

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

2023

www.falkirk.gov.uk



Falkirk Council



wsp



Contents

Putting People First	03
Policy Framework	04
Vision and Values	05
Future Active Travel Network	15
Identifying Strategic Routes	16
Promoting Thriving High Streets	20
Creating Liveable Neighbourhoods	22
Embracing Sustainability.....	29
Realising the Vision	31

Putting People First

Across Scotland, and around the world, policy makers are adopting a people-first approach to planning and transport, creating great places that are connected by a healthier and more sustainable transport system.

We know that the population of Falkirk District is projected to increase over the next decade, putting further pressure on our existing infrastructure. To address this, we need a transport network that can better promote the development of sustainable, liveable, productive and distinctive places, in line with [national](#), [regional](#) and [local policy](#).

Transportation is an essential part of our lives – how we move around affects our access to, and experience of, travelling between home, education, work, services and leisure. But different forms of transport have different impacts on our environment, health and wellbeing, and economy. Some transport types are also more easily accessed than others.

We know that active travel – walking, wheeling and cycling – is the best form of transport for the environment, health and wellbeing, and local economies. It is also the cheapest form of transport, and much less affected by cost-of-living increases than motorised transportation. From the household to the local government level, we continue to face financial challenges. However, by working with partners to shape our communities for walking, wheeling and cycling, we support individuals, families and businesses to make transportation choices that are best for their own needs and budgets.



Policy Framework

This Active Travel Strategy for Falkirk, builds upon the plans, strategies and frameworks at the local, regional and national level. By building on these policies, we are contributing toward a better Scotland.



Vision and Values

Our vision for the next decade is that our communities are shaped around people, with walking, wheeling or cycling the most popular choice for shorter, everyday journeys.



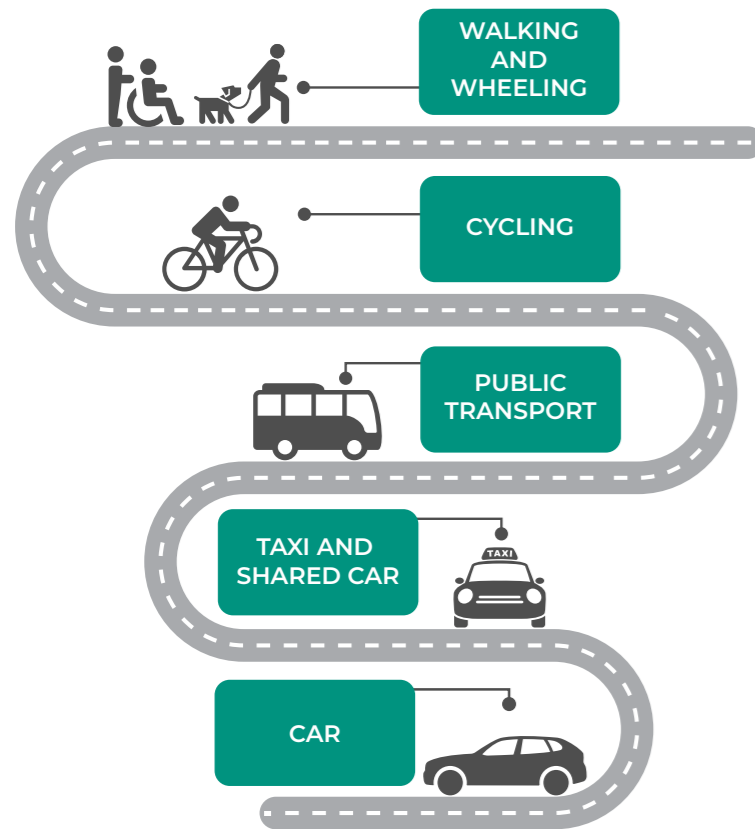
In our vision, people can live their lives without owning a car. Local journeys, for school, work, appointments, services or leisure, are normally made via walking, wheeling or cycling. Longer journeys combine walking, wheeling or cycling with reliable, affordable public transport. Roads are more attractive and welcoming communal spaces, and reduced congestion increases air quality and decreases journey times for bus routes and emergency services. With car ownership truly optional, families have more control over their budgets and transport choices.

This supports the Scottish Government’s commitment to reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030 and is aligned to the National Planning Framework (NPF4) approach to developing liveable, sustainable places via the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network and National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network. It also helps address some of the issues that we have identified about travel and wellbeing across the local area and is aligned with our transport values.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

People First

For many years, streets have been designed for cars, with other users an afterthought. We are returning to our streets' historical origins, with walking and wheeling as our top priority. Our investment priorities are illustrated in the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT HIERARCHY

Sustainable Investment

Our Strategy is aligned with the Scottish Government's sustainable investment hierarchy, in which we make sure that existing infrastructure is well-maintained and being used to full capacity before considering new infrastructure options.



SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT HIERARCHY

Objectives

Our goal is to develop suitable conditions for most people to easily undertake their local journeys by walking, wheeling or cycling. Each step toward this goal will have positive impacts for individuals, the community, and the wider area.

Our work will support the development of:

Thriving Communities

As more people walk, cycle and wheel for everyday journeys, they will help to create more sociable and more pleasant communities. Travelling actively will improve health levels for everyone. Connected paths, footways and more 'eyes on the street' create safer streets and places for all.

A Growing Economy

Making it easier to walk, wheel and cycle will reduce inequalities of access to employment, education, services and leisure. When everyone can move across our communities more easily, they can support local businesses and facilities. This encourages more sustainable economic growth.

A Sustainable Place

The shift from private car use to active modes will reduce transport-related carbon emissions and other air pollution. This shift also will allow some of the space, currently used for excessive traffic-levels and parking, to be used more productively creating greener and more attractive spaces and places.

Our Approach

In order to achieve these objectives, we have identified our key priorities:

- Raising awareness of the importance of walking, wheeling and cycling for wellbeing, cost-of-living, and the community.
- Supporting all road users, business owners and key services to make walking, wheeling and cycling easier, safer, and more welcoming for everyone.
- Investing in new and upgraded infrastructure to create safe spaces for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Committing to the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods to ensure that key facilities are within a reasonable distance for active travel. Only by ensuring that we invest in people, as well as places, will we be able to see sustained progress in meeting our objectives.

Improving Inclusion

We know that there are some groups of people who need additional support to access walking, wheeling and cycling, and we will prioritise investment accordingly.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

During the development of this Strategy, you’ve told us about the main transport problems you have. In response to this information, we have identified appropriate solutions to help support your needs better.

