

# **PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

**Falkirk Council**

**ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018**

## **FOREWARD**

The Council's vision for the Falkirk area is that it is the place to be, a dynamic and distinctive area at the heart of Scotland, characterised by a network of thriving communities and greenspaces and a vibrant and growing economy which is of strategic importance in the national context, providing an attractive and sustainable place in which to live work, visit and invest.

An efficient and well-functioning planning service has an important role in achieving this by facilitating sustainable economic growth and delivering high quality development in the right places. Falkirk Council recognises that regular monitoring of service performance and a commitment to improving what we do is essential to achieve this vision.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 01 Falkirk Council is pleased to submit its seventh annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) to Scottish Government. The PPF is an annual report which all Scottish planning authorities produce. It highlights the work we have done from April 2017 to March 2018 to monitor performance and demonstrates what is being done to maintain and improve the quality of planning service we provide. It demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement.
  
- 02 The structure of the report follows the PPF template and guidance provided to all planning authorities by the Heads of Planning Scotland. It includes feedback from Scottish Government on our performance last year and includes a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators documenting planning activities over the year and our plans for the coming year.

## FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS REPORT

- 03 The Council's sixth annual PPF, covering the period April 2016 to March 2017 was submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of July 2017. Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing, gave us feedback in December 2017. This feedback was very encouraging and supportive of the work Falkirk Council is doing to monitor, maintain and improve the quality of planning service we provide.
- 04 The PPF was assessed by the Scottish Government against 15 performance markers agreed by the Scottish Government and Heads of Planning Scotland. A red, amber, green rating of our performance against these markers was provided by Scottish Government. We received 12 green ratings and 3 amber ratings. None of the performance markers had a red rating.
- 05 The green ratings on which we were commended included:
- our work to encourage pre-application discussions;
  - the quality of guidance and advice published on our website;
  - the availability of staff to provide early planning assistance and guidance;
  - our willingness to enter into processing agreements with applicants;
  - our collaborative approach with stakeholders on development management and development plan matters;
  - our early engagement with elected members in the development plan process;
  - the good work that has been done to progress to determination planning applications that have stalled and;
  - the quality of the guidance and advice we provide on requirements for developer contributions.
- 06 Where we received amber ratings it was because although our planning application decision making timescales for major applications had improved since the previous year they were still slower than the Scottish national average. Also, our timescales for determining householder applications, although better than the national Scottish average had dipped very slightly. The Scottish Government also commented that they felt our timescales for concluding planning obligations could still be improved. It was also noted that there had been a slippage in the timescales for consulting on the development plan main issues report (MIR). The Scottish Government felt that this delay had not been explained in the PPF. The reason for the delay was because there was a need to carry out extended consultation with Members and a decision was

made that carrying out consultation over the winter period straddling Christmas would not have been in the public interest. We could have made this clearer in the PPF.

- 07 In addition to the feedback received from the Scottish Government we reviewed our PPF with the assistance of a peer review partner, Dundee City Council. The feedback received from Dundee City Council was positive.

## **PART 1: QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES**

### **Quality of Outcomes**

- 08 The area has been on a journey of regeneration from post-industrial decline of the 1970s and 1980s to its current status as one of the most popular places in Scotland to live, work and visit. The journey has been underpinned by good placemaking, bringing assets such as our canals, historic sites and greenspaces to life, developing an award winning green network, investing in our town centres, and creating iconic new attractions such as the Helix and Kelpies. Placemaking is, in turn, underpinned by a strong body of strategic policy and guidance. The past year has seen further progress in terms of both policy development and implementation.
- 09 The Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP) provides the overarching direction on placemaking and design quality, supported by its suite of 16 Supplementary Guidance notes which are now embedded in day to day discussion with stakeholders, and provide a firm basis for negotiating high quality outcomes. This continues to be backed up by in-house expertise in urban design, conservation, landscape, outdoor access and biodiversity, providing valuable input to assessment of proposals at the pre-application and application stages.

### **Strategic Growth Areas**

- 10 The area has seen major residential growth over the last fifteen years, which has been led by a proactive growth strategy in successive development plans. Achieving quality in these developments has been a key objective, and a variety of placemaking tools, from development frameworks to masterplans and briefs have been used. Our largest growth area has been at Kinnaird Village, Larbert, comprising 1700 homes and community infrastructure. This development is now in its latter stages and it is now possible to see how the original planning brief and masterplan has helped to create a well structured and attractive new community which addresses the six qualities of successful places and has been used as an example in SG2 Neighbourhood Design (see case study).

<b>Case Study:</b>	
<b>Kinnaird Village (Bellsdyke/Hill of Kinnaird)</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Larbert, 2002 - Current	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of outcomes</li> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
11,15	
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Greenspace</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Supply</li> <li>• Masterplanning</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p><i>Kinnaird Village is an example of the long term masterplanning of a large settlement extension of 1700 homes which is reaching its latter stages with successful placemaking outcomes now becoming apparent. The site comprised the former Bellsdyke Hospital, and associated agricultural land. With its origins in the Falkirk Council Structure Plan 2001, the Council set out its clear aspirations for place, quality and integrated infrastructure in a Planning Brief in 2002. This guided the masterplan which was prepared and approved as part of an outline planning permission in 2006. Detailed planning permissions for successive phases have steered development broadly in accordance with the masterplan.</i></p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p><i>The overall goal was to create a sustainable new community which would meet long term housing growth needs, create attractive and distinctive neighbourhoods, have a clear village centre with new primary school and shops, and incorporate a green network which built upon the existing landscape features of the site.</i></p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p><i>Through the brief and masterplan, Kinnaird has achieved the vision of a new community comprising a mix of housing types and streets within a mature landscaped setting. The village centre and school has been developed, albeit that there have been capacity issues with the school which the Council is having to address through additional investment in extensions. The development has been used as a case study in our Residential Design guide as it demonstrates how the six qualities of successful places can be realised within a large scale contemporary suburb.</i></p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Katherine Chorley	

## Town Centres

- 11 Falkirk Town Centre is our principal town centre, as well as one of the area's outstanding historic environment assets. Over the last five years it has been the focus of a £5.5m Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) which is now drawing to a close. The THI has delivered a number of quality outcomes including priority building restoration, reuse of vacant space building repairs, shopfront improvements, training and job opportunities, community engagement and innovative interpretation. Over the past year, the major project has been a £1.7m public realm scheme which is

improving the environment and pedestrian conditions in secondary streets to the north of the High Street and some of the historic pends and closes leading off the High Street. This will be completed in May 2018.

- 12 Phase 1 of the Denny Town Centre regeneration project is now complete. The final element delivered during the reporting period was a new town square featuring five public art projects (see case study). The remarketing of Phase 2 and 3 is to commence shortly.

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
Denny Town Centre Regeneration	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Denny, 2015 - current	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of outcomes</li> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
2, 3, 12	
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Town Centres</li> <li>• Masterplanning</li> <li>• Local Develop Plan &amp; Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Development Management Processes</li> <li>• Planning Applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Working</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Project Management</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Hard to reach groups</li> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Committee</li> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> <li>• Community groups</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p><i>The phase 1 regeneration is a new Council-led development comprising a mixed use commercial building including a new community library and public realm works. The provision of a new town square for Denny is an integral component of the phase 1 works.</i></p> <p><i>The regeneration involved the replacement of four 1960's residential/retail blocks (Church Walk Blocks). The modernist design of the blocks had resulted in significant social problems and the decayed building fabric was a significant eyesore and blight on the community. Given the design difficulties inherent within the four blocks, the Council considered that full demolition was necessary. This presented opportunities to redesign and redevelop the town centre to modernise its facilities and meet the needs and aspirations of the local community.</i></p>	

A developer was originally appointed to progress the project but advised in 2011 that the project was not viable. Following an appraisal of options, the Council decided to proceed with the delivery of the project without developer involvement, utilising, where possible, its own resources and adopting a phased approach.

