

# Planning Performance Framework



**Falkirk Council**  
*Development Services*

Annual Report April 2020 – March 2021

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## Forward

01 Falkirk Council is pleased to submit its tenth 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 2021/2022.

## Feedback on previous report

02 The feedback we received on our performance last year was again good. The Council and staff were thanked for enabling planning services to continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. Scottish Government commented that the impact which the pandemic has had has demonstrated how valuable planning is, from ensuring that businesses can operate flexibly to the contribution that it can make to the places that are so important for communities in terms of having access to the services they need, to greenspaces and other areas where people can walk, wheel and cycle safely. The Scottish Government noted that although the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the tail end of the 2019 – 2020 reporting year the impacts on service delivery would show more through the current 2020 – 2021 reporting period.

03 Our 2019 - 2020 PPF was assessed by Scottish Government against 13 performance markers, agreed by the Scottish Government and Heads of Planning Scotland. A red, amber, green rating of our performance was given against these markers. Falkirk Council received 9 green ratings and 3 amber ratings. None of our performance markers were red. Falkirk Council was commended for:

- The clarity of our Local Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance, the Council's development plan scheme and progress made to ensure the Council maintains an up to date development plan.
- The Council's proactive approach to pre-application discussion and the clear and proportionate advice we provide.
- The corporate working of the planning service and communication across Council services.
- The continuing work by planning staff to share good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities.

04 The Council received amber ratings because the ambitious service improvements we had proposed had not been completed. Also, although our timescales for determining local and householder applications was faster than the Scottish National average our timescales for determining major applications was slower than the national average because of delays caused by applicants/agents and Committee procedures.

# Introduction

05 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**

06 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

07 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 inclusive economic growth, and creating a quality green network which promotes health and well-being.

08 Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 provides the overarching direction on place quality, articulated through the keynote Policy PE01 Placemaking, other supporting topic policies, and Supplementary Guidance (SG) notes which are embedded in day to day discussion with stakeholders, and provide a basis for negotiating high quality outcomes. During the past year, the SG notes on design, the natural environment and the historic environment have all been refreshed and re-adopted following the adoption of LDP2. A notable addition to the suite of guidance notes is SG05 on Green Infrastructure and New Development, which seeks to embed high quality greenspace and nature-based solutions through the design process (see case study).

<b>Case Study 1</b>	
<b>SG05 Green Infrastructure and New Development</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Council wide, 2020-2021	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to</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</b>	
6,11,15	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenspace</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council Planning Staff</li> <li>• Falkirk Council Other Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Agencies</li> <li>• Key Stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
A new SG on Green Infrastructure and New Development has been prepared providing illustrated guidance on open space, active travel, community growing, landscape,	

sustainable drainage, and the water environment in new development. It has been structured under the 'Building with Nature' themes of Well-Being, Water and Wildlife. The guidance includes revised standards for how and when development should contribute to open space, and key principles for the successful design of green infrastructure. Consultation with key agencies and stakeholders informed the SG. Much of this was captured in a green infrastructure workshop held at the end of 2019.

**Goals:**

The purpose of the SG is to drive a more comprehensive and integrated approach to the consideration of green infrastructure and nature based solutions within development, compared with the more sectoral approach under the previous set of guidance. The revised open space standards are also intended to be more proportionate in their approach, targeted to the needs of an area through a new Local Open Space Audit process. The guidance is intended to be highly graphic, with photographs of good practice examples dominating the document. The majority of these are local examples, providing encouragement to developers on what can, and has been achieved locally.

**Outcomes:**

The guidance was well received when it went out to consultation early in 2021 and, following clearance from the Scottish Government, was adopted in June 2021. The impact of the guidance on the ground will be closely monitored.

**Name of key officer**

Andrew McNair

09 Planning continues to steer and add value to regeneration projects across the town. Of note is the restoration of the category B-listed Rosebank Distillery which is now under construction and has seen intensive input from development management during the consenting process (see case study).

<b>Case Study 2</b>	
<b>Rosebank Distillery</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Falkirk 2020 - 2021	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of outcomes</li> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Governance</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
2,3,12	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council planning staff</li> <li>• Falkirk Council other staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>The former Rosebank Distillery is a prominent listed building in Falkirk. The site is adjacent to the Union Canal between The Kelpies and The Falkirk Wheel and has lain vacant since 1993. Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in 2019 to secure conservation of the listed building and the return of its original use as a distillery with the addition of a visitor's centre. Following initial demolition and ground works at the site it became apparent that the building was more fragile than first thought. Uncertainty about the future of the building was compounded by the pandemic and the scheme needed to be revised to consolidate the space required whilst replacing sections of the building that are in the most severe state of dilapidation with a new build structure. Added to this, the effects of the pandemic necessitated a review of the project.</p> <p>Pre-application discussions involving Council planning staff, key agencies such as HES and the applicant's agent ensured that an acceptable scheme and then revised proposals were submitted with all necessary information. Timescales for consultation and requirements for publicity were clear. There were no objections to the proposals and the applications for planning and listed building consent were determined within statutory timescales under delegated authority. Revisions to the scheme were discussed and granted despite restrictions and obstacles caused by the impacts of Covid-19.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The site is allocated for Business/Leisure/Tourism use with the Proposals and Opportunities Schedule of the Falkirk Local Development Plan. The site has lain empty and in a dilapidated state for many years. The Council's goal was to ensure that this stalled site is developed, and the character and appearance of this historic site restored. The regeneration benefits for the town include retention of a historic listed distillery site that has a strong local identity; trickle down economic benefits from tourism and manufacturing.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>As a result of the positive engagement between the Council, applicants, key agencies and public the development of a stalled site has restarted. The development of a key proposals and opportunities site identified in the Falkirk Local Development Plan is being implemented</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
John Cooney	

## **Town Centres**

- 10 The past year has been a particularly challenging one for our town centres, with pre-existing challenges around the changing role of centres being exacerbated by the pandemic, and successive lockdowns. As well as continuing to progress the Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan, the Council and Falkirk BID have been involved in delivering a range of immediate support measures to town centres and town centre businesses through the Economic Recovery Plan, including a maintenance fund and digital business support grants. Capital funding has been made available for a range of projects, including one to repurpose large vacant units in Falkirk High Street, town centre Wi-Fi, public realm improvements and a conservation appraisal of Grangemouth Area of Townscape Value (see case study). Planning has specifically been involved in facilitating outdoor hospitality, implementing the Scottish Government's relaxations.
- 11 The regeneration of Falkirk and Grangemouth Town Centres features heavily in the Council's Growth Deal. In Grangemouth, early work on restructuring the 1960s precinct has begun. In Falkirk, intensive work has been ongoing on site options the Council's new HQ/Arts centre project, which it is hoped will provide a catalyst for regeneration.

