Falkirk Local Development Plan 3
Topic Papers   April 2024

Site Assessment Methodology

Falkirk Council

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1   This topic paper sets out Falkirk Council's draft site assessment methodology to identify, appraise and inform the allocation of development proposals within the Falkirk Local Development Plan 3. The methodology, once finalised, will be used to assess all types of potential development sites including those for mixed use, housing, employment, retailing, tourism or other uses. It will help inform which sites are sustainable, deliverable and aligned with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and Falkirk Council's emerging spatial strategy.

1.2   The paper is part of the evidence base that informs the preparation of the Falkirk Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3) and its associated Evidence Report. Comments are particularly sought from local residents, Key Agencies, landowners, developers, agents and other interested groups or organisations.

2. Legislation and Policy

Local Development Planning Guidance

2.1   The Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance sets the scene for the topic paper outlining the process for preparing plans, giving advice on evidence to include in the Evidence Report and on how planning authorities may take NPF4 into account when preparing their Proposed Plans. The guidance states the following:

- The optional 'Call for Ideas' consultation phase should be carried out after the Gate Check Review. This is to allow stakeholder views and ideas to be informed by the content of the Evidence Report;

- All sites should be assessed using the site assessment methodology that was considered at the Evidence Report and Gate Check Review;

- The site assessment should cover (i) sites allocated in the current local development plan; (ii) sites proposed through any call for ideas; and (iii) any other sites the planning authority considers may have potential;

- No sites should automatically roll forward from one plan to the next without being assessed;

- All sites proposed to be allocated for the development in plans should have been assessed for their deliverability through the site assessment process;

- The site assessment process should take an infrastructure first approach whereby decisions on sites are informed by the capacity, condition, needs and deliverability of infrastructure including education, health and social care services, drainage, water and wastewater, flood risk management, digital, energy supplies, transport, open space and so on;

- De-allocations should be considered where sites are no longer deliverable;

- It would be helpful to link the strategic environment assessment (SEA) with site assessment as they cover similar environmental topics. All sites should be included in the SEA as well as any reasonable alternatives;

- NPF4 is a key consideration. It is expected that planning authorities will use the framework's policies to support the development of their spatial strategy.

Housing Land

2.2   The Housing Topic Paper sets out the evidence in relation to housing need and demand in the Falkirk Council area and the availability of housing land. It sets out the projected population and household growth in the area as well as initial thinking on the local housing land requirement (LHLR). The LHLR is another important consideration for the site assessment process, establishing the total amount of housing land that should be allocated in LDP3. Not all sites will be needed, appropriate and/or deliverable for housing. The site assessment process will be a key means to identify deliverable land in the right locations to achieve the LHLR and other strategic policy objectives. The Evidence Report will include the Council's agreed, indicative LHLR along with a rationale explaining how this has been derived from the evidence.

SEA and SFRA

2.3   At an early stage, the Council concluded that LDP3 is a qualifying plan or programme that requires a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The SEA will consider the environmental effects of the plan's spatial strategy, policies and site allocations, and their reasonable alternatives. It will also consider how negative effects could be avoided or lessened, and how positive effects could be further enhanced. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, which has been published alongside this topic paper for comment, identifies the scope and level of detail of the information to be included within the Environmental Report for the Proposed Plan. It provides the policy context and environmental baseline of the SEA and includes the proposed methodology for appraising environmental effects. The SEA is integral to the site assessment, and Chapter 3 of this topic paper describes how the two processes will be joined up.

2.4   The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides a high-level appraisal of the extent and nature of flood risk from all sources. Both the SEA and SFRA are informing tools to consider the suitability of a site with respect to current and future flood risk.

3. Site Assessment Process

3.1 Falkirk Council proposes five stages to the site assessment process:

Stage 1: Consult and Finalise the Site Assessment Methodology

3.2 Depending on the feedback received on this topic paper and the SEA Scoping Report, Falkirk Council may further refine the site assessment methodology before submitting it and the Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers for the Gate Check Review.