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
The Falkirk District’s population is older than the UK average.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote programmes that provide access to adapted cycles and e-bikes and mobility scooters.• Provide more rest opportunities on walking routes.
Concerns about antisocial behaviour make people less active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote walking, wheeling and cycling to increase the number of eyes on the street.• Increase investment in lighting on active travel routes, especially near integration with other transport modes.
Air Quality Management Areas do not meet national objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create opportunities for shift from private car to walking, wheeling and cycling• Reduce vehicle traffic near schools and in neighbourhoods.
The south and west of the region are hillier than other parts of the Falkirk District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure integration between public transport, shared mobility, and walking, wheeling and cycling.
25% of the District residents do not have access to a car or van.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with planners and businesses to ensure accessible walking, wheeling and cycling links to and between workplaces, education, key services and leisure facilities.
Cost of living increases are affecting household budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design new connections to enable people to travel without the need to fuel, and maintain, a private car by combining walking, cycling, and wheeling with public transport or use of a car club.
Reduced high street footfall reduces spend with local businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease traffic congestion and reallocate road space to increase access to town and neighbourhood centres.• Increase the availability of secure storage for bicycles.
Traffic congestion causes delays to emergency services and service vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the number of private cars on the road to free up space for those who need it most.
New settlements create additional traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that new settlements are connected to active travel networks.• Behaviour change campaigns to support more active and healthier travel choices.

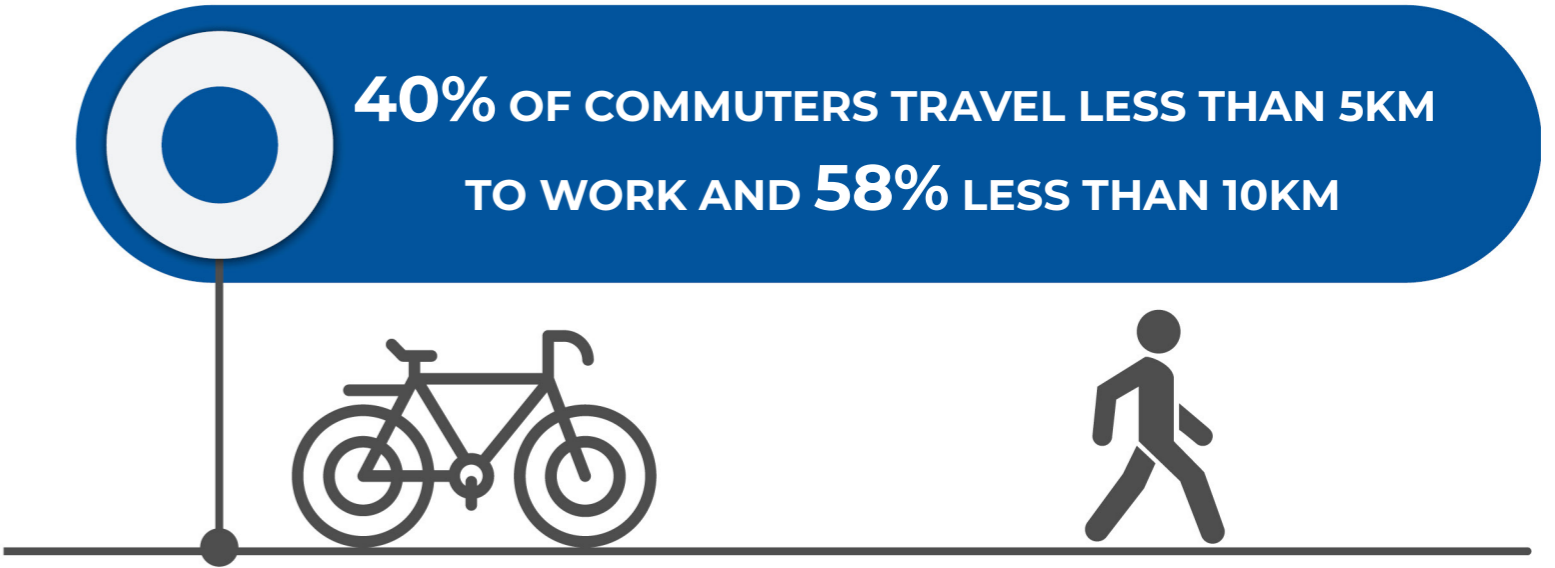
LOCAL JOURNEYS

In 2019, Falkirk was awarded ‘[Britain’s Best Walking Neighbourhood](#)’ by The Ramblers. We want to build on this, working with internal partners to develop our Core Path Plan.

With your help and feedback, we have identified the key places people travel to and from. We have used this information to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place to help you walk, cycle or wheel more often to and from the places that are important to you.

We know that in the Falkirk District, 40% of commuters travel less than 5km to work and 58% travel less than 10km. Journeys under 10km can often be easily made through active modes such as cycling, if the appropriate infrastructure, services, and equipment are available.

For longer journeys, we want to encourage the use of walking, wheeling and cycling as part of an onward trip using public transport. We know that it’s not possible for everyone, or every journey, but we want to make sure that those who do want to travel this way have the safe infrastructure, skills and equipment they need.



CASE STUDY : BESPOKE TRAILS

Village of Maddiston Monument to a Landscape

A series of nine sculptures/monuments have been situated throughout the village of Maddiston to encourage people to explore their local area.

Community artists, ‘NADFLY’, engaged with the community through making paper lanterns that people could put up outside their houses to show a shared experience. They also carried out an evening lantern walk where all the lanterns had bike lights in them to light up the evening, which saw a total of 400 residents coming out on a cold January evening.

Nine granite monuments were put in place across the old and new estates, which had metal plates attached with drawings of the area. These could be used to make pencil rubbings as people explored their community.

As we develop more infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling, we will aim to incorporate more interesting and attractive features that celebrate the Falkirk region’s heritage.

The Foundry Fortunes and Monuments to a Landscape were funded by Paths for All, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Falkirk Council.

“The Foundry Fortunes project was also community led with community artists NADFLY engaging with the public through workshops, maps and booklets.”

Larbert and Stenhousemuir: Foundry Fortune

The six Foundry Fortune waymarker sculptures form a unique community engagement project that celebrates heritage and encourages exploration by foot and bike through the parks and pathways of the Larbert and Stenhousemuir area.

The work is greatly inspired by our industrial heritage and the many iron foundries that used to dominate the landscape across the local area.



So what does 10km of cycling look like?