## **Greenspace**

- 12 The importance of access to good quality local greenspace has been highlighted by the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by lockdown. The Council's strong track record in this area over recent years has proved its value more than ever.
- 13 Over the past year, we have continued to progress projects outlined in our Open Space Strategy and Falkirk Greenspace Strategy. Our programme continues to be marked by close collaboration with partners, with our strong and longstanding partnership with the Green Action Trust being particularly notable. Our flagship Zetland Park project is delivering multiple outcomes within the deprived community of Grangemouth, while the works to Herbertshire Castle Park have secured a range of significant improvements for the primary open space serving the people of Dunipace (see case studies below). Implementation of Council's Forest Estate Plan has commenced, with a first tranche of works focusing on urban woodlands in and around North Falkirk completed.
- 14 In appropriate circumstances, LDP policies seek developer contributions to the improvement of open space in lieu of on site provision. Resources secured by this means continue enable a range of greenspace projects, providing core capital which can lever in match funding from other sources.

<b>Case Study 3</b>	
<b>Zetland Park Project</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Grangemouth, 2020-2022	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of Outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
2,3,10	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenspace</li> <li>Masterplanning</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Falkirk Council Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friends of Zetland Park</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Zetland Park was identified as the key open space asset for the Grangemouth area and the implementation of a masterplan for its improvement identified as a top local priority in our Open Space Strategy. Council officers successfully secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a range of other sources for a c£2.2m park improvement project which began construction in November 2020 with completion planned for Autumn/Winter 2021. A funded activity programme is also ongoing and will conclude in September 2022. Park improvements include a refurbished war memorial, park gates and fountain, a rejuvenated play area with new pump track, creation of a naturalised pond on the site of a derelict boating pond, a revived rose garden, and a new events space.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The Zetland Park Projects overall aim is to “Rejuvenate Portonian Pride” through conserving and enhancing the Park’s historic features and interpreting the Park’s rich heritage; providing better areas for nature to take root and improve the value of the Park’s current trees, plants and biodiversity; delivering a range of facilities that users need to make Zetland Park their park of choice; overturning a period of decline, restoring (and installing new) elements that make Zetland Park special, restoring a feeling of local pride; generating opportunities for people to become involved in the fabric of the park, making the Park their Park and; improve management and maintenance over the long term through education, training and volunteering.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>The project is ongoing but by completion will have delivered a substantially improved and better interpreted park in the heart of a community surrounded and heavily affected by nationally important industry.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Allana Hughes	

<b>Case Study 4</b>	
<b>Herbertshire Castle Park, Dunipace (Gala Park)</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Dunipace, 2021	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of Outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
2,3,10	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenspace</li> <li>Masterplanning</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Falkirk Council Staff</li> <li>Green Action Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Green Initiative</li> <li>Falkirk Great Places Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Herbertshire Castle Park was identified as the key open space asset for the Denny area and the preparation of a masterplan for its improvement identified as a top local priority in our Open Space Strategy. Community Green Initiative secured funding from LEADER to prepare a community led park masterplan and then worked with Council Officers and the Green Action Trust to secure funding from LEADER to implement the first phase of masterplan improvements (path improvements, heritage interpretation, woodland management, specimen tree planting new landscaped picnic areas and disabled car parking). Other funding was secured through open space contributions from nearby developments. Delivery of the (c£350k) improvements was project managed by the Green Action Trust and delivered between November 2020 and March 2021.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The masterplan aims to improve active park facilities, carry out landscape enhancements, create outdoor education opportunities, introduce trees, biodiversity, and riverside features, and improve accessibility. The 1st phase of masterplan improvements delivers on a number of these aims.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
Substantially improved and better interpreted park in the heart of a growing community.	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Danny Thallon	

## Historic Environment

- 15 Implementation of the Council’s Historic Environment Strategy continues. Key ongoing projects include the restoration of the Rosebank Distillery and Zetland Park, which are covered by case studies elsewhere in this report. A significant evaluation study of the Grangemouth Area of Townscape Value was completed during the year, linking to wider regeneration plans which are emerging for Grangemouth through the Council’s Growth Deal proposals (see case study).

<b>Case Study 5</b>	
<b>Grangemouth Area of Townscape Value</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Grangemouth, 2020-21	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of Outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
2,3,10,11	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic Environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Falkirk Council Staff</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>An “Area of Townscape Value” ( AoTV) is a non-statutory designation applied to various areas of architectural, historic or townscape value across the Falkirk Council Area. They represent candidate Conservation Areas and it has been a long term aim in successive Development Plans and the Council’s Historic Environment Strategy to carry out Character Appraisals to enable formal designation as appropriate. The first AOTV to be appraised is in Grangemouth in the historic area surrounding Zetland Park as this was seen to be complimentary to the Zetland Park Project’s overall aim to “Rejuvenate Portonian Pride” using money secured through the Scottish Government’s Town Centre Regeneration Fund. Officers commissioned a specialist Architectural Consultant - Sonya Linskaill to carry out the appraisal work.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>To better understand and effectively protect areas of architectural, historic or townscape value across the Falkirk Council Area which are not currently formally designated as Conservation Areas and, in time, lever in external funding for their sensitive conservation.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>This part of Grangemouth is going through a period of significant change with town centre regeneration, construction of a flood protection scheme and the rejuvenation of Zetland Park. The Character Appraisal will be a useful tool to help planners to better understand the architectural heritage of the area and better ensure development is designed sensitively to protect its unique historic character. At an appropriate time, the Character Appraisal will be used to inform a formal Conservation Area designation which, it is hoped, will help to enable a subsequent Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Ruth Simpson	

## Quality of Service and Engagement

### Covid 19: Response and Recovery

- 16 The Covid 19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the planning service over the reporting year. Like all local authorities, the Council has had to quickly adapt its processes to ensure business continuity in the face of the Covid 19 restrictions, and to respond to the emerging needs of businesses and communities.
- 17 Most staff in the Development Management and Planning & Environment Unit have worked successfully from home during this period, with access to all Council systems available remotely. A small number of staff have been temporarily redeployed to support the Council's bereavement service which sits within the Planning & Environment Unit and has been under pressure during the pandemic. This has included assistance with crematorium management as well as statistical support and analysis from our development plan team in relation to modelling mortality rates.
- 18 As well as its immediate response to the impacts of the pandemic, the Council has developed a longer term Economic Recovery Plan for the area, within which planning plays a key part. The adoption of LDP2 in August 2020 in timely in this respect, setting out a programme of development and infrastructure around which a green recovery can be built. Provisional agreement on the content of the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zone Growth Deal also provides a firm basis for delivering the transformational change needed in the area to address the impact of Covid and the transition to net zero carbon.
- 19 Further details of how the different parts of the planning service have adapted and responded to the pandemic are provided throughout this section.