Stage 2: Identify Sites for the Site Assessment

3.3 Following the Gate Check Review, the Council will identify a pool of sites for the site assessment through reviewing the primary sources of evidence:

- Existing sites allocations in the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2;
- Sites submitted through the 'Call for Ideas' consultation (see paragraph 3.4);
- Housing Land Audit;
- Open Space Strategy and Audit;
- Register of Vacant and Derelict Land;
- Employment Land Audit;
- Engagement with Elected Members and Council Services including but not limited to Development Management, Environmental Protection, Environment & Operations (roads, transport planning and flooding), Invest Falkirk, Children's Services, Housing Services, Asset Management, Planning and Greenspace etc.;
- Engagement with the Key Agencies and other consultees;
- Local knowledge of potential land and development opportunities;
- Data sources on environmental, infrastructural and other constraints;
- Investment plans and programmes.

3.4　The 'Call for Ideas' consultation will provide the opportunity for anyone to suggest sites for allocation for a particular purpose in LDP3. Falkirk Council will carry out the consultation after the Gate Check Review in line with the Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance and to allow site suggestions to be informed by the evidence gathered at that point. Details of the consultation will be well-publicised through a combination of methods including the Council's website and social media channels and mailings to individuals and organisations on the development plan customer database. Stakeholders will be able to submit sites during the consultation by submitting a completed online form along with a site plan on an Ordnance Survey map base showing the location and boundaries of the site.

3.5　It is hoped Stage 2 will yield the following information for each site under consideration:

- Site proposer;
- Site ownership;
- Site location and area;
- Site status;
- Planning history (if any);
- Suggested mix of development;
- Scale of proposed development (such as number and type of residential units, density, floorspace and development area);
- Environmental, infrastructural or other constraints to development (and the potential to overcome these, if applicable);
- Potential community benefits;
- Programming and delivery;
- Any technical reports prepared (such as a flood risk assessment, transport assessment or ecological survey).

3.6　Council officers will check the information obtained for accuracy and omissions before inputting it into a database linked to geographic information system (GIS) software. To minimise delay with checking, stakeholders should ensure their 'Call for Ideas' submission is concise, complete, accurate and clear.

Stage 3: Consult the Public, Key Agencies and Other Stakeholders

3.7 Public consultation is important to the site assessment process, helping Council officers identify and confirm particular planning issues that require detailed consideration through the actual site assessment. The Council will publish details of the sites and invite the public, Key Agencies and other stakeholders to comment.

Stage 4: Prepare the Site Assessment Report

3.8 The Council will then prepare a Site Assessment Report providing a summary site assessment of each site and bringing together the information assembled from Stages 1, 2 and 3. The site assessment will be guided by Appendix 1 - Site Assessment and SEA Checklist, which sets outs criteria-based questions under the themes of 'Accessibility', 'Environment' and 'Infrastructure', 'Community Benefits' and 'Deliverability'.

Accessibility

3.9 Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods are concepts that are now embedded in NPF4. They are places that enable people to access most of their daily needs within a reasonable 20-minute round trip by walking, wheeling or cycling from their own home. An overarching spatial principle of NPF4 is to… "support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace and learning, work and leisure locally". This principle is supported by NPF4 Policy 15, which requires consideration to be given to the existing settlement pattern, and the level and quality of interconnectivity of proposed development with the surrounding area including local access to sustainable transport modes, open spaces for play and recreation, schools, health care, shops and employment. Consequently, the accessibility of sites to these facilities will need consideration.

3.10 Appendix 1, Table 2 contains indicators that will be used to judge how far a site supports local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods. The indicators build upon the approach used for LDP2. Some indicators are new, and some have been updated, to reflect the latest policy considerations (such as NPF4, the Open Space Strategy and the Council's criteria for free school transport). An overall accessibility rating for the site will be stated in the Site Assessment Report after being derived from all the individual accessibility ratings. The ratings themselves will be informed by GIS analysis of walking distance isochrones, site visits, consultation, site submissions etc.

