

# Open Space Strategy



**Falkirk Council**



The environmentalist John Muir once said: “In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” Wise words from the Scotsman dubbed the father of America’s national parks.

Our open spaces and parks are important places to be protected, cherished and enhanced. They take great effort - and money - to maintain, but give back so much to our communities.

Falkirk district is lucky to have some wonderful open spaces, from areas including the John Muir Way to magnificent parks like The Helix, dominated by the world-famous Kelpies.

This strategy document, developed with stakeholders and the wider community, sets out the council’s ambitions to manage our open spaces, working closely with local people.

The documents highlights the substantial investments made in recent years and looks at opportunities for the future - particularly to encourage better health, increased biodiversity and carbon reduction.

The plan is also mindful of some of the financial challenges we face, and gives a direction of travel for future investment decisions. Let’s be clear : there will be some tough choices in years to come.

Crucial to our long-term efforts will be the involvement of local communities. Many have already established “Friends of” groups to support local parks. I hope this trend will continue in the months and years to come.

Working together we can achieve so much more. So let’s go on this journey to create better open spaces. The path to success starts now.

### **Councillor Adrian Mahoney**

Portfolio holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism  
Falkirk Council





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Value of Parks and Open Space

1.1.1 Parks and open spaces are vital to the quality of the urban environment and the physical and mental health of its residents, they can also provide valuable wildlife habitat. They help to define a sense of place within settlements, contribute to their landscape structure and provide areas for recreation and physical exercise. Where linked into networks, parks and open spaces can be extremely valuable for active travel and can form corridors through which wildlife can migrate through the urban area. Parks and open space also have a role to play in sustainable flood management, providing areas for flood water to go without adversely impacting houses or businesses.

## 1.2 Progress made since 2010

1.2.1 The Council recognises the value of its parks and open space and has delivered its investment programme since 2010 guided by its Open Space Strategy and its Parks Development Plan focussing on:

- Setting up Falkirk Community Trust to manage our high profile parks;
- Creating and establishing the Falkirk Helix;
- Improving the quality of the 7 Core Parks previously identified in the 2003 Culture and Leisure Strategy;
- Improving the quality of the poorest quality play areas; and
- Installing Multi Use Games Areas at several locations around the Council area.

1.2.2 Significant investment has been made in the parks and open space resource by the Council and its partners<sup>1</sup>. Total investment by all partners between 2010 and 2015 is shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Investment in Parks and Open Space**

	Total excluding the Helix	Total
2010 - 2011	£505,000	£2,805,000
2011 - 2012	£2,067,000	£5,067,000
2012 - 2013	£2,750,000	£19,150,000
2013 - 2014	£3,542,000	£20,052,000
2014 - 2015	£4,840,000	£8,640,000

1.2.3 Although the quantity of open space across the Council area has remained broadly the same since 2010, the quality of open space across the Council area has significantly improved. The average score of open spaces in the fitness for purpose assessment carried out as part of the audit of open spaces has improved: in every area other than Bonnybridge and Banknock; at all levels of open space importance (national, regional, settlement and neighbourhood) and in all functions of open space (park and amenity, playspace, sports area and natural/semi natural). Further details are contained within appendix 2.

<sup>1</sup>Partners include BIG Lottery Fund, Forestry Commission Scotland, Central Scotland Forest Trust, the Central Scotland Green Network Trust, Falkirk Environment Trust, LEADER, Sportscotland, Scottish Canals, NHS Forth Valley, Callender Estates and SUSTRAN.

## 1.3 The Purpose and Scope of the Open Space Strategy Review

- 1.3.1 The responsibility for managing, maintaining, protecting and regenerating the parks and open spaces across the Falkirk Council area is shared between different Council Services and other organisations such as Falkirk Community Trust, the Forestry Commission, NHS Forth Valley, Scottish Canals and Callendar Estates. Falkirk Community Trust for example manages Callendar Park, Helix Park, Kinneil Estate and Muiravonside Country Park. They also manage Grangemouth Golf Course and any bookable sports pitches. With such a range of organisations involved there is the need for a single strategic document to:
- Provide a unified vision for the future of the parks and open space resource across the Council area;
  - Outline the challenges that we face if we are to realise the vision;
  - Set shared objectives which will overcome these challenges; and
  - Set out a detailed action plan which outlines the actions that need to be taken to achieve the shared objectives.
- 1.3.2 This review amalgamates and replaces the Open Space Strategy 2010-2015 and the Parks Development Plan 2008-2011.

## 1.4 Strategy Structure

- 1.4.1 The structure of the Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan is outlined in table 2 below:

**Table 2: Strategy Structure**

Section Name	Content
<b>Section 2 Vision</b>	This section reviews the vision contained within the previous Open Space Strategy and develops a vision for the future of the parks and open space resource.
<b>Section 3 Delivering the Vision : Summary</b>	This section summarises the Council's proposed key decisions in relation to parks and open space investment presented under the four key themes of the vision.
<b>Section 4 Open Space Standards and Policies</b>	This section reviews the open space standards set out in the previous Open Space Strategy and sets out policies that will apply to: the level of support the Council will offer community organisations; parkland and open space being considered for sale; and the destination of proceeds from the sale of such land.
<b>Section 5 Area Strategies</b>	This section outlines an indicative Spatial Strategy for each settlement across the Council area setting out what open space improvements should be made and what the priorities for open space improvement are.
<b>Appendix 1 : Delivering the Vision</b>	This appendix breaks down the vision into its four key themes; analyse the strategic choices that relate to each theme; and contains a narrative which explains why the Council's has decided on its proposed approach to each strategic choice.
<b>Appendix 2 : Context</b>	This appendix describes the policy context the Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan will sit within. It also summarises the findings of the Council's second open space audit carried out between 2013 and 2015 summarising how much open space there is, what quality it is and how it is distributed.
<b>Appendix 3 : Parks Development Plan</b>	This appendix contains a 5 year action plan for implementing the Open Space Strategy identifying which service of the Council (or which external organisation) is responsible for delivering each action and identifying partner organisations to aid delivery.
<b>Appendix 4 : Pre consultative draft consultation report</b>	A report of the findings of the programme of pre-consultative draft consultation.
<b>Appendix 5 : The open space audit and fitness for purpose assessment</b>	An explanation of how a fitness for purpose assessment was carried out on the parks and open spaces surveyed as part of the open space audit.
<b>Appendix 6 : Accessibility standard review</b>	Involves a review of the accessibility standards of the 2010 Open Space Strategy and consideration of different options for changing them.
<b>Appendix 7 : Consultations comments</b>	Summarises comment received on the Draft Strategy, the Council's response and consequential changes.



