

**Falkirk Council Open Space Strategy
SEA Statement**

January 2017



Falkirk Council
Development Services

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the approved Open Space Strategy (OSS) which covers the Falkirk Council area (shown in figure 1 below)

Figure 1. The Falkirk Council area



1.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the SEA Act) section 18(1)(a)(iii) requires that a 'statement' be made available to accompany the adopted plan, as soon as reasonably practicable upon adoption of the plan.

1.3 The Open Space Strategy was adopted by Falkirk Council on 18 October 2016.

1.4 The content required in this statement is defined under section 18(3), as follows:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- how the environmental report has been taken into account;
- how the opinions expressed in response to the invitations mentioned in section 16 have been taken into account;
- how the results of any relevant consultation under regulation 14 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/1633) have been taken into account;

- the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives considered; and
- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

1.5 To reflect these requirements, the format of this report is as follows:

- Background: A summary of the development of the OSS and the SEA process to date.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Describes the need for SEA and how the SEA process has been undertaken for the OSS
- Environmental Considerations During the Plan Making Process: A description of how environmental protection objectives and the SEA objectives informed the OSS,
- Using the Environmental Report: How the Environmental Report has influenced the development of the OSS and how mitigation identified both in the Environmental Report and during the finalisation of the OSS has been included to prevent, reduce or offset significant negative effects and to enhance significant positive effects.
- Assessment of Alternatives to the OSS: The scope of reasonable alternatives to the OSS which were considered.
- Consultation: How responses received during consultation on the Environmental Report were taken into account during the finalisation of OSS.
- Adoption of the OSS: How the OSS was adopted in light of reasonable alternatives
- Monitoring: The measures that are to be taken to monitor the implementation of the OSS and any environmental effects it may have.

1.6 No trans-boundary consultations with other EU member states were required.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE OSS

2.1 Purpose and Scope of the OSS

2.1.1 The responsibility for managing, maintaining, protecting and regenerating the parks and open spaces across the Falkirk Council area is shared between different Council Services and other organisations such as Falkirk Community Trust, the Forestry Commission, NHS Forth Valley, Scottish Canals and Callendar Estates. With such a range of organisations involved there is the need for a single strategic document to:

- provide a unified vision for the future of the parks and open space resource across the Council area;
- outline the challenges that we face if we are to realise the vision
- set shared objectives which will overcome these challenges; and
- set out a detailed action plan which outlines the actions that need to be taken to achieve the shared objectives.

The OSS amalgamates and replaces the Open Space Strategy 2010-2015 and the Parks Development Plan 2008-2011.

2.2 Policy Context

2.2.1 The OSS's relationship with other plans, programmes and strategies is set out comprehensively at section 3 of the Environmental Report. The main documents influencing the OSS are summarised below.

2.2.2 **Scottish Planning Policy** indicates that green infrastructure, including open space and green networks should be protected, enhanced and promoted as an integral component of successful placemaking. It also requires the preparation of up to date audits, strategies and action plans which cover the multiple functions of open space.

2.2.3 Scotland's third **National Planning Framework (NPF3)** identifies the Central Scotland Green Network as a national development with wide ranging environmental objectives including:

- Creating an environment for sustainable economic growth;
- Creating an environment more in balance, one that will support Central Scotland to thrive in a changing climate;
- Creating an environment which supports healthy lifestyles and good physical and mental wellbeing;
- Creating an environment that people can enjoy and where they choose to live and bring up their families; and
- Creating an environment where nature can flourish

2.2.4 Parks and open spaces within the Falkirk Council area form part of the Central Scotland Green Network. NPF3 indicates that, during its lifetime, remediation of derelict land, prioritised action in disadvantaged communities and active travel to maximise community and health benefits should be the priorities for funding.

2.2.5 The vision of the **Falkirk Local Development Plan** is for the Falkirk area to be a dynamic and distinctive area at the heart of Central Scotland, characterised by a network of thriving communities and greenspaces and a vibrant and growing economy which is of strategic significance in the national context, providing an attractive and sustainable place in which to live work and invest. The open space strategy will have a role in creating and maintaining the network of thriving greenspaces and helping to deliver an attractive and sustainable place to live work and invest.

2.2.6 The Council's **Culture and Sport Strategy "Inspiring Lives"** recognises that parks and open spaces are one of the places where people make culture and sport happen; they are a focal point for participation and community cohesion, they attract visitors and enhance the image of the area and therefore they need to be fit for purpose. The Strategy also recognises that participation is key to improving a sense of well-being and enriching the lives of people of all ages and therefore structures need to be in place to encourage and enable grass roots participation in parks and open spaces. The Strategy is also clear that any forward plans for parks and open space need to be aligned to partner expectations to ensure opportunities for investment are maximised.

2.2.7 **Falkirk Greenspace – A Strategy for our Green Network** aims to connect areas of natural, semi-natural and man-made open spaces within our towns and villages, and create links into the wider countryside. The strategy recognises that the development of a high quality, multi-functional green network will provide a range of benefits for people, businesses and wildlife across our area. Priority actions are proposed conserving 9 themes:

- Economic Development and Placemaking
- Tackling Vacant and Derelict Land
- Outdoor Access
- Community Growing
- Education Services
- Woodland
- Water Environment
- Biodiversity; and
- Landscape

3.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

3.1 Need for SEA

3.1.1 The likely nature, location and scale of environmental effects caused by the implementation of the OSS are such that the Council, in its role as responsible authority for the implementation of the OSS, determined it should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

3.1.2 SEA is a key component of sustainable development, establishing important methods for protecting the environment and extending opportunities for participation in public policy decision making. SEA is a process by which the potential environmental effects of strategic actions, that is policy level actions rather than specific development proposals, are considered. In the case of the OSS, the strategic actions assessed in the SEA relate to the various proposals which the Strategy makes to deliver its vision and the range of standards and policies it establishes which will guide future decision making.

3.2 Legislation

3.2.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (The Act) came into force on 20 February 2006 and requires that all public plans, programmes and strategies in Scotland undergo a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment. This Act is now the implementing legislation for directive 2001/42/EC, known as the “strategic environmental assessment” or “SEA” Directive.

3.3 SEA Process to Date

3.3.1 The process of environmental assessment has informed the OSS throughout its development, as shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Key Stages of SEA

Stage	Requirement	Date Undertaken
Screening	to establish whether SEA is required	Submitted to the SEA Gateway - 7 th May 2014
Scoping	to determine what environmental issues need to be covered by the Environmental Report	Scoping report submitted to the SEA Gateway- 9 th October 2014
Environmental Report	Documents the environmental effect (both positive and negative) of the implementation of the OSS	Environmental Report published for consultation on 4 th December 2015 alongside the consultative draft OSS.