The project has been developed through liaison with a wide range of partners including the Falkirk Community Trust, Denny and District Community Council, local businesses, local churches and schools, NHS, Police Scotland and a number of other local stakeholders. Local community groups consulted and engaged include Communities Along the Carron, Peace by Piece, and the local War Memorial group.

The masterplan was adjusted several times to reflect the comments from the local community, businesses and bodies such as Architecture Design Scotland. There was strong support for radical remodeling of the Church Walk site, creating a vibrant new town centre and provision of a new town square with meaningful, socially engaged, public art and the introduction of public WiFi to support growth, improve occupancy rates and provide free internet connection to local residents, some of whom may not have this invaluable tool at home.

The Council in partnership with Falkirk Community Trust commissioned industry experts to build on the extensive community consultation data previously gathered and to work collaboratively with communities within the town. Responding to the question “what would you like to see in your town?” these conversations led to the re-imagining of the town centre, in particular the creation of a new town square, and tackling of issues such as the relationship between the building and the town centre, resulting in reworked plans to improve the connection between internal and external spaces.

The wider town centre regeneration project will be delivered through phase 2 and 3 developments consisting of additional opportunities for retail and mixed use.

#### **Goals:**

Through our regeneration project, we hope to have made a lasting impact on the community by way of increased energy, confidence and trust through enhancement of the town centre area. We intend to test this thinking in due course when we examine the impact the development has made to the quality of life and opportunities. So far, anecdotal evidence does support this idea with the attraction of new business, visitor numbers, conversations and feedback received.

#### **Outcomes:**

Critical to Denny’s future was the removal of the 1960’s Church Walk blocks and their replacement with a modern fit for purpose building and public realm space.

##### Scotland’s First Digital Town

The introduction of the innovative Denny WiFi project brings the traditional trading town into a transformative digital age and equips local business with the tools to counteract the current trend widely witnessed in UK town centres.

##### Public Art Project

Informed by community engagement, we and our consultants consolidated feedback and proposed five broad themes that would direct the development of the public art during the regeneration period. These themes were – Activity; Trade; Networks; Heritage; Environment. The themes are expanded upon fully in the Denny Public Art Plan 2015/17, together with strategic objectives for each, as well as suggested opportunities that help illustrate the range of potential approaches for public art development within each theme.

##### Denny Library

The new library, designed following extensive community consultation, is the centre-piece of the town centre’s redevelopment. The local community has embraced the new library, with 1000 new customers registering in the first twelve months. Those customers have been making the most of the library’s extensive stock of books, DVDs and audio books, borrowing a total of over 54,000 items. Facilities in the library include free public internet access, including Wi-Fi, and a community room. The PC’s and Wi-Fi have been accessed 6640 times, over 1000 more times than in twelve months before the new building opened.

<b>Name of key officer</b>
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<i>Brent Vivian</i>
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## **Historic Environment**

- 13 The Council's new Historic Environment Strategy - 'Our Future in the Past' - was approved in February 2018. This will provide a new strategic framework for protecting, enhancing and promoting the area's many historic environment assets. Actions are grouped under the key eight themes of Enhancement of Knowledge; Knowledge Sharing; Effective Management and Protection; Sustainable Use of Assets; Increased Access; Growing Skills; Community Involvement; and Increased Appreciation.
- 14 The Falkirk Great Place Partnership has been successful in a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to carry out a programme of work focusing on better connecting our heritage assets. Projects will record, interpret and celebrate Falkirk's routes and places and will be complemented by investment in developing social and digital networks.
- 15 The restoration of Larbert House, one of the area's most distinguished country houses, is now complete. This complements the regeneration of the wider estate landscape which has been undertaken in recent years in conjunction with the building of the Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

## **Greenspace**

- 16 The Falkirk Greenspace Strategy and the Open Space Strategy provide the context for our continuing work to enhance and connect up our green network. The Open Space Strategy, approved in 2016, won an award in the Scottish Awards for Planning 2017, recognising its thorough and innovative approach to addressing the open space needs of the area. We are now moving into the implementation of the strategy, and have made some significant progress already on a number of actions (see case study). Meanwhile the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative is coming to the end of its 5 year life, having delivered a host of environmental projects along the estuary (see case study). Another notable achievement has been the successful promotion of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to secure a key path link in the village of Shieldhill (see case study).

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
Shieldhill Core Path Compulsory Purchase Order	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Shieldhill, 2010-2017	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
12	
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active Travel</li> <li>Community Engagement</li> <li>Interdisciplinary Working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compulsory Purchase Orders/ Project Delivery</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Public</li> <li>Authority Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authority Other Staff</li> <li>Community Council</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>The Council and the local community has been attempting for some years to secure a critical path route connecting the communities of Shieldhill and California, and connecting the village of Shieldhill to the wider countryside. The route was identified as a core path in the Core Paths Plan 2010 but had become unusable due to the collapse and removal of a culvert at the Polmont Burn. Following exhaustive but unsuccessful efforts to deliver the route through agreement with the landowners, the Council decided that compulsory purchase of the land required for the crossing was the only option. The resultant CPO, which was the first in Scotland to use powers under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, was subject to objection and an inquiry which was held in 2016. The Council's position was upheld and the CPO confirmed in 2017. The scheme, comprising new bridge and approach paths, is currently out to tender.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The Council has a policy commitment to develop the green network and active travel routes through the LDP, the Falkirk Greenspace Strategy, and the Core Paths Plan. The specific goal was to deliver a new bridge and section of path for the community of Shieldhill which is considered essential to enable them to access the adjacent community woodland and the neighbouring village of California. By pursuing the project through CPO, the Council hoped to demonstrate the strength of its commitment to bring green network benefits to all communities.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>The primary outcome will be to enable the construction of the path in question, bringing the benefits outlined above. However, the project has also given the authority valuable experience of pursuing the CPO mechanism for paths through the Land Reform Act, which it is able to share with other authorities. The project has also demonstrated the importance of close working between different sections of the Council including planning, access, engineers, and legal.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Mandy Brown	

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
Falkirk Open Space Strategy Implementation	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Area Wide, 2016-2018	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
12	

<b>Key Areas of Work</b> (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Greenspace</li> <li>• Masterplanning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Active Travel</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b> (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p><i>The Council's 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Space Strategy was approved in October 2016. In a climate of diminishing resources, the Strategy makes a vital contribution towards maintaining the sustainability of the Council's parks and open spaces by clearly setting out a vision which aims to: maximize the benefits of any investment; address inequality and foster community; work and invest more efficiently and generate money for future reinvestment.</i></p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p><i>The Strategy provides us with a robust management tool to guide decision making around investment in parks and open spaces and the management of our estate; is an important part of the evidence base for our Local Development Plan and informs planning decisions relating to open space and new development.</i></p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p><i>A corporate open space liaison group has been established to oversee the implementation of the Strategy, meeting twice yearly. Progress made since approval in October 2016 includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Individual park masterplans have been prepared for 7 out of 14 parks which were identified as key open space assets;</i></li> <li>• <i>Improvements have been made at 5 out of 50 parks which were identified as priorities for quality improvement;</i></li> <li>• <i>Six of our poorest quality play parks have been upgraded;</i></li> <li>• <i>Progress has been made in delivering 9 out of 36 green network opportunities;</i></li> <li>• <i>63 individual park webpages have been created on MyParkScotland and 15 crowdfunding projects have been run through the MyParkScotland website;</i></li> <li>• <i>Preliminary work has begun on a study to revise the grounds maintenance regimes for amenity grassland with the aim of enhancing biodiversity and saving money and 5 demonstration projects have been set up; and</i></li> <li>• <i>New open space to meet a local deficiency in provision has been secured at Tappernail Farm near Shieldhill.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Danny Thallon	

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
<b>Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI)</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
2014-2018 in the area adjoining the Firth of Forth coastline between South Alloa and Blackness.	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to</b> (please select all that apply):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of outcomes</li> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b> (please select all that apply):	
12,13	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b> (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Conservation</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Greenspace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Active Travel</li> </ul>