Kinneil Estate, Bo'ness



## 2. Vision

### 2.1 Previous Vision

2.1.1 The vision of the 2010 Open Space Strategy was:

***“to secure the long-term improvement to the quality and accessibility of Falkirk’s open spaces, so that they can provide a truly sustainable and diverse resource for the benefit of the communities they serve.”***

### 2.2 Developing a New Vision for our Parks and Open Spaces

2.2.1 A policy development panel was convened to oversee the review of the Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan. The policy development panel undertook a programme of consultation to inform the preparation of the consultative draft open space strategy and parks development plan. The programme involved consultation with elected Members, national and local organisations with an interest in parks and open spaces, Council officers working with parks and open spaces and the general public. A report of this pre-consultative draft strategy consultation programme can be seen at appendix 4.

2.2.2 In drawing together the findings of the programme of consultation four key themes emerged which were considered to be important for the open space strategy and parks development plan to address:

- Modernising our parks and open spaces;
- Addressing inequality and fostering community through open space investment;
- Working and investing more efficiently; and
- Generating capital and revenue for investment in parks and open space.

2.2.3 We have developed the vision to encompass these four key themes and deliver the greatest environmental benefit. This vision will guide the direction of the open space strategy and parks development plan:

***“Our parks and open spaces will be high quality, well used and well connected and will provide a modern, sustainable and diverse resource which will: improve the health and enrich the lives of the communities at the heart of them; be of significant ecological value; and help to mitigate the effects of climate change”***





Zelland Park, Grangemouth





# 3. Delivering the Vision

Forth & Clyde Canal, Bonnybridge

## 3.1 Summary

3.1.1 To deliver the vision of the Open Space Strategy the following proposals are made under each of the four key themes.

### Modernising our Parks and Open Spaces

1. We will invest in our poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision nearby; (See actions MQUAL.01-50 in the Parks Development Plan).
2. We will invest in the parks and open spaces which are particularly valued by the local community; (See actions MVAL.01-14 in the Parks Development Plan).
3. We will maintain investment and revenue budgets in the higher level open spaces which serve a more strategic function and raise the tourism profile of the Council area; (See section 4.11 in the Open Space Strategy and actions MNATREG.01-08 in the Parks Development Plan).
4. We will invest in a rationalised, more modern portfolio of play and sports facilities to improve overall play and sports development value; (See sections 4.7 and 4.9 in the Open space Strategy and actions MSPOR.01-20 and MPLAY.01-16 in the Parks Development Plan).
5. We will make investment decisions which encourage people to improve their health by:
  - Increasing their use of parks and open spaces; and
  - Walking or cycling to parks and open spaces. (See actions MUSE.01-04 in the Parks Development Plan)
6. We will change the management of the parks and open space resource to:
  - Exploit opportunities to further the conservation of biodiversity; and
  - Reduce overall flood risk (See section 4.8 in the Open space Strategy and actions MNAT.01-04 in the Parks Development Plan)
7. We will promote improvement projects which help to develop a high quality, multi-functional green network which will provide a range of benefits for people, businesses and wildlife and to the ecological status of water bodies across our area. (See actions MGNT.01-36 in the Parks Development Plan)



## Addressing Inequality and Fostering Community through Open Space Investment

8. We will give investment priority to those areas and open spaces which need improving the most (See actions MQUAL.01-50; MVAL.01-14; MNATREG.01-08; MPARK.01-19; MPLAY01-13; MSPOR01-18; and MSEM.01-02 in the Parks Development Plan)
9. Building on recent work in establishing “friends” groups and the exemplar of community partnership working at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, we will actively encourage the increased involvement of community groups in the management and improvement of parks and open spaces (See section 4.6 in the Open Space Strategy and action I&CCOM.01 in the Parks Development Plan)
10. When preparing individual parks masterplans, formulating proposals for park improvement and improving play facilities, where appropriate, we will aim to maximise access for all groups including wheelchair users. (See actions MQUAL.01-050; MVAL.01-14; MNATREG.01-08; MPARK01-19; MPLAY01-13; MSPOR01-18; and MSEM.01-02 in the Parks Development Plan)