Stage	Requirement	Date Undertaken
SEA Statement	This report – documents how the adopted OSS has incorporated environmental considerations and consultation responses.	The OSS was formally adopted on 18 th October 2016. This SEA Statement has been produced as soon as was reasonably practicable given available resources and other work commitments.

3.4 SEA Statement

3.4.1 According to the European Commission, SEA should ‘ensure that environmental consequences of certain plans and programmes are identified and assessed during their preparation and before their adoption.’ Therefore, the SEA process should inform the development of the plan or programme, and then assess the resultant likely environmental effects prior to its adoption.

3.4.2 Section 18(3)(a) and (b) of the SEA Act require that the SEA Statement demonstrates ‘...how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme’ and ‘how the environmental report has been taken into account’.

3.4.3 The remaining sections of the SEA Statement (this report) details how environmental considerations and consultee responses have been incorporated into the adopted OSS.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS DURING PLAN MAKING PROCESS

4.1 Legislative Requirement

4.1.1 One of the core principles of SEA is to facilitate the consideration of the potential for positive and negative environmental effects during strategic decision-making. This section sets out how the environmental information gathered and analysed in the SEA and OSS preparation processes, and the results of the assessment presented in the Environmental Report, have been used to inform the adopted OSS.

4.2 Setting of SEA Objectives

4.2.1 Environmental protection objectives were identified during a review of relevant international, national, regional and local policies at the Scoping stage; from these a set of SEA objectives were proposed to provide the basis against which the environmental effects of the draft OSS would be assessed.

4.2.2 The process of setting these objectives, together with the baseline characterisation carried out at earlier stages of SEA, helped to identify the sensitive assets and key issues within the area covered by the plan, whilst the objectives themselves set benchmarks and aspirations for the plan to achieve. The OSS has been developed and revised as appropriate and where practicable to best achieve these objectives.

4.3 Environmental Assessment of the OSS

4.3.1 The environmental assessment undertaken on the consultative draft OSS was a transparent and objective means to demonstrate how environmental considerations had been incorporated into the consultative draft OSS, and to consider the environmental effects that would have arisen from its implementation. The significance of these effects was weighed against the SEA objectives set earlier in the process. The process of environmental assessment was also intended to highlight areas where mitigation is required to prevent, reduce or offset adverse effects or to increase the value of positive effects.

4.3.2 The environmental assessment also identified areas where monitoring of environmental effects during the life of the OSS was needed or were desirable to generate further baseline information for future reviews of the OSS or related plans, programmes or strategies.

4.3.3 The results of the environmental assessment, set out in the Environmental Report, were taken into account in the finalisation of the OSS. It should be noted that the adopted OSS did not necessarily have to take on board all the recommendations made in the Environmental Report and comments made in

consultation on the Environmental Report and consultative draft OSS; however it is vital that these recommendations and other observations are clearly taken into consideration in finalisation of the OSS.

4.3.4 Table 2 below sets out the SEA objectives and results of the environmental assessment against each of the key baseline assets in the Falkirk Council area which were scoped into the assessment process, and shows how they have been taken into account in the adopted OSS.

Table 2 Assessment of OSS against SEA Objectives

SEA Sub Issue	SEA Objective	Integrated into the OSS (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken Into Account Or Reason For Not Being Taken Into Account
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			
Habitats	Maintain or extend the extent of priority habitat types associated with parks and open space spaces across the Council area.	Yes	<p>Proposal 6 of the OSS indicates that we will change the management of the parks and open space resource to exploit opportunities to further the conservation of biodiversity.</p> <p>Action MNAT.01 of the Parks Development Plan (PDP) is to identify opportunities to change the maintenance regime of our parks and open spaces to further the conservation of biodiversity.</p> <p>Action EMAN.01 of the PDP is to commission a study to identify those parks and open spaces where a lower intensity maintenance regime would be more appropriate to either save money, or to enhance value for wildlife.</p> <p>These should act to extend the extent of priority habitat types associated with parks and open spaces across the Council area.</p>
Habitat Networks	Enable parks and open spaces to expand and improve the wider Falkirk Integrated Habitat Network.	Yes	<p>Action MNAT.02 of the PDP is to identify opportunities to join up existing habitat networks through promoting targeted landscape change within existing parks and open spaces.</p> <p>This action together with proposal 6 of the OSS and action EMAN.01 of the PDP outlined above should allow the integrated habitat network within our parks and open spaces to expand and improve.</p>
Woodland	Increase the rate of woodland planting across the Council area	Yes	<p>Proposal 6 of the OSS and Actions MNAT.01 & 02 and EMAN.01 of the PDP outlined above should result in the identification of opportunities for planting new woodland in our parks and open spaces which will help to increase the rate of woodland planting across the Council area.</p>
Species Biodiversity	Help to implement the aspirational projects set out in the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan	Yes	<p>Proposal 6 of the OSS and Actions MNAT.01 & 02 and EMAN.01 outlined above is likely to result in some projects which help to deliver aspirational projects set out within the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>

SEA Sub Issue	SEA Objective	Integrated into the OSS (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken Into Account Or Reason For Not Being Taken Into Account
Protected Sites	Help to secure the appropriate management of sites protected for their nature conservation value	Yes	A large number of open spaces are also formally protected for their nature conservation value. Proposal 6 of the OSS and Actions MNAT.01 & 02 and EMAIN.01 of the PDP outlined above should help to secure the appropriate management of these sites.
Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces	Improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of parks and open spaces	Yes	Proposal 6 of the OSS and Actions MNAT.01 & 02 and EMAIN.01 of the PDP outlined above should help to improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of parks and open spaces.
Population and Human Health			
Quality of Accessibility within Open Space	Improve the quality of accessibility within parks and open spaces	Yes	<p>Actions MQUAL.01-50; MVAL.01-14; and MNATREG.01-08 of the Parks Development Plan aim to improve the quality of selected parks and open space across the Council area. Improvement projects are likely to involve improving the quality of accessibility within these parks and open spaces.</p> <p>Proposal 10 of the Open Space Strategy indicates that when preparing individual parks masterplans, formulating proposals for park improvements and improving play facilities, where appropriate, we will aim to maximise access for all groups including wheelchair users. This is likely to lead to an improvement of the quality of accessibility within these parks and open spaces.</p>
Accessibility to Open Space	Improve access to different types of open space	Yes/No	<p>Areas which are outside the walking distance threshold to different types of open space have been identified and projects to address these deficiencies in access have been proposed (MPARK.01-19, MSPOR.01-18 and MSEM.01-02) Implementation of these projects should increase the percentage of households within the various walking distance thresholds to different types of open space.</p> <p>Other actions to improve access include: promoting the provision of new open space in association with new development; encouraging wider unrestricted public access to privately managed sports facilities; introducing new facilities into existing open spaces; creating new entrances to existing open spaces which shorten travel time and creating missing links in the local path network to</p>