Improving Inclusion

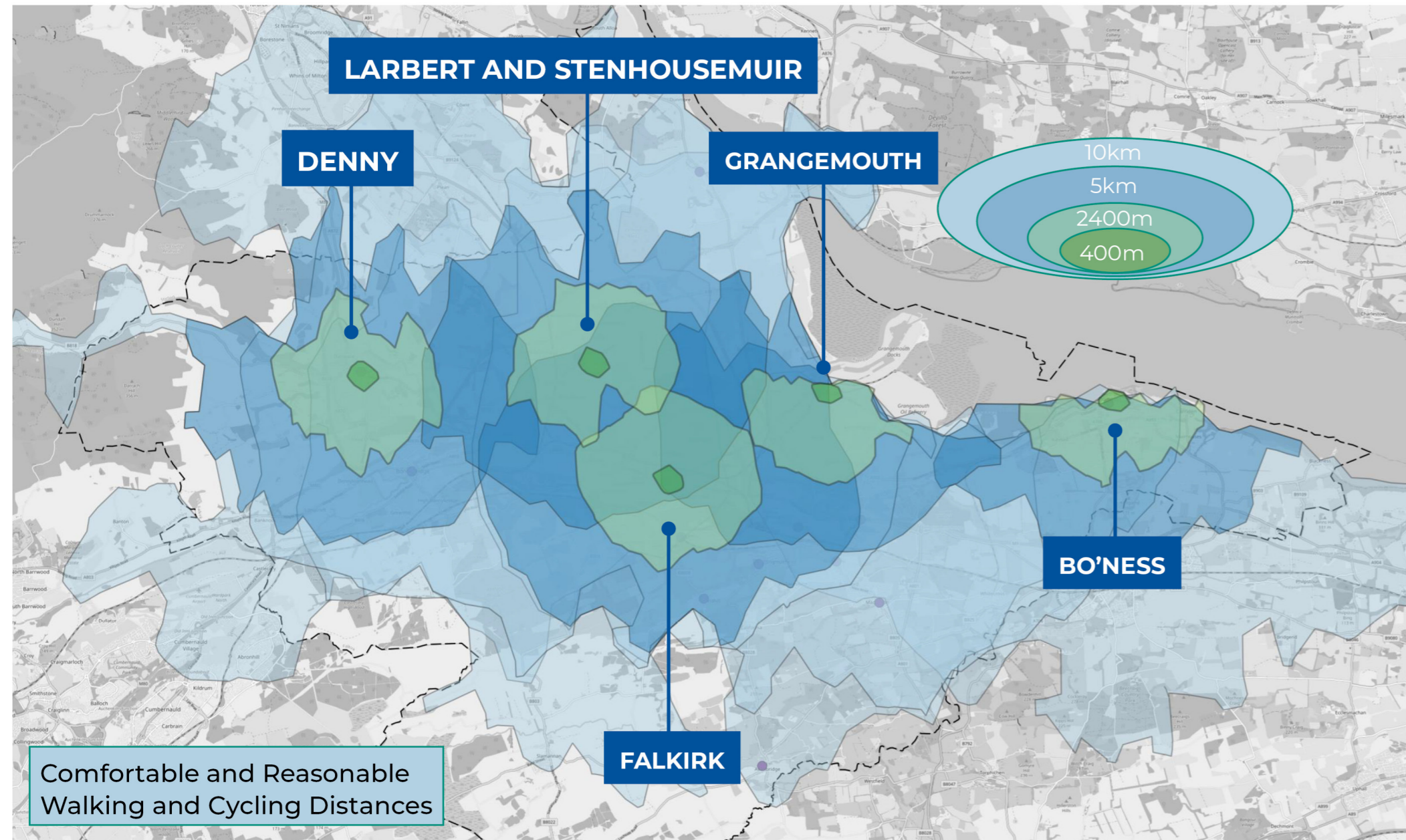
Not everyone wants, or is able, to travel at the same speed. By opening areas to walking, wheeling and cycling, people can take accessible, active journeys at their own pace.

When we look at the five District centres, we see that the majority of the District is within walking, wheeling and cycling distance of a District centre.

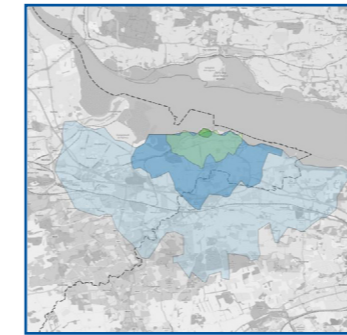
In fact, it is estimated that over 85% of the population of the Falkirk District live within a 10km cycle distance of Falkirk town centre. This is a distance that, depending on the landscape, many people can cycle in 30 minutes; but whatever speed people travel at, if the infrastructure is right, people will have a comfortable cycling or wheeling experience at their own speed.

With the pedaling assist of an e-bike, these distances can be travelled more easily by more people. No matter their form of travel, we want and need to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to allow journeys of this length to be made easier and more accessible. If we get the infrastructure right, there is the potential for most people to make more of their everyday journeys on foot, by wheeling, or by cycle.

The map below shows comfortable and reasonable walking and cycling distances for the biggest settlements across Falkirk.



BO'NESS



Walking / Wheeling

400m: Bo'ness Railway Museum

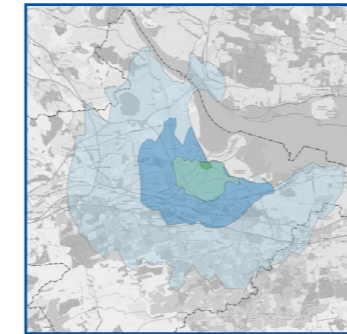
2400m: Kinneil and Muirhouses

Cycling

5km: Kinneil Estate

10km: Linlithgow, Beecraigs Country Park

GRANGEMOUTH



Walking / Wheeling

400m: High Street Shops

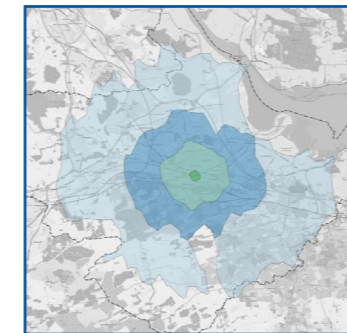
2400m: Sports Stadium

Cycling

5km: Helix Park

10km: Bo'ness, Larbert, Kincardine

FALKIRK



Walking / Wheeling

400m: Falkirk Grahamston and Falkirk High rail stations

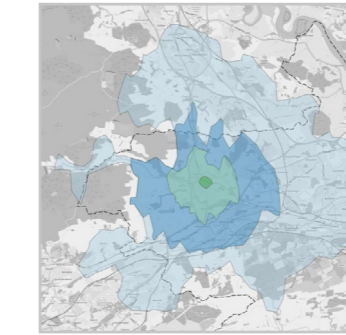
2400m: Callendar Park, Forth Valley College

Cycling

5km: Forth Valley Hospital

10km: Larbert and Stenhousemuir

DENNY



Walking / Wheeling

400m: Broad Street shops

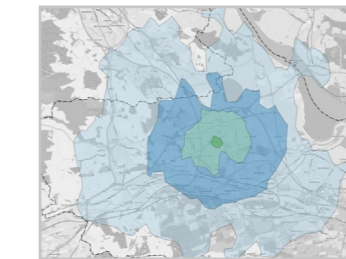
2400m: Herbertshire Castle Park, Chacefield Wood