Environment

3.11   The proposed methodology for assessing likely environmental impacts is set out in the [Chapter 4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report](). In summary, Council Officers intend to assess all sites using the proposed SEA Assessment Framework. This will involve asking a series of questions to establish the likely impacts of a site's development on the environmental objectives for each of the following issues in Schedule 3, paragraph 6, of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005:

- Biodiversity, fauna and flora;
- Population and human health;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape.

3.12   The questions and environmental objectives of the proposed SEA Assessment Framework are derived from plans and programmes such as NPF4 and included in Appendix 1, Tables 3 to 11 for ease of reference.

3.13   Scores will be assigned to each site before, and after, mitigation/enhancement of environmental effects is applied and to allow comparisons to be made between different options. The scores are shown in the Table 1, and range from significant negative effect to significant positive effect. Some effects might not be known or are so small that they will have negligible impacts. The scores will be presented and explained within an assessment matrix. Council Officers will follow a similar approach for assessing the potential and combined environmental impacts of sites in the same locality, for example on flood risk, air quality and the wider landscape.

Table 1: Proposed scoring for the SEA

Effect	Symbol for Effect
Significant negative effect	--
Adverse effect	-
Neutral or negligible effect	N
Unknown effect	?
Positive effect	+
Significant positive effect	++

3.14   The detailed results will be reported in the Environmental Report, and then summarised in the Site Assessment Report.

Infrastructure

3.15   New development can place additional pressures on existing infrastructure such as roads, water supplies, drainage, sewerage as well as local facilities such as GPs and schools. It can even contribute to deficiencies in open space and play provision in the area. NPF4 and the Local Development Planning Guidance stress the need to take an infrastructure first approach to planning development. Therefore, the Council will engage with infrastructure providers (such as Scottish Water, Transport Scotland and NHS Forth Valley) and relevant Council services (for example, Children's Services) to inform the site assessment.

3.16   The key questions for infrastructure are stated in Appendix 1, and a summary assessment of infrastructure will be provided for each site in the Site Assessment Report.

Community Benefits

3.17   Falkirk has pressing issues of poverty and inequality. Around 1 in 5 of our residents are in poverty and 22,500 residents live in 20% of Scotland's most deprived areas. NPF4's regional priority for Central Scotland, including Falkirk, is to target economic investment and build community wealth to overcome disadvantage. Community wealth building is defined in NPF4 as a "people centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits into the hands of local people." NPF4 polices such as Policy 25, and Appendix 1, will give some direction on considering the community benefits of a site which could include:

- Community regeneration;
- Climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience;
- Improved town centre viability and vitality;
- Provision of affordable housing;
- Enhancement and net gain of local biodiversity and contributing to nature networks;
- Active travel improvements;
- Additional or enhanced community facilities;
- Local job and firm creation;
- Use of local supply chains and services;
- Community ownership and management of buildings and land.

3.18   The Site Assessment Report will provide a summary assessment of the community benefits of each site.

Deliverability

3.19 The Local Development Planning Guidance mentions many times that deliverability is key to effective plan-making and housing delivery. Sites need to have a realistic prospect of being developed as this is important for achieving the spatial strategy and for maintaining enough deliverable land to meet the local housing land requirement (LHLR). Appendix 1 states the questions that will inform the Council's consideration of a site with respect to deliverability. Please note the questions may be revised in future to reflect the Scottish Government's Housing Land Audit guidance, which is under preparation and is expected to cover deliverability factors linked to housing sites. Every site's deliverability will be summarised in the Site Assessment Report.

Stage 5: Selection, Delivery Programming and Examination of Sites

3.20 Sites will also need to be considered through related impact assessments including the SEA but also the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA), Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) and Transport Appraisal. The evidence assembled will inform the Council's selection of sites for allocation in the Proposed Plan, and help prepare the statutory Delivery Programme. This programme will set out a list of actions required to implement LDP3 along with the expected sequencing of, and timescales for, delivery of housing on sites allocated by the plan. Key documents, including the Site Assessment Report, will be published alongside the Proposed Plan to allow informed representations to be made on the plan during the minimum 12-week consultation period. At Examination, an independent reporter will consider the unresolved issues raised in a representation(s) in relation to a particular site and may make recommendations to change to the Proposed Plan. The recommendations will be published in the Examination Report and will be binding on the Council except only in specific defined circumstances set out in planning legislation.