## Working and Investing more Efficiently

11. We will identify those parks and open spaces where: high intensity maintenance regimes are necessary to maintain an appropriate image; and lower intensity maintenance regimes would be more appropriate to save money and enhance value for wildlife. (See action EMAIN.01-02 in the Parks Development Plan)
12. To ensure that investment can be focussed on providing good quality local provision within a reasonable walking distance, we will revise maximum walking distance standards to the different functions of open space (public park or amenity space, playspace, sports area, natural/semi natural open space). (See section 4.3 and Appendix 6 of the Open Space Strategy)
13. Where an area is not within the maximum walking distances to the different functions of open space (park or amenity space, playspace, sports area, natural/ semi natural open space), we will:
  - Promote the provision of new open space within new development sites. (See actions EACC.01-09 in the Parks Development Plan)
  - Encourage wider unrestricted public access to privately managed sports facilities (See actions EACC.10-11 in the Parks Development Plan)
  - Introduce new facilities into existing open spaces (where possible this could be funded through developer contributions.)
  - Create new entrances to existing open spaces which shorten travel time; (See action EACC.12 in the Parks Development Plan) and;
  - Create missing links in the local path network which shorten travel time. (See action EACC.13 in the Parks Development Plan)

14. We will develop a set of projects and priorities which help to:

- Deliver the vision of the Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan;
- Deliver the aims of other related Council strategies; and
- Align with the priorities of external funding partners. (See Parks Development Plan)

## Generating Money for Investment in Parks and Open Space

15. We will explore opportunities to generate money for investment in park and open space improvement and maintenance through:

- Seeking appropriate alternative uses for parks and open spaces which are no longer needed; (See section 4.5 of the Open Space Strategy and action GINV.01 of the Parks Development Plan)
- Building on our impressive track record of partnership working to lever grant funding from other organisations; (See Parks Development Plan)
- Charging for the commercial use of parks and open space whilst safeguarding their free use by community groups; (See section 4.4 of the Open Space Strategy and action GINV.02 of the Parks Development Plan)
- Developing a business case to commercialise appropriate parts of the park and open space resource (See section 4.4 of the Open Sapce Space Strategy and action GINV.03 of the Parks Development Plan)
- Using innovative fund raising methods. (See action GINV.04 of the Parks Development Plan)

- 3.1.2 A detailed explanation of: the strategic choices we face; the rationale behind making the decisions we propose to make; and the actions we will take to implement these proposed decisions is contained within appendix 1.





## 4. Standards and Policies

Bo'ness Foreshore

### 4.1 Park and Open Space Quantity

4.1.1 The Council's open space audit included 632 parks and open spaces across the Falkirk Council area. Each site was allocated to an individual town or village which allowed us to gain an understanding of how much open space there is within each settlement. Table 3 below shows the results of the open space audit:

**Table 3: Quantity of Open Space**

Settlement Area	Number of Open Spaces	Area of Open Space (Hectares)	Population (2013 mid year estimate)	Hectares of Open Space/1000 people 2013
Bo'ness	48	243.7	14,531	16.8
Bonnybridge and Banknock	82	127.8	12,424	10.3
Denny	51	154.5	13,184	11.7
Falkirk	124	795.0	38,886	20.4
Grangemouth	33	100.1	17,269	5.8
Larbert and Stenhousemuir	109	223.6	25,498	8.8
Polmont Area	97	274.0	22,308	12.3
Rural North	21	70.9	2,691	26.3
Rural South	61	458.6	7,178	63.9
Rural Villages	82	529.5	9,869	53.7
Urban Settlements	550	1919.4	144,100	13.3
<b>Falkirk Council</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>2448.9</b>	<b>153,969</b>	<b>15.9</b>

#### Quantity Standard :

Each community should have access to open space at a rate equivalent to 5 hectares per 1000 people.

#### Quantity Policy :

If the quantity of open space within any community is below 5 hectares per 1000 people (currently Avonbridge, California, Dunmore, Shieldhill and Skinflats fall below this level) then:

- 1) The sale of Council owned open space will not be supported unless it results in replacement provision of equal or greater size.
- 2) Planning applications which would result in the loss of open space will not be supported unless they enable replacement provision of an equal or greater size, or there is particular support for the development within the local community, or material considerations outweigh the need to retain the open space.

For the avoidance of doubt, "open space" refers to any open space surveyed as part of the Council's open space audit. These open spaces are shown on the individual area strategy maps in section 5.



## 4.2 Parks and Open Space Quality

4.2.1 As part of the open space audit, an assessment of overall quality (or fitness for purpose assessment) was carried out for 612 of the 632 open spaces. The overall quality of each open space was measured on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1 = poor quality
- 2 = fair quality
- 3 = good quality
- 4 = very good quality
- 5 = excellent quality

4.2.2 A detailed description of how the fitness for purpose assessment was carried out is contained within appendix 5. Table 4 below shows that the quality of open space varies across the Council area.

**Table 4: Quality of Open Space within Settlement Areas**

Settlement Area	Number of Open Spaces	Average score of an open space in the fitness for purpose assessment	Percentage of the total number of open spaces which scored 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	Percentage of total area of open space which scored 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment
Bo'ness	48	2.49	33.3%	69.3%
Bonnybridge and Banknock	82	2.29	15.0%	44.0%
Denny	51	2.48	19.6%	47.9%
Falkirk	124	2.62	36.4%	50.3%
Grangemouth	33	2.55	28.1%	50.3%
Larbert and Stenhousemuir	109	2.38	18.6%	40.5%
Polmont Area	97	2.53	31.3%	66.0%
Rural North	21	2.83	35.0%	5.1%
Rural South	61	2.52	34.4%	84.4%
Rural Villages	82	2.60	34.6%	73.8%
Urban Settlements	550	2.48	26.6%	61.3%
Falkirk Council	632	2.50	27.6%	64.0%

4.2.3 Each audited park and open space has been assigned a place in a hierarchy of importance. To decide where to place each open space on the hierarchy of importance we considered whether people would be likely to travel to that open space from across Scotland, from across the Council area, from across the settlement or only from within their neighbourhood to visit. Table 5 below shows how the quality of an open space can vary depending on where it sits in the hierarchy of importance.