<b>Stakeholders Involved</b> (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Hard to reach groups</li> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Committee</li> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p><i>IFLI ran from 2014-18, supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, with a total budget of over £4 million. IFLI's vision was to create an Inner Forth where local people and visitors alike value, protect and celebrate this unique landscape at the heart of Scotland. Falkirk Council, partnered with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils, RSPB, Sustrans, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland and the Central Scotland Green Network Trust to deliver 54 inspiring and intrinsically linked projects across the 202 km<sup>2</sup> of the project area.</i></p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p><i>The Council has a policy commitment to develop the green network and active travel routes through the LDP, the Falkirk Greenspace Strategy, the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the Core Paths Plan. The LDP contains a number of green network opportunities which contribute towards the enhancement of habitats, access networks and the wider landscape. IFLI represents a key delivery vehicle for driving forward the implementation of these habitat, access network and landscape enhancement opportunities within the Forth Estuary corridor.</i></p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p><i>33 projects were delivered within the Falkirk Council area equating to a combined investment of c£1.25m. The outputs of these projects include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>470 people volunteering to provide 8485 hours of work to enhance wildlife</i></li> <li>• <i>Training for 357 people including 24 school trips</i></li> <li>• <i>126 events engaging 855 people</i></li> <li>• <i>The creation of 90ha of new habitat for wildlife</i></li> <li>• <i>The creation of 3.5km of new paths</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Over the 4 year life of the project, Falkirk Council has invested £292,411 in the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative. This means that for every £1 invested, a return of more than £4 has been received representing excellent value for money.</i></p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
<p><i>Ian Edwards</i></p>	

## **Quality of Service and Engagement**

### **Contact**

- 17 The planning service is open for business. Officers can be contacted by email, by telephone and in person. Contact details are published on our webpages, on emails and letters and on business cards. Development Management operate a duty officer service which allows customers to contact an officer on the telephone or in person and receive free planning advice and guidance. Planning guidance is also provided on our webpages and this guidance is regularly reviewed and updated. Development Plan officers have geographical and topic responsibilities so customers can get more specific and informed advice. Other specialists – e.g. landscape officers, education officers and transport/roads officers – are also available by phone and email to give advice.

- 18 For all planning applications and pre-application enquiries the contact details for the lead officer are provided at the outset. For major developments and other projects of wider public interest we establish project teams. This ensures stakeholders have alternative contacts within the Development Management Unit if the lead officer is unavailable and also supports the lead officer.
- 19 We set early dates for meetings and telephone calls are returned timeously. Enquiries are logged and acknowledged on receipt. Officers reply by email where this option is available. This allows enquiries to be acknowledged and answered quickly. This has proved particularly helpful where planning applications are invalid because it allows issues to be resolved more quickly.

### **Pre-application**

- 20 We offer a free pre-application advice service for all types of applications, from small scale householder developments to major and national planning application submissions. Planning advice and guidance can also be found on the Council's website which includes links to the Scottish Government website and links to other websites where useful information and resources can also be found. The information on our planning webpages is clear and easily accessible. The webpages show what information is needed for a valid application submission and what additional information may be requested for the assessment of an application. The LDP and supplementary planning guidance are published on the website and are clearly signposted. The availability of guidance and free advice is emphasised during pre-application discussions and the use of project plans and processing agreements promoted to all applicants.
- 21 Early collaboration with applicants and consultees at pre-application stage along with the LDP, supplementary guidance and other useful information on our webpages helps to ensure that requests for supporting information are clear and proportionate.

### **Developer Contributions**

- 22 The LDP and supplementary guidance clearly set out for developers the circumstances where contributions are likely to be required. Contribution levels are regularly checked and updated as appropriate. In relation to education contributions for example, the school rolls and future predicted levels are assessed for each planning application. This ensures that requests for contributions are proportionate and contributions are only sought where necessary.

- 23 There are regular officer liaison meetings chaired by the planning service with children's services (education), housing and other Council Services at which contribution levels are discussed and information reviewed. Reviews of SG10 Education and New Housing Development and SG12 Affordable Housing are underway, informed by discussions in these liaison meetings.
- 24 The Council recognises developer concerns about the potential impact of contributions on the viability of development. We encourage the submission of development viability statements where this is a concern. Guidance is provided in our supplementary guidance. Statements are assessed in consultation with the District Valuer to ensure that requests are reasonable and proportionate and comply with Scottish Government guidance in Circular 3/2012, 'Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements'.

### **Flexible Team Working**

- 25 The Development Management Unit is structured into 2 geographically based teams but officers are based in the same open plan office and work across the team areas as and when work levels require. This assists the professional development of officers and allows officers to have an overall general knowledge of case load within the Unit. These team working arrangements, particularly for more complex or controversial cases, allows for the sharing of information, discussion of issues, promotes staff development and provides continuity of delivery if staff are absent.
- 26 In addition we have an officer dedicated to mostly dealing with householder and local applications across the Council area and this helps maintain good householder planning application decision making timescales.
- 27 There has been very little movement of staff from the planning service in recent years. As a consequence this means that the Unit is made up of established teams of planning officers who have good general knowledge of the Falkirk Council area and who have developed good working relationships with our various stakeholders.
- 28 We work closely with other Council Services when dealing with enquiries and planning applications to ensure a joined up approach. Many of our principal cross service contacts, for example roads, transport, environmental health and asset management are in the same building which helps communication and close working.
- 29 Case officer workload is regularly monitored and reviewed by line managers to check progress and to offer advice, guidance and support as required.

- 30 We continue to review working practices to maintain and to improve performance and staff development.

### **Development Delivery**

- 31 During the reporting period more than 95% of planning applications received were granted planning permission and more than 96% of applications were determined in accordance with the officer recommendation.
- 32 The Council's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is ongoing, with the aim of delivering major infrastructure and enabling works in the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zones, and removing constraints and barriers which would otherwise fall on prospective developers in the area. Improvements to M9 Junction 5, which will improve access to the Grangemouth Investment Zone, are expected to commence at the end of 2018. Design work on improvements to the A9/A904, which will facilitate development at the Falkirk Gateway, is ongoing, with further consideration being given to the best way to ensure high quality pedestrian/cycle movement as part of the scheme.
- 33 Marketing of the first phases of the Falkirk Gateway took place during the year. As part of the marketing material, a Planning Statement was prepared and issued setting out planning and placemaking requirements for the sites. Prospective developers have been shortlisted and invited to submit detailed bids.
- 34 The Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme, which ranks as the top priority flood risk management scheme in Scotland, is progressing. Public consultation has recently taken place, and options are being refined through engagement with stakeholders.
- 35 Grangemouth has seen a number of applications for both new and replacement combined heat and power plants (CHP) across the industry sectors in the area. A site in Grangemouth Docks for a Biomass wood waste Power Plant has had its S36 consent extended by 2 years and is in the process of varying the deemed planning consent. CalaChem have also been granted consent for a CHP plant using refuse derived fuel (RDF) at the Earlsgate Park site. Ineos have also applied to replace their existing gas powered CHP plant. Celtic Renewables have also been granted planning permission for a demonstrator Biofuels plant at the Earlsgate Park site utilising distillery by-products and potatoes.

- 36 The Council continues to host annual action programme meetings for the Grangemouth Investment Zone National Development. This provides an important opportunity for stakeholders, including Scottish Government, the Council, key agencies and industry to share progress on projects and discuss future actions.
- 37 In terms of housing delivery, five of the LDP's 12 Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) are under construction, while starts on two others – at Maddiston East and Falkirk Canal Corridor – are imminent. At the Denny South East SGA, productive pre-application discussions are ongoing regarding the parts of the growth area that have been stalled up to now. The two large SGAs in the west of the area at Banknock and Dennyloanhead now have planning permission in principle and the main obstacle to delivery remains the upgrading of the M80 Junction 7 slip roads. The Council is taking a lead on tackling this, and recently secured funding of up to £1.5m from the Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure Fund to address the issue. The three remaining SGAs have more fundamental issues and are under review through LDP2. The planning service is also working closely with Housing Services in the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), which is aiming to deliver 1,310 houses affordable houses over the period 2017-22, and consideration of potential supply of sites for future programmes.