4. Summary

4.1 The five stages of the site assessment process are described in this topic paper. Changes to the site assessment methodology may be made further to comments, and before the submission of the Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers for the Gate Check Review.

Sources

- [Housing Topic Paper](#)
- [Local Development Planning Guidance](#)
- [National Planning Framework 4](#)
- [Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report](#)
- [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#)

Appendix 1: Site Assessment and SEA Checklist

About the Site
Site reference number:
Site Name:
Location:
Grid Reference:
Site Size:
Current Use:
Existing allocation in LDP2:
Proposed Use:
Supporting Information:
Ownership:
Developer:
Summary Site Description:
Location Plan:
Site Photographs:

Accessibility

Table 2 contains indicators that will be used to judge how far a site supports local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods. An overall accessibility rating for the site will be stated in the Site Assessment Report after being derived from all the individual accessibility ratings. The ratings themselves will be informed by GIS analysis of walking distance isochrones, site visits, consultation, site submissions etc. Notes are provided in Table 2 to explain the rationale of the ratings.

Table 2: Accessibility Indicators for the Site Assessment

Accessibility Indicator	High Accessibility Rating	Moderate Accessibility Rating	Low Accessibility Rating	Notes
Distance to a bus stop with a good bus service	0 - 400m	Not applicable	400m+	The Scottish Government's PAN75 for Transport (2005) states up to 400m to walk to bus services in residential areas. The quality element of 'good bus service' has been added to recognise a bus stop may or may not offer a direct bus service to key facilities and also provide a regular service throughout the day Monday to Sunday. NPF4 Annex D references reliable, accessible and convenient public transport as a component of successful places.
Distance to a railway station	0 - 800m	801 - 1,600m	1,600m+	Up to 800m is cited by PAN75 for Transport as the recommended distance for walking from housing to a railway station.
Connectivity of walking, wheeling, and cycling networks for moving around and reducing car dependency	High	Moderate	Low	NPF4 Annex D recognises well-connected networks, which encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling together and reduce car dependency, as another component of successful places. What constitutes 'high', 'moderate' or 'low' accessibility will be determined by considering the degree to which networks in the vicinity of the site link well with residential areas, local facilities, employment, town, district and local centres, other settlements, public transport etc.
Distance to a town, district or local centre	0 - 800m	801 - 1,600m	1,600m+	800m is generally considered a walkable distance for most people to access local facilities like shops, places of worship, post offices, libraries, community centres, GPs etc. A range of facilities are typically found in a town, district or local centre. The centres and the role of each type of centre is shown in LDP2 Table 3.5 and Map 3.5.
Distance to GP surgery or health centre	0 - 800m	801 - 1,600m	1,600m+	800m is generally a walkable distance to local facilities.
Distance to local convenience retail	0 - 800m	801 - 1,600m	1,600m+	800m is generally a walkable distance to local facilities.
Distance to catchment Primary School(s)	0 - 800m	801 - 1,600m	1,600m+	This indicator is loosely based upon the Council's distance criteria for free school transport i.e. pupils who are under 8 years of age and live more than 1 mile from their catchment school or are 8 years of age or older and live more than 2 miles from their catchment school. It also recognises 800m as a walkable distance for most people including young children.

Accessibility Indicator	High Accessibility Rating	Moderate Accessibility Rating	Low Accessibility Rating	Notes
Distance to catchment Secondary School(s)	0 - 1,600m	1,601m - 3,200m	3,200m+	This indicator is loosely based upon the Council's distance criteria for free school transport i.e. pupils who are under 8 years of age and live more than 1 mile from their catchment school or are 8 years of age or older and live more than 2 miles from their catchment school. It recognises secondary schools serve larger catchment areas than primary schools.
Distance to a public park, garden or amenity space bigger than 0.2 hectares	0 - 400m	Not applicable	400m+	The distances have been derived from the accessibility standards in the Open Space Strategy.
Distance to an open space containing a playing field	0 - 1,200m	Not applicable	1,200m+	The distances have been derived from the accessibility standards in the Open Space Strategy.
Distance to a natural/semi natural open space	0 - 1,200m	Not applicable	1,200m+	The distances have been derived from the accessibility standards in the Open Space Strategy.
Distance to a good quality play space	0 - 800m	Not applicable	800m+	The distances have been derived from the accessibility standards in the Open Space Strategy. This part of the assessment will also be informed by the evidence gathered for the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Summary Assessment of Accessibility