### Development Management: Support and Guidance for Applicants

#### Contact/Accessibility

- 20 Development Management officers had, up until the pandemic, always been available in person through the duty service. This had to be curtailed because of the pandemic, however officers remain available by phone and email, and can arrange virtual meetings. It has been a real challenge to continue providing the level of service we had been used to. A full computer software upgrade due in in 2021 will hopefully allow officers to be more accessible online and help enable us to meet with agency staff, applicants, agents, and members of the community more readily.

- 21 The website remains an important point of contact for people and will be a significant area for growth in the future PPF reporting period.
- 22 Towards the end of the reporting period we ran a Developers Workshop. Regular developers and Agents were invited to join us for a virtual update on policy, economic and development matters. The workshop was well attended by the larger scale developers but less so by those agents representing developers of smaller sites. This was unusual and may have reflected the difficult circumstances we are all operating in this year. We hope to see a wider variety of users at the next workshop and will discuss with customers how this can be achieved.

### The Covid Response and Recovery

- 23 We recognised early on that businesses would need support from a wide variety of Council services to bounce back from the pandemic. As a result of this we set up the Covid Recovery Group. Further details are provided in the case study below. Early signs suggest it has been immensely helpful in guiding businesses through the various Council departments.

<b>Case Study Title 6</b>	
<b>Covid Recovery Group</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Virtual via MS Teams in April 2020	
<b>Elements of a High-Quality Planning Service this study relates to</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</b>	
2,3,3,10,11,12,13	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centres</li> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>The Covid Recovery Group was formed within the Council as it was highlighted prior to the easing of the first lockdown in 2020, that as businesses reopened, they would require the assistance of many units across the Council to be able to form and put in-place external measures to allow operations to restart with COVID-19 restrictions in-place. This initially took the form of a meeting across a wide range of Council units, including heads of service, which was then refined into the specific units and persons within each which required to meet and form the main</p>	

Covid Recovery Working Group. It was then agreed the group would meet weekly, and the core units that form the group are Development Management, Economic Development, Licensing, Environmental Protection/Health, Roads Development and Planning & Environment. Falkirk Delivers which run the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) also attends weekly, and there are other relevant groups invited when and where required, such as the Police, Health Services etc. This essentially allowed for Falkirk Council to create a one stop shop for business, as Falkirk Delivers would advise businesses to initially contact Development Management, who would advise the business using a flexible template that was created. This would also advise the business of the other units within the Council that they required to contact. It therefore allowed the business a smooth process in ensuring that they could contact all relevant units and have all necessary permissions in-place. In terms of the Council, it allowed for the units to work directly with each other, advise of any upcoming enquires, as well as work together on more complex cases, ensuring that there was a weekly fixed point at which to do this, as well as knowing which persons in each unit to contact out with the main weekly meeting. This also allowed for direct discussion and collaborative working on Council projects that were required to be put in-place due to COVID-19, such as street widening, signage etc.

**Goals:**

The Covid Working Group has allowed for staff within Development Management to work more closely with colleagues across the Council service, as well as those associated with the Council or those that are likely to meet the Council. It allowed for a much simplified process for businesses to contact the Council initially starting with Development Management, which we simplified the requirements and ensured we were being flexible with the advice and relaxations put forward by the Scottish Government. It overall allowed for Development Management to work with colleagues across the Council, creating better communicative channels between Council units, as well as creating a simple process for our own customers to engage with the planning service. It has also allowed for other Council services to understand more the requirements of Development Management and engage us more for information and advice.

**Outcomes:**

It has so far been demonstrated by the work that Development Management can engage and work successfully to create a working group across the Council which benefits the customers of the service by providing a much simplified process, where they only had to initially make contact with Development Management, where they were advised on all planning matters and then provided with the direct contact details for any other relevant unit that they would need to speak to prior to initiating any works. This helped businesses at a time of real pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic and all the requirements they then had to do to reopen. It has also allowed for Council projects to be successfully brought forward in relation to COVID-19 requirements. The Covid Recovery Group is ongoing as there is still very much restrictions in-place across all businesses. The weekly meetings and continuation of the group has allowed for continued changes in the

requirements to be discussed and again for a key point of contact for businesses to remain in-place. It is considered that the Group has been extremely useful internally within the Council, and it is thought that the Group will continue forward in the future, initially as the Covid Recovery Working Group, but then as restrictions eventually ease, it is hoped that it can morph into a Town Centre Group, which would aim to continue to work together to improve and help the town centres across Falkirk District, as well as look at general improvement projects in the town centres. This will be required in the years to come as the pandemic passes and the centres require to recover and move forward.

**Name of key officer**

**Stephen McClure**

**Pre-Application**

24 Our pre-application and general enquiry services remain free to access and we continue to encourage people to make use of these services for all scales of development. Where workloads allow, officers carry pre-application enquiries through the entire process to a decision. This allows for continuity of service and improves the customer experience. We have seen a significant increase in people accessing these services over the last year and will be looking for ways to streamline and improve our service provision.

25 Officers spend a significant amount of time providing this service and generally provide a written response in the form of an email or a virtual meeting. Site visits and site meetings have been very limited this year and so the focus has been on written responses. Officers liaise with other Council services and external agencies to provide detailed replies.

<b>Case Study 7</b>
Low energy system
<b>Location and Dates:</b>
Little Kerse, Grangemouth – January 2021
<b>Elements of a High-Quality Planning Service this study relates to</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Governance</li> </ul>
<b>Key Markers</b>
1,2,3,12
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Greenspace</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>• Project Management</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Agencies</li> <li>• Authority Planning Staff</li> <li>• Authority Other Staff</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>The proposal is to develop a local energy system to reduce carbon emissions and running costs for the sports pitch hub operated by Little Kerse Leisure Ltd at Little Kerse Little, as well as providing zero carbon electric vehicle charging for visitors and staff. The specifications of the proposal are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150kWp solar ground mounted array</li> <li>• 50 kWh battery storage system</li> <li>• 4 EV charging points and parking bays</li> <li>• Associated ancillary works</li> <li>• Replacement floodlighting to sports pitches</li> </ul> <p>Detailed pre-application consultation was carried out with Council development management and policy staff, Council asset management staff and agents acting for Little Kerse Leisure Ltd to identify a potential site, development constraints, information, and procedural requirements. The pre-application discussions resulted in an application being submitted that accorded with the development plan and could be determined timeously under the Council's scheme of delegation.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>To identify issues that the applicants needed to consider in looking for a suitable location within their site. To clarify procedures for the determination of the proposal and timescales. To identify information required to support an application.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>By encouraging pre-application discussions and taking a cross service approach the Council was able to ensure that this project can be successfully delivered in an appropriate location in accordance with development plan policy and Scottish Government climate change goals.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Julie Seidel	

## **Processing Agreements**

26 A template remains available on our website and agreements are promoted by officers at the pre-application stage or early in the assessment of applications. Take up remains low but we provide clear timescales to applicants on applications and keep them up to date with progress. Customers are generally satisfied that we have procedures in place to ensure applications are progressed in a reasonable timescale. We are very open with applicants and agents and are available by phone or email to talk matter through.