Cycling

5km: Bonnybridge

10km: Larbert, Falkirk, Cumbernauld Village, Bannockburn

LARBERT AND STENHOUSEMUIR



Walking / Wheeling

400m: Main Street shops

2400m: Forth Valley Royal Hospital

Cycling

5km: The Falkirk Wheel

10km: Plean Country Park, Grangemouth, Polmont



Understanding Regular Journeys

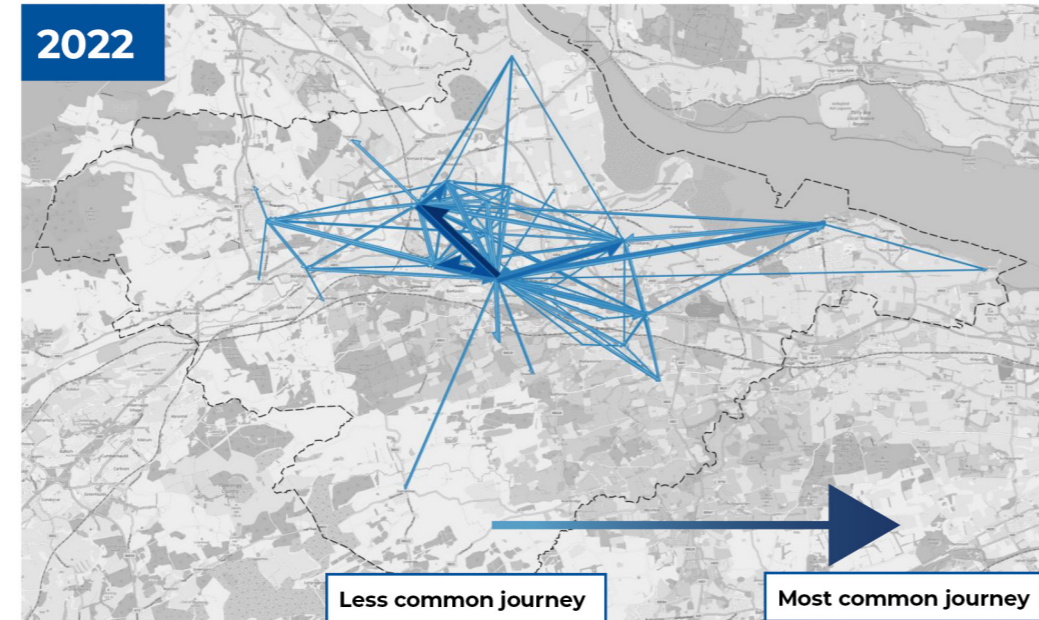
We asked Falkirk District residents what their most regular journeys were and compared this to the census data.

The result is a map which highlights the key connectivity areas of Falkirk town, Camelon, Larbert, Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Grangemouth, Bo'ness, and other key areas across the region.

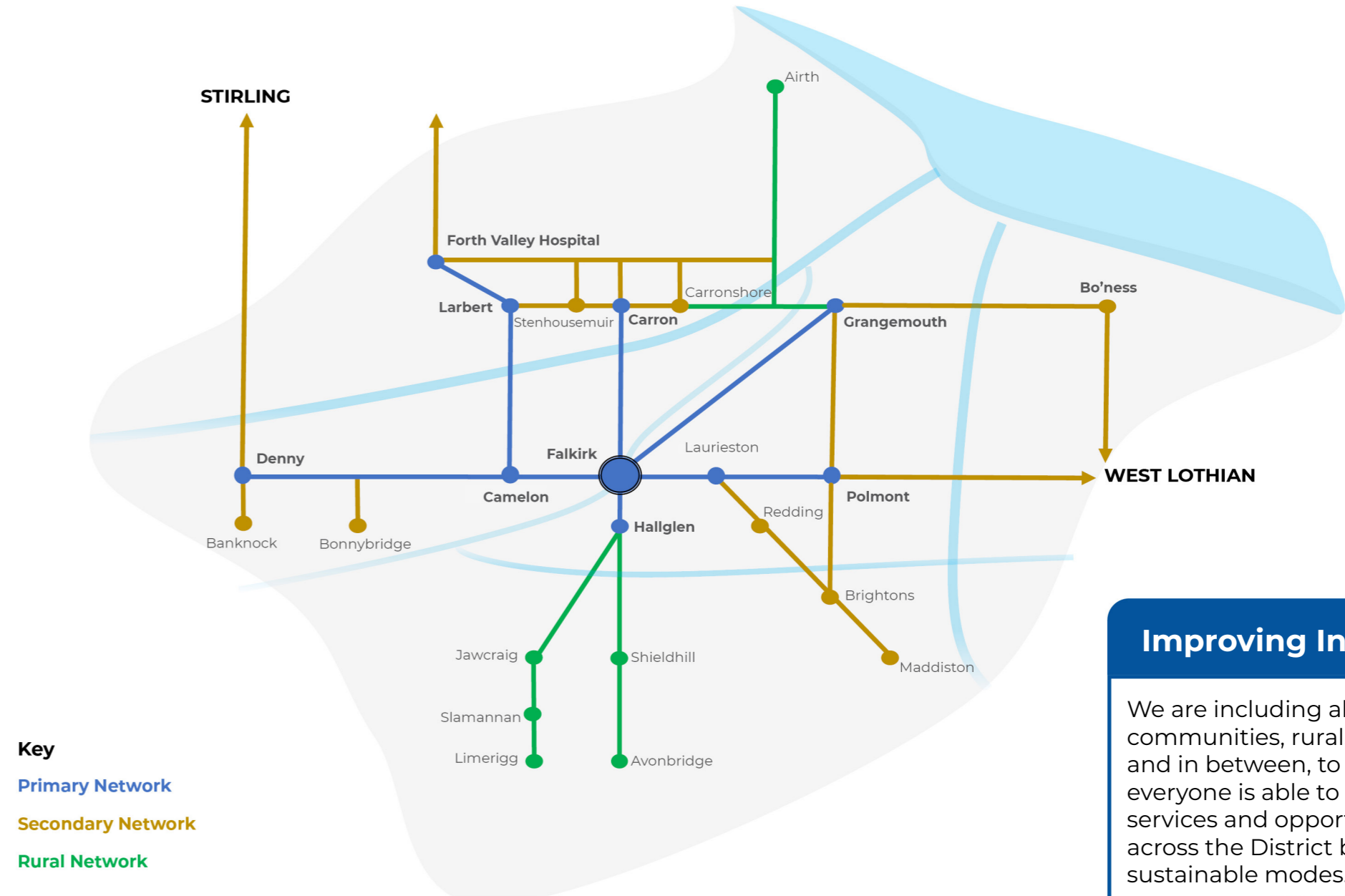
We used this information to develop a proposal for a strategic active travel network across the Falkirk District. Having this network plan helps ensure that we have all the best practice tools we need to secure funding to make our walking, wheeling and cycling vision a reality.