Environment

Tables 3 -11 below list the SEA objectives and questions to consider the likely environmental impacts of a site's proposed development. The objectives and questions are reproduced from the SEA Scoping Report, and are grouped under the following issues that were 'scoped in' for the SEA:

- Biodiversity, fauna and flora;
- Population and human health;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage;
- Landscape.

Table 3: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of biodiversity, flora and fauna

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Habitats	• Increase and enhance biodiversity in the wider environment; • Safeguard and enhance priority habitats (as defined in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan); • Safeguard ancient and long-established woodland as a habitat resource of irreplaceable value; • Increase the rate of new woodland planting to help achieve the aims of the Falkirk Forestry and Woodland Strategy; • Improve tree equity in communities.	• To what extent will the option conserve, enhance or degrade biodiversity? • Does the option safeguard and enhance Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats? • Will the option safeguard ancient and long-established woodland? • Will the option lead to tree planting or the creation of new woodland?
Habitat Networks	• Prevent the further fragmentation of key habitat networks and contribute to improved habitat connectivity.	• Does the option enhance the wider Falkirk Integrated Habitat Network?
Species	• Maintain and enhance the populations of European Protected Species and other legally protected species, including protection of their resting places; • Safeguard and enhance priority species (as defined in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan); • Contain the spread and reduce the impact of invasive non-native species.	• Does the option maintain and enhance populations and resting places of European Protected Species? • Does the option safeguard and enhance Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority species? • Does the option reduce the impact of invasive non-native species?
Protected Sites	• Avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European sites; • Protect and enhance sites which have been designated due to their biodiversity and nature conservation value; • Designate any unprotected sites which have particular biodiversity and nature conservation value.	• Will the option have a likely significant effect on any European site? • Does the option protect and enhance sites designated for their biodiversity and nature conservation value?

Table 4: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of population and human health

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Population	• Ensure that new housing to accommodate projected population growth is located sustainably.	• Is the new housing proposal in a sustainable location?
Degraded Environment	• Increase the amount of land on the vacant and derelict land register which is brought back into beneficial use; • Increase the amount of potentially contaminated sites which are decontaminated through new development.	• Does the option bring land on the vacant and derelict land register back into beneficial use? • Does the option enable the decontamination of polluted land?
Waste Management and disposal	• Ensure that there is a network of modern waste handling facilities available across the Council area to support the staged targets within the Zero Waste Plan; • Reduce waste through maximising the reuse, recycling and recovery of resources	• Does the option safeguard and/or improve the network of modern recycling facilities available across the Council area? • Does the option maximise the reuse, recycling and recovery of resources?
Access to Open space, recreation and countryside	• Increase access to open space, recreation and the countryside; • Encourage the promotion and connectivity of the Central Scotland Green Network within and linking beyond Falkirk.	• Does the option increase access to open space, recreation or the countryside? • Does the option encourage the promotion and connectivity of the Central Scotland Green Network?
Open space quantity, quality and accessibility	• Ensure that all settlements 5ha/1000 people of open space; • Improve the quality of open space; • Ensure that households are within an acceptable walking distance to different types of open space with reference to the standards set out in the Open Space Strategy.	• Does the option result in a loss of open space in a settlement which doesn't have 5ha/1000 people of open space? • Does the option result in a loss of open space which would mean that the settlement no longer has an acceptable amount of open space? • Does the option improve accessibility to open space? • Does the option improve the quality of open space provision in a settlement?
Noise	• Reduce the proportion of the population affected by nuisance noise issues.	• Does the option reduce the proportion of the population affected by nuisance noise?
Odour	• Reduce the proportion of the population affected by nuisance odour issues.	• Does the option reduce the proportion of the population affected by nuisance noise?
Co-location Issues	• Ensure sensitive uses are located, sited and designed to avoid or acceptably minimise the negative environmental impacts of nearby SEPA regulated sites and processes.	• Does the option avoid, or acceptably minimise, the negative environmental impacts of a sensitive use being located close to SEPA regulated sites and processes? Negative impacts can include, for example, on air, noise, odour and the water environment.
Exposure to risk of accidents from major hazards	• Reduce the amount of new development sites which are impacted by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consultation zones or other hazards.	• Is the option impacted by HSE consultation zones? • Is the option likely to increase the proportion of the population impacted by HSE consultation zones? • Is the option impacted by other hazards such as a Scottish Water mains pipe?