## **Legal Agreements**

27 Advice and guidance are 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.

28 We continue to try and speed up the process. 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**

29 Our Development Management and Enforcement Charters are available on our website. The Development Management Charter will be reviewed in the next PPF reporting period. The Enforcement Charter was reviewed in June 2020.

## **Complaints**

30 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 complaint 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.

- 31 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 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**

- 32 We obtain feedback from a variety of sources. We have links to dedicated questionnaires on our email signatures and people can comment through our website or direct to officers. Performance is monitored and regularly reported to Members for their consideration at a Scrutiny Committee. This helps us improve our service and makes sure we are meeting the needs of the communities. We have received many positive comments this year. It's been a very difficult time and so we are particularly pleased that we have managed to maintain a high level of service. We've highlighted below just some of the comments we have received ....

"I wanted to thank you for your efforts – you really went above and beyond to help me and it is much appreciated."

"Thanks you for your patience in this , the planning team have been amazing and the staff have been so helpful"

"Just to say a huge thank you from MLA for progressing the Rosebank Planning Applications in a proactive, timeously manner to reach a successful outcome.

All the way through the project the Falkirk planning team have been really helpful and given good advice on how to progress and resolve matters at all times."

"Just had a look and this is fantastic, thank you very much, it is really appreciated. Really forward thinking of Falkirk local authority"

## **Developers Forum**

33 In March 2021 we held a planning customer/developer workshop on Microsoft Teams. Invitations were circulated widely to regular applicants and agents. Topics covered included:

- An overview of the Falkirk/Grangemouth Investment Zone
- a development plan update giving an overview of changes to legislation, the development plan scheme, work being carried out to update supplementary guidance on developer contributions and green infrastructure, an update on housing delivery
- a development management update on changes to legislation and actions taken to maintain service delivery during the pandemic, an update on application validation requirements and an overview of biodiversity issues.
- A general Q&A session.

34 The workshop was well received and by making use of the Teams format it was possible to make the session more widely available and informal than events held in previous years.

## **Development Planning**

35 LDP2 was adopted in August 2020. The Council received the Examination report at the end of March and, notwithstanding the disruption caused by the pandemic, was able to conclude the process of modifications and adoption in just over 4 months, thereby achieving our Development Plan Scheme programme target. Some significant and potentially controversial changes were recommended by the Examination reporters which had to be assessed and discussed with elected members in this short window. Overall, LDP2 has taken 4.5 years to complete from inception to adoption, a similar timescale to LDP1, but with a considerably reduced staff resource. Our project management approach, involving stage planning, regular team meetings, and project meetings with senior management, has helped achieve this improved productivity. Our Action Programme was completed in October 2020. LDP2 is available in hard copy, pdf, or online interactive versions.

36 A major focus over the last year has been preparing a new suite of Supplementary Guidance (SG) to accompany LDP2. This has mostly involved updating the existing LDP1 guidance documents, but in certain cases significant rationalisation and change was considered appropriate. A new SG on Green Infrastructure and New Development (see previous case study), and a single consolidated SG on Developer Contributions were the key innovations. During the reporting year, of the 14 SGs

flagged up in LDP2, 6 were adopted, and a further 6 consulted on and submitted to Scottish Government.

37 Our engagement work on planning policy over the year has been mainly focused on SG consultations, but we have continued to issue newsletters and mailings to our customers to alert them to the outcome of the LDP2 examination, the adoption of the plan, and news on plan implementation. We have migrated our customer database and mailing services onto Mailchimp, which offers a simpler and more flexible platform. We took this as an opportunity to refresh our database and re-confirm with customers their wish to continue to receive mailings in line with GDPR. We continue to promote our activities and planning in general through our development plan Facebook page.

38 With the completion of LDP2, we carried out two surveys – one with the public and one with customers - to assess overall awareness and satisfaction with the LDP process, and how people would like to be involved in future. Although the response rate was disappointing, this has offered us some pointers as to how engagement for LDP3 can be improved.

## Project Implementation

39 Following on from the identification of Kinneil Walled Garden as an opportunity in LDP2, a significant public engagement exercise was carried out during the course of the year to help determine the future of this important space, which sits at the heart of important heritage asset of Kinneil Estate (see case study).

<b>Case Study 8</b>	
<b>Consultation on Kinneil Walled Garden Masterplan</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Kinneil Estate, Bo'ness	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of Outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
2,3,11,12	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masterplanning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic Environment</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic Environment Scotland</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
Since the closure of the municipal plant nursery at Kinneil Walled Garden in June 2019, Council officers have worked with stakeholders and the wider community to explore	

future development options for the site in line with the wider masterplan for Kinneil Estate approved in 2015 and the allocated Development Plan opportunities for tourism related development (BUS02) and community growing (GN24). Ideas generated at a stakeholder meeting in June 2019 were subject to a wider consultation with stakeholders and members of the public from 17th October to 2nd December 2019. The feedback received during consultation has been used to develop a landscape masterplan framework for how the walled garden might be used in the future for the benefit of people living in, working in and visiting Kinneil Estate.

<b>Goals:</b>
To enable the sustainable future use of a listed historic asset within a wider designed landscape as part of the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site whilst meeting the objectives of the Council’s Tourism, Historic Environment and Community Food Growing Strategies
<b>Outcomes:</b>
The landscape masterplan framework will be presented back to stakeholders and the community before final approval by the Council. Masterplan enabling works will then be commissioned using ringfenced funding from the Council’s capital programme.
<b>Name of key officer</b>
Mandy Brown

### Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies

40 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has introduced the requirement for planning authorities to prepare regional spatial strategies (RSS) in place of the current strategic development plans. Following the invitation from the Scottish Government at the end of 2019 for regional groupings to prepare indicative RSSs as an input to NPF4, Falkirk Council joined forces with Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils to prepare an iRSS for the Forth Valley region. Falkirk has taken a lead role in this process and the grouping submitted a final iRSS to Scottish Government in April 2021 (see case study).