**Table 5: Quality of Open Spaces at Different Levels of the Hierarchy of Importance**

Hierarchy Level	Number of sites surveyed	Average Score	Area covered by sites in hectares	Percentage of total sites scored 3.0 or better fitness for purpose	Percentage of total area which scored "good" or better fitness for purpose
National	23	3.61	356.8	90.0%	98.9%
Regional	26	3.28	957.6	73.1%	84.4%
Settlement	162	2.77	764.3	41.6%	45.9%
Neighbourhood	421	2.27	370.3	15.7%	14.5%

### Quantity Standard :

National and Regional level open spaces should achieve a score of 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment.

Settlement level open spaces should achieve a score of 2.5 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment.

Neighbourhood level open spaces should score 2 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment.

### Quantity Policy :

The Council will make investment decisions which aim to increase the percentage of open spaces which meet the quality standard appropriate to their place on the hierarchy of importance.



Helix Park, Falkirk



### 4.3 Parks and Open Space Accessibility

4.3.1 Each open space surveyed as part of the open space audit has been allocated one or more functions dependent on how it is used, those are:

- Public park or garden
- Amenity open space
- Playspace
- Sports Area
- Natural/ Semi Natural Open Space
- School/Institution
- Allotment
- Churchyard/ Cemetery

4.3.2 To assess the relative levels of accessibility to parks and open space, we have analysed the distribution of certain functions of open space. This has allowed us to identify what proportion of households within each settlement can access different functions of open space within certain walking distances. Table 6 below shows the results:

**Table 6: Percentage of Households within the Minimum Walking Distance of Different Types of Open Space by Settlement Area**

Settlement Area	Open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within 400m (5 minutes walk)	Park or amenity open space bigger than 0.2ha within 400m (5 minutes walk)	Open space containing a playspace within 400m (5 minutes walk)	Open space containing a sports area within 800m (10 minutes walk)	Natural/ Semi Natural Open Space within 1200m (15 minutes walk)
Bo'ness	75.0%	98.8%	63.1%	80.0%	98.5%
Bonnybridge and Banknock	55.8%	92.9%	75.1%	44.5%	99.5%
Denny	78.8%	90.7%	73.3%	92.5%	99.0%
Falkirk	74.5%	87.5%	68.2%	71.8%	99.4%
Grangemouth	60.5%	78.3%	76.1%	89.8%	86.2%
Larbert and Stenhousemuir	58.1%	90.8%	86.9%	89.3%	99.6%
Polmont Area	66.0%	81.9%	71.9%	72.1%	99.1%
Rural North	59.9%	51.9%	73.8%	79.1%	93.0%
Rural South	24.8%	82.4%	68.5%	86.9%	74.8%
Rural Villages	34.1%	74.3%	69.9%	84.8%	79.6%
Urban Settlements	67.7%	87.9%	73.3%	77.7%	97.7%
Falkirk Council	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>73.1%</b>	<b>78.1%</b>	<b>96.6%</b>

4.3.3 Based on the levels of performance above the Council has decided to set its open space accessibility standards at a level which will drive improvements but which is also realistically achievable in a climate of declining resources. Appendix 6 sets out the accessibility standard review process.

#### Accessibility Standards:

- 1) People should live no more than 400m (5 minutes walk) from a surveyed open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment.
- 2) People should live no more than 400m (5 minutes walk) from a public park, garden or amenity space of greater than 2000m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3) People should live no more than 800m (10 minutes walk) from an open space containing a playspace.
- 4) People should live no more than 1200m (15 minutes walk) from an open space containing sports area.
- 5) People should live no more than 1200m (15 minutes walk) from a natural/semi natural open space.

The walking distance times noted in the accessibility standards are based on travelling at a rate of 3mph.

#### Accessibility Policy:

The Council will make investment decisions which aim to increase the percentage of households which meet the various accessibility standards set out in the Open Space Strategy.



Crownest Park, Stenhousemuir



## 4.4 Commercial Use of Parks and Open Space

### Charges for the Commercial Use of Parks and Open Space

- 4.4.1 Increased use of our park facilities is being made by large commercial organisations or by local small businesses, particularly in the health and fitness sector. Whilst the use of our parks is to be encouraged and supported, such increased use can have an adverse impact on the condition of certain areas. For example local 'bootcamp' sessions which may continually use a particular area will simply lead to additional wear and tear of an area that may affect the overall impression of the open space as a whole. There will then be additional costs to the land manager to repair or reinstate such areas.
- 4.4.2 To compensate for these additional costs many other local authorities across the country have already introduced specific charges for commercial use of parks and open spaces which they manage. Falkirk Community Trust have also introduced a similar scheme for the 2015/16 financial year. We therefore propose to devise an appropriate scheme of charging for the use of our parks and open spaces by small businesses or commercial organisations (see action GINV.02 of the Parks Development Plan)

### Commercialising our Parks and Open Spaces

- 4.4.3 Parks and open spaces can provide a very attractive setting within which to do business, particularly because there are a large number of potential customers who use parks and open spaces regularly.
- 4.4.4 People using parks and open spaces can have their overall experience enhanced by having access to the goods and services which some businesses provide. Examples include cafes and restaurants; adventurous activities like Go Ape; and hire of bicycles and segways.
- 4.4.5 Many parks and open spaces have buildings, land or other physical resources in them which are either empty or under-utilised. Leasing these resources for appropriate business use will benefit the Council by:
- Improving the security of the sites by increasing the footfall, and hence eyes and ears reporting problems;
  - Providing a potential source of revenue for the land manager through rental income;
  - Giving start-up businesses a chance to grow thereby improving the local economy;
  - Preventing buildings from falling into disrepair through disuse, or providing an opportunity to restore derelict structures/areas.
- 4.4.6 Given these mutual benefits, we propose to carry out a study to identify what opportunities there are to commercialise the park and open space resource and develop a business case for taking this forward (see action GINV.03 in the Parks Development Plan).

