



# **Falkirk Local Development Plan 2**

## **Technical Report 9: Pre Main Issues Report Consultation Summary**

### **1. Introduction**

The current Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in July 2015. However, as the Council is required to replace the LDP at least every five years, the programme for preparing and reviewing the LDP (LDP2) commenced almost immediately afterwards. The programme for LDP2, and the Council's intentions with regard to consultation (the Participation Statement) are set out in the Council's Development Plan Scheme (DPS) 2015.

The first stage in the preparation of LDP2 is the pre-Main Issues Report (pre-MIR) stage. Early consultation is an important part of this stage, enabling the key issues and sites to be identified, and making the public and stakeholders aware of the start of the LDP process and the potential to influence it. This is part of the greater emphasis on 'front loading' engagement under the new development plan system. Information from this stage will help to define those matters on which the Main Issues Report should focus.

This report sets out the steps which were taken as part of the pre-MIR consultation exercise carried out between August 2015 and March 2016 to fulfil these various commitments within the DPS, and summarises the outcome of the consultation.

### **2. Consultation Principles**

In trying to improve the way in which involvement and consultation is carried out, the Council continues to be guided by Scottish Government guidance and the Council's own Principles for Community Involvement in Falkirk which are as follows:

1. **PURPOSE** : in each situation where we engage with the local community, we will be clear about whether we are informing, consulting or engaging.
2. **INVOLVEMENT** : we will identify who might be interested in any consultation or engagement and encourage them to be involved. We will also try to overcome any barriers they may face so that no group or individual is excluded.
3. **METHODS** : we will use the right methods of engagement in each situation and ensure that timescales are long enough for people to participate effectively.
4. **INFORMATION** : we will share all the information necessary for people to participate and we will use clear, accessible language.
5. **WORKING TOGETHER** : we will treat all participants with respect and we will expect all participants to treat us and others with respect. We may require people and organisations that represent their communities to show us how they have collected the views of their community.
6. **FEEDBACK** : we will always explain how people will receive feedback before they participate. We will always try to show how people's views have influenced the outcome.
7. **IMPROVEMENT** : we will monitor and evaluate our approaches to community involvement so that we can improve over time

The Council is keen to improve the way it engages with stakeholders on development planning. In particular, we have tried to learn lessons from what we did as part of LDP1 and have extended the scope of our activity to get a broader level of participation. Examples of this include the use of the Council's Citizens' Panel; the use of online survey forms to make responding easier; the setting up of a Local Development Plan Facebook page; holding specific meetings with Homes for Scotland representatives; and engaging senior high school pupils and college students through targeted exercises.

### **3. Development Plan Scheme – Participation Statement**

The Participation Statement contained within the current Development Plan Scheme indicated that the Council would undertake the following as part of the pre-MIR stage:

- Publicise the Development Plan Scheme by placing it on the web site
- Update our customer database
- Meet with key agencies
- Engage with community councils, including addressing any training needs they may have to enable them to participate in the plan process
- Carry out a consultation on the issues to be covered in the plan
- Invite developers and landowners to submit any sites or proposals which they wish to be considered
- Hold workshops involving representatives of different stakeholder groups
- Carry out a youth engagement exercise
- Consult on the scope of the SEA
- Issue a Development Plan Newsletter and update web site material to keep stakeholders updated on progress
- Explore the potential use of social media as a means of keeping people updated on progress

The sections below indicate in detail how the Council has fulfilled these various commitments.

### **4. Consultation Activities**

#### **Publicity**

The Council publicised the start of the LDP2 process and the various opportunities to contribute to the pre-MIR consultation stage by a variety of means:

Website. A new LDP2 page has been added to the Council's web site providing a link to the Development Plan Scheme and information on the various ways of getting involved in the issues consultation and the 'Call for Sites'.

Falkirk Council News. The Council's newspaper, which is distributed to all households in the Council area, carried news items in its September 2015 and December 2015 editions highlighting the start of the LDP process and indicating the types of issues which it would be likely to consider.

Mailshot. A letter was sent/e-mailed to around 1,700 organisations, businesses and members of the public on the Council's customer database. The database had previously been comprehensively updated.

Newsletter. A special edition of the 'Development Plan Update' newsletter was prepared, issued with the mailshot, and made available on the website and distributed to libraries and one stop shops. This provided a summary of the likely issues for LDP2 under the five themes of Place, Homes, Jobs, Infrastructure and Resources, and provided information on how to get involved.

Social Media. The Falkirk Local Development Plan Facebook page was set up in October 2015 as an additional communication tool to disseminate information about LDP2 and related activities. The option of advertising or utilising promoted posts on Facebook is currently being considered. Facebook Insights is used to monitor usage including demographics and level of engagement with individual posts

## **Issues Consultation**

The issues consultation was undertaken between 23 October 2015 and 8 January 2016. It took the form of a survey in which people were asked to rate the importance of certain issues in their area at the present time.

### Place

- The quality of new development
- The quality of our greenspace
- Safeguarding our historic buildings and monuments

### Homes

- The amount and location of new housing
- Long-standing housing proposals that remain undeveloped
- Providing affordable housing or homes to meet special needs
- The control of housing in the countryside

### Jobs

- Providing more land for business development
- The mix of uses on our important business sites
- The future health of our town and local centres
- Growing tourism in the area

### Infrastructure

- The ability of schools, roads etc to cope with housing growth
- Improving transport and other infrastructure to create more jobs
- How we get developers to contribute to infrastructure costs

### Resources

- The promotion of different kinds of renewable energy
- Future policies on unconventional gas extraction
- Providing sites for new facilities to deal with waste

In addition, people were given the opportunity to add comments on any other issues which they wished to tell us about in relation to the five themes.

The issues survey was promoted in three ways:

- As questions within the Council's Citizens' Panel. The Citizen's Panel is an existing Council consultation platform which has been in existence since 2013. The Panel is made up of over 1,000 local people who have volunteered to respond to three or four surveys each year on a variety of topics. Surveys provide feedback on Council services, as well as information about the needs of communities and other issues.
- As a freestanding online survey using survey monkey.
- As a paper survey form, issued with the newsletter.

There were 658 responses to the survey, of which 439 came through the Citizen's Panel.

The responses have been analysed and the results are summarised in Appendix 1.

As well as responding to the survey, stakeholders were also given the opportunity to make more general written submissions in response to the issues consultation. Thirteen parties made submissions, including key agencies, representative organisations, businesses, community councils and individuals. Their responses are summarised in Appendix 2.

### **Call for Sites**

A 'Call for Sites' exercise was carried out during the same period as the issues consultation. This is now a well-established, though non-statutory, part of the pre-MIR process whereby landowners, developers and other parties are invited to submit expressions of interest in proposals for future development or land use change which they wished to be considered for inclusion in LDP2. 61 submissions were made. The submissions have been made available to view through interactive mapping on the Council's web site. They are also listed in Appendix 3.

### **Stakeholder Workshops**

Two half-day workshops were held on 28 October 2015 and 11 November 2015 to help introduce key stakeholders to LDP2 and to encourage initial debate on the important issues. 61 participants attended over the two days including representatives of developers, housebuilders, landowners, local businesses, key agencies, community councils, housing associations and public/voluntary organisations.

The format consisted of Council presentations on the background and programme for LDP2, and officers' initial assessment of likely issues. This was interspersed with workshop sessions on the key themes of Place, Homes, Jobs, Infrastructure and Resources, facilitated by Council officers. A summary of the discussion and feedback is set out in Appendix 4.

### **Key Agencies**

The Council has a statutory obligation to engage with certain 'key agencies' in the preparation of the Main Issues Report.

A series of three meetings were organised in September 2015 to start the process of engagement with key agencies in the preparation of LDP2. The purpose of these inaugural meetings was to set out how the agencies would be involved at each stage of LDP preparation, to review how engagement went for the first LDP, to give an early indication of the issues which are likely to be raised in LDP2, and to get feedback from key agencies on their information needs and issues of concern to them.

Attendance of key agencies at each meeting was as follows:

#### Wednesday 2 September

SEPA, SNH, Historic Scotland, Sportscotland, SEStran

#### Tuesday 8 September

Scottish Water, Transport Scotland

Thursday 17 September

Scottish Enterprise, NHS Forth Valley, Forestry Commission Scotland

A summary of the points raised at the meeting is provided in Appendix 5. In addition several of the key agencies provided written responses which are summarised in Appendix 2.

### **Community Councils**

Community councils were invited to participate in the the Stakeholder Workshops, and some did so. They were also included in the general mailshot of all customers. In addition, they have been provided with additional e-mail updates advising, for example, of the availability of the 'Call for Sites' information.

A training event for community councillors took place on the morning of Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in Falkirk. This was delivered by council officers. A total of 15 Community Council representatives attended covering eight community council areas. The training covered the plan process, key topics and issues and how to engage effectively. Key points which emerged from the workshop are summarised in Appendix 6.

### **Homes for Scotland**

Homes for Scotland is the industry body representing the interests of the house building industry in Scotland. With over 200 member companies, it has a particular interest in the allocation of land for housing through the planning system.

Two meetings took place in 24 September 2015 and 1 October 2015 attended by eight representatives of the house building industry and relevant Council officers. Feedback from these meetings is included in Appendix 7.

### **Falkirk Council Elected Members**

Two workshops were held with elected Members of the Council, using a similar format to that used for the Stakeholders Workshops. Presentations from officers set out some of the strategic considerations and issues, followed by ward-based discussion of the implications of these issues for local areas.

### **Young People**

For LDP1, the emphasis of youth engagement activity had been on primary age children through the IMBY project facilitated by PAS. It was decided for LDP2 to shift the focus to senior secondary school pupils, and to undertake a workshop which would link with, and reinforce, the Geography curriculum at National 5/Higher Level.

The workshop took place at Larbert High School on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016, and involved approximately 80 students studying Geography at National 5/Higher level. Two separate sessions were run, each accommodating 40 pupils. Students were arranged into groups based on the neighbourhood in which they live.

The exercise was linked to the urban change and management elements of the Higher Geography Course. It aims and objectives were:

- to obtain the views of students about what they consider to be the main issues in their local area

- to translate city-scale national and international examples of urban change into a local context by looking at how change happens and is managed at a local level
- to introduce planning as a potential career option

Students undertook exercises over the course of a double period - approximately 90 minutes - covering two key elements of planning:

(i) **Placemaking** - looking at why places look good and function well. This incorporated the provision of **Open Space** as an important element of placemaking. Students were asked to assess their local area using the Scottish Government's 'Place Standard' and were also asked to assess the requirement for various types of open space using criteria set out in the Council's Draft Open Space Strategy 2015.