#### **Investment Zone Bid**

- 38 During the year, the Council has developed the outline business case for its Investment Zone bid for submission to the Scottish Government. The bid seeks to complement the TIF programme and secure additional resources along similar lines to the City Deals or Growth Accelerators being pursued across Scotland. There is a strong focus on realising sustainable economic growth in Grangemouth as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF3).

#### **Hazardous Substances Consents**

- 39 During the year we have been working with site operators in Grangemouth to manage and rationalise existing consents, taking account of changes in legislation and changes in site activities. Our aim has been to build working relationships with operators and the Community Council and ensure risk is effectively managed (see case study).

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
<b>Management of hazardous substances consents</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Grangemouth 2017 and on going	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of outcomes</li> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
3, 6, 12	
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Local Develop Plan &amp; Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Development Management Processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Working</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Project Management</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> <li>• Site operator</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Following pre-application discussion the operator of 2 chemical storage and distribution sites sought hazardous substances consents to increase the amount of substances stored on their sites and to update their existing inventory to take account of changes in regulations. Work was carried out with the operator and statutory consultees to review and rationalise existing historic consents to ensure that potential risks are correctly assessed and constraints on other nearby land uses minimised. The Community Council were kept apprised of the work being carried out. The operator agreed to the revocation without compensation of historic hazardous substances consents and single updated consents were granted for the 2 sites. The Health and Safety Executive were supportive of the approach taken to the handling of applications. They did not object to the applications and advised that on the basis that historic consents were revoked that the increase in the amount of substances stored did not necessitate any increase in the hazard consultation zones</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The overall goal was to work with the operator to remove redundant consents and put single, up to date consents in place that minimise off site constraints. Further goals were to build an on-going working relationship with the operator and the Community Council to improve understanding of hazardous substance consent procedures.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>Through the work carried out by the operator and Council officers in planning and legal services and consultation with the Community Council there is a better understanding of the procedures to revoke hazardous substances consents. The benefits of tidying up site records were also recognised by the operator.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Bernard Whittle	

## Development Plan

- 40 The Council is now well advanced with LDP2, and the focus of the reporting year has been completing the extensive MIR consultation exercise in May 2017, and preparing the Proposed Plan. As reported in the last PPF, the Council used its experience from LDP1 to improve the MIR document and the consultation experience for customers. We prepared a consultation report identifying what we had done and summarising the consultation comments by area and theme, and made this available to our stakeholders in autumn 2017. A newsletter was also circulated providing a quick digest of the main points to come out of the consultation. This and other development plan activities continue to be publicised through our web site and Facebook page.
- 41 The outcome of the consultation process and the issues it raised for the Proposed Plan was also the subject of briefing sessions with our corporate working group in August 2017 and with elected Members in November.
- 42 Preparation of the Proposed Plan was a major task during the reporting year. A working draft was circulated to key agencies and internal Council services for comment at the beginning of February 2018, with a revised committee draft ready by the end of March 2018. The LDP2 process continues to be project managed according to overall project plan, and more detailed stage plans. Project team meetings are held every three weeks, with reports to senior management dealing every three months. The latter focuses in particular on programming issues, risks, interface with elected members and key policy choices.
- 43 A further major task during the year was the preparation of an update to the LDP1 Action Programme. This was completed in September 2017, with input from key stakeholders. It updates the actions, and highlights progress since the original Action Programme was adopted in 2015.
- 44 There were no major changes to our suite of Supplementary Guidance (SG) during the reporting year, although through LDP2, we are looking forward to how we can improve and rationalise our SG for the next plan cycle. We continue to closely monitor the effectiveness of SG, and have identified the need for an early review of SG10 Education and New Housing Development and SG12 Affordable Housing, to take account of emerging trends and issues.
- 45 Our programme of translating spatial information into user friendly online format continues, with the interactive Housing Land Audit and Register of Vacant and Derelict Land now live, and attracting favourable comment.

46 We continue to seek opportunities to connect with young people, particularly where planning can tie in with the school curriculum. Our engagement with pupils at Larbert High School for LDP2 using the place standard led to an invitation to participate at a 'STEM at the Helix' day in May 2017 (see case study). Further sessions have been held with S2 pupils in Grangemouth High School, again using the place standard as part of a model town building exercise.

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
Youth Engagement using the Place Standard	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Helix/Grangemouth, 2017-18	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
6	
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place Standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Other Staff (Children's Services)</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p><i>The development plan team has previously engaged successfully with S4/S5 pupils at Larbert High School as part of consultation in the early stages of LDP2. A simplified version of the Place Standard was used, with a reduce number of criteria. Following on from this we were invited in May 2017 to contribute in a 'STEM at the Helix' day with S2 pupils from all schools in the Council area participating in a day of outdoor workshops focusing on a range of skills needed to plan and deliver construction projects. Council planners delivered workshops where pupils used two analytical tools to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Helix – the Place Standard and Place Legibility Analysis – as an input to their own improvement projects for the area. The event is to be repeated in 2018. Contacts made at the event, led to planners delivering Place Standard workshops in a classroom setting in Grangemouth.</i></p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p><i>While the goal of the original Larbert HS engagement was to obtain the views of young people as part of the LDP2 consultation, the purpose of the 'STEM at the Helix' event was more of an educational nature, raising awareness of planning as an essential part of the development process, and highlighting some basic planning tools to stimulate the interest of young people in planning as an activity.</i></p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p><i>Our experience of using the Place Standard with schools shows that it is a simple and accessible way of engaging young people with planning, helping them understand principles of survey, analysis and plan in live situations. We have also learned the importance of embedding our activities within the context of the school curriculum, so that teaching staff can see the clear benefits.</i></p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Alistair Shaw	

## **Processing Agreements**

- 47 We continue to encourage the use of processing agreements on major and local applications. There is information about processing agreements on our website along with a downloadable template for a draft agreement. In addition during pre-application discussions officers continue to advise developers of our willingness to enter into agreements. There appears however to be a general reluctance from developers to enter into agreements although applicants/agents appear to be satisfied that the Council has adequate procedures in place to ensure that the processing of planning applications is properly managed and that lines of communication are clear. The less formal arrangements we use in the absence of formal processing agreements include regular contact with applicants/agents either in person, by telephone or email to provide updates on the progress of applications and enquiries. This includes discussion of timescales for determination, discussion of submissions received, contribution requires and heads of terms, consultation responses and information requests and formal extension of time agreements. Where applications stall agreement that the application will be withdrawn is also sought.

## **Legal Agreements**

- 48 Where planning obligations and other legal agreements are required the heads of terms are progressed at the same time as the application in order to reduce potential delay. Minded to grant recommendations to the Planning Committee and recommendations in delegated reports on handling are framed to set a 6 month timescale for the conclusion of agreements or review of the application. There are templates for legal instructions to draft planning obligations and other legal agreements so that all necessary information is provided to legal advisers by the case officer and applicants/agents to assist the drafting process. The progress of legal agreements to conclusion is closely monitored by officers in the planning service and legal service.
- 49 In the next reporting period we intend to work on improving timescales for the conclusion of legal agreements. It is noted that our current timescales are significantly slower than the national average but also recognised that the current average timescales have been skewed by the conclusion of legacy cases within the reporting period.

## **E-planning**

- 50 The use of e-planning for the online submission of planning applications and use of the Council's website for public access to information continues and is being encouraged. The trend for electronic submissions continues to increase.

## **Charters**

- 51 Our Development Management Charter and Planning Enforcement Charter have both been updated during the reporting period. The Development Management Charter and the Planning Enforcement Charter set out what we do, how we do it and provide clear measurable standards. The documents are published on our website.