Key Connectivity Areas in 2022 and 2011



Future Active Travel Network



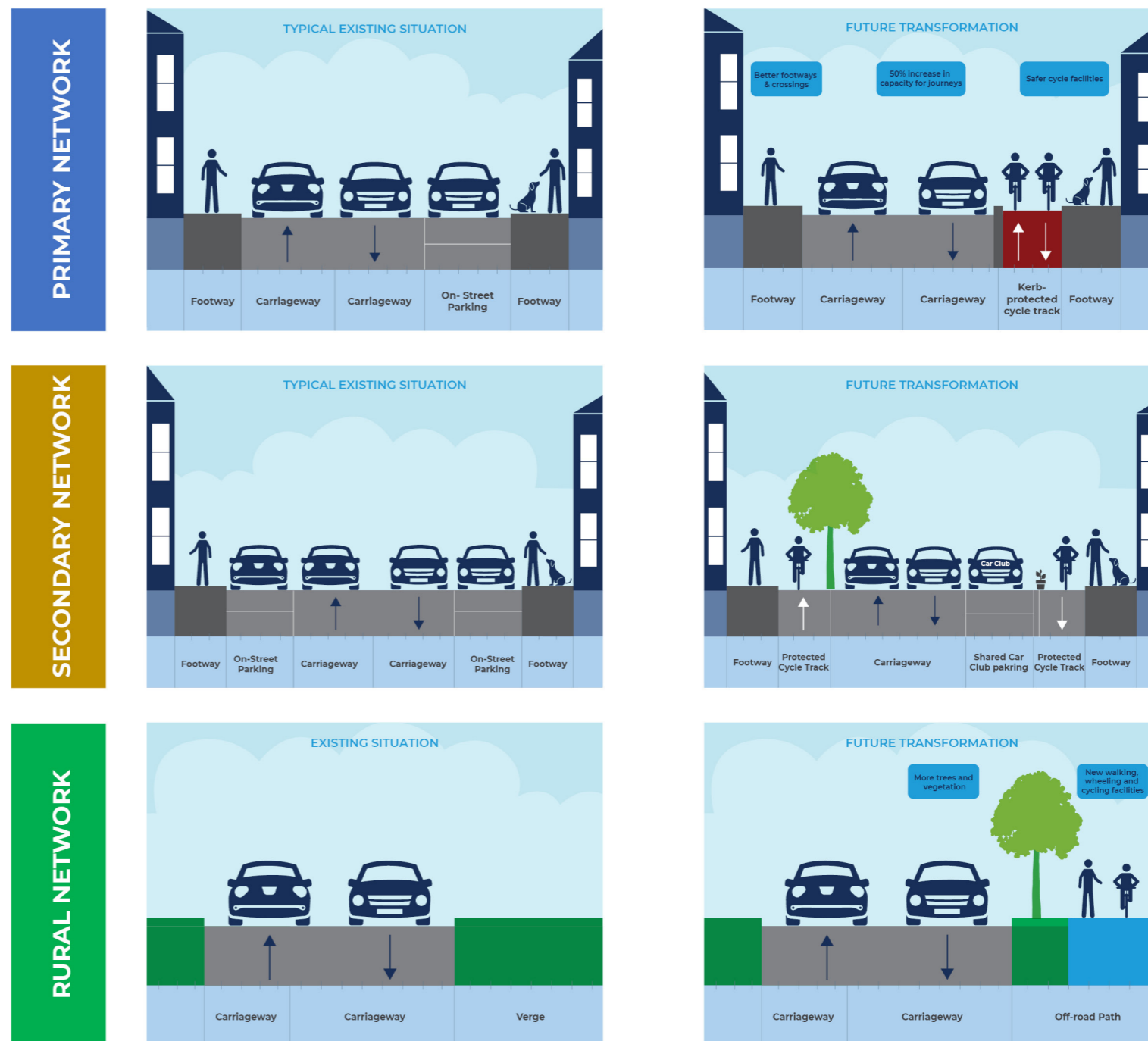
Identifying Strategic Routes

Ensuring safer and more accessible walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure across this network is the primary goal of our Active Travel Strategy over the years to come.

This does mean that we have to change the way we think about roads. To follow best practice design guidance, we need to modernise the way that we use our streets. We need to move from thinking about roads being primarily designed for the movement and storage of private cars and vans to thinking about streets as primarily designed for people. This means we will have to reallocate space from the carriageway, including on-street parking, for other users, to make our streets work better for everyone.

We need to use road space more efficiently. By replacing on-street parking with wider footways and new cycleways we can allow more people to move through a space.

The following page compares the way that we currently use road space with the way that we could use it. By reallocating space to use roads more efficiently we can increase the number of people who can use a road at the same time.





It's important to remember that we're not starting from scratch. We've made significant walking, wheeling and cycling investments, with over 1700km of footway, footpaths, and cycleways around the Falkirk District.

Our ambition and challenge is to connect these routes, and make sure that key journey origins and destinations are all accounted for.

The Falkirk District has invested in the region of £31 million in the district's path network over the past 25 years.

This extensive network saw Falkirk receive The Ramblers' award for 'Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood' in 2019. Falkirk Council have, and will continue, to improve this network for residents and visitors to comfortably commute by walking, cycling or wheeling.

Putting it into Action

- We will invest in our strategic active travel network, with a goal of developing the primary network by 2038, fifteen years after this strategy is published.
- We will develop and maintain an ambitious delivery plan for delivering the strategic active travel network.
- We will prioritise investment in street lighting, the footway network, and cycle routes to provide safe, sustainable travel options.
- We will work with the Council's Core Path Plan to enhance the existing path network and develop multi-use paths that are easily accessible and well-connected.
- We will improve the pedestrian and cycle environment in the busiest used areas to enhance safety for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- We will continue listening carefully to communities through prioritising consultation and collaboration with community groups.

Improving Inclusion

Small gaps in footway and path provision – even one step instead of a ramp, or a narrow pinch point caused by a barrier – can keep some people from using entire sections of route. Filling in the 'gaps' in the accessible active travel network is essential to making sure everyone has the option to make each journey they want to by walking, wheeling or cycling.

CASE STUDY : ABBOTSHAUGH BRIDGE

The communities of Carron, Carronshore, Langlees and Bainsford identified a need for a bridge over the River Carron to connect the four communities. Before the bridge, it was a 6 mile round trip to access the Helix and four miles to access the neighbouring communities. The bridge would allow these communities to access the Helix Park and neighbouring communities and amenities.

It was proposed that a bespoke cycling and pedestrian bridge was put in place to connect the path network on either side of the River Carron.

The bridge was installed in June 2018 and was named Abbotshaugh Bridge, after the estate is was built within. It is the biggest pedestrian bridge in the Falkirk District. It is situated in a beautiful location along the River Carron and serves as a critical link for the four communities, and beyond, to access the paths, parklands and amenities of the area.

The bridge has been built to last 100 years so it will become an important community feature for current and future residents and visitors to enjoy.



Promoting Thriving High Streets

In line with the Scottish Government's 'Town Centre First' principle, we are working to renew and regenerate town centres. A key part of this regeneration is safe and welcoming active travel routes to Falkirk town and the four District centres of Bo'ness, Denny, Grangemouth, and Stenhousemuir.

Our town centres form the heart of our local communities and play a crucial role in sustaining the local economy.

Making walking, wheeling and cycling easier, safer and more accessible increases accessibility to opportunities across the Falkirk District, improving quality of life for everyone.

We want to see communities in which business, residential, education, and leisure areas flourish together, with accessible well-signposted connections between local areas.

Part of promoting place requires us to work collaboratively across Council services and with expert partners to ensure that the spaces connected by transport infrastructure are places that people want or need to visit. We want to see space used flexibly, where it is adapted as the needs of the community change.

Improving Inclusion

Making it easier to travel by walking, wheeling and cycling means that people are not excluded if they do not drive or have access to a private vehicle.



Pedestrian Pound

There is strong evidence that the 'pedestrian pound' supports high streets, as pedestrians spend more per month than people arriving by car. That's why improving our high street environments for pedestrians is an essential part of community regeneration and planning for sustainable economic growth.