(ii) **New Housing - Site Allocation** - which traced housing pressure in the local area over the last 30 years, the requirement for social and physical infrastructure and the site assessment process. Students were asked to identify sites for housing using constraints maps and provide a justification for their choices.

The outcome of the two workshop sessions is summarised in Appendix 8.

As part of a corporate consultation exercise on community planning, students at Forth Valley College in Falkirk were asked about the most important planning issues for their area. The questions used were similar to those used in the online survey.

## 5. Conclusion

The Council has undertaken a wide range of consultation activity as part of the pre-MIR stage of LDP2. This has fulfilled the commitments made in the Development Plan Scheme, and will provide an important input to the Main Issues Report (MIR). The consultation exercise has helped to confirm some of the key issues which will need to be addressed in the MIR.

# APPENDIX 1

## ISSUES CONSULTATION: SURVEY

Through the Citizens' Panel, a separate online survey, and paper forms enclosed with the newsletter, people were asked to rate the importance of the following issues. The issues were divided up into five themes and there was an opportunity to provide free-text comments on any other issues that they wanted to draw attention to.

### Place

- The quality of new development
- The quality of our greenspace
- Safeguarding our historic buildings and monuments

### Homes

- The amount and location of new housing
- Long-standing housing proposals that remain undeveloped
- Providing affordable housing or homes to meet special needs
- The control of housing in the countryside

### Jobs

- Providing more land for business development
- The mix of uses on our important business sites
- The future health of our town and local centres
- Growing tourism in the area

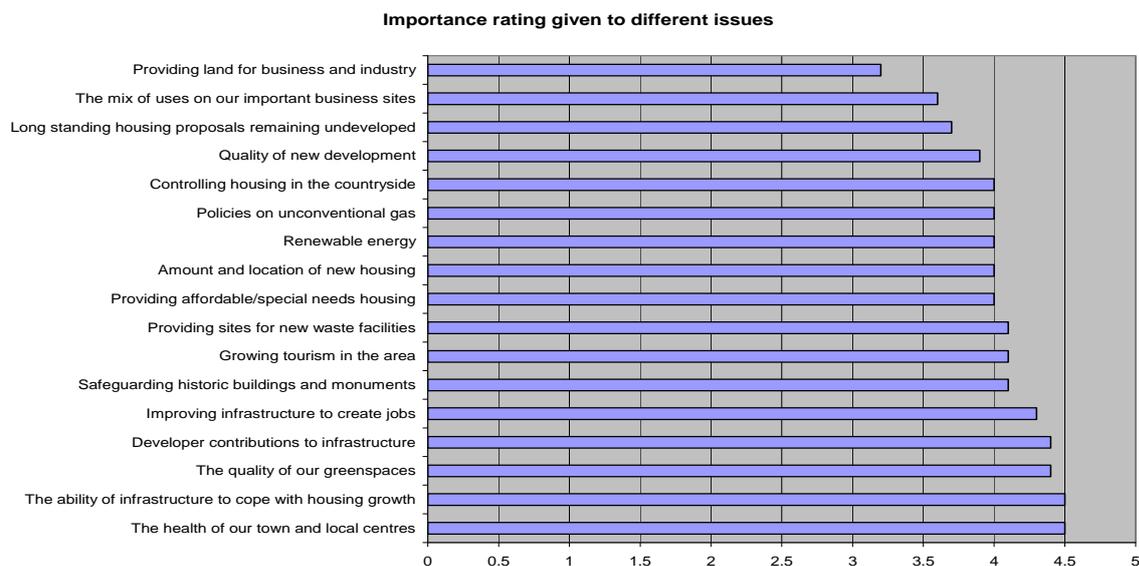
### Infrastructure

- The ability of schools, roads etc to cope with housing growth
- Improving transport and other infrastructure to create more jobs
- How we get developers to contribute to infrastructure costs

### Resources

- The promotion of different kinds of renewable energy
- Future policies on unconventional gas extraction
- Providing sites for new facilities to deal with waste

The results were processed to give an importance rating to each issue:



The results showed that, by and large, the issues that had been put forward in the survey were considered to be important by respondents.

The four issues which were rated as being most important were

- the health of our town and local centres
- the ability of infrastructure cope with housing growth
- the quality of our greenspaces
- developer contributions to infrastructure

The four issues which were relatively less important were:

- providing land for business and industry
- the mix of uses on our important business sites
- long standing housing proposals that remain undeveloped
- the quality of new development

In terms of the free-text comments, the following were some of the issues raised:

#### Place/Environment

- The erosion of greenspace/green belt
- Litter/dog fouling
- Reducing CO2 emissions
- Better energy standards in new buildings
- The proximity of landfill sites to housing
- Concerns about unconventional gas/fracking
- Road congestion
- Traffic speeds
- Parking provision for new homes
- Air quality
- Overdevelopment of the area
- Condition of town centres
- Buildings that are eyesores within communities
- Inadequate infrastructure in association with new housing
- No building on areas that flood
- More brownfield development
- Lack of community meeting space
- Lack of play parks
- Concern about development that is out of keeping with its surroundings
- Maintenance of roads, buildings and green space

#### Homes

- Lack of facilities and infrastructure
- Need for infrastructure to be integral to new development
- Need for genuinely affordable housing for local people
- The area cannot sustain more housing
- Renewable energy should be built in
- Utilise disused garage sites
- New homes are needed – they bring money and investment into the area
- Need to address undersupply of housing land in the area
- Need to provide the right type of housing, including smaller units for downsizing
- Housing for the elderly
- Build on brownfield sites before greenfield
- Protect the green belt – no need to build on greenfield sites

- Too many homes built in areas which flood
- Utilise empty homes
- General distrust of developers – need to be held to account by Council
- Allow rural homes to be built in association with businesses

### Jobs

- Tourism is a big opportunity which should be promoted.
- Concern about town centres – condition, empty shops etc
- There should be no more out-of-town shopping centres
- Business land is not available to local businesses
- Housebuilding contributes to the economy
- Should be more employment in local areas, not just centrally
- No need for more business sites – utilise empty units first
- High rents/rates a problem in the town centres
- Need for public transport connections to business sites
- More effort needed to bring new businesses to the area
- Need to reduce commuting
- Reuse redundant industrial land for business and housing

### Infrastructure

- Area's infrastructure is struggling to cope – roads, schools, drainage etc
- Schools have been built too small
- Road congestion and condition
- Adequacy of parking
- Need for better cycle infrastructure
- Infrastructure contributions asked of developers need to be reasonable
- Bus services have deteriorated – need for better public transport
- Problem of maintenance charges in new developments
- Developer contributions just pass costs on to home buyers

### Resources

- Concerns about unconventional gas extraction and 'fracking'
- Scepticism about wind energy developments
- Potential for hydro power should be exploited
- Concerns about bin collections
- Energy from waste should be considered
- Renewable infrastructure should be built into new development
- Importance of recycling

## APPENDIX 2

### ISSUES CONSULTATION: WRITTEN RESPONSES

#### Brightons Community Council

- Amenities and infrastructure in the area are under pressure because of recent housing development.
- Ensure robust application of developer contributions for infrastructure.
- Valued open spaces are listed.
- Maddiston Fire station should be retained for employment use.

#### Ellandi

- Submission made in capacity as owners of Howgate Centre.
- Highlight current issues for Falkirk Town Centre in terms of vacancies etc.
- Comments made on the impact of Central Retail Park on Falkirk Town Centre and clarity sought with regard to how any future relaxations of CRP S.75 would be assessed. CRP should be viewed as a separate commercial centre in terms of the 'town centres first' policy.
- Comments made on Falkirk Gateway and questions asked regarding impact assessment of any revised retail proposals for the Gateway.
- Support for Policy TC02.
- Need for updated evidence base on retailing.

#### Grangemouth Chemical Cluster Companies

- Highlights the importance of the chemical cluster companies as part of NPF3, and SPP stance on protection of clusters of major hazard industries.
- Seeks the redesignation of areas covered by Policy BUS03 to BUS02 on grounds of prejudice to the existing chemical sector if a wider range of uses is allowed in these areas.
- Makes reference to 'reverse COMAH' and views of Scottish Enterprise.
- Highlights contribution which chemical industries will make to TIF financing.

#### Homes for Scotland

- Highlight the importance of the new LDP having a good range and choice of deliverable housing sites, bearing in mind concerns about effectiveness of some existing sites.
- The relative strength of the housing market across the Council area should be taken into account.
- Contribution of housebuilding to the economic growth and job creation should be recognised.
- Economic development sites should be reviewed to see if they could be more effectively used for housing.
- Infrastructure provision is critical, but developers cannot be expected to fully fund requirements. Developer contributions need to be reasonable and affordable. Better market locations will support more contributions.

#### Ineos

- Submission highlights Ineos' ambition to promote investment in its Grangemouth site, in particular the development of an integrated Chemical Sciences Cluster and refinery, and the creation of a global competitive location for the petrochemical industry.

#### Ineos Upsteam

- Highlights the need for the LDP to have a policy covering onshore hydrocarbons which are likely to become an important part of national energy policy.

- Refers to requirements of SPP with regard to PEDL areas.
- Suggests an approach in terms of detailed policy wording and supporting text.

#### James Callendar & Son

- Support for the existing designation of the Abbotshaugh sawmill site as a BUS03 area, with potential for redevelopment for other uses. This is appropriate given the location of the site.
- No detailed plans have yet been drawn up for the future of the site, but the policy wording offers the required flexibility.

#### Living Streets Scotland

- Community Street Audit attached highlighting access issues for pedestrians with disabilities in the vicinity of Grahamston Station.
- Further report attached outlining wheelchair access issues experienced by a visitor to Falkirk.

#### SEPA

- Provides an overview of the issues that SEPA would want to be addressed within the Plan.
- Identifies sources of information and guidance SEPA hold that should assist in shaping the Main Issues Report and baseline information for the SEA.
- Gives advice on how proposed allocations are presented for consultation to enable us to provide the most timely and useful feedback.

#### SNH

- Placemaking policies should be expanded to set a clearer approach to design and placemaking in the area.
- Falkirk is part of the CSGN. Need for review the approach to the green network, including issues such as community growing, temporary greening and support for placemaking in business opportunities.
- Expect to work with the Council on the where and how of new housing, through a collaborative approach to site consideration, and the ruling out of more constrained sites.
- Need to link up the Helix and the Wheel better to the Town Centre. Potential for retrofitting of green infrastructure to town centres.
- Would support a more concise approach to HRA for LDP2.
- Highlight potential climate change impacts on the Council area and the need to integrate the Grangemouth Flood Risk Management Plan into LDP2. Need to set the correct framework for adaptation and mitigation.
- Active travel opportunities should be explored.
- Importance of assessing proposals likely to require HRA prior to commitment of funding.
- Need to be aware of the draft Land Use Strategy for Scotland.