## 4.5 Surplus Parks and Open Spaces

### Identifying Surplus Parks and Open Spaces

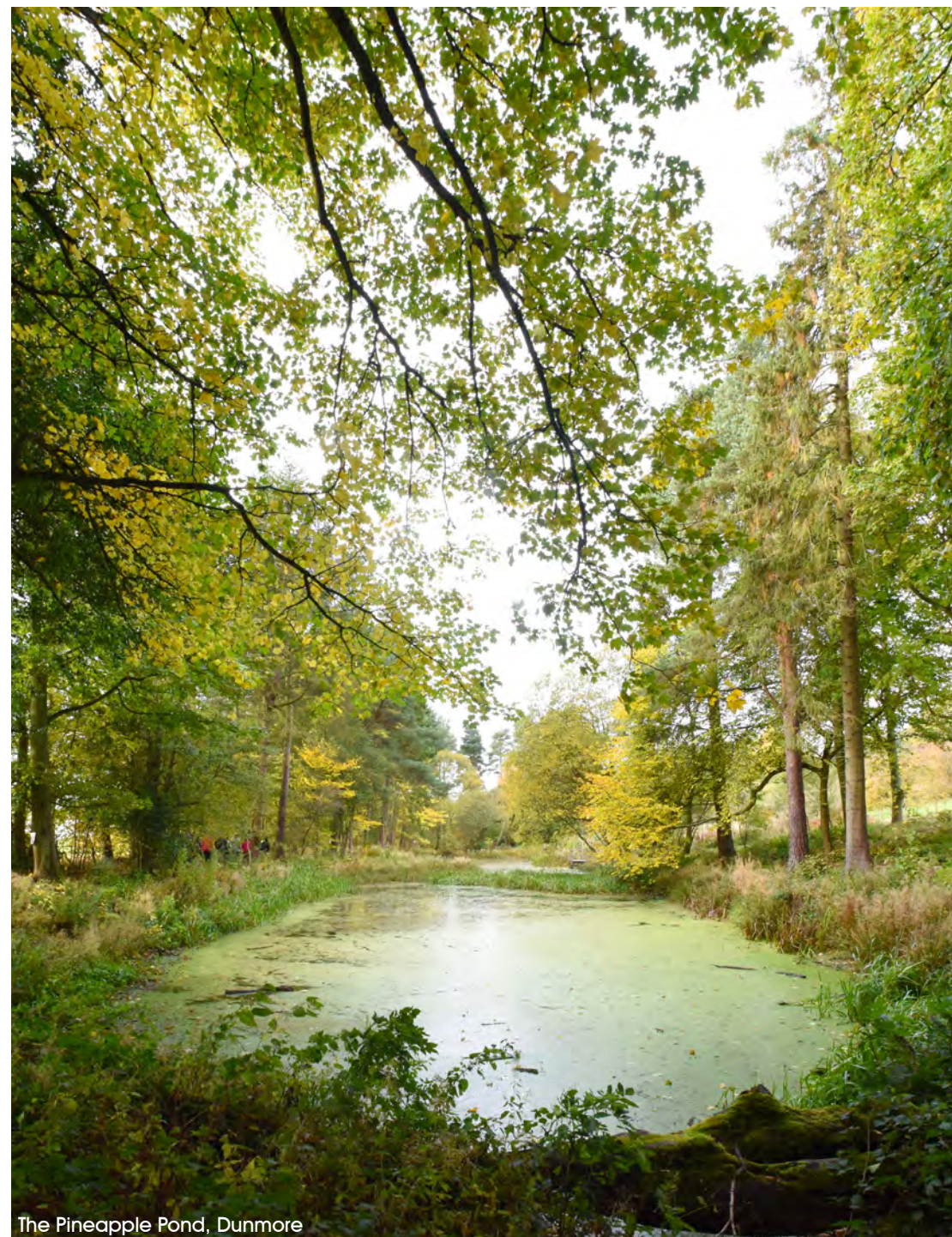
- 4.5.1 There is an abundance of open space across the Council area. At 15.9 hectares per 1000 people, the Council wide rate of open space provision is more than 3 times the proposed 5 hectare per 1000 people standard. It follows therefore that some open spaces could be used for other purposes without causing the overall rate to fall below the 5 hectare standard.
- 4.5.2 There are currently 14 Fields in Trust (7 King George V Fields, 6 Queen Elizabeth Fields and 1 Centenary Field) across the Council area which have legal protection to ensure that these valuable community fields are protected for existing and future generations. These Fields in Trust cannot be identified as surplus to requirements and are shown within the various area strategy maps in section 5<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.5.3 In order to identify whether an open space is surplus to requirements or not all of the following factors should be considered:
- Will there be an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area?
  - Will the loss of the park or open space lead to any households no longer being within the maximum walking distance threshold for different functions of open space (set out in section 4.3)?
  - Will the loss of the park or open space cause the rate of open space provision within the settlement to fall below 5 hectares per 1000 people?
  - Is the area of significant ecological value?
  - Does the park or open space have any other important green infrastructure function? e.g. as flood storage or as a carbon sink.
  - Will the loss of the park or open space threaten the connectivity within and functionality of the wider green?
  - Will the loss of the park or open space make it more difficult to manage and maintain remaining open space in the vicinity?
  - Can the open space be brought into functional use to meet a need identified in the open space strategy or the food growing strategy?
  - Have the concerns of the local community been fully taken account of?
  - In the case of open spaces which contain outdoor sports facilities, does the Council's Sports Pitches Strategy show that there is a clear excess of sports pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand in the area and that the site could be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision?
- 4.5.4 Rather than trying to decide whether a park or open space is surplus to requirements on an ad hoc basis when an enquiry about an alternative use is received, we will carry out an exercise to identify surpluses at a settlement wide level and consult with the local community about any surplus parks or open spaces identified. (see action GINV.01 in the Parks Development Plan).