Falkirk Council have been using [Smarter Choices, Smarter Places](#) funding since 2008. Smarter Choices, Smarter Places funding allows a location-specific approach to suit the unique characteristics of each community. Locations throughout Falkirk District have benefited from interventions such as a network of signs to key destinations and walking and cycling events that encourages active travel.

We can also trial temporary interventions to understand their impact on local businesses. In a trial in Shoreditch, East London, two car parking spaces were turned into seating for 14 people and eight cycle parking spaces. During the trial period, the adjacent shops' takings increased by 20%.

Improvements to Kelso's traffic management and pedestrian experience in the early 2010s led to a 28% increase in footfall along the high street, supporting local retail sales.



Creating Liveable Neighbourhoods

20-minute neighbourhoods aim to create attractive, safe, accessible environments that connect people to the facilities and services for their everyday needs via short, convenient walking, wheeling and cycling trips, without depending on a car.

Within a 20-minute neighbourhood, there are typically schools, green space, grocery stores, health facilities, recreational opportunities, and diverse and affordable homes – keeping jobs and spending local, and journeys achievable by active modes.

We know that for liveable neighbourhoods to be successful, vehicle speeds and traffic flows need to be managed. Our public consultation revealed that more than 50% of over 65-year-olds felt roads were unsafe for them as a pedestrian. As a response, in line with the global [Streets for Life](#) campaign, led by the United Nations, we are working to make 20mph the norm for places where people mix with traffic. We know that limiting vehicle speeds reduces risks to pedestrians and is an important part of making a more equitable balance between road users. We are committed to a phased approach to the introduction of 20mph restrictions, with all towns and most villages as a first step. We will continue to investigate and implement appropriate measures to improve safety and accessibility for all people, whether walking, wheeling or cycling.

Being able to move around the community safely is particularly important for children. That's why Falkirk Council is making a commitment to ensure that all children attending school within their local catchment have a suitable walking, wheeling or cycling route to school.

This will reduce traffic around schools, and congestion and parking issues at the beginning and end of the school day whilst encouraging more active lifestyles from an early age.



Improving Inclusion

Children and young people under 17 cannot legally drive private cars. Investment in walking, wheeling and cycling promotes independence and opportunities for young people.



The ability to play outside is not just important for children, but also for adults. Recreational exercise such as walking, cycling and jogging is an important component of active travel provision, particularly where leisure destinations can be made accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling.

Everyday users can appreciate historical and cultural projects that protect and enhance our unique historical, natural and cultural environment. We will promote and support projects that provide access to community spaces and green space, such as the Helix Park and Bo'ness Foreshore. We know that recreational exercise can be a stepping stone to having the ability and confidence to use walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people enjoyed cycling across the UK and used it as an alternative to their previous method of travel. [Cycle sales rose by 677%](#) during the pandemic. We want to promote long term investment in these plans, undertaking schemes like those in Milan Italy. The Italian city of Milan, launched an ambitious scheme to reduce car usage after lockdown. Called 'strade aperte'(open streets), the plan aims to reallocate 35 km of street space from cars to cycling and walking. We want to promote long term investment in similarly ambitious schemes.

We also want to ensure strong connections to and from our rural communities. We know that in rural communities walking, wheeling and cycling may look different. In many rural areas, it is not feasible for every journey to be within the urban 20 minute neighbourhood model. But this does not mean those who live in rural communities should be excluded from positive developments in the transport network. To apply the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods in a rural setting we will:

Provide the infrastructure to support more walking, wheeling and cycling.

Promote the provision of accessible transport to remote areas.

Improve the integration between different forms of transportation.

Rationalise car parking and introduce low speeds to reduce congestion and improve safety.



Incorporating the 20-minute neighbourhood concept into our strategy aligns with our vision that prioritises a modal shift to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. Whilst we acknowledge our more rural locations, we hope to improve connectivity so that travelling by bus, bike, or train is as, or more, convenient as the private car.

As the modal shift to sustainable and active travel occurs, we aim to improve connectivity between active travel routes and train stations to reduce congestion. Additionally, secure storage facilities at transport hubs will be key in encouraging the mixed-use of sustainable and active travel. If we are to encourage the use of public transport and walking, wheeling and cycling, we must ensure the provision of infrastructure that makes this as convenient as possible.

Putting it into Action

- We will review existing footway and path clutter, and remove, or relocate, anything unnecessary which is a barrier to access for all people whether, walking, wheeling and cycling.
- We will invest in new street infrastructure, such as pedestrian crossings, wider footways and protected vehicle-free spaces to improve the pedestrian experience.
- We will improve connectivity and integration between different modes of transport to ensure seamless mobility. This includes steps, such as, exploring integrated ticketing, walking, wheeling and cycling access to train stations, and active travel integration with Car Club vehicles (e.g. cycle racks).
- In areas of high pedestrian demand we will ensure that the default position is pedestrian priority at signal-controlled junctions.
- We will prioritise cycling movements over motor vehicles through greenlights, and investigate 'green wave' technology to help cyclists progress through a series of junctions more smoothly.



CASE STUDY : HELIX PARK

The Helix path network provides a stunning backdrop for walks, runs or cycling. Its pathways connect 16 communities via 26 kilometres of paths - so there's always a new route to try.

Whether you're a serious runner, scenic stroller, dog walker or keen cyclist - there's plenty of room for everyone.

Cycle parking is available outside the Plaza Café and the visitor centre at The Kelpies.

We're also lucky to be linked to two National Cycle Network Routes as well as the John Muir Way, which runs from Dunbar, in East Lothian, to Helensburgh, in Argyll and Bute. You don't have to follow a set path, though - you can get out and explore our extensive path network.



Opportunities for All



Improving Inclusion

1 in 4 Falkirk District residents do not have access to a car or van. Improvements to active travel routes and connections to public transport will improve their ability to move around the district.

Transport is important for promoting social inclusion and wellbeing, allowing people access to employment, healthcare, education, and other services. When barriers to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport emerge, it is often vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities or mobility issues, who are most affected.

To make walking, wheeling and cycling viable choices for parts of longer distance journeys, active travel infrastructure has to be well-connected to public transport systems. Even where public transport might cover most of a journey, users still need to walk, wheel or cycle to the transport hub where they access the public transport. This part of the journey is referred to as the 'first and last mile'. Steps taken by the Council going forward will contribute to enhancing safety during the 'first and last mile' to improve accessibility.

Connections between public transport and walking, wheeling and cycling do not just make sustainable transport an easier choice – for many residents of the Falkirk District they are essential. **A quarter of the Falkirk District's residents do not have access to a car or van** – making it easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle to where they need to go ensures that no opportunities are missed as a result of transport differences. Making it easier for people to travel actively also creates an opportunity for those who do have access to a vehicle to consider giving it up or using it less to reduce running costs.

We know that some new technology, like electric cars, are harder to fit into families' budgets. We also know that with rising fuel prices, car ownership may not be a financially sustainable choice.

Walking, wheeling and cycling are much more affordable, and help to address [transport poverty](#) within the Falkirk District. Our strategy includes investment in the infrastructure, skills and materials that people need to feel confident moving about actively. This means reducing risks around cycle theft, and making it safer to store cycles at home and at key destinations.