#### Sportscotland

- Highlights sportscotland's role in relation to planning and the various provisions of the SPP as they relate to sport and physical activity.

#### The Coal Authority

- General response highlighting that coal resources are present within Falkirk, and the area has been subjected to coal mining which will have left a legacy. When considering site allocations coal mining data should be taken into account, although site development does offer the potential to deal with any public liabilities.
- Potential sterilisation of coal resources should be taken into account.

Mr Tom Ferraioli

- There should be no more greenfield developments. The area is overdeveloped.
- Infrastructure is not adequate for existing development
- Highlights road safety issues associated with traffic management schemes

## APPENDIX 3

### CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSIONS

Site Ref	Site	Promoter	Agent	Use Suggested by Promoter
	<b>Bo'ness</b>			
101	Burnfoot, Carriden, Bo'ness	Graham Blackburn		Huts & Bothies
102	Crawfield Road, Bo'ness	AWG Property Ltd	Barton Willmore	Residential
103	North Bank Farm, Bo'ness	Taylor Wimpey		Residential
104	Carriden Brae North, Muirhouses	John Paul and Sons	Savills	Residential
105	East Muirhouses	John Paul and Sons	Savills	Residential
106	Drumacre Road, Bo'ness	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
107	Cadzow Road 2, Bo'ness	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
108	Pennelton Place, Bo'ness	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
	<b>Bonnybridge &amp; Banknock</b>			
109	Easter Thomaston, Banknock	1936 Investments	DM Hall/Baird Lumsden	Business & Industrial/
110	Broomhill Road 2, High Bonnybridge	Cheifan Contracts		Residential
111	Hillview Road, High Bonnybridge	Broomside Properties		Residential
112	Bonnyside Road, High Bonnybridge	John Pollock & Sons	CKD Galbraith	Residential
113	Reilly Road, Greenhill	John Pollock & Sons	CKD Galbraith	Residential
114	Cumbernauld Road, Longcroft	JJZ Property		Residential
	<b>Denny</b>			
115	Drove Loan, Denny	Philip Smith	Keppie	
116	Rosebank North, Dunipace	Ogilvie Homes Ltd	JM Planning	Residential
164	Bankend Farm, Dunipace	Ogilvie Homes Ltd	JM Planning	Residential
117	Denovan Mains Farm, Denny	Mr & Mrs Graham	Emac Planning	Residential
118	Tygetshaugh, Dunipace	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
	<b>Falkirk</b>			
119	Smith Street, Falkirk	Dormont Estate		Residential
120	Slamannan Road, Falkirk	Garhill Developments	Profili Partnership	Residential
121	Glen Farm, Falkirk	Persimmon Homes		Residential
122	Carron Road, Falkirk	Link Group		Mixed Use
123	Woodend Farm 1, Falkirk	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential

160	Woodend Farm 2, Falkirk	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
161	Woodend Farm 3, Falkirk	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
124	Tamfourhill Road, Falkirk	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
125	Ochiltree Terrace, Camelon	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
159	St Giles Square, Camelon	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
126	Seaton Place, Falkirk	FC Corporate & Housing Services	FC Building Design Unit	Residential
	<b>Grangemouth</b>			
128	Grangemouth Docks 1	Forth Ports	Holder Planning	Port Related & Energy
162	Grangemouth Docks 2	Forth Ports	Holder Planning	Port Related & Energy
163	Grangemouth Docks 3	Forth Ports	Holder Planning	Port Related & Energy
	<b>Larbert &amp; Stenhousemuir</b>			
127	Kirkton Farm 2, Carronshore	Taylor Wimpey		Residential & Mixed Use
129	Kirkton Farm 1, Carronshore	Taylor Wimpey		Residential & Mixed Use
130	Roughlands Farm, Carronshore	Springfield Properties		Residential
131	Bensfield Farm, Stenhousemuir	Wallace Land	Andrew Bennie	Residential
132	Denny Road, Larbert	John Pollock & Sons	CKD Galbaith	Residential
133	Stirling Road, Larbert	John Pollock & Sons	CKD Galbraith	Residential
94	Hill of Kinnaird	Bellsdyke Consortium	Ryden	Residential
134	Hill of Kinnaird East, Larbert	Cala Homes	Ryden	Residential
92	Glenbervie, Larbert	Scottish Enterprise		Mixed
	<b>Polmont Area</b>			
95	Gilston, Polmont	Hansteen	Felsham PD	Mixed Use
135	Milnholm Riding Centre, Polmont	Susan Buchanan	Paul Houghton	Residential
136	Station Road, Polmont	Tom McCarroll	John Duff	Residential
137	Grandsable Road, Beancross, Polmont	Falkirk Whisky Distillery Company		Economic Development & Tourism
138	Greenwells Farm North, Maddiston	Craigrossie Properties	John Handley	Residential
139	Greenwells Farm South, Maddiston	Greenwells Developments		Residential
140	Maddiston Fire Station, Main Road, Maddiston	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Barton Willmore	Residential
141	Parkhall North, Maddiston	Land Options West	McInally Associates	Residential
142	Parkhall North (East), Maddiston	Land Options West	McInally Associates	Residential
143	Land North of Shamistle, Maddiston	Manor Forrest		Road
144	Gilandersland, Maddiston	Persimmon Homes		Residential

145	Redding Park North, Reddingmuirhead	Bonnington Investments Limited	Peter Brett Associates	Residential
146	Redding Road, Redding	1936 Investments	DM Hall/Baird Lumsden	Residential
147	Standrigg Farm, Wallacestone	Persimmon Homes	RFA	Residential
189	Parkhall North (West), Maddiston	Gladman		Residential
	<b>Rural North</b>			
148	Airth Mains Farm	George Russell Construction	David Jones	Housing & Tourism
149	Airth Glebe	Church of Scotland	Paul Houghton	Housing
150	Eastfield 1, Airth	Ogilvie Homes Ltd	Andrew Bennie	Housing
151	Eastfield 2, Airth	Ogilvie Homes Ltd	Andrew Bennie	Housing
152	Blairs Farm, Torwood	Balfour Beatty	TMS Planning	Residential & Commercial
153	Newton Avenue, Skinflats	Davidson Robertson Rural	RFA	Residential
165	Newton Avenue South, Skinflats	FC Development Services		Residential
154	Castle Crescent, Torwood	Robert Young	Clarendon Planning & Development	Residential
155	East of Letham Cottages, Letham	Robert Young	Clarendon Planning & Development	Residential
	<b>Rural South</b>			
156	Stevenson's Yard, Avonbridge	Stevenson Bros		Residential
157	South of B825, Whitecross	Findlay Erskine	Doug Riddell	Residential
158	Waterstone Hill, California	Brian Tait	Charles Tibbles Planning	Residential

## APPENDIX 4

### STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

#### **(I) Callendar House, Falkirk 28 October 2015**

Total attendance: 25 (including 7 Development Plan and 1 Transport Planning staff members)

Breakdown of external participants:

- 5 from community councils
- 3 from developers
- 3 from developer's agents
- 3 from other public agencies
- 1 from local businesses
- 1 from Housing Association
- 1 from key agencies

#### **Feedback from group discussion**

##### **Homes**

- Important to recognise the need to help young people access the housing market
- Economic conditions for small builders are improving
- Falkirk housing market is buoyant but we need to allocate sites in areas where developers think people want to buy – some areas are just not attractive
- Station locations are a magnet (for developers)
- The Falkirk area is regarded by housebuilders as a prime commuter area, therefore those areas in close proximity to the rail network are viewed as being very much more marketable than those areas which are not.
- Housing sites within Falkirk Town Centre, or close to Falkirk High/ Falkirk Grahamston Stations would only really be attractive to volume house builders if they are the right size i.e. 50-300 units.
- Emphasis should be on more accessible sites to reduce reliance on the car.
- BUT there is a general assumption that rail network can cope with new development. More partnership working with Network Rail is needed in terms of planning for new development. This will ensure that their forward planning reflects LDP allocations and aspirations
- Areas of interest to house builders have shrunk and peripheral areas have suffered
- A variety of sites in terms of size and location are required to provide choice
- Volume builders looking for sites of over 50 units
- Too many large allocations in out of the way areas
- Better to look at urban fringe sites which benefit existing towns
- The generosity allowance needs to be justified but acknowledge Falkirk Council is trying to be realistic
- A root and branch review of the effectiveness of current housing sites is needed.
- Stalled sites - should think about changing allocation from business to housing. Introduce more mixed use to bring sites forward.
- Cost of remediation is a big issue (e.g. Tamfourhill). LDP should look at mechanisms to draw in financial help.
- Safeguard sites for longer term development, outwith housing land supply allocation. This could be useful for stalled sites (e.g. Whitecross).

- Airth was stagnating before new housing developed. Promoting new development can really help dying communities.
- Are there further opportunities for housing development on brownfield sites? Brownfield sites should be promoted before Greenfield sites (e.g. Thermolite site South Alloa). However acknowledgement that other issues are relevant with this site such as flood risk.
- One suggestion was for more housing on the Slamannan Plateau given the low quality agricultural land. Potential New Town?
- Useful to look at relationship between new housing and use of local businesses/services e.g. in Denny new commuter households tend not to use local services and town centre is struggling
- In Denny new housing might not be providing for people of Denny - could possibly release business land for housing
- Bo'ness was seen as a quite attractive location for house building (by the industry) particularly because of its good access to the green network.
- Camelon looks very successful though traffic is bad
- Affordable housing an issue for young people looking to buy a house. Preference from Airth Community Council was for social rented housing as many cannot afford to buy.
- Every site is different in terms of what affordable housing contributions it can deliver. There should be more flexibility in term of applying policy where it affects viability of sites.

