

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK



Falkirk Council
Development Services

ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020

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Foreword

01 Falkirk Council is pleased to submit its ninth annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) to Scottish Government. The PPF is an annual report produced by all Scottish planning authorities. It sets out what we have done during the year to maintain and improve the quality of planning service that Falkirk Council provides and shows our commitment to continuous improvement. The structure of the report follows the PPF template and guidance produced by Heads of Planning Scotland. The report includes Scottish Government feedback on our performance last year and provides a broad overview of how we are performing and our plans for 2020/2021.

Feedback on previous report

02 The feedback we received on last year's report was good. The Scottish Government recognised the work Falkirk Council is doing to monitor, maintain and improve the quality of planning service the Council provides. Our PPF was assessed by Scottish Government against 12 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. Falkirk Council received 10 green ratings and 2 amber ratings. None of our performance markers were red. The green ratings we were commended for included:

- Timescales for determining planning applications. The Council's timescales for determining major, local and householder applications are all better than or match the Scottish average.
- Our proactive approach to pre-application discussions and the clear advice we provide.
- Our willingness to enter into processing agreements.
- The Council's Local Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance were commended for their clarity, as were the Council's development plan scheme and progress to ensure the Council maintains an up to date development plan.
- Our corporate working.

03 Where we received amber ratings it was because the average timescales to conclude planning obligations was slower than the Scottish average. Also, because we had not completed all the service improvements we had proposed.

Introduction

Context

04 The Falkirk Council area is at the centre of Scotland, at the heart of the road and rail network. It has a growing population (160,130 in 2018). It comprises a network of towns and villages, each with its own strong identity, Falkirk being the principal administrative and service centre. The area retains a strong manufacturing base within a diverse economy. Grangemouth hosts the largest petrochemical complex in Scotland and is also the country's busiest container port. The area has a diverse landscape character and a proud history stretching back to Roman times. The Falkirk Council area is dynamic and forward looking with new popular tourist destinations such as the Falkirk Wheel, the Kelpies and Helix Park.

Our Vision

05 Falkirk Council's planning service is a part of the Council's Development Services which encompasses a range of related services and professional disciplines. It has a key role in achieving the Council's priorities. These are set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022 and Business Plan 2019 – 2024. The key priorities are:

People

- To be ambitious and aspirational for our people and communities;
- Reduce the impact of poverty on children and their families;

Place

- Grow our economy;
- Improve the neighbourhoods we live in;
- Promote vibrant town centres;

Partnership

- Work with communities to deliver better services;
- Empower and enable people to be self-reliant.

Part 1: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

Quality of Outcomes

Development Quality

- 06 Our Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery Plan sets out a vision for the Council area as ‘the place to be’. The planning service is central to delivering the spatial aspects of this vision, engaging with our communities on how they can grow sustainably, adding value to development through the planning application process, facilitating economic growth, and creating a quality green network which promotes health and well-being.
- 07 The Falkirk Local Development Plan provides the overarching direction on placemaking and design quality, supported by Supplementary Guidance notes which are now embedded in day to day discussion with stakeholders, and provide a 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.
- 08 Two contrasting case studies of development completed over the course of the year which demonstrate quality, are presented here.

Case Study: 1	
Forth Valley College, New Falkirk Campus	
Location and Dates:	
Falkirk, completed 2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quality of outcomes	
Key Markers:	
3, 7, 10, 11, 12	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project management

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration • Masterplanning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placemaking
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority Planning Staff • Forth Valley College and consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public
Overview:	
<p>Redevelopment of the Forth Valley College Falkirk campus to provide new and improved facilities fit for the future.</p> <p>Falkirk is the College's headquarters and its biggest campus. It majors in science and engineering, life science, chemical, electrical & mechanical engineering and oil and gas process technologies. The campus also provides advanced level provision in computing, construction, sport, hairdressing, beauty therapy, health care and early years Development of a college campus with ancillary office, retail, café and bar. It is an ideal location between Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. In addition its proximity to Grangemouth means the new facility will continue to foster links with local industry, business and the wider community.</p> <p>The development of this site is a key element of the Falkirk Gateway. The Council's flagship new urban quarter on the eastern edge of the town. The College development will act as a catalyst for economic growth and will compliment the wider redevelopment of the area.</p>	
Goals:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of development plan proposal to provide a new college campus facility • Improved education facilities that support the existing economy and future growth • A catalyst for future investment in the area, building on the success of existing developments in the vicinity such as the Helix, Kelpies and Falkirk Community Stadium 	
Outcomes:	
<p>Through collaborative public/private sector working and Scottish Government investment the development was delivered on time</p>	
Name of key officer	
Ilan Dryden	

Case Study: 2	
New Council Housing, Abbots Road, Grangemouth	
Location and Dates:	
Grangemouth, completed 2020	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of outcomes • Quality of Service and Engagement 	
Key Markers:	
3, 12	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Affordable Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working • Regeneration
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council Planning Staff • Falkirk Council Building Design • General public 	
Overview:	
<p>This proposal involved the demolition of a former nursery and its replacement with 14 houses and 4 flats. There was extensive pre-application discussion between Council services and consultation with members and the public to achieve a scheme that responds to the context of the site and provides a group of residential buildings that provide an attractive residential environment</p>	
Goals:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet an identified housing need • To ensure a good quality residential environment 	
Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regeneration of a brownfield site that was surplus to education requirements. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of affordable housing to meet an identified need • A design solution that responds to the context of the site and provides an attractive residential environment
Name of key officer
Katherine Chorley

Town Centres

09 Our town centres, and particularly Falkirk Town Centre, continue to face difficult challenges, which have been exacerbated latterly by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council has continued to promote action to improve, sustain and diversify the role of town centres to meet these challenges.

- A new Revitalising Falkirk Town Centre Partnership has been established to agree and deliver an Action Plan for the centre.
- A £2m programme of town centre projects is being taken forward utilising resources from the Scottish Government’s Town Centre Capital Fund. This includes feasibility work for an extension to the Falkirk Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), public realm enhancements, rail station enhancements, and progress of Grangemouth Town Centre regeneration work identified by the ‘Making Places’ process
- Work continues on the delivery of the Council’s civic headquarters and arts centre project which is intended to be a catalyst for revitalisation of Falkirk Town Centre. Project assessment criteria have been developed which will favour options which deliver the maximum positive impact on Town Centre vitality and viability.
- Following the successful completion of the Falkirk THI, which won an award at the 2019 Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning, investment in new residential use within the Town Centre is continuing, through both new build and conversion of redundant floorspace.

Greenspace

10 Work continues on the implementation of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.

11 The Zetland Park Project was awarded delivery phase funding by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in December 2019 and has also secured additional funding from Sportscotland, The Scottish Landfill Communities Fund and Historic Environment Scotland as well as funding from the local community and local businesses.