To reduce the number of vehicles needed in our town centres, we need to support businesses to have active 'first and last mile' delivery solutions, such as cargo bikes or hand trolleys. We also need to make it easy for people to use walking, wheeling and cycling to 'click and collect', meaning that even online purchases will create some footfall for the high street.

[£21 million](#) has been dedicated to a central sustainable transport hub and green corridor known as 'Falkirk Central' at the current Falkirk Grahamston Station and an associated 'Green Corridor' that will connect local communities. This investment will ensure that walking, wheeling and cycling is a key component in sustainable development, and will support the rejuvenation and growth of the Falkirk District's economy.

Putting it into Action

- We will trial pedestrian and cycling improvements and monitor the economic impacts on local businesses through business engagement.
- We will invest in secure cycle parking infrastructure at key destinations.
- All new flats will have dedicated secure cycling storage.
- We will invest in infrastructure and placemaking to make the walking, wheeling and cycling gateways to town centres welcoming and accessible.
- We will work collaboratively to increase the flexibility of land use, to encourage thriving high streets.
- We will remove time restrictions for cycle access on Falkirk town's high street to increase cycle access and facilitate greater use of cargo bike delivery models.
- We will explore opportunities for cargo bikes in the Grangemouth Investment Zone, and make arriving at this zone, by foot, cycle and wheel, a welcoming and accessible experience.
- We will ensure the Grangemouth Investment Zone is accessible via walking, wheeling and cycling.



CASE STUDY : I BIKE AND BIKEABILITY

I Bike is a partnership project between Sustrans Scotland and local authorities designed to support schools to embed walking, wheeling and cycling into the curriculum in Scotland. The main benefit of I Bike is that schools have focussed support through an I Bike Officer to become more active with their travel habits at no financial cost to the school.

The project has supported schools in Falkirk since 2015 through dedicated I Bike officers, events, activities and staff training. The majority of the budget has been used to gift fleets of high-quality, age-appropriate bikes to both primary and secondary school including bikes for staff as well as helmets and fleets of scooters. I Bike Falkirk has also supported several schools to install cycle parking and cycle storage.

Over 130 led rides have been delivered in schools, allowing pupils and teachers to access the curriculum in more interactive ways while benefiting from physical exercise, improved wellbeing and mental health, and learning life skills, such as navigating the local area and riding safely and considerately.

As part of its focus on long term sustainability and behaviour change, I Bike Falkirk has trained 52 senior pupils through engagement with the Sports Leaders programme as well as 90 teachers and school staff. In addition to this, 30 teachers have been completed the Cycle Ride Leader training.



Embracing Sustainability

We want to create greener, more inclusive, and more economically successful areas. Investment in active travel is not a short-term solution – it is a long-term commitment to making our communities better places to live, work and play.

It is well-known that one of the biggest changes we can make in our daily lives to reduce carbon emissions is changing the way we move around. In Scotland, transport accounts for a third of all carbon emissions – more than any other sector – with private car use making up nearly half of all transport emissions. Falkirk Council has declared a climate emergency. We know that prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use as part of our response to this emergency is essential to help all of us rapidly and significantly contribute at a local level towards tackling this global emergency.

Climate change is not the only reason to move toward cleaner transportation choices – we want the air in our towns to be cleaner for all those living in, working in, or visiting us, and for the local wildlife.

Improving habitats for plant and animal life supports our commitment to biodiversity net gain – making sure that our interventions result in an increase in more high-quality habitats.

In the Falkirk District, we have two active Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) – Falkirk Centre, and Grangemouth. These are areas where we know that the national air quality targets are not currently being met. Across the region, but particularly in these areas, it is essential that we make it easy to travel actively, to reduce the number of cars on the road and improve air quality.

Cars, even electric ones, release particles into the air via their brake pads and tyres. These particles create even more localised pollution than car exhausts, contributing to asthma and other health conditions. By reducing vehicle traffic on our streets, particularly near schools and homes, we can create cleaner air and a safer, more welcoming environment for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Walking, wheeling and cycling also helps people to live healthier lifestyles, as physical activity is part of their everyday movement from place to place. And additionally, walking, wheeling and cycling can improve both physical and mental health.

Improving Inclusion

Having quality spaces for recreational exercise and time outdoors can be therapeutically beneficial to many disabled people and those with learning difficulties.

CASE STUDY : SHARED MOBILITY

Forth Bike was Scotland's largest electric bike share scheme. It was made up of 144 electric bikes spread out across numerous stations in the Forth Valley Region, including the Falkirk District.

Using e-bikes through a shared mobility solution reduces the costs on individuals by allowing users to hire e-bikes when they have a journey. In a typical month Falkirk District residents and visitors travelled nearly 9000 miles on Forth Bikes.

The most popular checkout stations were located in the Falkirk District and include the Helix Park, Falkirk Wheel, and Falkirk High Street. There were also several e-bike Stations in the wider Falkirk District including Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Callander Park, Grangemouth, Bo'ness, Falkirk Community Hospital, and Denny.

Similarly, the Car Club is funded by the Council and managed by Co Wheels. The scheme aims to improve accessibility to private vehicles without the financial responsibility of owning a car. Vehicles can be booked online up to 15 minutes before use and rented hourly. Car Club and shared mobility in the area is connected as part of an intermodal system. We can reduce congestion and emissions through the shared mobility of an all-electric fleet. The use of shared mobility across the area continues to grow as members of the Car Club have almost doubled since November 2021.



Putting it into Action

We will continue promoting and increasing awareness of sustainable and active travel choices through the Take the Right Route campaign.

We will continue to work with schools and other partners to educate children on the benefits of walking and cycling, and to increase walking, wheeling and cycling to and from school.

We commit to ensuring more than 10% biodiversity net gain across our active travel programme to improve the habitats and environments within the Falkirk District.

Realising the Vision

Making our active travel vision a reality requires all of us to be on board, whether we travel actively, take public transport, or need to continue to use private vehicles.

We're not expecting everyone to ditch the car all the time – but we want to create opportunities for people to try walking, wheeling and cycling and use these modes more often and for more types of trips, and to let their active travel experience inform the way they use other modes of transport.

Creating choice is the focus of shared mobility solutions, such as Forth Bikes and car clubs.

Shared mobility solutions break traditional ownership models and allow people access to transport, including cars, on an on-demand basis. Shared mobility is based upon providing people with short- term access to shared vehicles like cars, bikes, scooters, etc. on an on-demand basis. This removes the need for vehicle ownership and provides people with a wider, more affordable range of sustainable transport options than they would have available under the traditional ownership-based approach.

By having options, people can choose their mode of travel based on what's best for them, their family and community. And when they do choose to travel by private car, people will have a better appreciation of the perspectives and specific needs of those walking, wheeling and cycling.

We know that making a change to established habits can be intimidating, so we're also investing in, and supporting, a range of community projects, such as:

The Take the Right Route campaign

Driver education campaigns

Cycling education and training for all ages



By integrating changes such as this we will work towards building a more sustainable, equitable society. The environmental, health, economic and social benefits of active travel will benefit all Falkirk District residents for generations to come.