## **Infrastructure**

- Who's going to pay for large infrastructure projects e.g. schools? The provision of education infrastructure is a particular issue which should be addressed by Scottish Govt
- Primary school capacity is an issue in Airth / concern whether existing school can cope with future development.
- Better forecasting of the likely impact of new housing on schools capacity is needed. The current problems at Kinnaird Village needn't have happened if better forecasting had been done.
- The availability of High School capacity in Bo'ness and Grangemouth was noted.
- There is an over-reliance on the private sector to fund public infrastructure e.g. health facilities, schools
- Council needs to look at alternative means of funding infrastructure e.g. disposing of council assets
- Developer contributions need to be proportionate
- A more tailored approach to developer contributions for sites that have stalled or are difficult to develop.
- Noted that a cumulative approach can be taken to finance roads infrastructure. i.e. contributions from a number of housing sites to complete a roads project. Timings of contributions can be difficult.
- Ask major employers where their staff live, as this could help inform public transport services (E.g. Grangemouth / Forth Valley Hospital).
- New rail stations could be considered but Falkirk would be competing with the rest of Scotland.
- Suggestion to move Falkirk High Station to a more accessible location
- Parking capacity in association with railway stations is an issue. There often isn't enough dedicated parking available which can lead to congestion problems on nearby residential streets

- The canal corridor has yet to be fully developed as a commuter corridor, could more be done to achieve this e.g. taxi barges linking to Falkirk High and Polmont railway stations?
- Better connection by public transport to the railway network may be a solution to station parking congestion although it was noted that bus travel in Falkirk is particularly expensive and this might be encouraging people to stay in their cars
- Green infrastructure can attract further housing investment. Early delivery of green infrastructure in housing developments can increase their marketability.
- Better public transport connections to rural areas would improve their attractiveness to house builders.
- Subsidising bus services is costly and developers can't do this indefinitely.
- Heat needs to be properly articulated in development plans but it's early days and most successful projects are publicly funded and there are existing small scale projects
- The Polmont area cannot accommodate any further housing development until the existing sewer flooding issue (which is exacerbated by flooding from the Polmont Burn) is resolved and developers shouldn't be solely responsible for solving existing infrastructural problems like this.

## **Jobs**

### Business land

- Falkirk's portfolio of industrial land is fragmented and polarised between the national importance of Grangemouth and the more local significance of the remainder of sites
- LDP1s strategic business location a largely remain undeveloped e.g. Gilston and Glenberrie
- More mixed allocation at Falkirk Gateway, Helix and Falkirk College. Suggestion that there could be a general statement for an overall hatched area, rather than separate allocations of 'housing' / 'business'.
- Look again at Green Belt between Falkirk and Grangemouth in the context of Falkirk Gateway and the Helix. Assess whether the Green Belt is delivering its function and whether there is any scope for tourism/compatible uses associated with canal and Helix.
- Think about the image of Falkirk Gateway and Helix, as this area is 'the front door of Falkirk'.
- Car Parking is an issue at the Helix, but this also reflects the success of the project.
- support for widening of proposed uses in LDP1 at most sites
- Some business sectors are compatible with housing e.g. two business sites in Airth work fine.
- The Council should consider changing the permitted uses within certain economic development sites to allow residential development to form part of the mix.
- Sufficient business land has been identified but there isn't sufficient marketing of sites to businesses.
- There is too much emphasis on attracting big single users to business sites whereas encouragement of SME may be more successful in delivering development.
- The central location of Falkirk halfway between Glasgow and Edinburgh has to be the area's unique selling point. More should be done to market this.
- The proximity of the eastern gateway (Gilston) to Avondale landfill has to be negatively affecting the site's attractiveness.
- Providing ancillary services such as crèches and cafés within business parks (and town centres) would improve their attractiveness
- The office market in the old central region area is not big
- Canal network should be safeguarded for future freight uses.

### Tourism

- Increase leisure potential of Falkirk Canal network but the lack of maintenance of the Union canal is making it un-navigable for larger craft.
- Main tourist attractions are outwith Falkirk Town Centre. There is a need to encourage tourists to visit Falkirk itself.
- the town should be better exploiting tourism – the tourist bus has been very successful which has attracted locals as well as visitors
- Suggestion of bike carriages on trains.

### Town centres

- the new council HQ location should support Falkirk Town Centre
- the business rates in town centres are too high
- should look at example of Paisley where the rang of acceptable town centre uses was relaxed
- town centre management should be stepping up its efforts to stem decline of TC
- the bus station location an continuing issue with several ownerships
- positive influences on the TC are the THI getting underway and the Business Hub in Vicar St
- there should be a role for more housing to help vitality in Falkirk Town Centre
- Problem in Falkirk is that Central Retail Park is isolated from the town centre - the migration of some stores to Central Retail Park has not helped the High Street, although recognise success of retail park
- The regeneration of Callendar Square is very important to the overall efforts to revitalise Falkirk Town Centre. Redevelopment for smaller units to attract independent retailers may be one way forward.
- Improving linkages between Falkirk Town Centre and the tourist attractions at the Helix and the Wheel would help the town centre to capitalise on the areas growing tourism profile.
- Moving the tourist information centre to the Helix (?) does very little to help increase footfall in the town centre.
- Need incentives to bring people into Falkirk Town Centre. e.g. free parking over Christmas period worked well.
- Change in shopping patterns has had an impact on town centres e.g. Internet Shopping.

### **Resources**

- Fracking is a big issue and communities would like clarity on whether it can be environmentally acceptable
- Forth Ports are still supportive of the carbon capture plant and renewable energy proposals in its landholding
- Council should have more of a role in delivering district heating.
- Proposals for energy from waste are not necessarily seen as unattractive
- Mixed feelings in the community with regard to wind energy, but acknowledged some communities have benefitted from wind turbines
- Wind turbines and forestry are seen as competing land uses, however with more care to design, there is no reason why increased wind energy development should lead to the large scale loss of forested land.
- Great potential in geo thermal heat which should be investigated further.

### **Placemaking**

- Good examples: Kinnaird Village, Forth Valley Hospital, green edges of Lionthorn and Mungal Farm developments, Airth Castle development, footpath and cycle

networks, high flats in and around Callendar Park, Bo'ness town centre, The Drum, Westquarter.

- While Kinnaird village was liked by some, others criticised its scale
- Examples with potential for future work: P+R at Falkirk Wheel, Grahams Road corridor, Forth Valley College, Rosebank Distillery, strengthening tourist attraction linkages, canal corridors (using community involvement), Forth Estuary foreshore (provided nature conservation and visitor needs can be reconciled), preserve industrial heritage of Grangemouth for future generations and do not demolish redundant chimneys
- The Falkirk area is considered to be mostly an attractive place to live. Communities and the Council have worked together to ensure that the worst development proposals are not given planning permission and to improve the design of new development.
- Plea for traffic considerations to be a part of placemaking – resultant congestion in successful projects make it appear to be an afterthought
- LDP should incorporate principles on what makes a good place. Hill of Kinnaird / Bellsdyke given as a good example.
- Earlier disclosure of the Council's design aspirations for development could help to raise the quality of design in new development. The existence of the Council's neighbourhood design guide SG was noted.
- One of the area's best placemaking assets is the green network which has seen substantial improvement in recent years. The linking of new development into the network of connected greenspace should be a key placemaking goal.
- Need cooperation between land owners for green networks
- Would be nice to see more off road cycle provision in the future and more cycle provision at key nodes.
- Cutbacks in grounds maintenance by the Council will jeopardise success of green spaces
- Although the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies have been very successful, more focus needs to be given to developing the connecting parts of the canal network. There are very few ancillary services along the canal in the Falkirk area (such as marina, moorings and other canalside development)
- Support / opportunities should be given for community facilities for local groups (brownies/cubs etc) as helps with a sense of community.
- The promotion of the industrial history of the Falkirk area has considerable tourism and placemaking potential which has yet to be realised.
- Connecting David's Loan with the Falkirk northern distributor road through Abbotsford Business Park would be a positive step towards alleviating traffic congestion on Graham's Road and would help it to better achieve its placemaking potential.
- Council should use Compulsory Purchase Orders on vacant and derelict land to bring them back into use, as derelict sites can be 'eye sores' and have a negative impact on area.
- Small derelict sites sometimes can be too risky for developers to take on as the costs are too high (e.g. redundant school site Torwood).

**(II) Callendar House, Falkirk  
11 November 2015**

Total attendance: 36 (including 7 Development Plan, 2 Planning & Environment, 1 Development Management, 1 Housing Strategy and 1 Transport Planning staff members)

Breakdown of external participants:

8 from community councils

2 from developers

3 from developer's agents

3 from other public/voluntary agencies

1 from local businesses

7 from key agencies

**Feedback from group discussion**

**Homes**

- Profile of area is positive with the Helix, Canal and the Falkirk Wheel. This may make the area more attractive to builders although there may also be a time lag before this feeds through to development on the ground
- Distribution of house building is skewed towards the most popular areas.
- There need to be incentives to promote house building in the less popular locations, e.g. Slamannan, especially where there is infrastructure capacity. There is a view that there is no demand for private housing in these areas, i.e. there is a problem with the marketability of sites.
- Problem with where developers want to build and where land is available.
- Council should share risk/profits at some sites such as Portdownie.
- The issue of marketability is complex. Houses should be located where they will sell. View from the development industry is that accessibility can be a key factor in assessing attractiveness and marketability of a site.
- There is a need to plan for growth, otherwise the Council is planning for decline. Reference made to the regeneration strategy for Airth of 20 years ago.
- Reference was made to the national housing crisis – there is a nationwide lack of housing. This was questioned – is there really a housing crisis?
- There were calls for a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of currently allocated housing sites. If housing targets aren't being met because there is a lack of effective sites then this has a knock on effect on the Council's ability to meet its affordable housing targets. Non-effective sites should be removed, even if this is likely to be contentious. This may spur the owners of some sites to take action to ensure their site can stay within the plan. This is what the Examination is for
- Skinflats should be considered as a potential housing area. Kelpies views might be a plus.
- Difficult to see what benefits new development at Bellsdyke has brought to the area as many residents are commuters, certainly no great impact on Larbert local centre.
- Would like to see more emphasis on development of brownfield sites in Larbert and Stenhousemuir rather than greenfield expansion for further housing.
- Not a lot built recently in Bo'ness but consider there is still potential and market interest there. View expressed that Bo'ness is open to more growth. It has a good mix of housing, it has capacity in its schools, and an excellent social infrastructure (well networked and active community organisations). The only thing lacking is good public transport links, particularly with recent reductions in services.