SEA Sub Issue	SEA Objective	Integrated into the OSS (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken Into Account Or Reason For Not Being Taken Into Account
			<p>shorten travel time.</p> <p>The walking distance threshold to playspaces has been raised from a 400m walk to an 800m walk and to sports areas has been raised from an 800m walk to a 1200m walk. As a consequence of changing these standards a number of playspaces and sports areas have been identified as potentially surplus to requirements. The removal of these facilities could raise the distance some people need to walk to different types of open spaces.</p>
Health and Wellbeing Quality of Open Space	Maximise the contribution that new and existing open space makes towards peoples' health and wellbeing	Yes	<p>Actions MQUAL.01-50; MVAL.01-14; and MNATREG.01-08 of the Parks Development Plan aim to improve the quality of selected parks and open space across the Council area. Improvement projects are likely to involve improving the health and wellbeing quality of these parks and open spaces.</p> <p>The design of new open space is not really within the scope of the Open space Strategy.</p>
Participation in outdoor recreation	Increase the levels of participation in outdoor recreation	Yes	<p>Proposal 5 of the OSS indicates that we will make investment decisions which encourage people to improve their health by increasing their use of parks and open spaces and walking or cycling to parks and open spaces.</p> <p>Action MUSE.01-04 of the Parks Development Plan are to: tackle dog fouling, promote the responsible use of parks and open spaces; promote the facilities on offer within parks and open spaces; and encourage people to walk or cycle to parks and open spaces. These actions should act to increase levels of outdoor recreation.</p>
Soil			
Vacant and Derelict Land	Decrease the amount of vacant and derelict land	Yes	31 of the 632 open spaces surveyed a part of the open space audit contain some land which is classified as vacant or derelict. 5 of the 57 priority quality improvements identified within the area strategies contain some land which is classified as vacant or derelict. Implementation of actions M.QUAL.05, 33 & 46 and MNATREG.05, 07 & 08 should act to increase the amount of vacant and derelict land rehabilitated as open space and to decrease the amount of vacant and derelict land.
	Increase the amount of vacant and derelict land rehabilitated as open space		

SEA Sub Issue	SEA Objective	Integrated into the OSS (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken Into Account Or Reason For Not Being Taken Into Account
Water			
Ecological status of the water environment	Prevent deterioration and improve the status of the water environment	Yes	<p>Proposal 6 of the Open Space Strategy indicates that we will change the management of the parks and open space resource to exploit opportunities for the conservation of biodiversity.</p> <p>Action MNAT.04 of the Parks Development Plan is to identify opportunities to change the maintenance regime of our parks and open spaces to enhance the ecological status of waterbodies.</p> <p>Together these should act to prevent deterioration and improve the status of the water environment.</p>
Flood Risk	<p>Contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts</p> <p>Reduce overall flood risk</p>	Yes	<p>Proposal 6 of the Open Space strategy indicates that we will change the management of the parks and open space resource to reduce overall flood risk.</p> <p>Section 4.8 of the OSS indicates that where the existing parks and open space resource can be used to help to deliver measures identified within the Flood Risk Management Plan for the area, then the Council will support the use of its parks and open spaces for this purpose.</p> <p>Action M.NAT03 of the Parks Development Plan indicates that we will support the development of flood risk management measures..</p> <p>Together these should act to contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts and reduce overall flood risk.</p>
Material Assets			
Active Travel Links	Increase the connectivity of the core path network and the open space network	Yes	<p>Proposal 13 of the OSS indicates that where an area is not within the minimum walking distances to the different functions of open space (park or amenity space, playspace, sports area, natural/semi natural open space), we will create missing links in the local path network which shorten travel time.</p> <p>Action EACC.13 of the Parks Development Plan indicates that we will carry out a study to identify where the creation of missing links in the active travel</p>

SEA Sub Issue	SEA Objective	Integrated into the OSS (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken Into Account Or Reason For Not Being Taken Into Account
			<p>network would increase the number of households with access to different types of open space within the distances set out in the various open space standards</p> <p>Together these should increase the connectivity of the core path network and the open space network,</p>
	Increase the percentage of people who travel to parks and open spaces by active forms of travel	Yes	<p>Proposal 5 of the Open space Strategy indicates that we will make investment decisions which encourage people to improve their health by walking or cycling to parks and open spaces.</p> <p>Action MUSE.04 in the Parks Development Plan is to encourage people to walk or cycle to parks and open spaces.</p> <p>Together these should act to increase the percentage of people who travel to parks and open spaces by active forms of travel.</p>
Landscape			
Quantity of open space	Ensure each community has access to 5ha/1000 people of open space.	Yes	<p>The Quantity Standard set out in section 4.1 of the OSS is that each community should have access to open space at a rate equivalent to 5 hectares per 1000 people.</p> <p>Section 4.5 of the OSS indicates that one of the criteria which is to be considered when identifying whether an open space is surplus to requirements or not is whether its loss will cause the rate of open space provision within the settlement to fall below 5ha per 1000 people.</p> <p>Objective 10 of the Rural North and Rural South Area Strategies is to provide new open space where the rate of open space provision is below the 5ha/1000 people standard. This is relevant to the communities of Dunmore, Skinflats, Avonbridge, California and Shieldhill.</p> <p>Together these should act to ensure that each community has access to 5ha/1000 people of open space.</p>
Design and	Enhance the	Yes	Actions MQUAL.01-50; MVAL.01-14; and MNATREG.01-08 of the Parks

SEA Sub Issue	SEA Objective	Integrated into the OSS (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken Into Account Or Reason For Not Being Taken Into Account
Aesthetic Quality of Open Space	design and aesthetic quality of open spaces		Development Plan aim to improve the quality of selected parks and open space across the Council area. Improvement projects are likely to involve improving the aesthetic quality of these parks and open spaces.
Fitness for purpose of Open Space	Enhance the overall fitness for purpose of parks and open spaces	Yes	Actions MQUAL.01-50; MVAL.01-14; and MNATREG.01-08 of the Parks Development Plan aim to improve the quality of selected parks and open space across the Council area. This will enhance the overall fitness for purpose of parks and open spaces.

5.0 USING THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section aims to show how the Environmental Report has influenced the development of the OSS.

5.2 Changes made as a result of the Environmental Report

5.2.1 The main ways in which the preparation of the Environmental Report has influenced the development of the OSS are through:

- Identifying the environmental protection objectives set at national and local level which the OSS needed to respond to;
- Translating those objectives into discreet SEA objectives and assessment questions against which the OSS was to be assessed;
- Highlighting the most environmentally beneficial alternatives;
- Highlighting where changes are needed to mitigate the significant negative effects of the OSS; and
- Highlighting opportunities to increase the environmental benefits of the OSS through rewording.