<b>Case Study 9</b>	
<b>Forth Valley Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Region wide, 2020-2021	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of service and engagement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
6,8,10,11,12,13	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Planning</li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Falkirk Council Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clackmannanshire Council</li> </ul>

• Stirling Council	• Key Agencies
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Through 2020 and 2021, in response to a Scottish Government invitation and utilising Scottish Government grant funding, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils developed an indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) for the Forth Valley area. With the assistance of Kevin Murray Associates, a series of workshops were held with officers and members across the three councils and representatives of key agencies. This provided the basis for devising the strategy. Further consultation and iterations took place, with the final iRSS being submitted to the Scottish Government in April 2021. With no history of regional planning in Forth Valley, this was an innovative piece of work requiring vision and collaboration. Falkirk Council took a lead role in procuring the consultancy support, co-ordinating the outputs, and liaising with the Scottish Government.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The iRSS was primarily focused on providing input to NPF4, so that the importance of the region would be fully recognised from a national perspective. However, the exercise has also allowed us to test out what a formal RSS for the Forth Valley might look like, exploring planning synergies between the three authorities and neighbouring regions.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>The iRSS has reasserted the crucial position of the Forth Valley area at the heart of Central Scotland and has identified six locational and thematic areas for development. The work has confirmed the added value which regional working can bring and has provided a springboard for considering the authorities' engagement with the formal statutory duty to prepare RSSs.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Alistair Shaw	

## Strategic Infrastructure & Inclusive Economic Growth

41 In July 2020, the UK and Scottish Governments announced a Growth Deal package of £90 million towards delivery of the Falkirk-Grangemouth Investment Zone. This fell short of the level of funding sought through the bid, and prioritisation and business case development has been progressing since then, working towards the formal signing of Heads of Terms. The focus is on Innovative Industry and Creating Great Places, and the continuing aspiration to deliver transformational economic, inclusive and clean growth locally, regionally and nationally has been reinforced by the need for economic recovery post-Covid. Facilitating a 'just transition' in Grangemouth is central to the Growth Deal, and a Place Based Investment Framework for the town is being developed with input from Scottish Futures Trust. The strategic importance of Grangemouth to meeting national net zero carbon targets has been emphasised through submissions to NPF4 and the indicative RSS, and through the creation of the Grangemouth Future Industry Board. The NPF3 Grangemouth Action Programme group has continued to meet, bringing together the key stakeholders from public and private sectors.

- 42 The Council's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) initiative continues to progress. This has already seen some £10.5m investment in infrastructure works to date. Two key projects in the pipeline are the M9 Junction 5 upgrade, which is due to commence in summer 2021, and the A9/A904 improvements including a major grade separated pedestrian/cycle bridge, for which the planning application has been submitted.
- 43 The Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme, which ranks as the top priority flood risk management scheme in Scotland, is progressing, with site investigation work, environmental studies, flood modelling and outline design work all ongoing. A further major round of community and stakeholder engagement has recently taken place.
- 44 Land acquisition for the Denny Eastern Access Road is being taken forward through CPO procedures. The scheme is critical to alleviating existing road network issues in the town and to the delivery of the next phases of the Denny South East Strategic Growth Area.

## Housing Delivery

- 45 The pandemic had an immediate effect on housing delivery in the area, with construction paused, but activity has picked encouragingly since then, with 263 completions recorded over the period July-December 2020. Of the 12 Strategic Growth Areas identified in LDP2, 4 are currently active, these having been carried over from LDP1, 2 are paused awaiting progress with later phases, 5 are at various stages of planning, from PANs to full planning permission, and 1 is subject to pre-planning discussions.
- 46 The planning service continues to work closely with Housing Services on the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), which is aiming to deliver 1,214 new build Council/RSL properties over the period 2021-26, and consideration of potential supply of sites for future programmes. Planning is represented on a suite of liaison groups which have been established to oversee both strategic planning and delivery (see case study).

<b>Case Study 10</b>
<b>Housing and Planning Liaison</b>
<b>Location and Dates:</b>
Area wide, ongoing.
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of service and engagement</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
2,3,10,11,12,13,15	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council Planning Staff</li> <li>• Registered Social Landlords (RSL)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council Other Staff</li> <li>• Scottish Government</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Engagement between the Council’s planning and housing services has been strengthening over recent years. The relationship is a multi-dimensional one, reflected in the range of collaborative working groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Housing Liaison Group –general update on inter-related areas of work, SHIP sites and planning applications.</li> <li>• Strategic Housing Group –operates as the housing market partnership. This group considers HNDA progress and agrees HNDA work and scenarios. Also considers LHS priorities and other housing policy issues.</li> <li>• HNDA Working Group – progresses HNDA.</li> <li>• Tripartite Meeting ( Scottish Government, Housing, RSLs) – progression of affordable housing sites in SHIP.</li> <li>• Short Life Working Group on Developer Viability Statements – short life group which was prompted by discussing SG13 at the tripartite meeting to produce a template for developer viability statements for social housing.</li> <li>• Grangemouth Masterplan Group –working group of RSL’s, Housing and other Council officers including planning. Has a mission to tackle various problems with Grangemouth housing stock, including potential rebuild but also environmental and stock improvements.</li> <li>• Council Housing Delivery Group –assist in resolving issues and moving forward council housing delivery.</li> </ul>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
The overall goal is to achieve more effective communication between the two services in terms of strategic planning for housing in the area, and the delivery of the SHIP programme.	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
Increased engagement is yielding benefits in terms of increased	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Catherine Devlin	

## Climate Change and Zero Net Carbon

47 In August 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and is committed to assisting national efforts to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Our Growth Deal bid

is built around projects which will help tackle the climate challenge, particularly those focused on a just transition in Grangemouth.

48 The planning service has had a key input to the Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) compiled by the Climate Change team in the Council. Officers from the Planning & Environment Unit were interviewed as part of the process, explaining how planning interfaces with climate change adaptation. This was used as a case study in the RTPI’s recent research paper on ‘Place Based Approaches to Climate Change’.

49 Consolidated and updated Supplementary Guidance on Low and Zero Carbon Development is expected to be issued for consultation in the summer.

50 The contribution of carbon sequestration to tackling climate change is recognised and an important piece of work has been our Carbon Sequestration Scoping Study which looks at the potential of Council owned land to deliver benefits in this area (see case study).

<b>Case Study 11</b>	
<b>Carbon Sequestration Scoping Study</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Council wide, 2020-21	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
10,12,13	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
Low and Zero Carbon	
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council Officers</li> <li>• Green Action Trust</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>The Council has committed to a net zero carbon emissions pathway by 2030. Planned reductions in emissions from corporate activities will not, on their own, meet the target of net zero by 2030. It is likely that emissions equivalent to at least 13,000 tonnes of CO2 per annum will need to be addressed through alternative means. Carbon sequestration could play a role in helping the Council achieve the net zero target but the extent to which it could play a role was unknown. The study aim was to identify the current carbon sequestration value of Falkirk Council owned land and buildings, and the potential carbon sequestration value that could be achieved through habitat change to carbon sequestering habitats (woodland, wetland and grassland).</p>	

<b>Goals:</b>
Protecting and enhancing biodiversity was a guiding principle for the study. The study focused on identifying habitats which could be changed to increase carbon sequestration, whilst protecting those habitats with greater biodiversity value thereby ensuring potential carbon sequestration/ climate mitigation goals were balanced with wider biodiversity goals.
<b>Outcomes:</b>
The study has found that the 13,000 tonne target cannot be met through habitat change on Council owned land alone and that the targets for reducing emissions from corporate activities will need to be significantly more ambitious if a net zero pathway by 2030 is to be met. Implementing the scale of habitat change needed to meet the potential for increasing carbon sequestration on Council land by 2030 identified in the study will need significant further site investigation and feasibility work, bold decision making and concerted effort. The Council's Cross Party Climate Action Working Group has approved the commissioning of a 2nd phase of study in 2021/22 to develop more detailed project proposals to implement habitat change on the ground.
<b>Name of key officer</b>
Danny Thallon

## Governance

### Service Structure

- 51 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.