- 12 The preparation and implementation of a masterplan for Herbertshire Castle Park in Dunipace is progressing. With funding from LEADER, a local group “Community Greenspace Initiative” produced a masterplan for the park in consultation with the local community in 2018. Further LEADER funding was secured in December 2019 which together with additional Council capital funding and planning obligations for greenspace improvement will be used to implement phase 1 of masterplan improvements including: viewing platforms, tree and pollinator planting, signage and interpretation panels, an improved cycle route and wheelchair accessible parking, paths and facilities. Improvements will be delivered during 2020.
- 13 Consultation on the review of our Core Paths Plan concluded in June 2019 and objections are in the process of being reviewed. Once all proposed additions, deletions and realignments have been taken into account, the changes proposed in the Revised Core Paths Plan (draft) equate to over 84 km of additional routes across the path network. The success of path network development in the area has been recognised by Falkirk being declared the Ramblers Association’s “Britain’s Best Walking Neighbourhood” in 2019 (see case study).
- 14 Our Community Food Growing Strategy was approved in October 2019 alongside an allotment action plan. Work is underway to produce food growing action plans for orchards, pocket allotments and school gardens.
- 15 Council officers are working in partnership with environmental charities Buglife and Froglife to implement projects which both received funding from Scottish Natural Heritage’s biodiversity challenge fund in 2019.
- 16 In partnership with Central Scotland Green Network Trust we have produced a Forest Estate Plan for all Council owned woodlands split into 6 distinct Urban Woodland Management Plans. The Plan will allow us to apply for Woodland Improvement Grant and Sustainable Management of Forest Grant under the Scottish Government’s Forestry Grant Scheme. Once implemented the Forest Estate Plan will involve the planting of nearly 40,000 trees; the clearance of 4ha of woodland; the thinning of 93ha of woodland; safety surveys of 67ha of woodland; the creation of over 24,000m² of new paths; and the improvement of over 14,000m² of existing paths. Preparatory work is underway to implement the Urban Woodland Management Plan for the Falkirk North area in 2020/21.
- 17 The Council was also successful at the 2019 Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning scooping the overall award and People’s Choice award for the Carron Dams Local Nature Reserve: A Dam Fine Place. This project, featured in last year’s PPF, has been successfully used as an outdoor learning space to inspire the local community and

neighbouring high school to learn through drama, history, sculpture, photography and nature. The Council were also partners in the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative's success in the partnership category of the awards.

Case Study: 3	
Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood Award 2019	
Location and Dates:	
Area Wide, 2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Outcomes 	
Key Markers:	
12	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenspace • Active travel • Transport 	
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council Planning and Transport Staff • Sustrans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners
Overview:	
<p>Falkirk boasts a remarkable 617km of paths, all of which are well signposted and maintained. Those making everyday journeys are well catered to with wide pavements, green infrastructure and many easy to navigate routes around the town's shops, services, bars and restaurants. Those who want to explore a little wider can do so on foot from the town centre, with many routes linking up areas of town and countryside in an interesting and unique way. The work of our Outdoor Access Team have put in over the past decade includes the expansion of the path network from 431km to 617km. This work was recognised with the area being declared the Ramblers Association's "Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood" in 2019.</p> <p>Falkirk was nominated for Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood because it provides a</p>	

distinctive mix between large scale 20th century redevelopment and well-preserved historical neighbourhoods whose small shops, cafes and pleasant walking routes contribute to a very welcoming area for walkers. The Roman remains, canals, and waterways provide this town with great places to walk. With its incredible features such as the Kelpies, the Falkirk Wheel, and a public right of way through the city centre, it has been referred to as the secret success story of Scotland.

Goals:

A public path network which contributes towards sustainable development and climate goals while improving the health and wellbeing of communities

Outcomes:

A high-quality public path network which is recognised on a national scale.

Name of key officer

Danny Thallon

Historic Environment

18 Implementation of the Council’s Historic Environment Strategy, approved in 2018, continues. Progress during the year included:

- Research work on two Areas of Townscape Value in Bo’ness and Grangemouth was carried out by post graduate students at the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture in Edinburgh University (see case study).
- Stage 2 HLF bid for nearly £1m for the Zetland Park restoration project was approved.
- Scotland’s Garden and Landscape Heritage together with Northlight Heritage, completed a 3 year project, *Glorious Gardens*, to record locally historic landscapes in the Falkirk Council area (see case study).
- The Falkirk Great Places Partnership has continued to deliver a variety of projects aimed at building capacity, promoting engagement, and raising awareness of the area’s rich cultural heritage.
- A survey of Buildings at Risk in the Council area has been completed. Links are being made with the Great Places programme. Arnothill House, a significant Building at Risk, has been renovated and brought back into community use, while work has started on the restoration of Rosebank Distillery.

Case Study: 4	
Areas of Townscape Value Appraisal	
Location and Dates:	
Bo'ness and Grangemouth, 2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Outcomes • Culture of Continuous Improvement 	
Key Markers:	
6, 12, 13	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation • Collaborative Working 	
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Authority Staff • University of Edinburgh 	
Overview:	
<p>The Falkirk Local Development Plan identifies Areas of Townscape Value in various communities across the Council area. These represent townscapes of local historic and architectural interest which have not been designated as Conservation Areas, but nonetheless merit recognition. The Historic Environment Strategy commits to undertaking further appraisal of these areas to identify what makes them special, and to inform possible future Conservation Area designation. Limited resources have delayed progress on this work, but an opportunity presented to collaborate with the Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies at the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture in Edinburgh University, and investigate two of these areas in Bo'ness and Grangemouth. The students undertook detailed research, prepared reports, and presented these to the Council and local groups.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The objective was to gather information and analyse the quality and distinctiveness of these areas of Bo'ness and Grangemouth, at minimal cost to the</p>	

Council, to provide an interesting and meaningful research project for the students, and build relationships with the university.

Outcomes:

The students prepared high quality reports which have highlighted the importance of these areas and provided key evidence for use in their future conservation, and possible designation as Conservation Areas. The work has raised awareness of the value of these areas within the local community. Joint working with the university has been successful, and is likely to lead to further collaboration in the future.

Name of key officer

Ruth Simpson

Case Study: 5

Glorious Gardens Project

Location and Dates:

Council wide, 2016-2019

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:

- Quality of outcomes
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

6, 10, 12

Key Areas of Work:

- Conservation

Stakeholders Involved:

- Planning Authority Staff
- Scotland’s Gardens and Landscape Heritage

Overview:

The Falkirk Council area has many historic gardens and designed landscapes which

are not included in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, but nonetheless have value and make an important contribution to the heritage of the area. However, they have limited protection and recognition. Whilst non-inventory sites are given some status in the Falkirk Local Development Plan, and are listed in the accompanying supplementary guidance, there is a lack of information about them. The Glorious Gardens project, led by Scotland’s Gardens and Landscape Heritage (SGLH), and funded by HES and HLF, seeks to address this. It has surveyed a number of priority sites in the area, prepared reports identifying their key features and significance, and developed a conservation strategy and landowner guidance notes for the area. The work has been carried by local volunteers who have been trained and supervised by SGLH.

Goals:

The objective was to survey some of the more important non-inventory historic gardens and designed landscapes to provide a platform for the future conservation and protection of these sites, at minimal cost to the Council.

Outcomes:

The Council now has access to quality information on non-inventory sites which will be referenced in our supplementary guidance on Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations, will provide an evidence base for decisions on applications affecting these designed landscapes, and can be used to inform restoration projects such as Zetland Park.

Name of key officer

Ruth Simpson

Quality of Service and Engagement

Development Management: Support and Guidance for Applicants

Contact/Accessibility

- 19 Development Management officers can be contacted by email, by telephone and prior to the COVID-19 during March, in person. Contact details are published on our website, on emails, letters and business cards. In addition to the general availability of officers we also normally operate duty officer services where people can receive free planning advice and guidance. This is supplemented by extensive planning guidance and other useful information published on our website.