<sup>2</sup>The rationale of Fields In Trust and more in depth details on the individual Fields classification, status and value can be found on [www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)



### **Improving Existing Open Spaces through re-use of Surplus Areas of Parkland and Open Space**

- 4.5.5 Surplus areas of parkland and open space will be marketed for sale for alternative use. Potential purchasers will be notified of the likelihood that the Council will seek financial compensation through the planning process from development proposals which involve the loss of open space.
- 4.5.6 The value of compensation for the loss of open space will be determined through the planning process by applying policy INF03 of the Falkirk Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance 13 Open Space and New Development i.e. £21/m<sup>2</sup> for loss of passive open space and £42/m<sup>2</sup> for loss of active open space. These rates may be reviewed as part of an updated version of the Supplementary Guidance.
- 4.5.7 Any compensatory payment for the loss of parks and open space must be spent on: improving existing parks and open spaces; enhancing maintenance (including wildlife and woodland management) of existing parks and open space, or on creating new ones. Any compensation for the loss of an outdoor sports facility must be used to improve existing outdoor sports facilities or to provide new ones. In general the park and open space improvement projects funded by compensatory payments should be of some benefit to the community who have lost the surplus open space and must also comply with the policy tests set out in the Scottish Government's planning circular 3/2012 in relation to: necessity; planning purpose; relationship to proposed development; scale and kind; and reasonableness.
- 4.5.8 Where an open space improvement project for investment has not been identified at the planning application stage, authority to determine priorities for investment in accordance with the Open Space Strategy will normally be delegated to the Director of Development Services. In general, priorities for investment will be in line with the Council's strategic aims for improving the open space resource as set out in the Open Space Strategy, Core Paths Plan and Falkirk Greenspace Strategy and there will be no need for further consultation with the public.



The Pineapple Pond, Dunmore



## 4.6 Promoting Community Involvement in Parks and Open Spaces

- 4.6.1 We recognise that the community will want to be involved in the decision making process and in delivering change on key open space sites throughout the area.

### Involving the Community in the Decision Making Process

- 4.6.2 Community input into future plans for individual parks and open spaces is vital and this summary outlines the 'rules of engagement' for this aspect of delivery. Falkirk Council or Falkirk Community Trust as lessees of open spaces owned by Falkirk Council, will inform the public about plans for significant change to open spaces.
- 4.6.3 The information will be available to everyone, but may be targeted to the communities using an individual site, and could be presented in various formats including
- a) Information signs on site
  - b) Articles in local media
  - c) Updates on the public websites for the managing body
- 4.6.4 Where there is the opportunity for the public to influence decisions about proposed changes there will be consultation in advance of planning any work and the views of the community will be taken into account in any decision making. The community cannot always decide what happens on every site as there are legal and budgetary restrictions on activity within open spaces and officers managing open spaces need to balance several functions, of which recreational public use is only one.
- 4.6.5 Consultation will be open to everyone, but it likely to be targeted to the communities and user groups with the strongest links to the site or the proposed change. The consultation could take many forms including for example
- a) A web based survey, advertised on site and through any existing community groups
  - b) Open days on site or at venues near the site
  - c) Postal surveys sent to residents
  - d) Questionnaires through the community panel
  - e) Formal approaches to specific stakeholder groups such as friends of parks groups, access forums, community councils or in the case of outdoor sports facilities, sports users, including clubs and governing body representatives. Formal approaches to specific stakeholder groups such as access forums or community councils.
  - f) Engaging with children through local schools and nurseries to find out exactly what they want.

## Helping the Community to Deliver Change

- 4.6.6 We recognise the added value local people can bring to plans for park development through volunteering their time either with physical tasks (vegetation clearance, community litter picks) or through fundraising (through fundraising events ; preparing funding bids or taking part in 'Friends of Group' meetings). Volunteering is beneficial both for the sites where community action happens and for the participants. Volunteers can learn practical skills, improve their physical fitness and mental health and gain self-confidence and experience which can help in entering employment.
- 4.6.7 To encourage and reward volunteering we propose to set up a fund to assist local communities who have formed a recognisable/ constituted group and who wish to fundraise for projects related to their open space which fit with the principles within the Strategy and help deliver recognisable benefits. The fund would support pilot or preparatory work required for a feasible external funding bid, or act as match funding for an agreed external funding bid (see action I&CCOM01 in the Parks Development Plan).
- 4.6.8 Support will be given to communities wishing to set up their own group linked to open space and officer attendance at meetings will be accommodated at a reasonable and sustainable level.



Hollandbush Park, Banknock



## 4.7 Sports Pitches and Sports Development

4.7.1 The provision of sports areas to meet informal local demand and the provision of sports pitches to meet demand for playing formal organised pitch sports and the area's sports development needs are two separate issues. To meet local demand, we will aim to ensure that every household is within 1200m (15minute walk) of an open space containing a sports area (see section 4.3). This section of the strategy deals with the Council's proposed policy for meeting demand for playing formal organised pitch sports and the area's sports development needs.