Table 5: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of soil

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Contaminated Land	• Reduce contamination and safeguard soil quality.	• Does the option reduce contamination? • Does the option safeguard soil quality?
Abandoned Mineral Workings	• Increase the amount of abandoned mineral workings rehabilitated through the development process.	• Does the option rehabilitate abandoned mineral workings?
Unstable Land	• Increase the amount of unstable land remediated through the development process.	• Does the option remediate unstable land through the development process?
Agricultural Land	• Reduce the amount of prime quality agricultural land which is allocated for development; • Protect prime quality agricultural land.	• Does the option protect prime agricultural land (class 1, 2 & 3.1)?
Carbon Rich and Rare Soils	• Protect carbon rich and rare soils.	• Does the option protect carbon rich soils and other rare soils (basin peat, blanket bog, peat alluvium complex, peaty podzols, peaty gleys, podzols, humus iron podzols and saltings)?
Geodiversity	• Ensure that Local Geodiversity Sites are afforded a protected status; • Improve the opportunities for education and interpretation at Local Geodiversity Sites.	• Does the option impact upon Local Geodiversity Sites? • Does the option improve access to and/or improve opportunities for education and interpretation at Local Geodiversity Sites?

Table 6: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of water

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Ecological Status of Waterbodies	• Protect the water environment; • Prevent deterioration and enhance the ecological status of waterbodies; • Prevent deterioration and enhance the status of groundwater bodies; • Achieve good ecological status; • Promote sustainable water use.	• Does the option protect the water environment? • Does the option prevent the deterioration of the ecological status of waterbodies? • Does the option enhance the status of waterbodies through, for example, removal of barrier to fish migration, deculverting a watercourse, remeandering, wetland creation etc.? • Does the option prevent the deterioration of the status of groundwater bodies? • Does the option enhance the status of groundwater bodies? • Does the option promote sustainable water use?
Flooding	• Reduce overall flood risk; • Ensure that new development avoids areas of flood risk and safeguards the functional flood plain.	• Does the option reduce overall flood risk? • Does the option avoid areas of flood risk?

Table 7: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of air

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Air Quality	• Keep air pollution below Local Air Quality Management thresholds.	• Will the option lead to Local Air Quality Management thresholds to be breached?
Exposure to Reduced Air Quality	• Reduce the proportion of the population affected by reduced air quality; • Avoid the designation of new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); • Avoid breaches of National Air Quality standards.	• Does the option reduce the proportion of the population affected by reduced air quality? • Does the option avoid the designation of new AQMA? • Does the option significantly contribute towards a breach in National Air Quality Standards?
Emissions from Motorised Transport	• Minimise the need to travel by private car and promote sustainable transport modes.	• Does the option minimise the need to travel by private car? • Does the option promote the use of sustainable transport modes?