CASE STUDY : TAKE THE RIGHT ROUTE

Take the Right Route is a campaign to promote walking, cycling, car sharing and the use of public transport for all journeys, particularly for short everyday journeys.

Take the Right Route covers a wide range of projects across the district including:

- Improvements to paths and cycleways
- Personal travel planning
- Marketing and promotion
- Practical support for those wishing to take up active and sustainable travel
- Cycle training

By rolling out these projects across the local authority, we support people to benefit from sustainable travel choices in their everyday lives.



OUR ACTIONS SO FAR

Falkirk Council has been committed to active travel for many years.

Our plans for future support and investment build upon the Council’s investments in active travel, from its extensive path network to behaviour change programmes.

Supporting Active Travel Journeys in School Communities

- Carried out School Travel Assessments at all 58 schools in the Falkirk District to make routes safer. From this, physical interventions across all school clusters were delivered, such as lighting, path improvements, speed reductions, crossing points, cycle storage and bike repair stations.
- Delivered behaviour change interventions, such as School Travel Plans, I Bike, education resources, and Cycle Friendly School Awards, and attained 100% of primary schools engaging in National Walk to School Weeks/Months.

Behaviour Change Projects through Take the Right Route

- Ran public events providing active and sustainable travel advice and support, such as Green Travel Maps, pedometers, bike repair kits and water bottles.
- Delivered area-wide advertising, using billboards, bus shelters, radio adverts, bus wraps and social media messaging to highlight the benefits of active and sustainable travel.
- Implemented walking and cycling signage to enable path users to navigate the walking and cycling network more comfortably.
- Incentivised active and sustainable travel journeys through the BetterPoints app. This app enabled users to log their journeys to gain points that could be redeemed for rewards, such as free coffee, bus tickets and retail discounts.
- Provided resources to enable journey planning to be delivered in businesses throughout Falkirk area.
- The Kelpies to Kick Off walks saw 300 participants walk 3km or 5km around the beautiful Helix Park and the iconic Kelpies sculptures. On completion of the walk the participants were rewarded with a goody bag, free ticket to see Falkirk FC play and a hot pie and drink.

Infrastructure Investments

Abbotshaugh Bridge: a new dedicated cycling, walking and wheeling bridge over the River Carron connecting the communities of Langlees, Bainsford, Carron and Carronshore.

Dorrator Bridge: bridge replacement over River Carron, between Larbert and Camelon, with a new accessible bridge to make walking, cycling and wheeling more comfortable.

Bo'ness to Blackness Foreshore Path: implemented a new shared use path between the communities of Bo'ness and Blackness to ensure residents and visitors could walk, cycle or wheel between the two communities. This route also forms part of National Cycle Network Route 76.



PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We can't accomplish everything we want to on our own.

The public sector across the country is facing financial challenges, and Falkirk Council is no exception. To deliver the ambitions and actions we have set out in this strategy, we will require considerable funding and resources beyond current budgets. Falkirk Council continues to work with, and rely on, external partners and national government support to enhance and strengthen communities, working towards our shared goals of tackling climate change, improving community health, and building sustainable economic growth.

Falkirk Council prides itself in working in partnership with others to provide residents and visitors with the means to choose walking or cycling for their journeys around the Falkirk District. These partners include:

Forth Environment Link (FEL):



FEL are a charity who support and deliver environmental initiatives within the Forth Valley area. These include local food growing projects and encouraging journeys by walking, cycling or wheeling. FEL previously implemented an electric bike hire scheme, Forth Bikes, at different locations throughout the Falkirk District. The bike hire scheme allowed residents and visitors to access an electric bike, at a number of locations within the District, and experience cycling around the area to visit the local attractions and amenities.

Communities Along the Carron (CATCA):



Communities Along The Carron Association (CATCA) is a volunteer community group regenerating the River Carron and 16 communities along it. The group does this via education, community engagement, connecting communities and through physical transformation. Conservation, community gardening, improving green spaces, and reducing litter and flytipping are part of CATCA's volunteering work. CATCA is the group that brought Cycling Without Age (CWA) to Falkirk. This involves taking elderly people out for Trishaw rides on specially designed bikes, so they can enjoy the green spaces and make them feel part of their community. This is now expanding throughout Scotland by CWA Scotland. CATCA provide valuable information on community views and ideas, and support funding applications.

Visit Falkirk

Visit Falkirk provide tourism information to enable people to visit and experience all the attractions Falkirk has to offer by cycling, walking, wheeling and public transport. Key visitor attractions include the Helix Park and the iconic Kelpies, Falkirk Wheel, Bo'ness Railway and Callander Park.



Sustrans

Sustrans are a charity who support sustainable travel choices. They administer Transport Scotland's active travel funding support. This funding is used to jointly fund cycling, walking and wheeling interventions in the form of paths, cycle storage and cycling projects in schools.



OUR AMBITIONS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Our vision for the next decade is that our communities are shaped around people, with walking, wheeling or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys.

Throughout this document we have highlighted our commitment to 'putting it into action'. These are the steps we will take over the years to come to make our vision a reality:

By the end of 2023 we will

- Continue promoting and increasing awareness of sustainable and active travel choices through the Take the Right Route campaign and create resources about current opportunities for accessing active and sustainable travel choices.
- Complete an update of infrastructure proposals and have an action plan for delivering improvements to the strategic network over the next five years.

By the end of 2025 we will

- Introduce new, secure cycle parking provision for residents and visitors to key destinations.
- Review School Travel Assessments for every primary and secondary school.

By the end of 2028 we will

- Update the Active Travel Strategy to make sure it's ready for the next decade.
- Extend the infrastructure improvement action plan for developments into the 2030s.

By the end of 2033 we will

- Deliver key elements of the strategic network, including safe active travel routes to schools.
- Ensure that every new residential, commercial and neighbourhood development has an active travel route to its nearest economic centre.

Beyond 2033 we will

- Continue to deliver the strategic network, connecting people and places across the Falkirk District.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Our vision for the future set out in this Strategy is that **most people undertake their local journeys by walking, wheeling or cycling**.

Making effective progress towards realising this vision will require us to learn the lessons from each new active travel scheme. This is in line with our Council-wide commitment to continuous improvement.

Investing in Smarter Data

We have already rolled out an initial network of smart walking, wheeling and cycle counters. The output data from these counters allows us to analyse changes in how people are travelling on our major active travel routes.

Over the next five years, we will continue to invest in additional smart counters to provide further coverage across the transport network. This will provide us with a better understanding of how well new schemes are enabling people to benefit from more walking, wheeling and cycling trips.

Listening and Learning

We will continue our commitment to local engagement through to the stage where new active travel schemes are fully up and running. We will discuss with users, residents and businesses to capture a deeper understanding of how each scheme is meeting our objectives. We can consider additional improvements to schemes, reflecting your feedback.



Improving Inclusion

We want to make sure that changes to transport opportunities benefit everyone. So, we will collect and analyse demographic information about who is walking, wheeling and cycling. Where we notice that some groups are not able to access active travel, we will work harder to include them.