4.7.2 Strategic issues relating to sports pitches and sports development can be split into two categories those relating to the quality of the facilities available, and those relating to the customer base for these facilities. The strategic issues are as follows:

### Facility-related Issues

- Many football pitches are located in parks and this limits their use at times
- Some football pitches and changing pavilions are too small; many pavilions are also of poor quality and unpleasant to use
- Grass pitches have very low carrying capacity and are often unplayable but require high levels of subsidy
- Investing in grass pitches and changing pavilions to complement them is poor value for money as they require high levels of subsidy
- There is a clear need for more high capacity 3G pitches
- Planning policy may be protecting a number of pitches that are not fit for purpose.

### Sports Development Issues

- Only a few football clubs are "development-minded" and looking to the future
- Girls' and women's participation is low
- The vast majority of demand is at the weekend so grass pitches lie idle for most of the week and the year
- Many of the football clubs have low membership and are economically fragile
- Players regard the Council's pitches and changing as poor value for money
- The rugby and cricket clubs are self-sufficient but lack the resources they need to improve their facilities and make them fit for the future.

4.7.3 The most important strategic decision facing the Council and Trust - and the one with the greatest implications in terms of sports and club development, land use and both capital and revenue costs - is whether to invest in upgrading existing grass football pitches and changing accommodation or to concentrate on developing a strategic network of a limited number of sites with artificial surfaces and good quality changing and ideally social facilities.

4.7.4 Although grass is the traditional playing surface and many players prefer it to an artificial one, investment in grass pitches is not always cost effective as improved drainage can be expensive without increasing carrying capacity significantly. Set against this the arguments in favour of investing in artificial turf pitches are numerous including; they can be used much more intensively; they require a much lower level of public subsidy; their playing condition isn't adversely affected by bad weather; and fewer of them are needed to meet local demand.

4.7.5 It is therefore proposed that the Council and Trust should work to encouraging the development of a network of strategic sports pitch sites, each with at least one floodlit "third generation" (3G) Artificial Turf Pitch, designed primarily for football, plus one and ideally more floodlit 5 or 7-a-side pitches with 3G surfaces and possibly one or more grass pitches, complemented by good quality changing and other ancillary accommodation, including social facilities. This has the potential to provide teams with much better facilities for weekend matches; to allow more teams to take part in mid-week training and therefore raise standards of play; and to support the development of mid-week leagues, potentially reducing the need for pitches at the weekend. (See action MSPOR.19 in the Parks Development Plan)

4.7.6 In addition the Council should not:

- Facilitate the provision of a new strategic football site to compete with existing nearby privately run sports facilities;
- Directly financially fund youth football clubs without any form of SFA Quality Mark; or
- Enhance grass pitches and related pavilions unless there is a sound economic case for doing so.

4.7.7 Falkirk Council is working with Falkirk Community Trust to agree a strategy for sports pitch provision across the district. The document will identify principles behind determining appropriate quantity, location and quality of sports pitch provision and once adopted will be used as a material consideration in the planning process and to support funding bids with the aim of successfully resourcing the best possible sports pitch facilities for the people of Falkirk. (See action MSPOR.20 in the Parks Development Plan)





## 4.8 Reducing Flood Risk

- 4.8.1 As part its programme to modernise our parks and open spaces to improve the range of benefits they provide the Council has chosen to change the management of the parks and open space resource to reduce overall flood risk.
- 4.8.2 The Flood Risk Management Strategy for the Forth Estuary Local Plan District was published by SEPA in late 2015. It confirms the immediate priorities for flood risk management in the area as well as setting out the future direction to be taken by all flood risk authorities.
- 4.8.3 The Flood Risk Management Plan identifies the need to carry out further detailed flood studies in a number of locations across the Council area. These studies may identify natural flood management measures such as the creation or restoration of intertidal areas river or floodplain restoration and runoff control actions will help to reduce overall flood risk.
- 4.8.4 Where the existing park and open space resource can be used to help deliver these measures, the Council will support the use of its parks and open spaces for this purpose.

## 4.9 Play Provision

### Playspace Rationalisation

- 4.9.1 The Council wishes to review its portfolio of playspaces in the context of rationalising its resources. This focused effort is needed if we are to continue to sustain and improve the overall play value of our playspaces utilising the defined revenue and capital budgets that are available.
- 4.9.2 To achieve this we have increased the accessibility standard in relation to access to an open space containing a playspace from a 5 minute to a 10 minute walk (400m to 800m). As a consequence of this, a large number of existing playspaces, the vast majority of which are Council owned and maintained, can be considered to be potentially surplus to recreational requirements. The potentially surplus playspaces are shown within the area strategies in section 5 of this document.
- 4.9.3 Of the identified playspaces, a small number of Council owned sites could be removed from services immediately. The core of the remainder would remain in service subject to the following:
- When a play item is heavily vandalised or coming to the end of its useful life, it will be removed from service and not replaced.
  - When the playspace has minimum play value e.g. aged or a single active play item only remains in active service it will be considered for removal and the playspace taken off the inventory.
  - Sites identified as having a high sustainable cost e.g. repeated vandalism by fire may be considered for priority removal.
- 4.9.4 The above measures would reduce the strain on both capital and revenue budgets and have a less drastic impact on public expectations than removing the potentially surplus sites in one action. The overall reduction in the number of play items/sites will allow what funds that are available to be targeted more meaningfully.

- 4.9.5 We recognise that the potential loss of play facilities is a very important issue for local communities. To address this we propose to carry out a comprehensive review of the 69 potentially surplus playspaces identified within the Strategy recommending which of them should be confirmed as surplus to operational requirements. We will then consult communities on the results of this exercise before finalising it. (See action MPLAY.16 in the Parks Development Plan) The review will collect further information on:

- The ownership of the playspace;
- The financial savings which could be gained from playspace removal;
- The operational life and play value of equipment within the playspace;
- The indicative year/month of removal from service;
- The proximity of the playspace to other playspaces in the vicinity; and
- Local issues and considerations of note which indicate that the playspace should be retained.