5.3 Details of mitigation measures

5.3.1 The likely significant negative effects of implementing the draft Strategy were:

- The overall rate of open space provision across the Council area (which is measured as the number of hectares per 1000 people) is likely to reduce;
- The average walking distance to open spaces containing a playspace or a sports area may increase; and
- The overall quality of regional, settlement and neighbourhood level open spaces could decrease with a consequential impact on the percentage of households which have access to a “fit for purpose” open space within a 400m walk.
- Actions MVAL.02, MNATREG.05 & 07, MGNT.05,22,31,33 & 35 and MQUAL.36 have the potential to disturb migratory birds associated with the Firth of Forth SPA or bean geese associated with the Slamannan Plateau SPA

To mitigate these significant negative effects the following measures have been taken:

- A Council wide quality standard has been drafted to ensure that the rate of open space provision in any settlement area does not drop below 5ha/1000 people. Where communities currently have access to less open

- space than this, proposals for the creation of new open space have been included within the appropriate area strategies at section 5 of the Strategy.
- Playspaces which have been identified as potentially surplus to requirements will be slowly phased out rather than withdrawn immediately. Although this will not reduce the ultimate significance of the effect, it will reduce the initial impact.
 - A future review of the Strategy will be able to identify open spaces as priorities for improvement in areas which no longer have access to fit for purpose open space within a 400m walk as a result of any deterioration in quality of settlement or neighbourhood level open space.
 - Works relating to actions MVAL.02, MNATREG.05 & 07, MGNT.05,22,31,33 & 35 are restricted to ensure that they don't coincide with the bird wintering period;
 - Appropriate Assessment is required to be carried out on the expanded masterplan for Kinneil Estate (MVAL.02) which demonstrates that proposals can be implemented without causing adverse effects on the integrity of the Firth of Forth SPA either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; and
 - Action MQUAL.36 has been deleted.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE OSS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The SEA process provides a means to consider and address environmental considerations at several stages in the preparation of plans, as described above in Section 3.

6.1.2 Once an alternative has been selected as the preferred option to bring forward as a plan or programme, the SEA process will inform the preparation of that plan or programme at two key stages: setting of objectives and environmental assessment.

6.2 Legislative Requirement

6.2.1 Section 14(2) of the SEA Act requires the likely significant environmental effects of the plan or programme together with reasonable alternatives, to be identified, described and evaluated in the Environmental Report taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan. Section 18(3) goes on to require that an SEA Statement provides the reasons for choosing the adopted plan or programme in light of these reasonable alternatives.

6.3 Consideration of reasonable alternatives

6.3.1 The scope for considering alternatives within the Strategy is very wide. The main alternatives considered were:

- Alternative vision
- Alternative strategic proposals
- Alternative standards and policies

6.3.2 Given this breadth of this environmental assessment and the fact that the vision, strategic proposals, standards and policies dictate the content of the individual area strategies, it was not considered to be proportionate or necessary to carry out further environmental assessment of the individual area strategies.

6.3.3 In their consultation response to the Environmental Report SNH noted that because environmental assessment of the individual area strategies and the actions within them had not been carried out as part of the Environmental Report, some actions which have the potential to impact on the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) or the Slamannan Plateau SPA, in particular by causing disturbance to migratory birds, will require further assessment.

6.3.4 A further specialist assessment of the area strategies and the actions within them was carried out, limited in scope to potential impacts on the Firth of Forth SPA and the Slamannan Plateau SPA. A more wide ranging environmental assessment of the area strategies and the actions within them was not considered to be proportionate or necessary.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Legislative Requirement

7.1.1 Another of the key principles underlying SEA is consultation and the opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the general public to comment on the evolution of the plan or programme and on the SEA process and outcomes.

7.1.2 The European Commission notes that ‘the public and environmental authorities can give their opinion and all results are integrated and taken into account in the course of the planning procedure. After the adoption of the plan or programme the public is informed about the decision and the way in which it was made. SEA will contribute to more transparent planning by involving the public and by integrating environmental considerations. This will help to achieve the goal of sustainable development.’

7.1.3 To reflect this, section 18(3)(c) of the SEA Act requires that the SEA Statement demonstrates ‘...how the opinions expressed in response to the invitations mentioned in section 16 have been taken into account’.

7.1.4 Section 16 of the SEA Act identifies the Environmental Report and the qualifying plan to which it relates as the relevant documents to be consulted upon. The consultation required by section 16 includes the Consultation Authorities (CAs) and the public.

7.2 Summary of Consultation

7.2.1 Consultation has been undertaken during the development of the OSS, to ensure key stakeholders had an early and effective opportunity to contribute to its content. Formal consultation on the draft OSS and its accompanying Environmental Report was carried out between 7th December 2015 and 7th March 2016.

Consultee Responses to Environmental Report

7.2.2 Responses to the consultation on the Environmental Report were considered by the Council officers. Details of the opinions expressed on the Environmental Report are outlined in table 4 below.

Table 4: How comments raised by Consultation Authorities and other respondents were considered in finalising and in deciding to adopt the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.

Consultee / Respondent	Summary Of Comments	Response and Modifications to the OSS
Historic Environment Scotland	At scoping, you advised that you intended to scope the historic environment out of the assessment, and we were content with that approach. I note from the ER that the historic environment was scoped out, and on that basis I have no comments to make on the assessment.	Comment noted.
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	<p>General comments - We are satisfied that the Environmental Report (ER) provides a satisfactory assessment of the potential significant environmental effects arising from the Falkirk Open Space Strategy (OSS).</p> <p>We are content that most of SEPA comments at the Scoping Report consultation stage have been taken into consideration in this ER and welcome the comments from the Falkirk Council (FC) outlined in Appendix 1- Record of scoping comments.</p> <p>In particular, as suggested at scoping stage, we welcome the decision to scope back in the SEA topic of water (including both ecological status of waterbodies and flooding).</p>	Support welcomed.
SEPA	Relationship with Other Plans, Programmes and Strategies - Please note that the Forth Estuary Local Plan district is expected to be published in 2016 (see reference in para 3.2.9 of the ER).	Comment noted
SEPA	<p>Environmental Baseline Information and Current Environmental Protection Objectives - We welcome the information provided under the SEA Topic of Water. Please note that 2014 data on the ecological status of the water environment is now available and accessible through the Water Environment Hub.</p> <p>Please note that in relation to Natural Flood Management, SEPA recently published (December 2015) the Natural Flood Management Handbook (see NFM handbook link).</p> <p>Para 4.5.14 of the OSS ER refers to the SEPA indicative Flood Risk maps. As this is</p>	Comment noted