- Generally people buying new homes in Bo'ness are commuters so not using local facilities. This reflects a more general change in shopping habitats with people not shopping locally but using out-of-town shopping centres / internet etc.
- Two sites at Bo'ness have stalled, development at both Foreshore and Drum have not happened due to economic downturn. No answers to resolving this.
- Reference made to the collapse of the Bo'ness Foreshore development. Friends of Kinneil are helping to transform the foreshore into a leisure resource. This may be an alternative to the previously proposed housing.
- There is a danger that communities such as Bonnybridge will become solely commuter towns without expansion of community facilities.
- Concerns about the coalescence of settlements such as in the Braes and lack of infrastructure. In Reddingmuirhead and Wallacestone recent growth is viewed negatively, and has put infrastructure under a lot of pressure. Social infrastructure is not as well developed. Community Council struggles to get active members.
- Maddiston feels increasingly remote from the wider Falkirk Council area and Polmont/Falkirk facilities.
- Community priorities should be investigated and established before preparing the plan. Noted that some communities have been subject to local community planning exercises which have yielded useful information.
- Affordable housing is still needed but affordable housing policy should be more targeted.
- People want to be able to downsize, there has to be the right type of housing to enable this.
- Availability of Council houses is an issue. Residents have sold their Council house privately for personal profit and then have been able to get another Council house. Meanwhile people object to locating affordable housing locally, as they perceive it will impact on their property value.
- In many cases RSLs are building often better quality affordable housing than homes provided by private house builders
- It's sometimes difficult for developers to find funding for affordable housing targets (25% in some places).
- There is a need for more amenity/adapted housing for the elderly (as distinct from sheltered housing). Such housing puts less pressure on infrastructure. Providing such housing would allow elderly people to move from houses that are too big for them, thereby freeing up housing stock. Amenity housing could be in the form of small steading type developments
- There is also potential for having amenity housing, assisted living housing and care homes on the same site, so that people can move from one to the other and remain in the same community. Recognised that the volume builders are not providing this sort of housing, although it is happening more south of the border.
- There is a perceived emphasis on allocating greenfield land for housing development. There should be a presumption in favour of developing brownfield sites rather than greenfield land and making use of sites within town centres.
- The LDP doesn't promote any sites exclusively for housing within Falkirk Town Centre. Why? Perhaps this is why house builders aren't building houses within the town centre? Housing would help to revitalise the town centre.
- For industries such as Calchem housing should not encroach or constrain their growth. Wood Street used as an example.
- Sites allocated for business use could be reallocated in part or in whole for housing. They tend to have the necessary infrastructure in place to enable development to start. Scottish Enterprise noted that this would allow them to dispose of their less marketable sites and reinvest the proceeds in delivering development on other more marketable sites.

## Infrastructure

- Delivering the infrastructure needed to support housing growth is extremely important.
- Need to incentivise developers to come to Falkirk area. Consider carrying out infrastructure works upfront.
- Developer contributions should be set out at day 1.
- Infrastructure problems in the Reddingmuirhead/Wallacestone area relate to inadequacy of basic physical infrastructure such as roads, schools and drainage.
- View expressed that the Falkirk area is turning more and more into a commuter belt. Even if there is a railway station, congestion is caused by car journeys to and from these stations.
- Concern in Larbert and Stenhousemuir about the lack of community facilities, given the amount of new house building / rise in population. School capacity is particularly an issue.
- There is a perception that the current accommodation pressures at Kinnaird village school are at least in part because the Council didn't forecast the number of pupils who might go there from the new housing accurately enough.
- Primary School capacity is a constraint to further housing development in Larbert/Sten'muir. All 5 local primary schools over 90% full. Extension to Kinnaird PS planned to deal with existing pressures. School situation 'fit to burst'.
- Larbert HS has a great reputation and is one of Scotland's largest high schools. Any change in catchment boundary (to deal with pressures) is not likely to be viewed favourably by local community.
- Schools (capacity) are a constraint in some areas.
- There is a risk that small incremental housing development cannot deliver community infrastructure benefits. Larger sites can potentially deliver more benefits to communities.
- Planning gain sometimes seen as 'bribes' to get sites approved.
- Promised infrastructure has not always been delivered.
- Developers should be required to deliver everything planning consent requires such as open space, play parks. There should not be a dilution of the consent once the development is underway. Landscaping should go in first and not after houses are built to allow plants to mature.
- Pressure at Larbert Railway Station due to the increase in the number of commuters. Station car park is at capacity and overspill is creating problems in surrounding residential streets. Car park is too small, despite being designed to encourage users to walk/cycle to station – this is not working.
- General acknowledgement that it is very difficult to encourage people to walk and cycle.
- Council short sighted with regard to parking at Forth Valley Hospital. Not enough parking, people want to drive to work/hospital rather than green options.
- Not enough parking spaces in new housing developments. Some families have more than 1 or 2 cars and this can lead to parking issues.
- Other symptoms caused by poorly planned housing growth are increased traffic congestion and overflowing doctor's surgeries.
- infrastructure projects can have an adverse impact on local communities e.g. Ineos road closure in Grangemouth and Larbert Railway Bridge works.
- General desire to see more green spaces for children to play. Conversely there are circumstances where play areas are provided and homeowners don't want these areas beside their house.
- Issue of Lido in Stenhousemuir being vandalised recently, so green spaces need to be managed properly.

- Although policies are now in place to ensure that new development contributes towards providing additional capacity at doctor's surgeries, this is another in a long list of financial constraints on housing development.
- Lack of infrastructure and community facilities and loss of green space in Maddiston. There is a perception that the pace of house building has not kept pace with requirements for new infrastructure. Maddiston has seen very little benefit from development until recently. Most went to providing services in Polmont.
- There should be a park and ride for Polmont Station from Maddiston – possibly from the Fire Service site. This could be run on a co-operative/community basis and would encourage public transport and solve the parking issues and Polmont station.
- The developers' perspective is that there are huge infrastructure issues in Slamannan and until these are addressed delivery will be problematic.
- Development sites should identify land within site boundary for community, service or retail uses. This is a mechanism which has worked for one house builder represented.
- New development should focus on delivering walking and cycling infrastructure at the start. Walking and cycling infrastructure should not be an afterthought.
- Communities (especially Community Councils) and developers need to have better communication and partnership working to identify appropriate community benefits.
- There is a need for more innovative funding mechanisms for development and infrastructure. West Lothian was cited as an example.
- If the Council's isn't prepared to put its hand in its pocket to front fund the infrastructure necessary for population growth then it should set itself lower housing targets.
- It is understood that Fife Council has introduced a policy removing some of the requirement for developer contributions for brownfield sites.
- Green infrastructure needs highlighted as an efficient way of solving issues with softer measures, making efficient use of land, e.g. use of open space for SUDS. Green networks need to evolve to take on more roles and be truly multi-functional.

## **Jobs**

### Business land

- General view expressed that there is an over provision of business land, particularly for Class 4, and that some of this could be allocated for housing.
- Class 4 requirements have been reducing with new technology and working practices. Some of the sites date back 30 years or more and relate to a time when the Council was trying attract overseas hi-tech investment. Circumstances have now changed.
- General discussion about retained sites for business where nothing has happened. Examples – Glenbervie, Larbert / small section of the Drum Bo'ness. Question of whether there could be temporary uses for business sites whilst they are waiting to be developed
- Larger economic development sites which have stalled should be re-appraised to assess whether housing would be appropriate use. There would need to be careful balance as some co-locating uses would be incompatible. The Council needs to look at the commercial reality.
- Glenbervie Business Park is well-located but hasn't been developed. Should some of the site be identified for housing in an area which is marketable?
- Developers don't build speculative business parks anymore as funding is not available and there is no demand in Falkirk. Difficult to predict what will happen in the future.
- There was discussion on the role of Grangemouth industries and the relationship with the town.

- Earlsgate Park phase 2, Grangemouth has slowed in terms of speculative development of units. Calachem support business growth and have been proactive in reviewing their chemical inventory, leading to a reduction in the major hazard consultation distance around the site.
- Accessibility still an issue at Wood St., Grangemouth. Poor access through housing area (once had consent for access onto Beancross Road).
- Calachem is developing a replacement combined heat and power plant which will reduce energy costs for them. This will be an energy from waste plant which will divert waste from landfill.
- Work on flood defences will be good for Grangemouth, reducing risk for businesses.
- Appears to be buoyant market in small business/workshop space in Falkirk area - Industrial estates and small workshops do well in Falkirk.
- Large mixed use sites should include small-scale commercial development opportunities (e.g. retail/leisure).
- TIF important in Falkirk, however tension between sites which are within the TIF boundary and those outwith. Suggestion that LDP should recognise this and include a planning policy to prioritise TIF sites and de-allocate sites outwith the TIF boundary.
- Capacity at Lochlands Industrial Estate discussed - constrained site due to sub-standard access road and Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Falkirk's asset is its great transport links in Central Belt. Storage and Distribution uses do well because of this.
- Communities need to be empowered to deal with big businesses and develop entrepreneurial skills.

#### Town centres

- Falkirk's central location with good public transport connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh and its high quality green network are two of the area's most attractive assets. More should be made of this in efforts to sell the town centre as a place to live, work and invest.
- Other than the Council itself, Falkirk Town Centre is probably the biggest employer within the Council area. The Council should be doing everything it can to improve the health of the town centre rather than doing counterproductive things like moving the town hall (the town's only real cultural offering) to an out of centre site.
- There is a need for a reimagining of what the town centre is for. A big vision needs to be formulated, maybe through a document like a Town Centre Strategy.
- Falkirk town centre doesn't really have an attractive retail offer any more. More needs to be done to attract independent retailers or find alternative uses for vacant retail space e.g. arts, youth related activities.
- View that Town Centre Management is losing momentum.
- There is a need to incentivise business to locate/relocate to town centre. The rates are currently too high for small businesses to sustain.
- Is there an opportunity build on the success of the Falkirk Business Hub and provide more flexible work space for small businesses? The trend towards increased levels of home working should mean that demand for such facilities is increased.
- Empty shops in town centres are a difficult issue for the Council to do anything about. Empty units above shops and empty shop units should be considered for conversion to housing.
- Town centres need to change. They need to change and adapt to a lesser role. Free parking is seen to be very important. There was discussion on how to promote town centre living. The environment can be poor, but this is balanced by the accessibility factor.
- Residential is seen as a use that could expand to fill the gaps left by departing retail.