- 20 All planning applications, pre-application enquiries and general planning enquiries are logged and acknowledged on receipt with a case reference and details of how to contact us. Responses are given by email where possible which allows us to give quick replies and also has cost benefits.
- 21 Due to COVID-19 restrictions we had to suspend our drop in service and meetings in person but made changes to maintain a high level of contact/accessibility. All Development Management staff are working remotely and can be contacted by email and telephone. We have maintained our general enquiry service and video conferencing facilities are available. The information on our website has been updated to offer further guidance and to keep people updated on the availability of our services during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Pre-application

- 22 We continue to offer a free pre-application advice service for all types of applications, from smaller householder applications to major and national applications. Our willingness to offer pre-application advice and the availability of information is emphasised in discussions with prospective developers and agents. The use of project plans and processing agreements is promoted.
- 23 In addition to providing written responses to pre-application enquiries, staff make themselves available for meetings and telephone calls with prospective applicants and liaise with other Council services and external agencies to offer guidance early in the planning process. There is also information and guidance on the Council's website to assist prospective applicants and the public. This includes the development plan, supplementary guidance and links to the Scottish Government website and other external websites where planning guidance can be found. Information on the website is clear and easily accessible. It shows what is required for a valid planning application, what additional information may be requested and how to contact us for further guidance. This all ensures that requests for information to support applications are clear and proportionate and seeks to avoid delays in the processing of applications.

Processing Agreements

- 24 An agreement template is published on our website. We continue to advise prospective developers of our willingness to enter into processing agreements but there has been little take up. Applicants and agents are generally satisfied we have procedures in place to manage and monitor the processing of applications. Case officers and line managers can be easily contacted. Contact details are published on application acknowledgement letters and on all other correspondence. Case officers

have regular contact with applicants and agents to discuss applications and to provide case updates.

Legal Agreements

- 25 Advice and guidance is set out in the development plan and supplementary guidance setting out the circumstances in which legal agreements will be required. Where financial contributions may be sought, the reasoning and likely amounts that will be sought are explained in the supplementary guidance. This information is published on our website and referenced in pre-application discussions.
- 26 The heads of terms of legal agreements are progressed prior to recommendation. We use standard templates for instructions to the Council's legal services to draft agreements. This ensures all information needed is provided by the Development Management Unit at an early stage and minimises potential delays. Minded to grant recommendations are worded to set 6 month timescales for the conclusion of agreements or review of the minded to grant decision. The progress of legal agreements is closely monitored by the planning service and legal services.

Charters

- 27 Our Development Management and Planning Enforcement Charters are published on our website. They set out what we do, and how we do it, and provide clear measurable standards. Both documents are regularly reviewed and updated. Our Development Management Charter is to be reviewed during the next reporting period to take account of the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 and changes that may be required as a result of COVID-19 circumstances.

Complaints

- 28 The Council's complaints procedures are published on our website. It is a 2 stage procedure. The first stage is a frontline resolution. This aims to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provide the service. Stage 2 deals with 2 types of complaint; those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. Stage 2 investigations are carried out by Service Unit Managers, with the final complaints responses signed off at Head of Service level or above. Following investigation, if customers are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have dealt with their complaint, they can ask the SPSO to look at it. These procedures follow the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) model.
- 29 Each Council service has a nominated lead officer for complaints and a Complaints Officers Working Group. At a national level, a Complaint Handlers network has been

established in conjunction with the SPSO and a Knowledge Hub forum so that Councils can share good practice and common queries. Falkirk Council is part of this group. An annual report on the Council's performance in dealing with complaints is published on our website. The report for 2018/2019 sets out the Council's performance against the indicators for complaints performance set by the SPSO. National benchmarking information is not available but in previous years the figures for Falkirk Council were close or better than the national average in terms of the number of complaints closed at stage 1 and the number of complaints upheld.

Customer Feedback

30 Customer feedback is captured regularly using a variety of channels. Use of the Council's website and various social media platforms to communicate information and news is promoted, as is the Council's People's Panel. This panel is made up of local people of all ages who have volunteered to complete regular online questionnaires about Council services and the local issues that affect them and their area. Online surveys are routinely used to collect information from customers about how the planning service is performing. A freepost card survey questionnaire is sent out with all planning decision notices. A link to our customer survey is attached to emails we send. Performance is monitored and regularly reported to Members for their consideration at a Scrutiny Committee. This helps us improve our services and make sure we are meeting the needs of communities. These are some of the positive responses we have received this year.

"...phoned the Chief Executive Office today to express... thanks and gratitude for your help in assisting with his planning enquiry..."

"Many thanks for your informative response; I appreciate you taking the time to look into this."

"Many thanks, that's really helpful. Very much appreciate such detailed information. Thank you once again for your prompt response."

"I just wanted to say a huge thanks for your assistance over the past few years. It is great being able to pick up the phone/send an email to you knowing you will respond and help out. I'm not saying others ignore me and don't help but I appreciate your input and pointers!"

I just want to let you know how delighted I am with the quick response from yourself & all the departments involved on the removal of the signs.....I much appreciate you resolving this matter"

"This is certainly helpful and I can't thank you enough for the professional and very fast service in an emergency moment I am having. Thank you again your assistance is much appreciated."

“Brian and John were well impressed the other day (as they said to you directly). They said that they had not dealt with a planning officer so proactive before”

Development Planning

31 The Council has made good progress with LDP2 over the course of the reporting year. We completed preparation of the Examination documentation and submitted to Scottish Ministers in July 2019, in accordance with our Development Plan Scheme timetable. Although the Examination did not start until October 2019, the Examination was completed within 5 months, and the Examination report was published at the end of March, again in accordance with our programme. An oral hearing into housing land issues was held, but otherwise, requests for further information from the reporters’ were limited in number. Our project management approach, involving stage planning, regular team meetings, and project meetings with senior management, has assisted in ensuring that programme timescales have been met throughout.

32 The development plan and supplementary guidance clearly set out the circumstances where developer contributions will be sought, anticipated amounts and circumstances where contributions may be reduced or waived. We monitor our suite of supplementary guidance, particularly those guidance notes which set developer contributions, to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date. During the course of the year a review of SG10 on Education and New Housing Development was completed (see case study).

Case Study: 6	
Revised Supplementary Guidance (SG10): Education and New Housing Development	
Location and Dates:	
Council wide, 2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of service and engagement 	
Key Markers:	
11, 12, 15	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplementary Guidance 	

Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council Planning Staff • Falkirk Council Children's Services 	
Overview:	
<p>SG10 is important guidance, setting out the circumstances in which developers will be required to pay contributions to school and nursery provision, and the level of such contributions. It was first adopted in 2015, along with LDP1. The requirement to update SG10 was driven by fresh data on the average number of pupils from new development (the pupil product ratio), the need to update construction costs to reflect inflation, and legislative changes to early years provision. The revised SG10 was subject to consultation in spring 2019, and adopted in November 2019. As well as updating contribution rates, the Council committed through the revised SG to produce an annual education capacity statement. This will increase the transparency of the process, highlighting more clearly those schools which are at capacity risk, and will attract contributions and the criteria used to determine this. The revision was undertaken in close collaboration with Children's Services.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The initial objective of the review was to ensure that education contributions remain appropriate and proportionate. In response to consultation, a further goal emerged of increasing the transparency of the process by which the need for contributions is determined.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>The rates now being charged are now considered to better reflect the true cost of mitigating the impact of new residential development on the education estate. Some rates have gone up, and some have gone down, in response to more up to date pupil product ratios in combination with inflation. The first education capacity statement is under preparation.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Andrew McNair	

33 We have also commenced revision of supplementary guidance for LDP2, and plan to roll out consultation on these over the next year. The COVID-19 pandemic is having some impact on the programme for this, consultation with the development industry being difficult over the initial period of lockdown. Some guidance will only require

limited updating, but we have also proposed rationalising and combining guidance where this would encourage a more joined up and holistic approach. A key part of this review is a consolidated SG on Developer Contributions, replacing our current approach of separate SGs for each form of infrastructure. This will help us achieve a more user friendly and consistent approach to contributions. A further significant improvement will be a consolidated, joined up SG on Green Infrastructure and New Development. To help inform this, a successful stakeholder workshop was held in November 2019 (see case study).