Consultee / Respondent	Summary Of Comments	Response and Modifications to the OSS
	the name that was used for maps pre- 2014 update, we are not clear if the new maps have been used for the OSS. SEPA published new flood maps in January 2014 (with some more recent, localised updates in 2015).	
SEPA	Assessment of Environmental Effects - As the Council was intending to scope out the SEA Topic of Water, there were no objectives on water in the scoping report (submitted in 2014). We therefore did not have the opportunity to comment on water objectives at the time. It is too late now to change the objectives as the environmental assessment as already been carried out, however we would have preferred if the sub-objective on flooding was worded 'contribute to the avoidance and mitigation of floods and droughts'. This is to be in line with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) para 255.	Comment noted.
SEPA	<p>Mitigation - We note that no significant negative effects have been identified for soil, water and material assets. We would have welcomed enhancements opportunities to be proposed for these SEA Topics as the strategy could help in meeting the River Basin Management Plan objectives, the improvement of the green network and blue network and flood risk management.</p> <p>We note that some of these opportunities have been identified in the rationale section of the monitoring proposals in Table 28, we could not find reference to this in the assessment or the mitigation section. For example Table 28 states for Water: 'A number of the priority actions within the area strategies could act to improve the ecological status of the water environment'. The mitigation/enhancement part of the assessment could have provided more specific reference to these actions.</p>	Comment noted.
SEPA	Assessment of Alternatives - We note the comment 'Although the SEA process has enabled the identification of the alternatives which have the greatest environmental benefits, the selected alternative is not always the most environmentally beneficial alternative, social and economic factors have also influenced decision'. We also note that the summary of the alternative assessment specifies which alternatives were chosen for	Support welcomed.

Consultee / Respondent	Summary Of Comments	Response and Modifications to the OSS
	<p>reasons other than environmental (i.e. financial resources not available). We welcome the transparency of the process.</p>	
SEPA	<p>Appendices - In the scoping response we requested that ER identifies any changes made to the OSSR as a result of the environmental assessment.</p> <p>We note your response in Appendix 1 'SEA is an iterative process carried out in tandem with the preparation of the open space strategy. It is not practical to identify where changes were made to the Strategy as a result of environmental assessment. The SEA process has certainly informed decision making but it very difficult to precisely document what is a fairly symbiotic relationship. If SEPA are aware of emerging good practice in the area then we would be interested to learn about it so we can consider this for future SEA production'.</p> <p>Many Responsible Authorities have been able to provide, even in general terms, an explanation of how the ER has helped in making changes to the Plan itself. There are also cases where the RA has been very detailed in providing an audit trail of the changes. For example the Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan is a good example of a case where the Council has shown how the SEA has influenced the preparation of the plan.</p> <p>Section 7 of the OSS provides reasons for choosing the different alternatives and this in itself is evidence of where the assessment has resulted in changes to the OSS.</p>	<p>Comment noted. We will examine Clackmannanshire's approach and assess whether there are any lessons we can learn for the production of future Environmental Reports.</p> <p>Section 5.2 of this SEA Statement outlines, in very general terms, the changes made to the OSS as a result of the Environmental Report.</p>
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	<p>We note on page 6 of the ER 'Alternatives Considered' "Given this breadth of this environmental assessment and the fact that the vision, strategic proposals, standards and policies dictate the content of the individual area strategies, it was not considered to be proportionate or necessary to carry out further environmental assessment of the individual area strategies."</p> <p>In our view, the assessment of individual strategies would be necessary in some circumstances, especially where the Forth</p>	<p>Further assessment has since identified that the following actions have the potential to disturb migratory birds associated with the Firth of Forth SPA or bean geese associated with the Slamannan Plateau SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MVAL.02 – Expand the Kinneil Estate Masterplan to incorporate Bo'ness Foreshore and Kinneil Foreshore; • MNATREG.05 – Improve the quality of Bo'ness Foreshore

Consultee / Respondent	Summary Of Comments	Response and Modifications to the OSS
	<p>foreshore or Slamannan Plateau may be affected. Such proposals would have the potential to impact on the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) or Slamannan Plateau SPA, in particular by causing disturbance to migratory birds (principally wader and wildfowl species using intertidal areas, and geese on the Slamannan Plateau).</p>	<p>East;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNATREG.07 – Consider temporary greening at Bo'ness Foreshore West; • MGNT.05 – Carry out landscape and access improvements along the length of the John Muir Way; • MGNT.22 – Create new habitat along the coastline to the north of the River Carron to support Firth of Forth SPA species; • MGNT.31 – Create a missing link in the Round the Forth Foreshore Path between Airth Sewage Works and Dunmore; • MGNT.33 – Improve the access network along the River Avon upstream from Avonbridge to Slamannan; • MGNT.35 – Create new greenspace specifically managed for bean geese at Hillend Farm, Slamannan; and • MQUAL.36 – Improve the quality of the open space at Ferry Road, South Alloa. <p>A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has subsequently been carried out which demonstrates that the Open Space Strategy will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Firth of Forth SPA or the Slamannan Plateau SPA provided that the following mitigation measures are implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works are restricted to ensure that they don't coincide with the bird wintering period; • Appropriate Assessment is carried out on the expanded masterplan for Kinneil Estate which demonstrates that proposals can be implemented without causing adverse effects on the integrity of the Firth of Forth SPA either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; and

Consultee / Respondent	Summary Of Comments	Response and Modifications to the OSS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action MQUAL.36 is deleted.
SNH	<p>We fully endorse the aspiration (para. 3.2.9) that “the open space strategy will have a role in helping to deliver some of the flood risk management priorities for the Falkirk area which could involve delivering natural flood management measures such as: the creation or restoration of intertidal areas; river or floodplain restoration; and runoff control actions.” Many of these proposals could also assist in enhancing biodiversity.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

8.0 ADOPTION OF THE OSS

8.1 The OSS was adopted by Falkirk Council on 18 October 2015. A consolidated version of the OSS is available via the Council's website.

8.2 The reasons for choosing the OSS as adopted in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered is presented in table 5 below.

8.3 The preferred option for each set of alternatives does not necessarily reflect the most environmentally beneficial option. Nevertheless, decisions have all been made with a full understanding of the environmental consequences of their implementation.

Table 5: Reasons for choosing preferred alternatives as adopted.