Table 8: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of climatic factors

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Climate Change Mitigation	• Avoid, reduce, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions.	• Does the option promote the sustainable location of development, and the use of sustainable transport (i.e. walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport)? • Does the option increase overall energy efficiency in the built environment? • Does the option minimise the carbon footprint of new development? • Does the option promote the generation of energy from renewable sources? • Does the option safeguard against the increased use of fossil fuels? Note the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions can take many forms such as close proximity to a good range of local facilities, good accessibility by walking, wheeling and public transport, bike infrastructure, carbon sequestration, low carbon sources of building materials, waste reduction, high energy efficiency, heat networks and the installation of renewable energy.
Climate Change Adaption	• Improve Falkirk's resilience to the current and future impacts climate change; • Reduce overall flood risk in a sustainable way.	• Does the option increase Falkirk's resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change? • Does the option reduce overall flood risk in a sustainable way?

Table 9: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of material assets

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Transport Network	• Reduce levels of traffic congestion within the Council area; • Slow down the rate of traffic growth on the road network.	• Will the option reduce levels of traffic congestion within the Council area? • Will the option slow down the rate of traffic growth on the road network?
Active Travel and Core Path Network	• Protect against the destruction/obstruction of the active travel and core path network; • Improve the quality of the active travel and core path network.	• Will the option protect against the destruction/ obstruction of the active travel and core path network? • Will the option improve the quality of the active travel and core path network?
Recreation Facilities	• Improve the provision and distribution of recreation facilities throughout the Council Area.	• Will the option improve the provision and distribution of recreation facilities across the Council area?
Low and Zero Carbon Energy Generation Capacity	• Enable the development of low carbon and renewable energy technologies within the Council area; • Enable the development of low carbon heat networks within the Council area.	• Will the option enable the development of low carbon and renewable energy technologies within the Council Area? • Will the option enable the development of low carbon heat networks within the Council area?
Primary Resources	• Safeguard valuable mineral deposits from sterilisation through inappropriate development; • Reduce the use of primary resources within the construction process.	• Will the option safeguard against the sterilisation of valuable mineral resources? • Will the option reduce the use of primary resources within the construction process?
Water and Drainage Infrastructure	• Avoid the need to increase capacity at existing wastewater treatment plants; • Alleviate sewer network capacity constraints.	• Will the option avoid the need to increase capacity at existing wastewater treatment plants? • Will the option contribute towards alleviate sewer network capacity constraints?

Table 10: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of cultural heritage

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Conservation Areas	• Promote the enhancement of Conservation Areas in line with the associated Conservation Area Management Plan; • Protect the historic character of Conservation Areas.	• Will a Conservation Area and its setting be adversely impacted?
Listed Buildings	• Protect the special interest and setting of listed buildings.	• Will the special interest or setting of any listed building be adversely impacted?
Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes	• Protect the character and setting of sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland; • Protect the historical significance, integrity and condition of other historic gardens and designed landscapes.	• Will a non-Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape or its setting be adversely impacted?
World Heritage Sites	• Retain, protect, preserve and enhance the Antonine Wall and its associated archaeology, character and setting.	• Does the option retain protect, preserve and enhance the Antonine Wall and its associated archaeology, character and setting?
Scheduled Monuments	• Preserve scheduled monuments and other identified nationally important archaeological resources in situ and protect the integrity of their setting.	• Does the option preserve scheduled monuments and other identified nationally important archaeological resources in situ and protect the integrity of their setting?
Historic Battlefields	• Promote the sensitive management and interpretation of battlefield sites; • Preserve the integrity of sites listed on the Inventory of Historic Battlefield and their setting.	• Does the option promote the sensitive management and interpretation of battlefield sites? • Does the option preserve the integrity of sites listed on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields? • Does the option adversely affect the setting of sites listed on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields?
Areas of Townscape Value	• Protect and enhance the character and setting of Areas of Townscape Value.	• Will an Area of Townscape Value and its setting be adversely impacted?
Non-designated historic environment assets	• Protect and enhance the character and setting of non-designated historic environment assets such as buildings, monuments, locally important archaeological sites etc. that have a degree of heritage of significance but are not formally designated.	• Will a non-designated historic environment asset and its setting be adversely impacted?