- 52 A review of the current structure is underway, which is likely to have significant implications for how Development Services is organised and focused. This will assist in addressing some of the major challenges facing the Council in terms of delivering major strategic projects such as those arising from the Growth Deal, and the re-integration of Falkirk Community Trust functions back into the Council.
- 53 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.
- 54 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**

55 '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 refreshed in May 2020 and provides a longer term basis for the process of transformation and the delivery of more efficient services. The planning service engages with challenges and opportunities associated with Council of the Future through the Service Improvement Group (see below).

## **Staff Resources**

56 Staff numbers across the service have been reducing over a period 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. The resource available to development management from specialist staff in the Planning & Environment Unit (e.g. landscape, biodiversity, urban design) is much more limited. However, this is being addressed through the availability of supplementary guidance, and general upskilling of development management staff in key areas, allowing them to be more confident in dealing with these issues themselves.

57 To address workforce planning issues and an aging staff profile, the service continues to participate in the Council's graduate recruitment scheme. The aim is 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.

## **Collaborative Working**

58 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 Groups (see previous case study)
- Council Housing Planning Delivery Group
- Council/SEPA/Scottish Water Tripartite Group
- NPF3 Grangemouth Investment Zone Action Planning Group

- Planning Obligations Monitoring Group
- Forth Valley RSS Officer Working Group
- NHS Forth Valley Planning Liaison Group (see case study)

<b>Case Study 12</b>	
<b>NHS Forth Valley Planning Liaison Group</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Area wide, ongoing	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of service and engagement</li> <li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
10,11,12,13,15	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Working</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHSFV</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Historically, the planning service has found difficulty in engaging with NHSFV on the planning of primary healthcare facilities in a context of community growth. In 2015, a policy on development contributions for healthcare facilities was introduced in LDP1, supported by supplementary guidance. However, there have been problems with the implementation of the policy. With the advent of LDP2, the Council and NHSFV have made fresh efforts to work together more closely. A regular high level meeting on mutual property and planning issues takes place at director level, complemented by a Planning Liaison group involving NHSFV's property manager and consultants, and both development management and development planning staff.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The objective has been to improve information exchange to benefit the planning processes of both the Council and NHSFV, and to address issues in the implementation of the system of developer contributions for primary healthcare facilities, as set out in LDP2.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>The programme of regular meetings has been very beneficial. Key information such as the housing land audit from the Council, and the primary healthcare premises review from NHSFV has been shared and discussed. The section on healthcare contributions in SG13 Developer Contributions has been a collaborative effort.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Alistair Shaw	

## **Decision Making**

- 59 Most planning applications are determined under the Council's approved Scheme of Delegation. The number of delegated decisions remains high. 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.
- 60 Decisions on the LDP are reserved to full Council. However, a scheme of delegation for supplementary guidance has been put in place which means that only SGs with significant new policy implications need to be referred to the Council's Executive. This has helped speed up the delivery of the SG programme.

## **Financial Management**

- 61 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**

### **Service Improvement Group**

- 62 The Council previously participated in the 'Costing the Planning Service' exercise with 12 other planning authorities. In partnership with CIPFA, the Improvement Service

and HOPS. Work to address the issues raised by this has been broadened out into a wider improvement agenda which is being taken forward by the Service Improvement Group.

### **Staff Development and Well Being**

- 63 With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and almost universal remote working, the well being of staff and the maintenance of team working and morale has been a priority. Regular team meetings to connect both socially and professionally have been held across the service, and advice on mental health has been disseminated to staff.
- 64 During the pandemic, there has been increased access to online conference and training events, which are often free, and staff have availed themselves of these opportunities. Staff have attended a variety of courses. Sessions have been attended on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, Enforcement, Biodiversity Planning on the Forth and a variety of other courses. Where these courses are recorded, the recordings have been shared with others and stored in a shared drive for future reference. Staff continue to be involved in the RTPI Central Chapter and engaged with colleagues across the Scottish planning network through HOPS both through the Knowledge Hub and online meetings of the various subgroups.
- 65 Development Management officers set up and attended externally run training on The Equality Act. We were joined by our colleagues in Governance with whom we work closely on planning legal matters. It enabled us to gain a better understanding of the Act and our responsibilities in this context. As a result of this training we will update our reports to reflect our roles and responsibilities.

### **Digital Transformation**

- 66 Digital transformation is a key priority both in terms of the 'Council of the Future' agenda, and the Scottish Government's Digital Strategy for Planning which was published this year.
- 67 With its previous focus on enabling mobile and flexible working through the Citrix system, the service was well placed to maintain business continuity when staff had to begin working from home. Initially, personal devices played an important role in remote working, but over the year, Council laptops, tablets and other equipment has been rolled out to all staff. In recent months staff have been migrated onto Office 365, enabling the use of MS Teams for virtual meetings, video calls, and general communication across teams.

## E planning

68 The development plan team continues to work towards converting spatial data into digital form, and to use GIS to enhance the presentation, useability and access to such data. Updates to all our spatial datasets have been undertaken following the adoption of LDP2, and uploaded to both the Council’s corporate data store, and to Spatial Hub. Meanwhile, a new online interactive version of LDP2 has been prepared and published on the web (see case study).

<b>Case Study 13</b>	
<b>Online Interactive Local Development Plan</b>	
<b>Location and Dates:</b>	
Area wide, 2020	
<b>Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture of Continuous Improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Markers</b>	
11,12,13	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Development Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Systems</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falkirk Council Planning Staff</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview:</b>	
<p>Following on from the adoption of LDP2 in 2020, the Council has created an online interactive version of the document, which is a further development in terms of quality and user friendliness from the online version of LDP1. Developed using ArcGIS online, the home page allows every component of the text document to be accessed, alongside a searchable, zoomable map displaying the spatial extent of policies and proposals. Clicking on individual policies or proposals give access to associated plan text. Displayed proposals can be filtered by type and location. Base mapping/aerial photography options are available.</p>	
<b>Goals:</b>	
<p>The aim has been to create a user friendly, intuitive and attractive version of the plan which will be the ‘go to’ version for all users. It is intended for those who want to dip into the plan for very specific information (e.g. the policies/proposals for a particular address) or for those who want to follow the more linear narrative of the plan.</p>	
<b>Outcomes:</b>	
<p>The online plan went live in March 2021 and has been well received by customers. Usage is high with some 900 views over its first months of operation.</p>	
<b>Name of key officer</b>	
Allan Ogilvie	