## **Plain English**

- 52 All publications are checked for the use of plain English to ensure that information is suitable for all readers. Information is published on our website in a number of different formats to meet the needs of users of the site. Guidance is available on our intranet for all Falkirk Council employees on the use of plain English. Attendance on training courses on report writing and the use of plain English is being rolled out across the Council. During the reporting period many officers with the planning service have attended these courses.

## **Complaints Procedures**

- 53 The Council has a complaints procedure and details are publicised on our website. The procedure is a 2 stage process, the first being frontline resolution and the second being investigation. The procedures follow the model developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Each Council service has a nominated lead officer for complaints and a Complaints Officers Working Group is in place. An annual report on the Council's performance in dealing with complaints is produced and published. Our 2016/2017 report highlights that the Council's performance, as a whole, is close to or better than the national average.

## **Customer Service**

- 54 Online surveys are routinely used to collect information from customers about how the planning service is performing. A link to our customer survey questionnaire is provided on staff email correspondence. We also distribute freepost card survey questionnaires with all hard copies of planning decision and correspondence. These are some of the comments we have received:

*“Thank you for your speedy action and reply”*

*“Thanks for the work you've done helping to process these consents.”*

*“I would like to thank you for all the advice you have given me regarding the planning permission for Alloa Rd your patience with me was impeccable.”*

*“I would like to say a massive thankyou to you and your colleagues for your decision on this matter, as now I can continue and move forward”*

*“I wanted to thank you for all your assistance and support over the years of getting our planning application from germination to approval. I could not have done it without you, and I don't think it would have been such a good application without your guidance either.”*

*“Thanks again for all your inputs, very professional and a pleasure to work with you and your colleagues at the Council on this project.”*

- 55 The Falkirk Council newspaper, Falkirk Council News, is published quarterly and is used by the planning service and all other Council services to bring the public news and information about Council policies, projects and services across the Council area. The Council has established a Citizens Panel with more than 1000 local people volunteering to complete three or four surveys each year. The surveys provide feedback on Council services, as well as information about the needs of local communities and other issues. This helps us improve our services and make sure we are meeting the needs of our local communities.

## **Governance**

### **Staffing Resources**

- 56 The Development Plan team and Development Management Unit have continued to operate throughout the year with reduced staff numbers. This has required greater flexible working, prioritisation of the workload, with a focus on statutory functions and less opportunity for improvement and discretionary projects.
- 57 The planning service is part of Falkirk Council Development Services. Development Services encompasses a broad range of related services and disciplines including environmental health, building standards, roads and transportation, emergency planning and waste management. The Service was being restructured during the last reporting period. This came into effect shortly after the start of the current reporting

period. The planning service now sits within a new Planning & Economic Development Division of Development Services, alongside economic development and asset management functions. This is bringing benefits in terms of closer integration of development planning, economic strategy and implementation of key strategic economic growth projects such as the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zones.

## Collaborative Working

- 58 Collaboration between the planning service and other Council services remains an important part of everyday working. In addition to the normal day-to-day contact between officers we continue to chair the Falkirk Flood Liaison and Advisory Group and have planning representation on the Falkirk Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Group. We also participate in the Development Management and Development Plan sub-groups of the Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS). Our regular liaison meetings with representatives from SEPA and Scottish Water are continuing as are our liaison meetings with the Council housing service, children’s services (education) and roads services. Our cross service officer working groups also continue to operate, dealing with the monitoring and spend of planning obligation financial contributions and also enforcement issues related to abandoned and untidy areas of private land.
- 59 A new group has also been established during the reporting year to improve communication between planning, asset management, housing and design teams in the delivery of the Council’s SHIP programme (see case studies).

<b>Case Study Title:</b>	
Council Housing Planning Delivery Group	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Area Wide, since 2017	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>	
6,12,14	
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Working</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Process Improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>

<b>Overview:</b>
<i>The Council's Corporate Service is delivering an ambitious programme of Council housing new build under the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). This is primarily on Council land, and it had become evident that sites were becoming increasingly complex to deliver due to a range of planning and property issues. The Council's design team, acting as agents for the housing service were engaging with Council planners and surveyors on an ad hoc basis, but this was not necessarily delivering the level of corporate collaboration required. A new corporate group has therefore been set up to monitor and agree actions on the key SHIP sites, and also to investigate the potential of other sites which may appear in future SHIPs.</i>
<b>Goals:</b>
<i>The overall objective was to improve collaboration between the Council's housing, design, asset management and planning functions in order to reduce delays to the SHIP programme and help to deliver Council housing on a range of sites.</i>
<b>Outcomes:</b>
<i>The group has helped communication between the various relevant arms of the Council in terms of progressing the SHIP sites. Services have a better understanding of each other's objectives and constraints, and there is greater clarity around actions and who is responsible for them.</i>
<b>Name of key officer</b>
<i>Douglas Duff</i>

<b>Case Study Title:</b>		
<b>Affordable Housing Provision</b>		
<b>Location and Dates:</b>		
Blinkbonny Road, Falkirk – 2017/2018		
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of outcomes</li> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>		
<b>Key Markers (please select all that apply):</b>		
2, 3, 11, 12		
<b>Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>		
<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Greenspace</li> <li>• Masterplanning</li> <li>• Local Develop Plan &amp; Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Development Management Processes</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Working</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Greenspace</li> <li>• Masterplanning</li> <li>• Local Develop Plan &amp; Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Development Management Processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Working</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Greenspace</li> <li>• Masterplanning</li> <li>• Local Develop Plan &amp; Supplementary Guidance</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Development Management Processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Working</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Placemaking</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Housing Supply</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):</b>		
<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Committee</li> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Committee</li> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Public</li> <li>• Key Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Committee</li> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>	

<b>Overview:</b>
The Blinkbonny Road site is a former school site that is owned by the Council and allocated in the Falkirk Local Development Plan for affordable housing development. The site has stood vacant for a number of years. Through collaborative working with other Council Services and engagement with elected Members and residents in the area a scheme to build 43 affordable houses has been developed for the site. An application for a Certificate of Lawful Development was submitted following pre-application discussion. This application was considered by the Planning Committee. In accordance with officer recommendations it was determined that the proposals comply with the Local Development Plan and are permitted development under Part 12, Class 33(a) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, as amended.
<b>Goals:</b>
<i>The overall goal was to achieve a housing scheme for the site in accordance with the Local Development Plan and wider Council aspirations to meet affordable housing need in the area. Also, to ensure that this could be achieved timeously by working collaboratively with stakeholders.</i>
<b>Outcomes:</b>
<i>Affordable housing is being built on this vacant brownfield site. The successful progress of the scheme relied on clear and proportionate planning policy and planning guidance and communication between all affected stakeholders. The project was managed efficiently so that there was a clear understanding of timescales and sharing of information.</i>
<b>Name of key officer</b>
<i>Katherine Chorley</i>

## Community Planning

60 Historically, there have not been strong links between the formal community planning process in Falkirk and the development plan process. However, efforts have been made over the reporting year to foster closer links. While the timing of LDP2 and the locality planning process does not fit comfortably together, spatial and community planning staff in the Council have agreed to work more closely together through the sharing of data and the alignment of objectives. Thus the LDP2 Proposed Plan will show how the spatial strategy dovetails with the objectives and outcomes of the Local Outcomes and Improvement Plan (LOIP), and the LDP team are supporting the locality planning process through membership of the key working groups, provision of evidence, and the identification of issues. Although the LOIP does not have a strong spatial focus, the community planning partnership has made extensive use of the place standard through the locality planning process, and this will bring a more spatial dimension to consideration of issues, and a closer relationship with the development plan.

## Efficient and Effective Decision Making

61 The majority of planning applications are determined under the Council's approved Scheme of Delegation (96.4%). The scheme allows local and major planning applications that are in accordance with the LDP to be determined by officers unless called in by any Councillor for consideration by the Planning Committee following publication of the weekly list of delegated recommendations. Where an application is called in the Councillor must state their planning reasons. The applicant/agent is

informed of the call in, who has made the request and their reasons. Councillors are encouraged by the planning service to discuss applications with officers before calling in an application. This Scheme ensures that the number of applications considered by the Planning Committee is generally small and limited to larger more controversial applications where a greater degree of public scrutiny is justified.