Case Study: 7	
Green Infrastructure Workshop	
Location and Dates:	
Falkirk Business Hub, November 2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of Service and Engagement 	
Key Markers:	
10, 11, 12, 15	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenspace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdisciplinary Working
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Planning Staff Falkirk Council Other Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Agencies Key Stakeholders
Overview:	
<p>The Council is preparing an updated and consolidated suite of Supplementary Guidance to support policy outlined in LDP2. As part of this, a new Green Infrastructure SG is being prepared to amalgamate SG13 'Open Space and New Development' and the SUDS guidance within Flooding SPG. In order to gather the views of a wide range of stakeholders who will use the guidance the Council arranged a workshop to brainstorm ideas and gather feedback. The event involved collaborative working amongst both Council officers, key agencies and developers and centred around four key questions:</p>	

- How do you use design guidance in your present role?
- What information you would expect green infrastructure design guidance to provide?
- What are the challenges you face around green infrastructure provision in new development?
- Are there good examples of green infrastructure that you would like guidance to promote?

The guidance will cover many areas, including sustainable drainage, active travel, landscaping, habitat, open space provision, maintenance and play equipment and will inform future planning application decisions in the Council area.

Goals:

To gather feedback and ideas from a wide range of stakeholders in order to inform the guidance presented in the new SG05 on Green Infrastructure and New Development.

Outcomes:

Positive and constructive feedback was obtained across a wide range of expertise and knowledge which will inform the upcoming SG.

Name of key officer

Andrew McNair

34 Although consultation on plans has not been a focus this year because LDP2 is in its latter stages, we have nonetheless continued to keep in touch with our customers. An edition of our newsletter was issued in autumn 2019 and we post regularly on our Facebook page. We also contributed to the annual ‘STEM at the Helix’ event in May 2019, which gives us the opportunity to engage with secondary school pupils, and show them how planning tools can be used to analyse the quality of their neighbourhoods.

35 During the course of the year, we have also prepared a comprehensive monitoring report focusing on progress in implementing LDP1, as we look to transition to LDP2.

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies

36 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has introduced the requirement to prepare regional spatial strategies (RSS) in place of the current strategic development plans. There is flexibility for authorities to form regional groupings to undertake this work. Pending formal regulations and guidance on RSS, the Scottish Government is encouraging planning authorities to prepare informal indicative RSSs to feed into the National Planning Framework (NPF4). Falkirk Council is working with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils with a view to developing an iRSS for a Forth Valley region, and has commissioned consultants to facilitate this work, utilising Scottish Government grant funding. Although this is challenging given the lack of any recent regional planning collaboration in the Forth Valley area, the process is opening up new possibilities in term of building new relationships and adding value to our existing plans and strategies.

Infrastructure Investment and Assisting Development Delivery

37 Provision of infrastructure remains critical to realising the Council's regeneration and growth agenda, particularly in the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investments Zones. The Council continues to take a proactive role in supporting development through investment in infrastructure.

38 The Council's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) has delivered £6m of infrastructure works to date including M9 Junction 6 upgrading and various site enabling works. The business case has recently been subject to review, and reconfirmed with adjusted timescales. Reprofiting of the forward programme has taken place. Improvements to M9 Junction 5, which will enhance access to the Grangemouth Investment Zone, are expected to commence next year. Design of the A9/A904 improvements is ongoing, including a major grade separated pedestrian/cycle bridge which will facilitate active travel in the area.

39 On the Falkirk Gateway, the Council's flagship new urban quarter on the eastern edge of the town, negotiations with the preferred bidder are ongoing to deliver the first phases. A mix of tourism, leisure, retail and affordable housing development will complement the Helix and the adjacent new Forth Valley College campus. The current economic uncertainties associated with COVID-19 present a significant challenge.

40 The Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme, which ranks as the top priority flood risk management scheme in Scotland, is progressing. A public exhibition was held in May 2019, giving the public an opportunity to see an outline of the Council's preferred option for the scheme. The potential environmental impacts of this option

are being considered through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which is in preparation. At a later date, the EIA will be published alongside other scheme documents for public inspection.

- 41 A significant milestone during the reporting year was the submission of our Growth Deal bid to the UK and Scottish Governments. The Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zone proposition, backed by the Falkirk Economic Partnership, is built on the three pillars of Innovative Industry, Strategic National Infrastructure and Great Places. It seeks a package of investment to deliver transformational economic, inclusive and clean growth locally, regionally and nationally. At its heart is a vision to develop a sustainable, long term investment area that is a smarter, greener, resilient and more inclusive place – ‘a dynamic and distinctive area at the heart of Central Scotland’. The bid is aligned with LDP2 in terms of its vision and component projects, and planners have been at the heart of the discussions over the content of the bid.
- 42 In terms of housing delivery, seven of the LDP’s 12 Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) are under construction at Bo’ness South East, Denny South East, Larbert North, Maddiston East, Falkirk Canal Corridor and Falkirk North, whilst Overton/Redding is largely complete. Delivery of Banknock and Dennyloanhead SGAs is dependent on upgrading of the M80 Junction 7 slip roads. The costs of this scheme have increased significantly, and the Council is working to see how the shortfall in funding can be met. The Council is progressing land acquisition to allow completion of the remaining phases of the Denny Eastern Access Road, which will facilitate further development at the Denny South East Strategic Growth Area. Major investment in the school estate is planned at Kinnaird and Maddiston Primary Schools, again facilitating committed development.
- 43 The planning service continues to work closely with Housing Services in the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), which is aiming to deliver 1,806 houses affordable houses over the period 2020-25, and consideration of potential supply of sites for future programmes.

Climate Change

- 44 In August 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and is committed to assisting national efforts to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. The area has a huge role to play in achieving this national target given the scale of emissions associated the Grangemouth industrial complex, and securing a just transition for the town is essential but will be challenging.
- 45 Our Growth Deal bid is built around projects which will help tackle climate change. This includes a proposal for a Scottish Centre for Industrial Decarbonisation at

Grangemouth, including a carbon capture and storage scale up facility, and the future development of Falkirk’s vehicle manufacturing capability, adapting ‘clean’ bus and other manufacturing technology to meet the requirements of domestic and export markets for low and zero carbon public transport. This focus on the climate challenge, and the opportunities for the Falkirk area, has fed into our early submissions on NPF4 and our iRSS discussions with our regional partners at Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils.

46 Work is ongoing on the Council’s Local Heat and Energy efficiency Strategy (LHEES) which primarily focuses on reducing emissions within the Council’s building estate. The planning service is represented on the steering group in order to ensure alignment with the LDP.

47 Climate change mitigation and adaptation is a fundamental objective of the LDP, and a number of detailed policies support this. Notable amongst these is Policy D04 on Low and Zero Carbon Development (and associated supplementary guidance). It seeks to implement the requirement of S.72 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to include policies to ensure that all new buildings avoid a specified and rising proportion of the projected greenhouse gas emissions through the installation and operation of low and zero carbon generating technologies. The Council has carried out a review of the operation and effectiveness of this policy, and its recommendations will be incorporated into revised supplementary guidance (see case study).