## Part 2: Supporting Evidence

Falkirk Council website

Corporate Plan

Costing the Planning Service Report

Strategy for Community Engagement 2019 - 2024

Council 5 Year Business Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26

Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and guidance – Council website

Covid-19, Interim Decision Making Structure reports

Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan 2020-22

LDP Monitoring Report

Draft Housing Land Audit 2020-21

Employment Land Audit 2021

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF	Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF
Design	•	Interdisciplinary Working	•
Conservation	•	Collaborative Working	•
Regeneration	•	Community Engagement	
Environment	•	Placemaking	
Greenspace	•	Charrettes	
Town Centres	•	Place Standard	
Masterplanning	•	Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	•	Process Improvement	
Housing Supply		Project Management	•
Affordable Housing	•	Skills Sharing	
Economic Development	•	Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	•
Development Management Processes	•	Transport	
Planning Applications	•	Active Travel	
Strategic Planning	•	Low and Zero carbon	•
Health	•		•

## Part 3: Service Improvements 2021-2022

In the coming year we will:

Service Improvement	Timescale	Objective
Complete LDP3 project plan	March 2021. Dependant on publication of DP Regs and Scottish Government guidance	7 LDP less than 5 years since adoption 8 Development Plan Scheme 9 Elected member engagement
Prepare LDP3 consultation plan	As above	As above
Complete adoption of remaining Supplementary Guidance	March 2021	6 Continuous Improvement 11 Regular and Proportionate Policy Advice 15 Developer Contributions
Carry out Teams training to enable DM to adapt its processes and work more efficiently. To streamline the committee report writing process.	6 months	1 Decision making 2 Project Management 3 Early Collaboration 6 Continuous Improvement
Train additional officers in dealing with Hazardous Substance Consents to future proof the Council's ability to deal with such applications	1 year	6 Continuous Improvement 1 Decision making 2 Project Management
Streamline the enquiry process and provide additional information on the Council website in relation to permitted development.	6 months	6 Continuous Improvement
Review and update DM charter	6 months	6 Continuous Improvement 11 Regular and Proportionate Policy Advice

Delivery of our Service Improvement Actions in 2020-21:

Service Improvement	Complete?
Adopt LDP2	Yes. Adopted in August 2020
Adopt batch 1 of LDP2 supplementary guidance	Yes. Adopted in November 2020
Prepare and consult on batches 2 and 3 of LDP2 supplementary guidance	Yes. Consultation
Carry out customer survey	Yes. Completed October 2020

Submit indicative RSS to Scottish Government	Yes, Completed April 2021
Prepare LDP3 project plan	Partly. Outline project plan prepared which is providing the basis for interim DPS. Full project plan awaiting publication of development planning regs and guidance
Carry out customer survey	Yes, completed March 2021
Adapt Covid19 response work procedures	Yes, completed March 2021
Arrange Developer/Agent workshop	Yes, held March 2021
Procedures for self-certification of flood/drainage information	Partly, internal consultation procedures revised to speed up response times and improve internal communication.

## Part 4: National Headline Indicators

### A: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Planning

Development Planning	2020-2021	2019-2020
<b>Local Development Planning</b>		
Age of LDP at end of reporting period	7 months	56 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?	No	No
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)	7019	5649
5-year effective housing land supply programming (units)	2761	2690
5-year housing supply total capacity (units)	5140	4509
5-year effective housing land supply target (units)	2650	2650
5-year effective land supply (years)	5.2	5.1
Housing approvals (units)	699	651
Housing completions over the last 5 years (units)	2243	2495
Marketable employment land supply (hectares)	448.2	337.5
Employment land take up during reporting year (hectares)	4.0	0.6

Source: Approved 2020-21 Housing Land Audit

Approved 2019-20 Housing Land Audit (note that these figures are different from the draft figures presented in PPF 2020)

Employment Land Audit June 2021

\*No formal programme established yet for LDP3, but expectation is that LDP2 will be replaced timeously in line with Scottish Government transitional arrangements

**B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management:**

<b>Development Management:</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>Project Planning</b>		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	<b>110 23.7 %</b>	<b>149 40.5%</b>
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	<b>2 50.0%</b>	<b>5 0.0%</b>
<b>Decision Making</b>		
Application approval rate	<b>96.9%</b>	<b>95.5%</b>
Delegation rate	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>94.2%</b>
Validation	<b>76.3%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>
<b>Decision-making Timescales</b>		
Major Developments	<b>77.4 weeks</b>	<b>63.8 weeks</b>
Local developments (non-householder)	<b>11.3 weeks</b>	<b>10.1 weeks</b>
Householder developments	<b>7.6 weeks</b>	<b>6.5 weeks</b>
<b>Legacy Cases</b>		
Number cleared during reporting period	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
Number remaining	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>

### **C: Enforcement activity**

	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	<b>9 months</b>	<b>20 months</b>
Complaints lodged and investigated	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>
Breaches identified – no further action taken	<b>66</b>	<b>70</b>
Cases closed	<b>40</b>	<b>49</b>
Notices served	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
Direct Action	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Prosecutions	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### **D: NHI Key Outcomes – Commentary**

#### **Local Development Planning**

69 LDP2 was adopted on 7 August 2020, in accordance with DPS programme, and exactly 5 years since the adoption of LDP1. Project planning has commenced for LDP3, with the authority's broad intentions set out in an interim DPS, but detailed programming awaits publication of the development planning regs and guidance.

#### **Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs**

70 The 5 year effective housing land supply is slightly up from the previous year, although not as much as might have been expected given the substantial volume of new supply that has come through because of the adoption of LDP2. This reflects the fact that much of the new supply is in the form of large sites with longer lead times and hence their impact on the 5 -year programmed supply is as yet limited. There is also the impact of continuing delays in the programming of existing sites. There appear to be a number of reasons for these delays, including slack market conditions in some areas, landowners being slow to bring sites to the market, and infrastructure issues. There has also been a fall in the 5 year rolling completions figure, which again is reflective of delays to sites rather than supply issues as such. In particular, the social housing output from the Council's SHIP has reduced over the last few years as the programme is now focused on larger, more complex sites which are proving more difficult to deliver. Housing approvals over the reporting year are marginally up compared to the previous year.

71 The amount of marketable employment land has increased due to a re-calculation of the scale of the Ineos development opportunity together with some additional sites from LDP2. Take-up this reporting year relates to developments at Grangemouth Docks including increased warehouse capacity.

### **Project Planning**

72 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**

73 Our approval and delegation rates remain high. The percentage of applications that we can validate on first receipt has increased from 43.4% to 76.3%. There is clear guidance on our website on what information should be submitted and we have targeted agents who frequently make invalid submissions to seek improvements.

### **Decision Making Timescales**

74 Regular monitoring of caseloads 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.

75 Covid 19 has impacted on decision making timescales. There have been periods where it has not been possible for officers to visit sites. Although use has been made of photographs and remote videos these measures are not appropriate in all cases where due to site circumstances, representations received or the personal circumstances of applicants a physical visit is required.