- 62 The Planning Committee meets every 4 weeks. Members not on the Committee and applicants/agents can address the Committee on written request.

### **Unit and Team Meetings**

- 63 Development Management Unit team meetings are held on a monthly basis and attended by all staff. These meetings are structured and minuted with the minutes of the meetings circulated to senior managers. At the team meetings the minutes of senior management team meetings are also relayed to the Units. These Unit meetings allow for work updates, discussion of performance issues and other information to be cascaded to officers. Weekly team briefings also take place as and when required which allow for the discussion of more urgent issues and information. Within the Planning & Environment Unit, Development Plan team meetings are held on a three weekly cycle as part of the project plan for LDP2.

### **Financial management and Local Governance**

- 64 The Planning Service has an important role in helping to deliver the objectives of the Council in a regulatory capacity and with regard to our knowledge and skills in problem solving and flexible working. Annual use of budget review templates has ensured revenue budget bids are scored against the Council's stated priorities. Priorities and objectives are aligned through the Single Outcome Agreement, Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Plan. The Service Performance Plan ensures staff are clear what their day to day role is in meeting the Council's priorities. Spend is guided by the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation and through monitoring by Internal Audit and the Council's Best Value Forum. Council procurement rules and procedures are followed. Regular monitoring of budgets is undertaken between the Unit Managers and the Planning Service accountant.

### **Training and Development**

- 65 A culture of sharing information and knowledge is encouraged within the planning service and across the Council.

- 66 The Council recognises the need for lifelong learning to gain new skills, to improve performance and to develop careers. Falkirk Council Employee & Organisational Development Team work in partnership with all Council Services to identify the needs of employees, Services and the Council as a whole and to provide training programmes to meet these needs. These programmes are publicised in a quarterly bulletin, with access being open to all employees and attendance being based on identified training needs and agreement of managers. Opportunities range from half day IT sessions to yearlong management development/leadership programmes.
- 67 The Council is accredited to deliver the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programmes at various levels. It is also recognised that attendance at training programmes can be difficult for some people because they work flexible hours or learn in a different way. Learning materials are available in different formats including books, DVDs as well as e-learning material. Most of these resources are work related but there are also resources to help staff with personal development training needs too.
- 68 Officers in the planning service have attended a range of courses during the reporting period. Course details and notes are shared electronically with other officers by those attending. Officers also regularly attend RTPi Chapter events and HOPS meetings. Email updates from Scottish Government, Idox, Planning Aid for Scotland and others are also circulated and day-to-day issues arising discussed at Unit meetings. Use of the Knowledge Hub is also encouraged.
- 69 Training sessions for all Councillors have been carried out. Sessions were organised and run by officers from the planning service, roads service and legal services. The sessions were also attended by officers from children's services and environmental health who may on occasion attend the Planning Committee to offer expert advice. The sessions were aimed at those on the Planning Committee and all other councillors who may be involved in the determination of planning applications by the full Council.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement**

- 70 For the Development Plan team, improvement remains focused on the themes of better online presentation of information through the continuing roll out of online interactive mapping; improved engagement with young people through use of the Place Standard and building relationships with schools and key faculty staff; and improving collaboration with other Council services and the community planning partnership. We have also spent the latter part of the year considering improvements that can be made to the structure and presentation of the Proposed Plan, which will be published in the next reporting year. We hope to report specifically on these improvements in the next PPF report.

- 71 For the Development Management Unit our focus remains on improving and maintaining our performance in decision making timescales for all types of applications. This is linked to continuing review of our procedures and engagement with stakeholders. A roll out of flexible working has started and will continue with increased use by officers and Councillors of tablets, laptops and smart phones as a way to assist in maintaining a high quality public service in the context of changes in staffing levels and budget restrictions. It is recognised that the Council's timescales for concluding legal agreements is an area that should be improved and this is planned within the next reporting period.

## **Part 2: Supporting Evidence**

1. Development Plan Scheme 2017
2. Falkirk LDP2 Project Plan and Stage Plans
3. LDP2 MIR Consultation Report
4. LDP2 Facebook Page
5. Development Plan Update Newsletter
6. Housing Land Audit 2017
7. Open Space Strategy
8. Our Future in the Past: Historic Environment Strategy for Falkirk
9. Supplementary Guidance
10. Development Management Customer Survey
11. Standing Orders
12. Development Management Charter
13. Enforcement Charter
14. Falkirk Council Complaints Procedure

15. Complaints Annual Report 2016 – 2017

16. Development Services Performance Update April – December 2017

17. Falkirk Council Employee Handbook

18. Citizens Panel

19. Falkirk News

20. Council Performance (Falkirk Council webpage)

21. Falkirk Council website

22. Falkirk THI website

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7	Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7
Design	x	Interdisciplinary Working	x
Conservation		Collaborative Working	x
Regeneration	x	Community Engagement	x
Environment	x	Placemaking	x
Greenspace	x	Charrettes	
Town Centres	x	Place Standard	x
Masterplanning	x	Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	x	Process Improvement	x
Housing Supply	x	Project Management	x
Affordable Housing	x	Skills Sharing	
Economic Development	x	Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes	x	Transport	
Planning Applications	x	Active Travel	x
Compulsory purchase/project delivery			x

### Part 3: Service Improvements 2018-2019

In the coming year we will:

Service Improvement	Timescale
Publish LDP2 Proposed Plan	August 2018
Complete Review of SG10 Education and New Development	March 2018
Complete Review of SG12 Affordable Housing	March 2018
Publish Development Plan Monitoring Report	January 2019
Establish new Employment Land Audit process	March 2019
Make enforcement register available online	December 2018
Review procedures for drafting and concluding planning obligations	March 2019

Increase public access to electronically stored planning application information	December 2019
Continue review of old minerals permissions	March 2019
Arrange developer/agent workshop on application validation requirements	March 2019
Meet with benchmarking partner to review PPF and share best practice	September 2018

Delivery of our Service Improvement Actions in 2017-18:

Service Improvement	Timescale
Analyse MIR responses and report back to customers through newsletter	Yes
Roll out interactive online mapping to Housing Land Audit	Yes
Finalise Historic Environment Strategy	Yes
Complete review of SG13 Open Space and New Development	No. Review will be undertaken as part of LDP2.
Prepare 2 year update to LDP1 Action Programme	Yes
Develop closer working between spatial and community planning	On-going
Review our Planning Charter	Yes
Continue review of old minerals permissions	Yes, work started and on-going
Meet with PPF benchmark partners to review PPF and share best practice	Yes
Continue review of development management procedures	On-going
Make enforcement charter available online	No. Completion delayed due to staff absence and need to prioritise other work
Increase public access to electronically stored planning application information	On-going
Arrange a further developer/agent workshop on application validation requirements	No, will take place 2018/2019
Carry out a review of implemented planning permissions	On-going
Training sessions on SG's and new legislation	Yes and on-going

## Part 4: National Headline Indicators

### A: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Planning

Development Planning	2017-18	2016-17
<b>Local Development Planning</b>		
Age of LDP at end of reporting period	32 months	20 months
Will the LDP be replaced by its 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary according to current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers changed over the past year?	Yes (3 month delay)	Yes (4 month delay)
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</b>		
Established land supply (units)	5865	7912
5-year effective housing land supply programming (units)	2893	2611
5-year housing supply total capacity (units)	4522	N/A

5-year effective housing land supply target (units)	3375	3375
5-year effective land supply (years)	4.3	3.9
Housing approvals (units)	807	1138
Housing completions over the last 5 years (units)	2671	2444
Marketable employment land supply (hectares)	51.1	268
Employment land take up during reporting year (hectares)	0	0