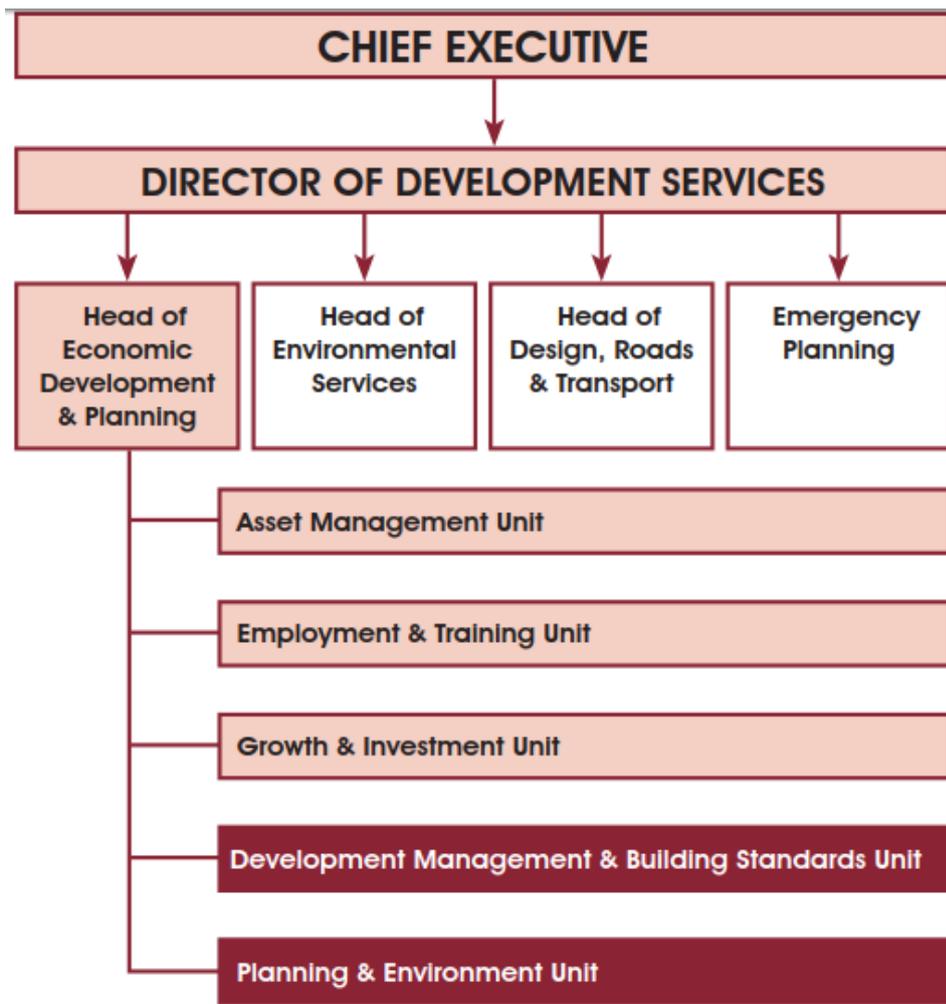
Case Study: 8	
Low and Zero Carbon Development Review	
Location and Dates:	
Area wide, 2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of Continuous Improvement 	
Key Markers:	
6, 11, 12	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Improvement 	
Stakeholders Involved:	

• Authority Planning Staff	• Authority Other Staff
Overview:	
<p>The Council has undertaken a review of practices associated with the implementation of the Low and Zero Carbon policy within the LDP. This involved reviewing previous planning applications to ascertain the condition purification process that is used to check whether new development has complied with policy. It was clear that once this initial review was completed that improvements could be made to set out a standard procedure for applying LZCGT policy. This would assist case officers in implementation and provide a clearer method for developers to submit relevant information. This resulted in a new proforma energy statement being produced by the Council, which developers will fill in prior to condition purification. In addition, the lessons learned during the review are being used to inform the latest update to the Low and Zero Carbon Development Supplementary Guidance.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>To determine the impact of current LZCGT policy and compliance. The review was also used to ascertain whether current processes could be improved or altered during the drafting of new Supplementary Guidance.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>A new process of applying LZCGT policy involving a proforma Energy Statement for developers to submit relevant information. This ensures that information is in a standard format which assists case officers.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Stewart Robson	

Governance

Service Structure

- 48 The planning service is part of Falkirk Council Development Services which encompasses a broad range of related services and disciplines including economic development, environmental health, building standards, roads and transportation, design, emergency planning and bereavement services. This has benefits in terms of closer integration of development-related teams in delivering the Council's corporate strategies, including the development plan.



49 The Development Management Unit is loosely split into 2 geographic area teams. Each team has a Co-ordinator but they share work allocation and staff management duties across both teams. The teams are based in an open plan office and deal with work across the whole area as and when work levels require. This arrangement assists professional development and allows officers to have a general knowledge and awareness of case load within the Unit. The flexible area team structure is particularly beneficial for more complex applications, as it allows for effective sharing of information, discussion of issues, promotes staff development and provides continuity of delivery if staff are absent.

50 The Planning & Environment Unit includes the Development Plan team, and an Environment team which comprises planners and environmental specialists working on greenspace and heritage projects, and offering support to both the development plan and development management processes.

Council of the Future

51 ‘Council of the Future’ is the Council’s response to the service and financial challenges facing local government, and promotes a radical programme of change

that will transform the organisation and how it delivers services over the next five years. It is underpinned by a 5 year business plan which was approved in May 2019 and provides a longer term basis for the process of transformation and the delivery of more efficient services. 'Reform of the Planning Service' is one of the projects within the 'Services of the Future' workstream, which will address the need for more efficient and effective service delivery within the service, whilst implementing the legislative changes coming through the Planning Scotland) Act 2019.

Staffing Resources

52 Both the Development Management and Planning & Environment Units have operated with a reduced staff resource over recent years due to retirement, voluntary severance and voluntary reduction in staff hours. This has required smarter and more flexible working, with regular monitoring of workloads and prioritisation of tasks. Otherwise there has been relatively little turnover of staff which, whilst beneficial in terms of continuity and knowledge of the area, is leading to an ageing staff profile. To start addressing this, the service is taking advantage of the Council's graduate recruitment scheme (see case study)

Case Study: 9	
Graduate Recruitment Scheme	
Location and Dates:	
2019	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Culture of Continuous Improvement 	
Key Markers:	
6	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Planning 	
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority Planning Staff 	
Overview:	

The age profile of the planning service is a matter of concern, with some 37% of staff aged 50 or over, and no staff under the age of 30. The need to bring in younger staff with new skills, particular digital skills, and to provide opportunities for young people to enter the profession, is important. The service has therefore made use of the Council’s Graduate Recruitment Scheme to take on two graduates for a two year period, one split between Development Management and Development Planning, the other undertaking Environment team project work. After a successful and very competitive recruitment process, two new staff joined in August 2019.

Goals:

The objective has been to start to address workforce planning issues in the planning service, particularly an ageing staff profile, to grow our own planners as an investment in the future, and provide young graduates with a good quality and range of experience as an investment in the future of the profession.

Outcomes:

The two graduates have proved an asset to their respective teams, bringing new ideas and enthusiasm. They have already gained experience in a wide range of types of work, and have benefited from mentoring.