- Bringing some new housing into the town centre would help to enliven it at night; it is a dead zone after the shops are shut. There is a need to develop the evening economy.
- More could be done to market the town centre as a place for residential development, current town centre allocations are either for economic development or for mixed use development which may not be sending the right message to house builders. Could planning obligations be waived for town centre development to encourage regeneration?
- The connection between the town centre and the popular Central Retail Park needs to be improved, it is not particularly welcoming at the moment. The pedestrian crossing across Graham's Road is poorly located and the underpass beneath Garrison Place can be quite daunting, especially at night.
- The perception of Grangemouth TC is poor. Design is out of date. Focus should be on smaller units.
- There are too many charity shops and take-aways in Larbert and Stenhousemuir.
- Larbert and Stenhousemuir has become one town with two centres. Stenhousemuir has become one big car park which is not attractive. Larbert Local Centre is being neglected, works to railway bridge/closure of road has led to closure of 3 shop units.
- There should be encouragement for investment outwith main centres in places such as Maddiston. This could be in the form of decentralised Council services and business.
- The quality of the streetscape in Bonnybridge town centre is poor and this makes it hard to attract businesses.
- The parking in Falkirk Retail Park is free but town centre car parks are charged. This will not attract shoppers and businesses.
- Mobile apps can be used to enhance the visitor experience of places such as Falkirk town centre providing opportunities for interpretation without the cost of producing physical interpretation boards.

### Tourism

- Visitors go to the Kelpies and Falkirk Wheel but don't go into Falkirk Town Centre. There is no real reason for them to do so at the moment which requires further thought
- There was a general consensus that the Falkirk area has been transformed by Falkirk Greenspace initiatives such as the Helix and the Wheel and tourism but there needs to be renewed focus on the town centre and why it is not fulfilling its role.
- The pink 'Visit Falkirk' tourist bus been a great success, enjoyed by both locals and visitors. The bus stops at the town centre, but does it stop in the right places?
- Providing a pedestrian link from the Helix to the Town Centre and strengthening the pedestrian links from the canal network would help to draw in tourists
- A historic environment related tourism opportunity should be developed in the town centre to provide a reason for tourists to visit the town centre, which could be based around the Antonine Wall. A walking history trail is another idea. Many historic assets in Falkirk, which we could capitalise on.
- Potential of some assets not being realised e.g. empty house in Kinneil Estate for over 10 years why? Building at Callendar Park previously café/gallery is now empty, why?
- One big project is not the answer – lots of contributions will increase the tourist potential of Falkirk e.g. Promotion of John Muir Way – spin offs more cafes / walkers shop etc.
- Discussion around the development of canal related businesses and tourism – has not taken off the way originally predicted. View expressed that there is still the potential for this.

- There needs to be better signage and linkages between the canal and adjacent settlements to allow visitors to use local businesses e.g. Bonnybridge is on John Muir way but visitors do not visit town. Linkages between different tourism nodes such as the canal and Muiravonside need to be better promoted.
- The proposal by the Council to close public toilets permanently in various locations is short sighted as they form part of the tourist infrastructure. This is not helping to realise the tourist potential of the Council area.
- In Bo'ness there is a need for more promotion and interpretation of heritage assets and tourist attractions.
- Using the green network to connect places up and promoting the entire Falkirk experience as something which can be done by bike or on foot may improve the tourist potential of the area.
- Bonnyfield Nature Reserve is a great asset but is spoiled by algae from bonded warehouses.

## Resources

- General view that unconventional gas is potentially a good thing although there is a need for a greater understanding of the science involved
- Dilemma of Coal Bed Methane seeking to create jobs locally versus potential impact on the local community – while CBM may bring jobs once the moratorium is lifted, the public don't want Coal Bed Methane due to safety concerns.
- Issue of 'trust' – Energy companies not able to give communities all of the facts; e.g. Dart Energy in Larbert.
- There is a need for a focus on geothermal heat as this is a significant potential resource. There should be a focus beyond wind farms.

## Placemaking

- Falkirk has a number of high quality places (Helix, town centre, Falkirk Wheel, canal networks, Callendar Park, Conservation Areas) the focus therefore needs to be on joining the good stuff up. There are currently issues with signage between these high quality places. How do you get from one to the other?
- Many positives for area such as: Canal/Helix, Milk Barn (not all like this, noisy venue), train stations generally ok. Path networks and green network generally are good. No prominent eyesores in area. Amount of derelict land not considered to be high.
- The Forth Valley Royal Hospital estate is a good example of what can be done with a vacant site, this area has become a high quality greenspace which is widely used by the public.
- Corbiehall corner flats Bo'ness good example of placemaking and Forth Valley Hospital grounds another good example.
- Putting resources into a far reaching and engaging Main Issues Report consultation a la "Live Park" to get people taking and thinking about the future of their area could be the best way to generate more ideas for how to improve Falkirk as a place.
- Some negatives: Better signage particularly from visitor attractions such as the canal into communities. The bus station is an eyesore. Short sighted replacement of railway bridges with ugly concrete designs such as at Polmont. One way system in town centre. Traffic management in town centre should be reviewed. When arriving by train very unclear at Falkirk High Station or Falkirk Grahamston which way to go. Both are significant gateways to Falkirk need addressed with improved signage.
- Maddiston centre has poor townscape and derelict buildings. This does not project a good image.

- Bonny Water is highly polluted and this is negative in perception of area.
- Struggled to think of examples of good places in the Falkirk Council area, yet parts of the area are popular. Perhaps this is not so important for people moving into the area, or maybe they are just not given the choice of better designed housing environments.
- Opportunities: industrial heritage could provide a focus for a museum; Site to west of Polmont railway station; Graham's Road should be more attractive. Camelon/ Glasgow Road more attractive entrances to town centre;
- More could be made of Falkirk Stadium as a place. Some sort of football museum which celebrates football within the Council area could be a good fit. It currently hosts some big events but is cut off from the rest of the town by the vacant sites that surround it. More could be made of linking the Helix events space and the Stadium as venues for cultural activities.
- People outwith Council not aware that Falkirk has a World Heritage Site – Antonine Wall. Question of how you make the most of it without damaging this asset. Suggest using modern technology e.g. an app 'Unlock the Story' type of idea.
- Historic designations can be a double-edged sword as they bring focus and visitors to the area but also can be a constraint on environmental improvement.
- Rosebank Distillery could be a great asset. Listed building status potentially viewed as a constraint to some developers.
- Potential to capitalise on 'Year of Ironworks' coming up. Suggest creating a walk from Carron Dams to Larbert Old Church, graveyard interesting in terms of ironworks. Dawson family significant to local area.
- More should be made of Bo'ness. Lots of visitors go to the Railway and the Hippodrome. THI has had a great positive impact on Bo'ness. Great sense of community in Bo'ness. 'Incomers' tend to see the potential of Bo'ness, sometimes more than people who have lived there all their lives.
- Kinneil House also a potential asset. James Watt 150 year anniversary potential future event.
- Dunmore House – schemes for housing/regeneration failed and affected by economic downturn. Asset hidden away, not many aware of it.
- Kinnaird House, Robert Bruce (instigator of the Church of Scotland) lived here so something could happen here
- In terms of new development, the mix of uses is key and the importance of aesthetics was stressed.
- Standardisation policies of volume house builders can work against placemaking, but some builders will change external treatments to suit the locality. But another view expressed was that providing an oversupply of housing drives up quality, because then house builders have to work harder to sell their product. Quality of design within new development is important in helping to create the conservation areas of the future.
- Open spaces and Green Network all contribute to good placemaking.
- Connectivity and permeability is important, and there should be much greater emphasis on designing developments around walkers and cyclists rather than vehicles – Sustrans provide match funding to schemes encouraging local walking and cycling.
- Organisations such as CSGNT can bring parties together for projects such as path networks and environmental improvements which can be hard to deliver due to mix of landownerships.
- Development sites with good quality landscaping are more attractive to buyers. The Council should continue to support open space on new sites which in time expand the green network. SUDs should not be hidden in corners of development sites but play a more positive part in landscaping of sites.

- Also allocating sites well in advance allows companies to invest in long term green infrastructure. Need to plant trees on new development sites now for the future as an aid to placemaking.
- With strong Scottish Government policy on placemaking planning authorities should refuse applications if the design is poor and can expect backing from Reporters.
- High quality public realm with unique public art can help to enhance the quality of places e.g. Dundee City Centre.
- Placemaking should be people-focused as communities are places for people to live and work. All communities need to have a centre.
- Community trusts can be a good mechanism for delivering improvements and services but must be managed correctly.
- The Community Empowerment Act is positive in terms of allowing communities to bring projects forward. Communities should take ownership of sites and projects such as the orphan land project. This would decrease reliance on the Council.
- Vacant and derelict land is a focus for CSGNT – not many sites in Falkirk, but sites that have naturalised could become recreational facilities.
- Levels of vacant and derelict land could be significantly reduced by regenerating the land as greenspace, either temporarily on the more marketable sites or permanently on those sites which have been vacant for a considerable period of time.
- Vacant and derelict land is a blight on communities but is can often be hard to bring it back into use as it is often constrained in terms of access, ecological designations etc.
- There is a need for more allotments. There is scope for more allotment provision through community empowerment legislation.
- Vacant and derelict land can be rich in biodiversity so may be better reallocated as an area for nature than promoted for redevelopment.
- There is a need to look at mechanisms for temporary greening of vacant sites – either by developers or by communities. Temporary greening for community growing needs careful consideration. Clear agreements need to be in place to formalise the temporary nature of the greening so that development potential is not hampered.