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
Vision	Alternative 3 was preferred: Our parks and open spaces will be high quality, well used and well connected and will provide a modern, sustainable and diverse resource which will: improve the health and enrich the lives of the communities at the heart of them; be of significant ecological value; and help to mitigate the effects of climate change."	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects.
Modernising our parks and open spaces - Which parks and open spaces should we be seeking to improve?	Alternative 3 was preferred: re-focus some investment on the poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision and some on the parks and open spaces which are particularly valued by the local community whilst maintaining investment and revenue budgets in the higher level open spaces which serve a more strategic function and raise the tourism profile of the Council area.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects and avoided any negative environmental effects.
Modernising our parks and open spaces - What sports and play facilities should we be providing within our parks and open spaces?	Alternative 2 was preferred: Reduce the overall number of separate sports pitches and play areas we maintain, allowing capital and revenue budgets to be released to enable investment in a more modern portfolio of play and sports facilities which have a higher overall play and sports development value.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects and avoided any significant negative environmental effects.
Modernising our parks	Alternative 2 was preferred: Open	This alternative secured the

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
and open spaces - How can we encourage more people to use our parks and open spaces?	space requirement is a scaled rate based on house type Aim to deliver wider health benefits by decreasing the amount of people who rarely or never use parks and open spaces; and increasing the amount of people who choose to walk or cycle to parks and open spaces.	most significant positive environmental effects.
Modernising our parks and open spaces – How can we improve the range of benefits our parks and open spaces provide?	Alternative 2 was preferred: Change the management of the parks and open space resource to exploit opportunities to further the conservation of biodiversity, reduce overall flood risk and promote improvement projects which help to develop a high quality, multi-functional green network which will provide a range of benefits for people, businesses and wildlife and to the ecological status of water bodies across our area.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects.
Addressing inequality and fostering community through open space investment - How should we address the inequality of park and open space provision across our communities?	Alternative 1 was preferred: Give investment priority to those areas and open spaces which need improving the most.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effect.
Addressing inequality and fostering community through open space investment - How can we foster community cohesion through open space investment?	Alternative 1 was preferred: Actively encourage the increased involvement of community groups in the management and improvement of parks and open spaces.	This alternative secured a positive environmental effect whereas alternative 2 did not.
Working and investing more efficiently – How can we maintain our parks and open spaces more efficiently?	Alternative 2 was preferred: Identify those parks and open spaces where: high intensity maintenance regimes are necessary to maintain an appropriate image; and lower intensity maintenance regimes would be more appropriate to save money and enhance value for wildlife.	This alternative avoided significant negative environmental effects.
Working and investing more efficiently - What is the best way to improve overall performance against the Council's various open space accessibility	A combination of all four alternatives was preferred	In the case of alternative 2,3 & 4 they were preferred as they provided some environmental benefits. In the case of alternative 1, this was preferred as the financial resources are not available to make the

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
standards?		investment necessary to significantly improve performance against the accessibility standards contained within the 2010 Open Space Strategy.
Working and investing more efficiently - How can we maximise the improvements achieved through Council investment?	Alternative 2 was preferred: Develop a set of projects and priorities which not only help to deliver the vision of the Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan but also help to deliver the aims of other related Council strategies; and align with the priorities of external funding partners.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects.
Generating money for investment in parks and open space - How should we raise money for investment in parks and open spaces?	Alternative 2 was preferred: Explore opportunities to generate money for investment in park and open space improvement and maintenance through: selling off parks and open spaces which are surplus to requirements; and expanding the scheme of charging for the commercial use of parks and open space currently operated by Falkirk Community Trust to parks and open spaces which are directly operated by the Council.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects and avoided any significant negative environmental effects.
Standards and Policies - Quantity Standard	Alternative 1 was preferred: Each community should have access to open space at a rate equivalent to 5 hectares per 1000 people.	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects and these were considered to outweigh the significant negative effects it could also cause.
Standards and Policies – Quantity Policy	Alternative 3 was preferred: The loss of open space will be sanctioned in communities where the rate of provision is below 5ha/1000 people, if the loss is compensated for by a significant improvement of remaining open space within the community, or there is particular support for the development within the local community, or material considerations outweigh the need to retain the open space.	For this alternative it was considered important to allow the Council and communities the flexibility to endorse the loss of open space within communities which have a deficient amount of open space, where there is particular support for development or material considerations outweigh the need to retain the open space. The ability to mitigate the significant negative effect by simultaneously promoting the creation of new open spaces within these communities was also a factor

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
Standards and Policies – Quality Standard	Alternative 3 was preferred: In the fitness for purpose assessment: National and Regional level open spaces should score 3 or better; settlement level open spaces should score 2.5 or better; and neighbourhood level open spaces should score 2 or better.	in the decision making process. This alternative was preferred as the financial resources are not available to implement a more ambitious quality standard. The ability to partially mitigate the significant negative effects through: identifying where a drop in the quality of an open space had also resulted in a decrease in the number of households with access to an open space that scored “good” or better in the fitness for purpose assessment; and promoting those open spaces as priorities for improvement in a subsequent review of the Strategy was also a factor in the decision making process.
Standards and Policies - Quality Policy	Alternative 1 was preferred: The Council will make investment decisions which aim to increase the percentage of open spaces which meet the quality standard appropriate to their place on the hierarchy of importance.	This alternative secured significant positive environmental effects. The ability to partially mitigate the significant negative effects through: maintaining the quality of national level open spaces; and promoting the enhancement in quality of a select number of settlement and neighbourhood level open spaces whose quality could otherwise have deteriorated was also a factor in the decision making process.
Standards and Policies – Accessibility Standard 1	Alternative 1 was preferred: People should live no more than 400m (5 minute walk) from a surveyed open space which is good quality.	This alternative secured some significant positive environmental effects and because the financial resources are not available to achieve a more ambitious alternative.
Standards and Policies – Accessibility Standard 2	Alternative 2 was preferred: People should live no more than 400m (5 minute walk) from a public park, garden or amenity space of greater than 2000m ² .	This alternative secured the most significant positive environmental effects and avoided any significant negative environmental effects.
Standards and Policies - Accessibility Standard 3	Alternative 3 was preferred: People should live no more than 800m (10 minute walk) from an open space containing a playspace.	This alternative was preferred because 10 minutes is still considered to be a reasonable amount of time to expect to walk to reach an open space containing a playspace and

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
		because the financial resources are not available to achieve a more ambitious alternative without causing a reduction in overall play value within Council owned playspaces.
Standards and Policies - Accessibility Standard 4	Alternative 2 was preferred: People should live no more than 1200m (15 minute walk) from an open space containing sports area.	This alternative was preferred because 15 minutes is still considered to be a reasonable amount of time to expect to walk to reach an open space containing a sports area and because the financial resources are not available to achieve a more ambitious alternative without causing a reduction in overall sports development value within Council owned sports areas.
Standards and Policies – Accessibility Standard 5	Alternative 1 was preferred: People should live no more than 1200m (15 minute walk) from a natural/semi natural open space.	This alternative was preferred because 15 minutes is considered to be a reasonable amount of time to expect to walk to reach a natural/ semi natural open space and because the financial resources are not available to achieve a more ambitious alternative without causing a reduction in the biodiversity and nature conservation value within existing natural/ semi natural open spaces.
Standards and Policies – Accessibility Policy	Alternative 1 was preferred: The Council will make investment decisions which aim to increase the percentage of households which meet the various accessibility standards set out in the Open Space Strategy.	This alternative secured significant positive environmental effects.
Standards and Policies - Commercial Use of Open Space	Alternative 1 was preferred: The Council will devise an appropriate scheme of charging for the use of parks and open spaces by small businesses or commercial organisations. The Council will also carry out a study to identify what opportunities there are for commercialising the park and open space resource	This alternative secured some positive environmental effects.
Standards and Policies – Identifying Surpluses	Alternative 1 was preferred: In order to identify whether an open space is surplus to requirements or not a	This alternative was preferred as the significant positive environmental effects it could