Name of key officer

Alistair Shaw

Collaborative Working

53 Collaboration between the planning service, other Council services and other key agencies remains an important part of everyday working. Groups meeting on a regular basis include:

- Education and Planning Liaison Group
- Housing and Planning Liaison Group
- Council Housing Planning Delivery Group
- Council/SEPA/Scottish Water Tripartite Group
- NPF3 Grangemouth Investment Zone Action Planning Group
- Council/NHSFV Healthcare Planning Liaison Group

- 54 A general liaison session has been held with local SNH staff, with participants agreeing should become a regular meeting.

Decision Making

- 55 The majority of planning applications are determined under the Council's approved Scheme of Delegation. The number of delegated decisions remains high (94.2%). The scheme allows local and major applications that are in accordance with the development plan 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 and the reason given. Councillors are encouraged to discuss applications with officers before making a call in request. The delegation scheme ensures that the number of applications considered by the Planning Committee is generally small and limited to more controversial applications where a greater degree of public scrutiny is justified.
- 56 The Planning Committee meets every 4 weeks. Meeting dates and agenda are published on the Council website. Councillors not on the Committee, applicants/agents and third parties can address the Committee on written request.

Financial Management

- 57 The Planning Service has an important role in delivering the Council's objectives in a regulatory capacity and 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 Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery Plan and the 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.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Costing the Planning Service

- 58 A main focus for the planning service during the last reporting period had been to look at the cost of the services we provide and how we can maintain and improve our decision making performance for all types of applications. The Council participated in the 'Costing the Planning Service' exercise with 12 other planning authorities in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and

Accountancy (CIPFA), the Improvement Service and Heads of Planning Scotland. Work on monitoring the cost of services and improvements that can be made continues as part of the 'Council of the Future' agenda. There are regular cost of the planning service meetings attended by service heads, front line staff and business support. A bottom up approach is encouraged to put into practice procedures and practice that will maintain and improve the planning service.

Digital Transformation and Data Management

- 59 Digital transformation is a key priority within the authority's 'Council of the Future' agenda. This aligns well with the Scottish Government's push toward a world class digital planning system.

- 60 The Council's drive towards mobile and flexible working has been of particular value in allowing the planning service to adapt to and maintain business continuity through the COVID-19 pandemic which began to affect service delivery around the end of the reporting period. The new Citrix operating system has facilitated an effective transition to homeworking for all staff in the service through both Council and personal devices. The widespread adoption of video conferencing has, as elsewhere, enabled communication within teams as well as with customers.

- 61 The Development Plan team has continued its efforts to manage and present data more effectively. As part of our preparation of this year's LDP monitoring report, we reviewed and documented the type and sources of data which we use as part of the development plan process, work which aligns well with the Improvement Service's current Data Pathfinder Project. We have worked to put on GIS some datasets which have a spatial dimension but are currently held in spreadsheets or access databases. This will facilitate the collection and updating of such data on site through a web interface (see case study).

- 62 For the first time, the Council has prepared a formal Employment Land Audit (ELA). Employment land data has previously been assembled on an ad hoc basis to support plan reviews, typically at five year intervals. The ELA will be undertaken annually, and provides a more systematic way of recording key data associated with employment sites (see case study).

Case Study: 10
GIS-Based Retail Floorspace Survey
Location and Dates:
Area wide, 2019

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of Continuous Improvement 	
Key Markers:	
6, 11, 12	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Improvement • Performance Monitoring 	
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council Planning Staff • Falkirk Council Economic Development Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Delivers
Overview:	
<p>The Council undertakes a Retail Floorspace Survey on a regular basis for the purposes of producing the Town Centre Health Check and to inform LDP policy. Previous surveys were conducted manually using pen and paper before being transferred into an Access database. With the most recent survey, the Council took the opportunity to refresh the process of data collection and storage by utilising ArcGIS Online software. This allows the collection and storage of data in a spatial format as points on a map. During the data collection phase of the survey, data is entered using an iPad which is saved and transferred in real time into the database. This can then be accessed, manipulated and utilised through ArcMap or through the web interface. This represents a significant improvement in the amount of time required to conduct the survey and also allows the data to be shared quickly and easily with external organisations such as Falkirk Delivers, the business improvement district for Falkirk.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The project was aimed at improving existing data collection processes and usability of data when conducting the Retail Floorspace Survey.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>Increased frequency of survey updates is now possible thanks to reduced administration time required, as this was previously conducted once every 5 years in</p>	

line with LDP timescales. Sharing and updating of data is now also possible in partnership with external organisations such as Falkirk Delivers.

Name of key officer

Stewart Robson

Case Study: 11

Employment Land Audit

Location and Dates:

Area wide, 2019

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:

- Culture of Continuous Improvement

Key Markers:

6, 11, 12

Key Areas of Work:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Improvement • Performance Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development |
|---|--|

Stakeholders Involved:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council Planning Staff • Falkirk Council Economic Development Staff | |
|--|--|

Overview:

The Falkirk Council Employment Land Audit (ELA) has been published by the Council to help to inform choices about employment land supply and to assist during the preparation of future LDP documents. The report and accompanying data will be of interest to companies, developers and other organisations with a requirement for, or an interest in, employment land in the Falkirk Council area. The ELA report seeks to provide a summary of the current economic situation within the Falkirk Council area, review and comment on national and local economic and planning policy and review annually the supply and take up of employment land since the previous ELA

report. The report analyses trends in take up and demand for employment land and assesses effectiveness and marketability of existing sites through qualitative assessment. The ELA is made up of all allocated employment sites identified within the LDP and windfall sites (sites not allocated in the LDP) which have current planning permission for employment uses but where no works have started. A range of information is recorded against each site including site details and type, information on take up, and information to assess marketability and effectiveness. This information will be updated annually and is presented within a report. The ELA will support the Council’s TIF initiative and Investment Zone bid, and represents an important service improvement.

Goals:

The project was aimed at consolidating and presenting up-to-date information about Employment Land in a useful and meaningful way. This has the potential to attract investment and encourage employment uses, raising business and community confidence in the Falkirk Council area at a time of considerable economic challenge.

Outcomes:

Increased frequency of employment land auditing, as this was previously conducted once every 5 years as part of the LDP process. Improved depth of information available on each site with clear detail on location, constraints and planning history.

Name of key officer

Stewart Robson

Training and Development

63 A culture of sharing information and knowledge is encouraged in the planning service and across the Council. The Council’s Learning & Development Unit works in partnership with all Council services to identify and meet the needs of employees. There is an extensive number of training and learning opportunities available to Council employees. These are available through e-learning modules and more specific targeted training opportunities.

64 The Council is accredited to deliver the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programmes at various levels. A number of planning staff have and are taking advantage of this opportunity to attend the accredited courses and gain management qualifications.

- 65 Planning service staff have attended a range of courses during the reporting period. In addition to the ILM courses this has included courses on enforcement, environmental impact assessment, master planning, green infrastructure and biodiversity. Course details and notes are shared electronically. Officers also regularly attend RTPI Chapter events and Heads of Planning Scotland meetings. Email updates from Scottish Government, Planning Aid for Scotland, Brodies and others are also circulated. Day to day practice issues are discussed at Unit meetings. We also subscribe to the Idox information service, and the encyclopaedia of planning law. Use of the Knowledge Hub is also encouraged.
- 66 We continue to encourage training for all Councillors. During the reporting period we have carried out further training for members joining the Planning Committee. We also held a question and answer session for all Councillors on general planning issues and practice. This included discussion on the assessment and determination of planning applications, planning conditions, planning obligations, developer contributions, the development plan and development valuation. These training 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 attend Planning Committee to offer expert advice to Councillors.