Table 11: Assessment framework for the SEA issue of landscape

Sub-topic of SEA Issue	SEA Objectives	SEA Assessment Questions
Green Belt	• Ensure Green Belts continue to: maintain the separate identity and visual separation of settlements; protect the landscape setting of settlements; and protect and give access to greenspace for recreation.	• Does the option maintain the separate identity and visual separation of settlements? • Does the option protect the landscape setting of settlements? • Does the option protect the greenbelts recreational value and maintain access to it?
Greenfield Land	• Reduce the proportion of new development which takes place on greenfield land.	• Does the option involve the development of greenfield land?
Landscape Character and Quality	• Protect and enhance the distinctive character of the landscape and ensure new development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it; • Protect and enhance Local Landscape Areas.	• Does the option protect and enhance the distinctive character of the landscape? • Does the option ensure that new development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? • Does the option protect and enhance Local Landscape Areas? • Would the option, if a development site, represent a natural extension to the existing urban and village limit?
Summary Assessment of Environment (based on findings from the Environmental Report)		

Infrastructure

The key questions for infrastructure are shown in the table below:

Table 12: Infrastructure Questions

Topic	Key Questions
Pedestrian and Vehicular Access	Can safe pedestrian and vehicular access be secured to the site?
Road Network Capacity	Is there likely to be capacity in the road network to accommodate the development? Will it create or exacerbate existing road network issues in the locality?
Water Supply and Drainage Network Capacity	Are there any known water supply or strategic waste water treatment capacity issues affecting the site? Does the local Waste Water Treatment Works have the capacity to accommodate the development without expansion?
Education Capacity	Is there capacity in local schools to accommodate the development? Are any projected capacity issues capable of being satisfactorily mitigated?
Other Infrastructure	Is there capacity in other infrastructure (such as healthcare, recreation, digital and energy supplies) to accommodate the development?
Summary Assessment of Infrastructure	

Community Benefits

The key questions for community benefits are shown in the table below:

Table 13: Community Benefits Questions

Topic	Key Questions
Services and Facilities	Would the development of the site facilitate the provision of additional and enhanced facilities that would benefit the local community and/or support local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods?
Town Centres	Would the development of the site enhance and improve the vitality and viability of a town centre? Does it support the town centre principle and/or town centre living?
Community wealth building	To what extent will the proposed development of the site contribute to community wealth building in the area? Will the development improve community resilience and reduce inequalities? Will it increase spending within communities? Will it involve use of the local supply chain and services? Will local jobs and firms be created or supported? Does the development support or enable a community led proposal for re-use, ownership or management of land and buildings?
Other community benefits	Will the development of the site achieve other benefits such as community regeneration, active travel enhancements, provision of affordable housing, net improvement of local biodiversity, conservation of built heritage, climate change mitigation, adaption and resilience, placemaking etc.?
Summary Assessment of Community Benefits	

Deliverability

The key questions for deliverability are shown in the table below:

Table 14: Deliverability Questions

Topic	Key Questions
Availability	What is the ownership status of the site? Is the site in sole ownership or is there a partnership of landowners/developers willing to bring forward the site for development during the plan period? Is the site under option? Is there a ransom strip associated with the site? Is the site in active use? If so, what are the timescales for the use to stop so that development can start?
Level of Interest/ Demand	Has the site been marketed and/or does it have active developer interest? What evidence is there of demand for the development in the area?
Physical	Is the site significantly affected by physical constraints such as slope, demolition, drainage, pipelines, pylons, aspect, current and future flood risk, ground instability, contamination, high risk coal referral area etc.? Are there any rights or wayleaves across the site?
Environmental	Is the site significantly affected by environmental protection considerations such as biodiversity, built heritage, landscape, air quality, amenity etc.?
Infrastructural	Is the site significantly affected by infrastructure constraints? Can any required infrastructure be provided realistically by the developer or another party to allow and support the site's development?
Financial	Are there significant abnormal costs associated with developing the site? Have these abnormal costs been taken into account in considering the site's viability?
Phasing	What is the phasing of the site? Short term (1 to 3 years)? Medium term (4 to 6 years)? Long term (7-10 years) or longer? What evidence is provided to support the proposed delivery timescale?
Summary Assessment of Deliverability	