## APPENDIX 5

### PRE-MIR ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY AGENCIES

**Inaugural meetings: Wednesday 2 September 2015, Tuesday 8 September 2015 and Thursday 17 September 2015**

Attendance of key agency representatives at each meeting was as follows:

#### Wednesday 2 September

SEPA	Silvia Cagnoni
SNH	Viv Gray
Historic Scotland	Alison Baisden and Andrew Stevenson
sportscotland	Elaine Fotheringham
SEStran	Alastair Short

#### Tuesday 8 September

Scottish Water(SW)	Sophie Day and Aileen MacKenzie
Transport Scotland (TS)	Adam Priestley

#### Thursday 17 September

Scottish Enterprise (SE)	Mike Williams
NHS Forth Valley	Morag Farquhar
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)	Sasha Laing

### Points covered

#### Engagement

- Key agency participants were generally happy with the opportunities for engagement at the various stages of LDP2 preparation as outlined by the Development Plan team. In particular they welcomed the chance to have face to face discussion on issues rather than trying to clarify or discuss points through an exchange of emails
- Historic Scotland will transform shortly to 'Historic Environment Scotland' and their responses will no longer be part of the Scottish Government response.
- SEPA will respond to the development plan and SEA reports in the same communication rather than in separate stages
- Mike Williams of SE is the chair of the key agency group; SE itself are using Hobbs Planning to respond to LDP consultations
- FCS are keen to see feedback on comments they may make to the assessment of candidate sites

#### 'Call for Sites' information needs

- SEPA drew attention to the new flood maps, heat maps, to the second round River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management Plan processes and the SPACE tool, all of which should inform site assessment
- SEStran has a tool for working out site accessibility (though probably at a cost)
- SNH offered assistance in assessing local wildlife sites
- SW were keen that the identification of trunk water mains crossing sites was taken into account in site assessment

- SW suggested having a green-amber-red system for categorising sites
- SE and NHS FV are owners of, as well as potential commentators on, sites which will be reassessed
- Agreement that agencies will respond on sites post Call for Sites

#### Preliminary issues comments

- SEStran wished the importance of the role of the port of Grangemouth to be emphasised in the next plan
- SW flagged up the need to involve them if routes for district heating schemes were being considered
- SW mentioned the possible role of canals in surface water flood management
- SE recommended we look at to work done by Midlothian and Aberdeen Councils on heat networks
- FCS has no involvement in providing woody biomass fuel for renewable energy projects in the Central Belt (resource is too small and potential demand is too great)
- FCS can support pre-development greening of stalled sites or those on the vacant and derelict land register
- FCS urged the strengthening of references to the Control of Woodland policy
- NHS FV are looking again at healthcare provision in Maddiston area
- NHS FV are preparing a new masterplan for the Falkirk Community Hospital site and acknowledge its potential as a heat anchor (existing on-site boiler is old but has surplus capacity)

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

- It's unlikely that the gateway agencies will comment on the SEA scoping report
- SNH have produced Firth of Forth HRA guidance
- Reminded that Supplementary Guidance (SGs) are part of the plan so should be subject to SEA screening

#### Key agency procedures/work programmes

- TS and SEStran are working together to prepare guidance on infrastructure issues
- sportscotland is preparing pre-MIR guidance and are keen to have input into any Sports Pitch and Facilities Strategy
- TS drew attention to the on-going work on the EGIP project (though this is due for completion before LDP2 adoption)

## APPENDIX 6

### COMMUNITY COUNCIL TRAINING

5th December 2015

Attendees:

#### Community Council Delegates

Aileen Amos	Airth Parish Community Council
Domini Grant	Airth Parish Community Council
Ginny Sutherland	Airth Parish Community Council
Dan Henderson	Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft Community Council
Madelene Hunt	Bo'ness Community Council
Stuart McAllister	Bo'ness Community Council
Len Ainslie	Bo'ness Community Council
Fiona Russell	Bonnybridge Community Council
Ian McGregor	Bonnybridge Community Council
Lee Gillies	Bonnybridge Community Council
Moira Heeps	Brightons Community Council
Colleen Hurren	Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council
Jacqueline McDevitt	Maddiston Community Council
Nicola Stainthorpe	Maddiston Community Council
Rosemary Taylor	Polmont Community Council

#### Falkirk Council Officers

Alistair Shaw	Development Plan Co-ordinator
Colin Hemfrey	Development Plan Co-ordinator
Ian Dryden	Development Manager
Joyce Hartley	Planning Officer
Alex Lewis	Planning Officer

#### Feedback from group discussion

##### Experience of Development Plan process

- There is not enough awareness of the LDP
- Feeling that there isn't always enough consultation but acknowledgement that many people not interested in planning until it affects them directly - Interest tends to be 'issue led'
- The timing of consultations has been an issue and often appear to coincide with holiday periods – meeting venues are closed over Christmas period so cannot hold meetings to come to a view
- Important to keep participating even in the event of unfavourable land allocations in order to get the 'best deal' for the community
- Large companies appear to have undue influence on decisions
- Positives of the process: The Development Plan (DP) procedure is organised, sites are represented openly, and Community Council (CC) views have been partly taken on board
- Negatives: resident apathy, lack of involvement of young people, have to take account of commercial reality
- In terms of information on LDP – a lot of people don't read the Falkirk Herald and don't look at other sources of information on the LDP. Tends to be topics like cutbacks, office closures etc. that jump into the headlines

- LDPs could be an 'easier read' – it was explained that there is a balance between easy read and keeping technical terminology for legal reasons
- The early periods of LDP preparation were open and positive but then had frustration of Report's/Examination stage
- View that the LDP was put together without local knowledge
- Name of LDP should acknowledge areas outwith Falkirk who feel bypassed – council should be Falkirk and District Council, not Falkirk Council

## **Issues**

- There is a recognition that there has to be more land for housing
- People who move into new housing usually very aware of infrastructure – especially schools and transport links to places of employment
- Plan contains a lot of sites but developers have said they are not interested in taking on small sites
- Some CC areas have benefitted from planning gain but others, like Maddiston, have seen infrastructure built elsewhere
- Discussions about developer contributions and developer concerns about sites becoming unviable if too much requested
- Cost of schools and the means by which the NCPD schools have been acquired
- View expressed that there is need to provide local sites for business to flourish – Callendar Square in Falkirk is an eyesore which could be redeveloped as an opportunity for small businesses
- LDP is business, not community, focussed
- The Council need to promote local (town) centres
- With tourism issue the area is now on the global map but the tourism offer is not joined up
- Need to balance potential exploitation of shale gas with environmental protection
- Shale gas exploitation could affect home insurance
- Need better internet access for home, and small, businesses
- Concern that proposals get changed by developers between LDP stage (when it may be acceptable) and stage when planning applications are submitted (which may not be unacceptable) – CCs have to be vigilant and not wait for meetings to act and make their views known
- Quality of design can be an issue
- Future of Gilston site and the possible mix of uses
- Skyline policy in Polmont
- There was some discussion about the presence of pipelines and historic mineshafts in Bo'ness
- Densities expected to increase due to need for more 'sustainable development'
- Means by which affordable housing is procured was discussed

## **Development Management (DM)**

- Importance of site visits was highlighted
- Personal positive feedback from experience of the pre-application discussion process
- Need to balance speed of processing planning applications with information gathering and engagement - DM is moving to improve technology and the online experience
- The pros and cons of delegated decision making was discussed
- Builders tend to carry out more extensive consultation through the planning application process
- Presence of developers at CC meetings can be helpful
- Voting on planning applications at cc meetings is by paper vote not show of hands – easier for development plan matters

## Effective Engagement

- LDP1 was good at engagement and MIR was well presented
- It would be helpful to have plan layout reviewed so that CCs can more easily separate out local concerns from global/council-wide concerns
- Need to reduce amount of jargon in plans – use plain English and more diagrams. This increases transparency as well as being easier to understand
- Some felt the Issues form was too complicated and wanted it to be simpler
- Often local people say their views don't matter to the council and CCs have to overcome this feeling
- Important to keep participating even in the event of unfavourable land allocations in order to get the 'best deal' for the community
- Many people who live in new housing areas on edge of towns don't engage with the local community – towns become 'dormitory' communities with many people travelling out of the area to work, shop and spend leisure time
- The timing of and intervals between community council meetings is important, particularly if matters need to be discussed more than once
- Community council meetings are open to allow issues to reach the wider community
- Handling of public meetings can be challenging
- CCs must get message out to local people to make use of opportunities for involvement when they occur
- CCs should use Facebook and twitter to increase engagement – check online information resources
- Polmont and Bo'ness community councils have a Facebook page
- Bo'ness community council has a website and can circulate details of LDP events
- CCs need to make wider use of other sources of help or funding to get wider involvement
- Important to keep LDP documents in libraries – not everyone uses the internet

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **HOMES FOR SCOTLAND (HFS) 24th September and 1st October 2015**

Attendees:

#### *Meeting 1*

Phillip Cooper, Taylor Wimpey  
Terry Walker, Ecosse Regeneration  
Richard Holland, Wallace Land  
Conor Byrne, Springfield Properties  
Amanda Fleming, Bellway  
Rita Jardine, Falkirk Council Housing  
Karen Strang, Falkirk Council Housing  
Colin Hemfrey, Alastair Shaw, Catherine Devlin, Falkirk Council Development Plan Team

#### *Meeting 2*

Oliver Munden, Persimmon  
Collette Maxwell, CALA  
Catherine Wood, Gladman  
Any Summers, Gladman  
Rita Jardine, Falkirk Council Housing  
Karen Strang, Falkirk Council Housing  
Colin Hemfrey, Alastair Shaw, Catherine Devlin, Falkirk Council Development Plan Team

#### *Meeting 1:*

#### **Engagement**

18 responses were received from housebuilders on LDP1 but none taken on board. The issue of effective supply has to be resolved. HFS should be supporting need for local authorities to be adequately resourced. Planning gain is a stealth tax.

West Lothian held a housing conference which included Councillors. Falkirk Council (FC) holds an annual developers meeting and it was considered useful to have Councillors at that meeting.

#### **Call for Sites**

The opportunity to look at the call for sites form was welcomed. The planning system is being reviewed and changes may come forward through this. A strategic review of infrastructure requirements should be considered by the Council. Housebuilders have reduced strategic staff. Checklist on effectiveness of site required. The need for developer contributions was understood however this needs to be reasonable and affordable.

#### **Issues**

There is a balance to strike in allocating sites in more marketable areas however banks will not invest in less desirable areas. Viability needs to be taken into account. Problems on a site may not come to light until further down the line making viability an issue.

We have an aging population and requirements such as for health facilities need to be provided early in the process so they can be fed into land negotiation. Having to go back to

renegotiate with the landowner is very difficult. Dundee Council was front funding roads infrastructure for a project which would help bring it forward.

Small to medium housebuilders are no longer as common, as financing projects is more difficult. If more attractive areas are successful lesser areas would spin off from that.

### **Affordable housing**

Can amenity housing be affordable? Amenity housing costs more to build but the grant available is not any higher than for mainstream housing. Likely to be looking for similar number of affordable units in LDP2. Disabled housing is included in target. Developers encouraged to speak to FC housing as early as possible. There should be a mix of housing to enable people to move within an area subject to their needs. Shared equity was an option and could be considered as affordable housing. The West Lothian model was mentioned which includes primary healthcare, social facilities and housing on the same site. The aging population was a potential new market.

Flats on the general market are not favoured as they take a lot of capital upfront. From an economic point of view affordable flats are better as there is one client – the Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

### **Infrastructure**

Funding would be available from developers for major infrastructure such as a new school if the area was attractive for developers. Returns are realised more quickly in more marketable areas. High costs at the start of projects can be difficult and the phasing of contributions is preferable. There are examples of developers working together to fund solutions to problems – such as at Bonnybridge – builders got together to resolve drainage issue.

Secondary Schools are an issue. Catchment reviews should be seriously considered. Where Council's want to build schools themselves this can add significant costs to a build. Modular build may be possible in phases as and when required and 2 school campuses may also be an option.