Part 2: Supporting Evidence

Development Plan Scheme 2020

Falkirk LDP2 Project Plan and Stage Plans

LDP2 Proposed Plan

LDP2 Facebook Page

Development Plan Update Newsletter

Draft Housing Land Audit 2019/20

Employment Land Audit

LDP Monitoring Report

Falkirk Council Complaints, Annual Report 2018 – 19

Development Services Services Service Plan 2017 – 2022

Corporate Plan

Strategy for Community Engagement 2019 – 2024

Falkirk Council website

Costing the Planning Service Report

Council 5 Year Business Plan

Most of the above documents can be accessed on the Falkirk Council website,

www.falkirk.gov.uk

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in case study	Case Study Topics	Issue covered in case study
Design	1, 2	Interdisciplinary Working	7
Conservation	4, 5	Collaborative Working	2, 4
Regeneration	1, 2	Community Engagement	
Environment		Placemaking	1

Greenspace	3, 7	Charrettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning	1	Performance Monitoring	10, 11
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	6	Process Improvement	8, 10, 11
Housing Supply		Project Management	1
Affordable Housing	2	Skills Sharing	
Economic Development	11	Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes		Transport	3
Planning Applications		Active Travel	3
Other: please note Work-force planning 9			

Part 3: Service Improvements 2020 -2021

In the coming year we will:

Service Improvement	Timescale	Objective
Adopt LDP2	July 2020	Promoting the plan led system Performance markers 7 - 11
Adopt batch 1 of LDP2 supplementary guidance	October 2020	Promoting the plan led system Performance marker 11
Prepare and consult on batches 2 and 3 of LDP2 supplementary guidance	March 2021	Promoting the plan led system Performance marker 11
Carry out customer survey	October 2020	Driving improved performance Performance marker 6

Submit indicative RSS to Scottish Government	September 2020	
Prepare LDP3 project plan	March 2021	Promoting the plan led system Performance markers 7, 8
Adapt COVID -19 response work procedures	April 2020	Driving improved performance Performance markers 2, 6 Promoting the plan led system Performance marker 11 Simplifying and streamlining Performance markers 12
Arrange Developer/Agent workshop	March 2021	Driving improved performance Performance markers 3, 6 Promoting the plan led system Performance markers 10, 13
Procedures for self-certification of flooding/drainage information	March 2021	Driving improved performance Performance markers 1, 3, 6, 11 Simplifying and streamlining Performance marker 12

Delivery of our Service Improvement Actions in 2019-20:

Service Improvement	Complete
Submit LDP2 Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers	Yes. Submitted July 2019
Complete LDP2 Examination	Yes. Completed March 2020
Complete Review of SG10 Education and New Development	Yes. Completed October 2019

Consult on first batch of LDP2 Supplementary Guidance	Yes. Consultation ongoing.
Publish Development Plan Monitoring Report	Yes. Completed March 2020
Establish new Employment Land Audit process	Yes. Completed December 2020
Finalise Core Paths Plan	No. Delayed by Covid-19
Make enforcement register available online	No, work to scan and redact information ongoing.
Review old minerals permissions	Ongoing
Arrange Developer/Agent workshop	No. Delayed by Covid-19
Meet benchmarking partners to review PPF	Yes. Email and telephone exchanges.
Costing the planning service – wide ranging review of processes and procedures	No. Ongoing review
Appointment of Graduate Planner	Yes. August 2019

Part 4: National Headline Indicators

A: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Planning

Development Planning	2019-2020	2018-2019
Local Development Planning		
Age of LDP at end of reporting period	56 months	44 months
Will the LDP be replaced by its 5 th 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?	No	No
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
Established land supply (units)	5661	5743
5-year effective housing land supply programming (units)	2992	2850
5-year housing supply total capacity (units)	4692	4675
5-year effective housing land supply target (units)	2650	3375
5-year effective land supply (years)	5.6	4.2
Housing approvals (units)	651	511
Housing completions over the last 5 years (units)	2495	2627
Marketable employment land supply (hectares)	337.5	49.6
Employment land take up during reporting year (hectares)	0.6	1.5

Source:

- Draft 2019/20 Housing Land Audit base date June 2019
- Employment Land Audit June 2020

B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management

Development Management:	2019-20	2018-19
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	149 40.5%	183 30.3 %
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	5 0.0 %	1 0.0 %
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	95.5%	96.3%
Delegation rate	94.2%	94.5%
Validation	43.4%	46.1%

Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	63.8 weeks	23.3 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	10.1 weeks	10.7 weeks
Householder developments	6.5 weeks	6.3 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	10	6
Number remaining	13	12

C: Enforcement activity

	2019-20	2018-19
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	20 months	8 months *
Complaints lodged and investigated	100	65
Breaches identified – no further action taken	70	33
Cases closed	49	26
Notices served	5	1
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

*Corrected from 11 months shown in 2019 PPF calculated to June 2019

D: NHI Key outcomes – commentary

Local Development Planning

The preparation of LDP2 has continued according to schedule, with the Proposed Plan being submitted to Scottish Ministers in July 2019, and the Examination being concluded in March 2020. Adoption is on target for July 2020, exactly five years since the adoption of LDP1.

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs

The housing land supply figures show relatively little change from the previous year, with the programmed 5-year land supply up slightly, and the total established land supply slightly reduced. The key change is that, with confirmation of a revised housing supply target in LDP2 of 530 units annually, the Council now has 5.6 years effective land supply, meeting the requirement of SPP. The additional allocations coming through LDP2 have not yet been added, and when these are included in the calculations next year, the supply will be further strengthened. The five year completion total has fallen, reflecting lower completions over the last couple of years. This in turn is related to lower social housing activity in these years, due to issues with the pipeline of readily deliverable Council housing sites. Notwithstanding the slight positive uplift in approvals, completions over the next reporting year will undoubtedly be effected by the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

A comprehensive Employment Land Audit has been undertaken for the first time, and as part of this, the definition of marketable land has been changed. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the quantity of marketable land. Of the total, 147.2 ha are judged as being immediately available, with 190.3ha deemed as marketable but with constraints. Around 45% of this lies within the Grangemouth Investment Zone, with land at Ineos and Grangemouth Docks forming the majority of this. There has been limited take up of land this year. Several sites are within the development pipeline, but the Covid-19 downturn may impact on these.

Development Management

Project Planning

There is still little interest from developers and agents to enter into processing agreements despite our willingness to do so and the guidance and sample template published on our website. Developers and agents appear to be satisfied that we use informal project plans, are willing to give pre-application advice, give clear timescales, seek to resolve issues arising and are contactable and regularly monitor caseloads.

Decision making

Our approval and delegation rates remain high.

The percentage of applications that we are able to validate on first receipt remains disappointing. This is despite clear guidance on our website and efforts made to educate our regular customers. The same errors continue to be made by agents in haste to submit without adequate information and ignoring pre-application advice.

Decision making timescales

Regular monitoring of caseload is well established. Use of electronic document management systems allows case officers and line managers to track the progress of applications and set timescales and monitor outcomes.

Our decision making timescales continue to be above the national average for local and householder applications. Our timescales for majors has slipped but we recognise that the number of applications received, complexity of cases and reluctance of applicants to enter into processing agreements can easily skew the performance figures. The 63.8 week timescale is based on only 4 applications, 3 of which have accepted stop the clock discounts and one legacy case that has been concluded.