Source: 2017/18 HLA base date June 2017

### B: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management

<b>Development Management:</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
<b>Project Planning</b>		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	<b>39.9 % (242)</b>	<b>27.9 % (171)</b>
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	<b>0% (0)</b>	<b>0% (0)</b>
<b>Decision Making</b>		
Application approval rate	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>96.1%</b>
Delegation rate	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
Validation	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>63.9%</b>
<b>Decision-making Timescales</b>		
Major Developments	<b>20.3</b>	<b>60.2</b>
Local developments (non-householder)	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.3</b>
Householder developments	<b>5.6</b>	<b>7.2</b>
<b>Legacy Cases</b>		
Number cleared during reporting period	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
Number remaining	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

### C: Enforcement activity

	2017-18	2016-17
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	1	12
Complaints lodged and investigated	92	143
Breaches identified – no further action taken	14	88 (all)
Cases closed	43	82 (resolved)
Notices served	4	1
Direct Action	0	N/A
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

### D: Consideration of National Headline Indicators

#### Local Development Plan

72 During the reporting year, work on LDP2 has continued, with the Main Issues Report consultation completed in May 2017, as per the Development Plan Scheme (DPS) 2017. Subsequently, the focus has been on collating the consultation response, and preparing the Proposed Plan. At the time of writing (July 2018), additional time sought by elected Members to scrutinise the Proposed Plan will result in some delay in its approval and publication, and may cause consequent delays to the submission date to Scottish Ministers. However, allowance has been made in the programme for publication of notifiable modifications. If these can be avoided, it is anticipated that the date for submission to Scottish Ministers in DPS 2017 can still be met. In either event, the overall timescale for adoption remains within the five year lifespan of the current LDP.

#### Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs

73 The 5 year effective housing land supply has improved slightly with an increase in the programmed supply to 4.3 years. The total remaining capacity of sites within the effective supply is considerably greater, exceeding the five year supply target. The established land supply shows a significant decrease as one large site in particular has been reduced in scale from 1500 units to an indicative 200 units. In addition the Housing Land Audit (HLA) contains 35 sites which are classified as non-contributing sites. These are sites which while allocated as housing sites in the LDP or occasionally with planning permission face such uncertainty in delivery that they are excluded from the land supply calculations. These sites total 2767 units. Completion rates to June 2017 have been stable however there have been more completions in the private sector than in previous years. Indications are that rates are expected to slow

in 2017/18 and the market in Falkirk continues to be challenging particularly for smaller housebuilders.

- 74 In terms of employment land, this year's audit has taken a more rigorous approach in identifying the amount of land that is marketable. This reflects the findings of the Employment Land Technical Paper prepared to support LDP2, and explains the major reduction in the supply. There are currently six sites totalling 51.1 ha which are considered to be serviced and immediately available for development. In terms of employment land take up, although there has been no take up this year, a Class 5 industrial building (1.68 ha) has been approved at Earls Gate Park in Grangemouth which is expected to feed through into next year's figures. There are also energy developments in the pipeline at Grangemouth, and continuing development in the existing industrial estates, utilising existing buildings for example at WH Malcolm in West Mains.

## **Development Management**

### **Project Planning**

- 75 We encourage developers and agents to seek pre-application advice from the planning service, other Council services and consultees. Falkirk Council does not charge for pre-application advice or for dealing with general planning enquiries. This service is publicised on our website. Procedures are in place to record the percentage of planning applications where applicants have sought pre-application advice and show that this service is well used.
- 76 There is a continued reluctance from applicants and agents to enter into formal processing agreements despite the proactive stance we take to encourage their use by providing guidance and a sample template on our website. However, with all applications for major and local developments we use informal project plans. This includes a commitment to enter into pre-application discussions with the applicant and statutory consultees, to identify timescales for submissions, responses and Committee dates, to maintain regular contact with the applicant/agent, to identify and seek to resolve any planning issues that may arise to ensure that statutory timescales are met or where appropriate extensions of time agreed or applications withdrawn.

### **Decision making timescales**

- 77 Regular caseload monitoring by case officers and line managers is inherent and has helped us to improve our overall performance timescales since our last PPF. We are pleased with the improved performance but recognise that the number of

applications received and complexity of cases can easily skew the performance figures. We are continuing to make good progress to reduce the number of legacy cases with the procedures in place to monitor caseload. Our delegation rate also remains consistently high.

### Validation

78 The percentage of applications which are validated on first receipt has reduced from 63.9% to 47.9%. It is disappointing that despite clear guidance on our website and a workshop session with agents it tends to be agents that regularly submit application who still fail to make valid submissions and repeatedly make the same errors in haste to submit applications without adequate information. During the next reporting period we will seek improvements from agents.

### Enforcement Activity

79 Due to long term staff absence we have had to be flexible in the way in which we deal with enforcement activity. In the absence of a dedicated enforcement officer for lengthy periods enforcement enquiries are being allocated to planning officers to deal with along with other case work. This has had an impact on how cases are recorded but not on how cases are being handled. This situation is being reviewed to ensure that enforcement activity is recorded as distinct from general planning enquiries.

## Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics

### A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Timescales	2017-18	2017-18	2016-17
<b>Overall</b>			
<b>Major developments</b>	7	<b>70</b>	<b>60.2</b>
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	221	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>• Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	77.5%		
	28.9%		
<b>Householder developments</b>	289	<b>6.1</b>	<b>7.2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>• Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	95.2%		
	4.8%		

<b>Housing Developments</b>			
<b>Major</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>37.5</b>
<b>Local housing developments</b>	64	<b>11.8</b>	<b>13.9</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> </ul>	54.7%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	45.3%		
<b>Business and Industry</b>			
<b>Major</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Local business and industry developments</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> </ul>	<b>75%</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	<b>25%</b>		
<b>EIA Developments</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>Other Consents</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>As listed in the guidance(right)</i></li> </ul>	<b>90</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b>Planning/legal agreements</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major: average time</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>	<b>347.9 Weeks</b>	<b>168.7 Weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: average time</li> </ul>	<b>14</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>30.9</b>

**B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Total number of decisions No.</b>	<b>Original decision upheld</b>			
		<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2016-2017</b>	
		<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Local reviews</b>	9	0	0	4	33.3
<b>Appeals to Scottish Ministers</b>	5	3	60%	3	0%

## **C: Context**

80 Comments on decision making timescales are provided in Part 4 of the PPF. In relation to the average time for legal agreements it is noted that the figure in this reporting period is significantly slower than last year's figure and well above the Scottish average. This is as the result of the conclusion of a legacy case within the reporting period relating to a strategic development area in the LDP. With the assistance of funding of up to £1.5m from the Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure fund it has been possible to address an obstacle to the conclusion of the legal agreement and issue planning permission in principle.

## **Part 6: Workforce Information**

	<b>Tier 1</b> <i>Chief Executive</i>	<b>Tier 2</b> <i>Director</i>	<b>Tier 3</b> <i>Head of Service</i>	<b>Tier 4</b> <i>Manager</i>
<b>Head of Planning Service</b>			1	

<b>RTPI Qualified Staff</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Development Management	11	11
Development Planning	4	3.3
Enforcement	0	0
Specialists <sup>1</sup>	7	5.5
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible) <sup>2</sup>	8	7

<b>Staff Age Profile</b>	<b>Headcount</b>
Under 30	0
30-39	8
40-49	6
50 and over	15

## **Part 7: Planning Committee Information**

<b>Committee &amp; Site Visits</b>	<b>Number per year</b>
Full council meetings	12
Planning committees	10
Area committees	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Includes Environment team (Biodiversity, Access, Landscape, Design/Conservation Officers and Environment Co-ordinator)

<sup>2</sup> Includes Planning & Environment Manager, Parks and Bereavement Co-ordinator, Parks Development Officers, Technical Support Officers and Countryside Rangers