Further growth in Larbert may necessitate a catchment review. An education seminar to consider specific education issues could be helpful.

Council's should consider ways to implement infrastructure upfront which would attract builders. A strategic road fund should be considered. In strategic sites a roof tax may be more efficient than a S75 requirement.

### **Place**

Zero carbon issues are an added cost on building. New build in other LA areas in previously unattractive areas was considered. Almost need to create a new market in such areas which is separate from the existing area in some respects although still has links.

Examples considered – Armadale, Heartlands, Winchburgh, Tamfourhill, Bellsdyke, Airth. Difficult for developers to take risk on an area with no record of success. Airth was an example where the development had risk associated with it but it was successful for Manor Kingdom. New Council building would not be a catalyst for development. A mix of housing product was important with better products pushing up the marketability of an area and also complementary housebuilders. Accessibility, good schools both make an area attractive. Areas like Slamannan are only likely to be feasible for small local housebuilders – these are now greatly reduced.

There is a hierarchy of desirable areas with primary areas being the focus for housebuilders and secondary areas thereafter. It may be that Falkirk as a whole is a secondary area however it is recognised that there are attractive areas for housebuilders here. Perceptions

can change on areas particularly with boundaries extending as new development comes into an area. Parkhall Farm is arguably considered to be a Polmont rather than a Maddiston development. Perception of an area is very important – parts of Tamfourhill are considered better than others, change may only be a few streets.

Town centre development is not a priority for housebuilders with the complications of mixed use sites, consortiums and smaller sites not ideal. Brownfield sites may also have difficult ground conditions.

### **Jobs**

Rezoning of business and industry land to other uses should be considered.

*Meeting 2:*

### **Engagement**

An expanded Call for Sites form asking for more information was welcomed. However, there needs to be an assurance that this will be fully considered. There is a cost to providing information at this early stage.

### **Affordable Housing**

The Wheatley Group funding mechanism was mentioned. A broader definition of affordable housing is required. Having mixed tenure sites is not seen as a barrier to development. CALA have developed a number of sites in this way. FC Housing Services are considering other options such as buying off housebuilders. There may be further opportunities for funding affordable housing. Lower cost housing for purchase should be considered as affordable depending on value. Rodel Drive was given as an example. There was no requirement for affordable housing on the site. Mydub is deferred for a later date. Flexibility in the delivery of affordable housing was welcomed.

The valuation of units for sale to the Council is carried out by the District Valuer here. Elsewhere build costs plus an additional sum have been agreed.

### **Infrastructure**

A range of sites is necessary which can accommodate the slower rate of build generally. Sites not delivering should be taken out. Consideration should be given to how school capacity is calculated – are all rooms included? New schools could be more than single storey.

### **Place**

There is interest from housebuilders in the wider Falkirk Council area with a range of sites required across the area. Whitecross, although close to Linlithgow is not seen to be in the right location. We are a commuter belt area. Businesses like Gladman focus on a short 5 year window to get the initial consent for a site before passing onto housebuilders. Drum Farm has been considered by housebuilders however a tightly controlled masterplan may be a hindrance to development. Bo'ness is a largely untested market and although Phase 1 of the Drum was successful there has been little development since then. West Lothian may be absorbing house sales from Edinburgh which previously may have filtered into the Falkirk area. In other areas, such as the Lothians, effectiveness of sites is open to question and education capacity is a major issue.

New railways lines have helped in some areas such as Bathgate and Armadale but not in others such as Blackridge and Caldercruix.

Landowners may have an unrealistic expectation of the value of their land which reflects pre-recession prices.

## APPENDIX 8

### SCHOOLS WORKSHOP – LARBERT HIGH SCHOOL

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016

#### Introduction

This workshop was undertaken with approximately 80 students studying Geography at National 5/Higher level.

The exercise was linked to the urban change and management elements of the Higher Geography Course. Its aims and objectives were:

- to obtain the views of students about what they consider to be the main issues in their local area
- to translate city-scale national and international examples of urban change into a local context by looking at how change happens and is managed at a local level
- to introduce planning as a potential career option

The workshop was run twice to accommodate two groups of 40. Students were arranged into groups based on the neighbourhood in which they live.

Students undertook exercises over the course of a double period - approximately 90 minutes - covering two key elements of planning:

(i) **Placemaking** - looking at why places look good and function well. This incorporated the provision of **Open Space** as an important element of placemaking. Students were asked to assess their local area using the Scottish Government's 'Placemaking Standard' and were also asked to assess the requirement for various types of open space using criteria set out in the Council's Draft Open Space Strategy 2015.

(ii) **New Housing - Site Allocation** - which traced housing pressure in the local area over the last 30 years, the requirement for social and physical infrastructure and the site assessment process. Students were asked to identify sites for housing using constraints maps and provide a justification for their choices.

#### Placemaking

**Exercise: use of the 'Placemaking Standard' to assess each group's local neighbourhood.**

##### Carronshore

Group 1 Placemaking score: 38/56

Best aspects: natural space (7), play and recreation (6), public transport (6)

Worst aspects: traffic and parking (2), streets and spaces (3)

Priorities for action: none specified

Group 2 Placemaking score: 31/49

Best aspects: public transport (6), facilities and amenities (6)

Worst aspects: traffic and parking (2), play and recreation (3)

Priorities for action: traffic and parking – improve parking; play and recreation – improve open space

### Stenhousemuir

Placemaking score: 43/56

Best aspects: moving around (6), public transport (6), play and recreation (6), facilities and amenities (6)

Worst aspects: traffic and parking (4), housing and community (5)

Priorities for action: traffic and parking – create more parking and persuade people to use cars less; housing and community – more houses available for rent

### Larbert Village/station

Placemaking score: 39/56

Best aspects: play and recreation (6), moving around (6)

Worst aspects: natural space (3), traffic and parking (4)

Priorities for action: natural space – try to protect and rejuvenate current green space (possibly fence off); Traffic and parking – residents only parking in certain areas e.g. Larbert Cross and replace traffic lights with zebra crossings.

### Antonshill

Group 1 Placemaking score: 37/56

Best aspects: public transport (6), housing and community (6), facilities and amenities (6)

Worst aspects: traffic and parking (3), streets and spaces (3)

Priorities for action: traffic and parking – traffic lights on Bellsdyke Road, more paths; streets and spaces – more open space and more ways to get around away from roads

Group 2 Placemaking score: 43/56

Best aspects: public transport (6), moving around (6), play and recreation (6), facilities and amenities (6)

Worst aspects: traffic and parking (4), housing and community (5)

Priorities for action: traffic and parking – encourage use of public transport, use green land for parking; housing and community – more houses for rent as current provision is not affordable for young people

### Kinnaird

Group 1 Placemaking score: 30/56

Best aspects: streets and spaces (6), traffic and parking (5)

Worst aspects: facilities and amenities (1), public transport (3) natural space (3) play and recreation (3)

Priorities for action: none specified

Group 2 Placemaking score: 44/56

Best aspects: moving around (6), traffic and parking (6), streets and spaces (6), facilities and amenities (6), housing and community (6)

Worst aspects: natural space (4), play and recreation (5)

Priorities for action: natural space – have more green space; play and recreation – have bigger park with more equipment

### Around Larbert High School

Group 1 Placemaking score: 39/56

Best aspects: public transport (6), natural space (6), facilities and amenities (6)

Worst aspects: traffic and parking (3) streets and spaces (4)

Priorities for action: traffic and parking – better public transport; streets and spaces – stop cars parking on paths and more bins.

Group 2 Placemaking score: 36/56

Best aspects: play and recreation (7), natural space (6), housing and community (6)

Worst aspects: public transport (2) streets and spaces (3)

Priorities for action: public transport – more buses, provide link between station and school; streets and spaces – remove speed bumps, fix potholes, provide zebra crossing

### Open Space and Urban Growth

**Exercise: Students were provided with a collection of maps and data relating to open space quantity, quality and distribution across the Larbert and Stenhousemuir area. Using this data they were asked to summarise what the shortcomings of the park and open space resource in their area was.**

Students successfully identified that:

- Larbert and Stenhousemuir's rate of open space provision was around half of the Council wide average but was still above the Council's proposed 5ha/1000people standard;
- The quality of open space in Larbert and Stenhousemuir was significantly below the Council wide average;
- There were parts of Larbert and Stenhousemuir which didn't have access to certain functions of open space within an acceptable walking distance when assessed against the Council's proposed accessibility standards;

They also identified using their own experience that the quality of play provision within Kinnaird and the Inches is not sufficient with numerous play areas for toddlers but little suitable provision for older children and teenagers.

Students were also provided with a map showing locations where there was pressure for future housing growth then asked how we can manage urban change to address these shortcomings. Solutions identified by the pupils included:

- Developers could be asked to contribute financially towards the improvement of existing open spaces;
- Future development at Kinnaird could be required to provide a new sports area;
- The Council could work with the Police and other agencies to discourage antisocial behaviour within the parks and open spaces where this is a problem which adversely affects their quality.

### **New Housing - Site Allocation**

**Exercise: Students were invited to identify sites for a further 1,000 houses in the Larbert/Stenhousemuir area.**

**Using constraints maps and other data supplied, they were asked to provide a justification for the sites chosen.**

Each group had the choice of deciding to:

- do nothing in Larbert/Stenhousemuir and assume new households can be accommodated elsewhere
- Find one site to accommodate all of the new households
- Find a number of sites scattered around the area
- Justify their choices

### **Results**

Two groups provided written justification of their choice. These were:

#### **One large allocation at Bensfield**

Justification given for this choice was good public transport, children can go to Carronshore Primary School which has no projected capacity constraints, the site is free of flood risk and it is within walking distance of Larbert High School. Although in the green belt, its allocation would not remove too much of it.

#### **One large allocation at East of Hill of Kinnaird**

This was justified as it is relatively flat, easy access from A88 with available public transport, and it was near green space. Students acknowledged that this choice meant that a new primary school would have to be provided.

Other suggested sites

- two medium sized sites, one at northern end of Carronshore and one at Roughlands
- three further suggestions of Bensfield, but delineating a smaller site than the above group.
- One group chose a number of relatively small sites around the edge of the built up area; two sites at the northern edge of Carronshore, ribbon development along Webster Avenue at Roughlands, In Rae Street behind Stenhousemuir PS, east of Kinnaird along Bellsdyke Road, and at Stirling Road, Central Business Park and at Old Denny Road in the west.
- two sites north of the M876 on either side of Stirling Road, at Glenbervie Golf Course and opposite at Cleddans Farm.

