS

Principle	Action
To use the right methods of engagement in each situation and ensure that timescales are long enough for people to participate effectively.	A roadshow involving drop in exhibition sessions at a wide range of venues was considered to be the best means of reaching people at the MIR stage. This proved successful with over 600 people being engaged through the roadshow. Our web based consultation was also popular, with some 3000 'hits' at the MIR stage. A 12 week period was allowed for responses at the MIR stage which allowed participants plenty of time to consider the consultation material.

INFORMATION

Principle	Action
To share the information necessary for people to participate and to use clear, accessible language.	We have endeavoured throughout the MIR consultation process to make the language and process as clear as possible.

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT OF LDP CONSULTATION AGAINST PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

WORKING TOGETHER

Principle	Action
To treat all participants with respect and to receive this in return. We may require people and organisations that represent their communities to show us how community views were collected.	We endeavoured to provide as many opportunities and methods as possible for people to express their views and opinions.

FEEDBACK

Principle	Action
To explain how people will receive feedback before they participate, and to try to show how peoples' views have influenced the outcome.	Commitment to feedback was given in the DPS. Feedback on the MIR consultation was published on the Council's web site and publicised to all participants.

IMPROVEMENT

Principle	Action
To monitor and evaluate approaches for future improvement.	The Council is currently undertaking a review of the effectiveness of all consultation undertaken through the LDP process. This will be used to improve consultation on future plans. A Customer Survey has been prepared and will be circulated as part of the Winter/Spring 2014 Newsletter.

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