Committee site visits	14
Local Review Body	6
LRB site visits	9

## Performance Markers

	Performance Marker	Council Response/Evidence
<b>Driving Improved Performance</b>		
1	Decision Making	<p>National Headline Indicators show that our decision making timescales for major, local non-householder and householder developments have all improved and are above the national average.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b> Part 4: National Headline Indicators Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics</p>
2	Project Management	<p>We promote the use of processing agreements. There is guidance and a template on our website. Agreements are invited during pre-application discussions and in correspondence with applicants and agents.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b> Part 4: National Headline Indicators Pre-application, paragraph 20 Flexible team working, paragraphs 25 – 29 Case study, Management of hazardous substances consents Processing agreements, paragraph 47 Legal agreements, paragraph 48 Project planning, paragraphs 75 - 76</p>
3	Early Collaboration	<p>We encourage early dialogue with applicants/agents and offer a free pre-application service. Guidance is provided on our website.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b> Case study, Denny Town centre regeneration Case study, management of hazardous substances consents Case study, Council housing planning delivery Case study, affordable housing provision Quality of outcomes, paragraph 09 Contact, paragraphs 17 – 19 Pre-application, paragraphs 20 – 21 Developer contributions, paragraph 24 Processing agreements, paragraph 47 Collaborative working, paragraphs 58 - 59</p>
4	Legal Agreements	<p>The progress of applications subject to legal agreements is closely monitored and applications are reported back to Planning Committee for reconsideration if not determined within 6 months.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p>

		Legal agreements, paragraph 47
5	Enforcement Charter	The Charter is up to date.  <b>PPF Reference</b> Charters, paragraph 51
6	Continuous Improvement	Progress on National Headline Indicators and Service Improvements are set out in the relevant sections of the PPF.  For development planning, improvement remains focused on the themes of better online presentation of information through the continuing roll out of online interactive mapping; improved engagement with young people through use of the Place Standard and building relationships with schools and key faculty staff; and improving collaboration with other Council services and the community planning partnership. For development management our focus is on maintaining and improving decision making timescales and reviewing current procedures  <b>PPF Reference</b> Part 1: Qualitative narrative and case studies Part 2: Supporting evidence Part 3: Service improvements 2018 – 2019 Part 4: National Headline Indicators Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics
<b>Promoting the Plan-Led System</b>		
7	Local Development Plan less than 5 years since adoption	The LDP was adopted in July 2015, and was 32 months old at the end of the reporting period.  <b>PPF Reference</b> Quality of Outcomes, paragraph 09 Part 4: National Headline Indicators
8	Development Plan Scheme demonstrates next LDP ➤ On course for adoption within 5 year cycle ➤ Project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	DPS 2018 indicates adoption of LDP2 in July 2020. i.e. within 5 year timescale. Project planning continues through preparation of stage project plans, 3 weekly team meetings, and three monthly senior management meetings. Some slippage is likely in the publication of the Proposed Plan in summer 2018, which has pushed the programme backwards by 2-3 months, although, if notifiable modifications are avoided, it is hoped that this can be clawed back.  <b>PPF Reference</b> Development Plan, paragraphs 40 – 44 Local Development Plan, paragraph 70
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Member workshops were held in June 2016 to examine options for inclusion in the MIR and to review the pre-MIR issues responses and 'call for sites' submissions. Meetings were held with a sub-group of the Administration in August and September 2016 to explore key choices and provide a further opportunity for input to the process. Elected member engagement has continued post-MIR with briefings on the consultation response and issues for the Proposed Plan.

		<p><b>PPF Reference</b> Part 1: Qualitative Narrative (Quality of Service and Engagement) Development Plan, paragraphs 39 - 43</p>
10	<p>Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation</p>	<p>Pre-MIR consultation took place in 2015/16 with all stakeholders including key agencies, business, housebuilders, community councils and the public using a variety of techniques. This was carried through into the MIR consultation which took place from February 2017 to May 2017</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b> Part 1: Qualitative Narrative (Quality of Service and Engagement)</p>
11	<p>Regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through SPGs produced on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information required to support applications; and</li> <li>➤ Expected developer contributions</li> </ul>	<p>The Council has a comprehensive suite of 16 SG documents have now been approved by the Scottish Government. Overall, the SGs provide guidance on the detailed implementation of policy, particularly in respect of design and placemaking, built and natural heritage, and infrastructure and developer contributions. Where relevant the SGs provide guidance on the information required to support applications and checklists for applicants to ensure that all the relevant issues have been considered and addressed pre-submission, to give the applications the highest chance of prompt assessment and determination.</p> <p>Those SGs which set out required developer contributions provide clear guidance on the circumstances in which contributions will be required, the scale of those contributions, and how the contributions are derived, thereby demonstrating proportionality. The Council has committed to reviewing contribution rates and thresholds through LDP2, and has embarked on an early review of SG10 on Education and New Development to update contribution rates.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Quality of outcomes, paragraph 09 Case study, Kinnaird village Case study, Denny town centre regeneration Historic environment, paragraph13 Greenspace, paragraph 16 Case study, Falkirk open space strategy implementation Case study, Inner Forth Landscape Initiative Contact, paragraph 17 Pre-application, paragraphs 20 - 21 Developer contributions, paragraph 22 - 24 Flexible team working, paragraph 25 - 30 Development plan, paragraph 44 Processing agreements, paragraph 47 Collaborative working, paragraph 58 Project planning, paragraph 75</p>

<b>Simplifying and Streamlining</b>		
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit	<p>Regular liaison meetings between planning and other relevant services are held on housing, education, open space and cemeteries. These ensure the integration of plans and strategies, sharing of information, and liaison on day to day issues, including current planning applications. During the reporting year, closer liaison has developed with community planning, and a new group formed to help improve communication on the delivery of the Council's new build housing programme. The Planning Obligations Monitoring Group brings together colleagues from planning, finance, legal and the various delivery services to ensure that developer contributions are taken forward and applied timeously to relevant projects.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Case study, Kinnaird Village  Case study, Denny town centre regeneration  Pre-application, paragraph 20  Developer contributions, paragraph 22  Flexible team working, paragraph 28  Development delivery, paragraph 31- 32, 35  Investment zone bid, paragraph 38  Staffing resources, paragraph 56  Collaborative working, paragraph 58 - 59  Case study, Council housing planning delivery group  Case study, Affordable housing provision  Community planning, paragraph 60  Financial management and local governance, paragraph 64  Training and development, paragraph 65</p>
13	Sharing Good Practice	<p>Staff have attended forums, conferences, training events and RTPI Chapter events. The Knowledge Hub is used to share information and experience. We have liaised with our SOLACE benchmarking family members in reviewing our previous and current PPF.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Case study, Kinnaird village  Greenspace, paragraph 16  Training and development, paragraph 65 - 69</p>
<b>Delivering Development</b>		
14	Stalled Sites	<p>We have cleared legacy cases during the reporting period and continue to work with applicants and agents to keep numbers to a minimum. Deadlines for dealing with applications are set and monitored. Minded to grant decisions are reconsidered within 6 months if not determined.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Development delivery, paragraph 37  Processing agreements, paragraph 47  Legal agreements, paragraph 48  Project planning, paragraph 75  Decision making timescales 77</p>

		Context, paragraph 79
15	<p>Developer contributions:  clear and proportionate  expectations  Set out in development plan  and  In pre-application discussions</p>	<p>Our LDP and SGs provide clear guidance on the circumstances in which contributions will be sought, the scale of those contributions and how they have been calculated. We demonstrate that where contributions are sought this is in accordance with circular 3/2012. The LDP and SGs are published on our website. Staff refer to the documents in pre-application discussions and correspondence. We consider impact of developer contributions on development viability in liaison with applicants/agents and the District Valuer. There is regular corporate officer liaison regarding contributions to take account of changing circumstances. Where appropriate, payments are phased to mitigate the impact on development viability and cash flow.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b>  Quality of outcomes, paragraph 09  Pre-application, paragraph 20 - 21  Developer contributions, paragraph 22 - 24  Development plan, paragraph 44  Processing agreements, paragraph 47</p>

**Falkirk Council**  
**Development Services**