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
	<p>number of factors should be considered (see section 4.5.2 of the Open Space Strategy)</p> <p>Compensation for the loss of open space will be captured through the development management process rather than at the point of sale</p>	<p>secure through generating funding for open space improvements were considered to outweigh the potentially significant scale of cumulative open space loss.</p>
Standards and Policies - Promoting Community Involvement in Parks and Open Space	<p>Alternative 1 was preferred: Where there is the opportunity for the public to influence decisions about proposed changes to parks and open spaces there will be consultation in advance of planning any work and the views of the community will be taken into account in any decision making.</p> <p>A fund will be set up to support local communities with external funding bids to improve parks and open spaces.</p>	<p>This alternative secured more positive environmental effects.</p>
Standards and Policies – Sports Pitches and Sports Development	<p>Alternative 1 was preferred: The Council and Trust should work to encourage the development of a network of strategic football sites.</p> <p>In addition the Council should not: facilitate the provision of a new strategic football site to compete with existing nearby privately run facilities; directly financially fund youth football clubs without any form of SFA Quality Mark; or enhance grass pitches and related pavilions unless there is a sound economic case for doing so.</p>	<p>The alternative was preferred as the funding is not available to promote the enhancement of grass pitches which only serve a local demand.</p>
Standards and Policies – Reducing Flood Risk	<p>Alternative 1 was preferred: Where the existing park and open space resource can be used to help deliver flood risk management measures identified within Local Flood Risk Management Strategies, the Council will support the use of its parks and open spaces for this purpose.</p>	<p>This alternative was preferred as the potential benefits of reducing flood risk were considered to outweigh the dis-benefits of losing open space in communities where the rate of open space provision is below the Council wide standard.</p>
Standards and Policies – Playspace Rationalisation	<p>Alternative 1 was preferred: Where a Council managed playspace has been identified as potentially surplus to requirements, it should remain in service subject to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When a play item is heavily vandalised or coming to the end of its useful life, it will be removed from service and not replaced. 	<p>This alternative was preferred as it avoided short term significant negative environmental effects and this was considered to outweigh the benefits of freeing up resources to improve the standard of play provision more quickly.</p>

Option	Alternative Chosen	Reason for Choosing Alternative
	<p>2. When the playspace has minimum play value e.g. aged or a single active play item only remains in active service it will be considered for removal and the playspace taken off the inventory.</p> <p>3. Sites identified as having a high sustainable cost e.g. repeated vandalism by fire may be considered for priority removal.</p>	
Standards and Policies – Standard of Play Provision	Alternative 2 was preferred: In the remaining play areas and any new play areas created as part of new development, we will aim to provide play equipment to serve three different age groups but where the site is in very close proximity to residential properties, teen provision may not be promoted	This alternative avoided any negative environmental effects.
Standards and Policies – Council Ownership	Alternative 1 was preferred: The Council will redouble its efforts to digitise its ownership records and where necessary allocate additional resources to complete the exercise.	This was the only reasonable alternative.
Standards and Policies – High Profile Parks and Open Spaces	Alternative 1 was preferred: The quality of national level open spaces should be retained and improved.	This alternative was preferred as financial resources are not available to pursue a more environmentally beneficial alternative.
Standards and Policies – Signage within Parks and Open Spaces	<p>Alternative 1 was preferred: All parks and open spaces should have signage at the entrance to the site stating: the name of the park or open space, who manages it; and how to contact them to report problems/raise queries.</p> <p>For high profile sites, the welcome sign should also include: information about what can be found within the site; a map to help with navigation; and information about other nearby places of interest.</p>	This alternative was preferred as financial resources are not available to pursue a more environmentally beneficial alternative.

9.0 PROPOSALS FOR MONITORING

9.1 Legislative Requirement

9.1.1 Monitoring of the environmental performance of the OSS during its life is a key requirement of SEA. The SEA Act schedule 3 para 9 requires ‘a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with section 19’. The monitoring measures proposed are based on the different environmental issues identified as potentially being subject to significant environmental effects from the OSS.

9.1.2 The environmental report found that the implementation of the OSS has the potential to have significant positive environmental effects as follows:

- the ecological value of our parks and open spaces should improve;
- the number of households within an acceptable walking distance of different types of open space should improve;
- the number of households within an acceptable walking distance of “fit for purpose” open space should improve;
- participation in outdoor recreation should increase;
- the health and wellbeing quality of our parks and open spaces should improve;
- the connectivity of the open space network and the active travel network should improve;
- our ability to mitigate increased flood risk caused by a changing climate should improve; and
- the design and aesthetic quality of our parks and open spaces should improve.

9.1.3 It also found that the implementation of the OSS has the potential to have significant negative environmental effects as follows:

- The overall rate of open space provision across the Council area (which is measured as the number of hectares per 1000 people) is likely to reduce;
- The average walking distance to open spaces containing a playspace or a sports area may increase; and
- The overall quality of regional, settlement and neighbourhood level open spaces could decrease with a consequential impact on the percentage of households which have access to a “fit for purpose” open space within a 400m walk.

9.2 Monitoring Proposals

9.2.1 Table 6 sets out the details of the proposed monitoring, the rationale for the selection and the methods and measures of monitoring. Monitoring will

be conducted by the Council, in their capacity as the Responsible Authority for this SEA.

9.2.2 Now that the review of the Open Space Strategy is complete it is our intention to review our Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Open Space and New Development to take into account the changed policy context.

9.2.3 Many of the indicators identified for monitoring will be updated during the preparation of the scoping report of the updated SG.

Table 6 Proposed Monitoring

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			
Habitats – Maintain or extend the extent of priority habitat types associated with parks and open space spaces across the Council area.	The extent of open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, urban greenspace and urban wildlife corridors in the Council	If the extent of this habitat associated with surveyed open space is maintained or extended then this objective will be met.	GIS analysis of future updates to the phase 1 habitat survey and future updates to the open space audit
Habitat Networks - Enable parks and open spaces to contribute towards expanding the wider Falkirk Integrated Habitat Network(IHN).	Size of the integrated habitat network and percentage of network which is of favourable status	If the Strategy encourages the development of new parks and open spaces or the changed management of existing parks and open spaces and this expands the size of the integrated habitat network then this SEA objective will be achieved.	Falkirk Council does not currently plan to update the data it holds on the integrated habitat network in the short to medium term. It may be that the data is updated as part of the research being undertaken to underpin the Central Scotland Green Network. In the absence of any new data we will keep a record of where improvements have taken place which were intended to expand the size of the IHN either within existing parks and open spaces or within new parks and open spaces
	Total area of the parks and open space resource which also forms part of the IHN	If the total area of the parks and open space resource which forms part of the IHN increases then this SEA objective will be achieved.	GIS analysis of the open space audit and the IHN data.
Woodland - Increase the rate of woodland planting across the Council area	The rate of woodland planting across the Council area	If the rate of woodland planting increased then this could, in part be attributable to projects promoted within the Strategy	This data is currently collected by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust
	Delivery of projects involving woodland plating which have been promoted within the Strategy.	If the Strategy promotes projects which increase the rate of woodland planting then this SEA objective will be met.	Through monitoring the implementation of the Strategy through the Parks Development Plan (Appendix 3 of the Strategy)