### **Legacy Cases**

76 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.

77 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

78 We 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. Covid 19 has impacted on the investigation of cases and the inspection of sites. We have considered Scottish Government advice and where appropriate have taken a sympathetic and flexible approach where breaches of control have occurred.

79 Our enforcement charter was updated in June 2020.

## Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics

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

Timescales	2020-21	2020-21	2019-20
<b>Overall</b>			
<b>Major developments</b>	4	<b>77.4 weeks</b>	<b>63.8 weeks</b>
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	174	<b>11.3 weeks</b>	<b>10.1 weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months (47.8%)</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months (52.2%)</li> </ul>			
<b>Householder developments</b>	237	<b>7.6 weeks</b>	<b>6.5 weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months (87.1%)</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months (12.9%)</li> </ul>			
<b>Housing Developments</b>			
<b>Major</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>104.9 weeks</b>	<b>63.8 weeks</b>

<b>Local housing developments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	58 (37.0%) (63.0%)	<b>23.9 weeks</b>	<b>14.9 weeks</b>
<b>Business and Industry</b>			
<b>Major</b>	0	N/A	N/A
<b>Local business and industry developments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	2 (0.0%) (100.0%)	<b>10.1 weeks</b>	<b>7.1 weeks</b>
<b>EIA Developments</b>	0	N/A	N/A
<b>Other Consents</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>As listed in the guidance</i></li> </ul>	60	8.5 weeks	7.6 weeks
<b>Planning/legal agreements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major: average time</li> <li>Local: average time</li> </ul>	1 13	<b>104.9 weeks</b> <b>51.5 weeks</b>	<b>102 weeks</b> <b>16.1 weeks</b>

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

Type	Total number of decisions No.	Original decision upheld			
		2020-21		2019-2020	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	0	-	-	1	50.0%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	5	2	40.0%	5	62.5%

## C: Context

80 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.

81 The pandemic has impacted on the number of applications submitted and the timescales to determine applications. Planning Committee meetings recommenced in May 2020 making use of video technology to hold meetings remotely.

## 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	10	10
Development Planning	5	4.3
Enforcement	0	0
Specialists <sup>1</sup>	6	4.5

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

Other (including staff not RTPI eligible) <sup>2</sup>	14	
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Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	2
30-39	9
40-49	7
50 and over	18

## Part 7: Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	8
Planning committees	9
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body	0
LRB site visits	0

## Performance Markers

Performance Marker	Council Response/Evidence
Driving Improved Performance	
1	<p>Decision Making</p> <p>We have amended our work practices to deal with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, inevitably it has impacted on decision making timescales through the reporting period.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics Decision Making, paragraph 73</p>

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

		Decision Making Timescales, paragraph 74,75
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><b>PPF Reference</b>  Part 4: National Headline Indicators  Case Studies  Pre-application, paragraph 24, 25  Processing agreements, paragraph 26  Legal agreements, paragraph 27, 28</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. We have amended our processes to deal with the impacts of Covid-19. Although face to face engagement has not been possible, we have encouraged the use and availability of video conferencing and use of telephones</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b>  Case studies  Greenspace, paragraph 12,13,14  Historic Environment, paragraph 15  Contact/Accessibility, paragraph 20,21,22,33  Pre-application, paragraph 24,25  Processing agreements, paragraph 26  Legal agreements, Paragraph 27,28  Charters, paragraph 29  Development Planning, paragraph 35,36,37,38  Service structure, paragraph 51 - 54  Digital Transformation, paragraph 66,67  Covid Response and Recovery, paragraph 23</p>

		Collaborative Working, paragraph 40,41,58 Contact/Accessibility, paragraph 20,21,22
<b>4</b>	Legal Agreements	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.  <b>PPF Reference</b> Legal agreements, paragraph 27,28
<b>5</b>	Enforcement Charter	The Charter is up to date.  <b>PPF Reference</b> Charters, paragraph 29,79
<b>6</b>	Continuous Improvement	Progress on National Headline Indicators and Service Improvements are set out in the relevant sections of the PPF.  <b>PPF Reference</b> Case studies Town centres, paragraph 10,11 Greenspace, paragraph 12,13,14 Historic Environment, paragraph 15 Contact/Accessibility, paragraph 20,21,22 Customer Feedback, paragraph 32 Development Planning, 35,36,37,38 Climate Change, paragraph 47 Council of the Future, paragraph 55 Staffing Resources, paragraph 56,57 Costing the Planning Service, paragraph 62 Digital Transformation and Data Management, paragraph 66,67 Staff Development and Well Being, paragraph 63 - 65 Service Improvement Group, paragraph 62
<b>Promoting the Plan-Led System</b>		
<b>7</b>	Local Development Plan less than 5 years since adoption	The LDP was adopted in July 2015 and was 4 years and 8 months old at the end of the reporting period.

		<p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning, paragraph 35 - 38</p>
<b>8</b>	<p>Development Plan Scheme demonstrates next LDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On course for adoption within 5 year cycle</li> <li>• Project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale</li> </ul>	<p>LDP2 was adopted in August 2020 i.e. within 5 year timescale. Project planning has commenced for LDP3</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning, paragraph 35 - 38,69</p>
<b>9</b>	<p>Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation</p>	<p>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 continued post-MIR with briefings on the consultation response and issues for the Proposed Plan.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning</p>
<b>10</b>	<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></p> <p>Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning</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 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. A major focus over the last year has been preparing a new suite of SG to accompany LDP2</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 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.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Case studies  Pre-application, paragraph  Processing Agreements, paragraph 26  Legal Agreements, paragraph 27,28  Charters, paragraph 29, 79  Development Planning, paragraph 35 - 38  Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies, paragraph 40  Climate Change, 47  Collaborative Working, paragraph 40,41,58  Digital Transformation and Data Management, paragraph 66,67</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><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Case studies Pre-application, paragraph 24,25 Development Planning, paragraph 35 - 38 Governance, paragraph 51 - 54 Collaborative Working, paragraph 58</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.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Case Study Historic Environment, paragraph 15 Collaborative Working, paragraph 58 Staff Development and Well Being, paragraph 63 - 65</p>

## Delivering Development

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 are set and cases monitored. Minded to grant decisions are reconsidered within 6 months if not determined.</p> <p><b>PPF Reference</b></p> <p>Case Study Quality of Outcomes, page 5 Quality of Service and Engagement, page 12 Processing Agreements, paragraph 26</p>
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		<p>Legal Agreements, paragraph 27 - 28  Governance, page 26  Legacy Cases, paragraph 76,77</p>
<p><b>15</b></p>	<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>  Case Studies  Pre-application, paragraph 24 - 25  Processing Agreements, paragraph 26  Development Planning, paragraph 35 - 38  Strategic Infrastructure and Inclusive Economic Growth Assisting, paragraph 41 - 44</p>



# Falkirk Council

*Development Services*