Legacy cases

We continue to monitor legacy cases. Older cases are regularly reviewed by line managers in conjunction with legal services. Where appropriate minded to grant decisions are reviewed and reported back to the Planning Committee for further consideration and determination.

The legacy cases we have are not all the same cases we had in the last reporting period and are the consequence of delays on the part of applicants and agents and agreed extensions of time.

Enforcement activity

We currently have one part time planning enforcement officer. Case load is regularly monitored. Planning officers assist with the investigation of enforcement complaints as part of their application and enquiry caseload.

Our enforcement charter was updated in June 2020.

Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics

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

Timescales	2019-20	2019-20	2018-19
Overall			
Major developments	9	63.8 wks	23.3 weeks
Local developments (non-householder) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	211 58.8% 41.2%	10.1 wks	8.4 weeks
Householder developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	273 91.2% 8.8%	6.5 wks	6.3 weeks
Housing Developments			
Major	7	63.8 wks	34.2 weeks
Local housing developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	65 40.0% 60.0%		14.9 weeks
Business and Industry			
Major	0	N/A	8.1 weeks
Local business and industry developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	3 50.0% 50.0%	7.1 wks	8.1 weeks
EIA Developments	0#	N/A	None

Other Consents			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As listed in the PPF guidance 	86#	7.6 wks	7.0 weeks
Planning/legal agreements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major: average time 	2	102 wks	38.7 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: average time 	13	16.1 wks	37.3 weeks

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2019-20		2018-2019	
Type	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	2	1	50.0	2	100
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	8	5	62.5	2	50

C: Context

Comments on decision making timescales are provided in Part 4 of the PPF. We continue to closely monitor the progress of legal agreements, set timescales for conclusion, seek withdrawal of applications, determine or agree extensions of time where there are delays and make use of 'stop the clock' procedures. Where the determination of applications is delayed it is a consequence of delays by applicants and agents or because extensions of time have been agreed.

Part 6: Workforce Information

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

RTPI Qualified Staff	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	11	10.8
Development Planning	6	5.3
Enforcement	1	0.6
Specialists ¹	7	5.5
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible) ²	11	9.6
Staff Age Profile	Headcount	
Under 30	2	
30-39	6	
40-49	7	
50 and over	20	

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

² Includes Planning & Environment Manager, Parks and Bereavement Co-ordinator, Parks Development Officers, Technical Support Officers and Countryside Rangers.

Part 7: Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	10
Planning committees	10
Committee site visits	8
Local Review Body	1
LRB site visits	1

Performance Markers

	Performance Marker	Council Response/Evidence
Driving Improved Performance		
1	Decision Making	<p>National Headline Indicators show our decision making timescales for local and householder developments are above the national average. Our timescale for majors (based on a small total number) has slipped due to applicants reluctance to enter processing agreements and clearance of a legacy case.</p> <p>PPF Reference 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>Although there is general reluctance from applicants/agents to enter into formal agreements we have procedures in place for case officers and line managers to monitor and review the progress of applications</p>

		<p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators Case Studies 1, 2 Pre-application, paragraph 22 - 23 Processing agreements, paragraph 24 Legal agreements, paragraph 25 - 26</p>
3	Early Collaboration	<p>We encourage early dialogue with applicants and agents and offer a free pre-application advice service. Guidance is published on our website</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 Greenspace, paragraph 10 - 17 Historic Environment, paragraph 18 Contact/Accessibility, paragraph 19 - 21 Pre-application, paragraph 22 - 23 Processing agreements, paragraph 24 Legal agreements, Paragraph 25 - 26 Charters, paragraph 27 Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35 Service structure, paragraph 48 - 50 Collaborative Working, paragraph 53 – 54</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>PPF Reference</p> <p>Legal agreements, paragraph 25 - 26</p>
5	Enforcement Charter	<p>The Charter is up to date.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Charters, paragraph 27</p>
6	Continuous Improvement	<p>Progress on National Headline Indicators and Service Improvements are set out in the relevant sections of the PPF.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,</p>

		<p>Town centres, paragraph 9</p> <p>Greenspace, paragraph 10 - 17</p> <p>Historic Environment, paragraph 18</p> <p>Contact/Accessibility, paragraph 19 - 21</p> <p>Customer Feedback, paragraph 30</p> <p>Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35</p> <p>Infrastructure investment and assisting, development delivery, paragraph 37 – 43</p> <p>Climate Change, paragraph 44 - 47</p> <p>Council of the Future, paragraph 51</p> <p>Staffing Resources, paragraph 52</p> <p>Costing the Planning Service, paragraph 58</p> <p>Digital Transformation and Data Management, paragraph 59 - 62</p> <p>Training and Development, paragraph 63 - 66</p>
Promoting the Plan-Led System		
7	Local Development Plan less than 5 years since adoption	<p>The LDP was adopted in July 2015, and was 4 years and 8 months old at the end of the reporting period.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators</p> <p>Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35</p>
8	<p>Development Plan Scheme demonstrates next LDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On course for adoption within 5 year cycle • Project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	<p>DPS 2020 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. Submission of Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers and conclusion of the Examination have both been completed according to programme.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators</p> <p>Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35</p>
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan	Member workshops were held in June 2016 to examine options for inclusion in the MIR and to

	preparation	<p>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> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35</p>
10	Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	<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>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35</p>
11	<p>Regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through SPGs produced on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information required to support applications; and • Expected developer contributions 	<p>The Council has a comprehensive suite of 16 SG documents which 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.</p> <p>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</p>

		<p>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 is reviewing contribution rates and thresholds through the preparation of a new Developer Contributions SG in association with LDP2. In the meantime, a review of SG10 on Education and New Development has been adopted which takes account of updated information to set revised contribution rates.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 Pre-application, paragraph 22 - 23 Processing Agreements, paragraph 24 Legal Agreements, paragraph 25 - 26 Charters, paragraph 27 Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35 Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies, paragraph 36 Climate Change, paragraph 44 - 47 Collaborative Working, paragraph 53 - 54 Digital Transformation and Data Management, paragraph 59 - 62</p>
Simplifying and Streamlining		
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit	<p>Regular liaison meetings between planning and other Council services are held on a range of topics such as housing, education, open space, economic development and delivery of the Council's SHIP programme, monitoring of planning obligation receipts and spend.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11 Pre-application, paragraph 22 - 23</p>

		Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35 Governance, paragraph 48 - 50 Collaborative Working, paragraph 53 - 54
13	Sharing Good Practice	Staff have attended forums, conferences, training events and RTPI Chapter events. The Knowledge Hub is used to share information and experience. PPF Reference Case Study 3, 4, 5, 7 Historic Environment, paragraph 18 Collaborative Working, paragraph 53 - 54 Training and Development, paragraph 63 - 66
Delivering Development		
14	Stalled Sites	We have cleared legacy cases during the reporting period and continue to work with applicants and agents to keep numbers to a minimum. Deadlines are set and cases monitored. Minded to grant decisions are reconsidered within 6 months if not determined. PPF Reference Quality of Outcomes, page 4 Quality of Service and Engagement, page 13 Processing Agreements, paragraph 24 Legal Agreements, paragraph 25 - 26 Governance, paragraph 48 - 50
15	Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations set out in development plan and in pre-application discussions	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

		<p>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>PPF Reference Case Studies 6, Pre-application, paragraph 22 - 24 Processing Agreements, paragraph 24 Development Planning, paragraph 31 - 35 Infrastructure Investment and Assisting, Development Delivery, paragraph 37 - 43</p>
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Falkirk Council
Development Services