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
Species Biodiversity - Help to implement the aspirational projects set out in the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan (FABAP)	Projects set out in the FABAP which have been enabled by the Open Space Strategy	If this Strategy enables projects set out in the FABAP then this SEA objective will be met.	Through liaison with the Council's biodiversity officer.
Protected Sites - Help to secure the appropriate management of sites protected for their nature conservation value	Number of sites protected for their nature conservation value which have active management plans	If the number of sites protected for their nature conservation value with active management plans increased then this could, in part be attributable to monies received through this OSS	Through liaison with the Council's biodiversity officer
	Financial contributions secured which have been put towards: the development of management plans for sites protected for their nature conservation value; or the ongoing management of sites protected for their nature conservation value	If this OSS enables the development of management plans or the ongoing management of sites protected for their nature conservation value then this SEA objective will be met.	Through liaison with the Council's developer contributions implementation group and biodiversity officer.
Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Value of Open Spaces - Improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of parks and open spaces	Monitoring of the average "biodiversity and nature conservation" score achieved by parks and open spaces during the fitness for purpose assessment carried out as part of any future open space audit.	The Strategy should have a significant positive effect on the biodiversity and nature conservation value of open spaces	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.
Population and Human Health			
Quality of Accessibility within Open Space - Improve the quality of accessibility within parks and open spaces	Monitoring of the average "quality of accessibility" score achieved by parks and open spaces during the fitness for purpose assessment carried out as part of any future open space audit.	The various area strategies identify a number of parks and open spaces as priorities for quality improvement. Part of this improvement process could involve enhancements to the quality of accessibility within those parks and open spaces. If the average "quality of accessibility" score achieved by parks	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
		and open spaces improves in any future open space audit, then this SEA objective will be achieved.	
Accessibility to Open Space - Improve access to different types of open space	Percentage of households with access to different types of open space within an acceptable walking distance as defined by the Open Space Strategy	If performance against this indicator improves then this SEA objective will be being met.	Through undertaking spatial analysis of data collected to inform the Falkirk Open Space Strategy.
Health and Wellbeing Quality of Open Space - Maximise the contribution that existing open space makes towards peoples' health and wellbeing	Monitoring of the average "health and wellbeing quality" score achieved by parks and open spaces during the fitness for purpose assessment carried out as part of any future open space audit.	The various area strategies identify a number of parks and open spaces as priorities for quality improvement. Part of this improvement process could enhance the contribution that these open spaces make towards people's health and wellbeing. If the average "health and wellbeing quality" score achieved by parks and open spaces improves in any future open space audit, then this SEA objective will be achieved.	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.
Participation in outdoor recreation – Increase the levels of participation in outdoor recreation	Monitoring of: the frequency of visits made to the outdoors; how often people use their nearest usable greenspace and frequency of visits made to open space.	If the frequency of visits made to the outdoors and open space increases and use of the nearest greenspace increases in regularity then this SEA objective will be achieved	Data extracted from the Scottish Household Survey and surveys of Falkirk Council residents.
Soil			
Vacant and Derelict Land - Decrease the amount of vacant and derelict land	Monitoring of the amount of vacant and derelict land	Sometimes the most appropriate use for vacant and derelict land is as greenspace. Where there is a deficiency in access to particular types of open spaces, the area strategies identify actions to investigate how these deficiencies can be met. One	Monitoring of data collected for the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey
Vacant and Derelict Land - Increase the amount of vacant and derelict land rehabilitated as open space	Monitoring of the amount of vacant and derelict land rehabilitated as open space		

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
		way of meeting these deficiencies could be through the creation of new open spaces on areas of vacant and derelict land. As well as meeting the deficiency, this would also lead to a reduction in the amount of vacant and derelict land.	
Water			
Ecological status of the water environment - Prevent deterioration in and improve the status of the water environment	Monitoring of the ecological status of the water environment	A number of the priority actions within the area strategies could act to improve the ecological status of the water environment	Status of the water environment data held by SEPA
Flood Risk - Contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts	Monitoring of local flood risk data held by SEPA	The Strategy commits to supporting the implementation of measures identified within Local Flood Risk Management Strategies which involve the use of open space	Flood risk data held by SEPA
Flood Risk - Reduce overall flood risk			
Material Assets			
Active Travel Links - Increase the connectivity of the core path network and the open space network	Monitoring of the number of open spaces which are cross by and which are in close proximity to the core path network	If the numbers increase then connectivity of the networks will have increased	GIS analysis of open space audit and core paths data.
Active Travel Links – Increase the percentage of people who travel to parks and open spaces by active forms of travel	Monitoring of the percentage of people who travel to parks and open spaces by active forms of travel	If the percentage increases then the objective will be met.	Surveys of Falkirk Council residents.
Landscape			

SEA Objective	Monitoring Proposed	Rationale	Methods & Measures
Quantity of Open Space - Ensure each community has access to 5ha/1000 people of open space.	Monitoring of the ratio of open space provision within each settlement	The Strategy indicates that the standard for the quantity of open space within each settlement is 5ha/1000 people. The area strategies propose the creation of new open space within settlements which currently fall below this standard. If the ratio of open space provision rises to above 5ha/1000people in all communities then this SEA objective will be met.	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.
Design and Aesthetic Quality of Open Space - Enhance the design and aesthetic quality of open spaces	Monitoring of the average “design and aesthetic quality” score achieved by parks and open spaces during the fitness for purpose assessment carried out as part of any future open space audit.	The various area strategies identify a number of parks and open spaces as priorities for quality improvement. Part of this improvement process could involve enhancements to the design and aesthetic quality of those parks and open spaces. If the average “design and aesthetic quality” score achieved by parks and open spaces improves in any future open space audit, then this SEA objective will be achieved.	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.
Fitness for Purpose of Open Space - Enhance the overall fitness for purpose of parks and open spaces.	Monitoring of the average score of parks and open spaces in the “fitness for purpose” assessment carried out as part of the open space audit	If the average score of parks and open spaces in the fitness for purpose assessment increases then this SEA objective will be achieved.	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.
	Monitoring of the percentage of the total number of open spaces and total area of open space which scores “good” or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	If the percentage of the total number of open spaces or total area of open space which score “good” or better in the fitness for purpose assessment increases then this SEA objective will be achieved.	Analysis of data from a future open space audit.