- 4.9.6 Where a playspace has been identified as surplus to operational requirements and there is a strong desire within the community not to lose the facility then, under the Community Empowerment Act, the Council will consider requests to transfer the asset to the community where they have organised themselves as a community transfer body. Following transfer, it will be the responsibility of the community transfer body to manage and maintain the playspace and to raise any funding for its improvement.





## Standard of Play Provision in Remaining Playspaces

- 4.9.7 In the remaining play areas we will aim to provide play equipment to serve three different age groups (See action MPLAY.14 in the Parks Development Plan):
- Months to 4 years (toddler zone);
  - To 11 (junior zone); and
  - 12 and older (teen zone).
- 4.9.8 On some sensitive sites e.g. those in very close proximity to residential properties, teen provision may not be considered as part of any potential future development of the playspace.
- 4.9.9 Where space and funding allows, we will continue to improve the quality and diversity of play in our remaining Council owned playspaces by providing diverse and stimulating new fixed play equipped items with appropriate safer surfacing. These will offer some or all of the following play opportunities: balancing; climbing; rocking; swinging; sliding; crawling; problem solving; and opportunities for social and inclusive play.
- 4.9.10 Where opportunities and site conditions allow we will also aim to develop and provide natural play features. These will be balanced against the need to minimise sustainable site costs. Natural play differs to fixed play equipped items by taking advantage of natural elements e.g. undulating topography, water, felled timber, sand, glacial boulders and by utilising other natural non manufactured play elements to contribute to the overall play experience. (See action MPLAY.15 in the Parks Development Plan) To avoid stifling opportunities for natural play we commit to not putting up any new “no ball games” signs within our parks and open spaces and will insist on the same within new open space created in association with new development.
- 4.9.11 Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) are essentially tarmac court surfaces with integral basketball and football goalsets set in rebound fence enclosures. These have been proven to be popular and valuable assets widening the play experience in several of our parks and open spaces including within school sites that have open public access beyond school hours. These are costly assets to provide but have minimum impact on sustainable costs, therefore any future opportunities via external funding would be welcomed but additional provision is unlikely to be driven as a priority need through capital bids.

## Standard of play provision in new residential developments

- 4.9.12 In new developments, where there is not a nearby play facility which could serve the recreational needs of new residents, we will require the provision of new play facilities of a standard and specification matching that which we aim to provide in our playspaces which have not been identified as potentially surplus to requirements. (As set out at para. 4.9.7)

## 4.10 Council Ownership

- 4.10.1 Details of which parks and open spaces the Council owns are still not comprehensively known. Over the last few years the Council has begun the process of gradually digitising its ownership records and have completed the process for the Bonnybridge and Banknock, Denny & Grangemouth areas as well as for the rural villages, however digitisation of ownership records for the Bo'ness, Falkirk, Larbert and Stenhousemuir and Polmont areas has yet to be completed.
- 4.10.2 Understanding which open spaces the Council owns is crucial if the aspirations of the Open Space Strategy are to be realised as it will influence:
- Where open space improvements can be made;
  - Where maintenance regimes can be changed; and
  - Where open spaces can be sold off to finance other open space improvements
- 4.10.3 To address this, the Council will redouble its efforts to digitise its ownership records and where necessary allocate additional resources to complete the exercise. (See action EMAIN.03 in the Parks Development Plan)



Callendar Park, Falkirk



## 4.11 High Profile Parks and Open Spaces

4.11.1 The setting of the Council area, and the impression visitors gain when they come here, affects their perception of the Falkirk area as a whole and contributes towards the Falkirk 'brand'. Our high profile parks and open spaces have dual functions: helping to serve the recreational needs of the whole of the local population; and contributing to the positive impression visitors, including businesses looking to invest, receive when they come to Falkirk. Key factors affecting place setting are:

- The visitor experience within the site;
- The appearance of sites from key transport routes; and
- The external signage of these sites on key transport routes

4.11.2 Our high profile parks and open spaces are the ones that we would expect people to come from across the country to visit. They have been identified in the hierarchy of importance as national level open spaces (see section 4.2); they are:

- Falkirk Wheel;
- Callendar Park;
- Muiravonside Country Park;
- Helix Park;
- Helix North/Kelpies;
- Kinneil Estate;
- The Forth and Clyde Canal; and
- The Union Canal

4.11.3 The quality of these sites must be retained and improved if the function they serve as adverts for the quality of life are to be safeguarded. A decline in quality on a large site will be harder to reverse, especially if it gathers momentum over several years. In addition any site which has attracted external grant aid must be maintained as detailed in the funding offer to prevent grant being reclaimed and reputational damage for the managing organisation with the funder which could affect future bids for assistance.

4.11.4 Because they receive higher numbers of visitors from a range of areas, including visitors from outside the Falkirk area, investment in maintaining and improving them must recognise the wide range of benefits they provide. Families are more likely to visit for significant periods of time and come from a range of communities not just the neighbouring settlements. Therefore there are a wider range of customers who need to be consulted on when significant change is proposed, and a larger number of residents who benefit from the park. Key facilities these parks may need which other local sites may not include:

- Car parking (these are destination sites and the majority of residents will not live close enough to walk or cycle to them);
- Internal and external signage to ensure the sites are easy to find and navigate within (see section 4.12); and
- Catering and toilet facilities proportional to the number of expected users (people will travel further to these sites and stay longer meaning toilet provision has more of an impact on their experience).

4.11.5 The visitor experience at parks and open spaces along corridors of tourist interest may also need to be reviewed. In addition to the canal network, those corridors are:

- The John Muir Trail; and
- The Antonine Wall.

## 4.12 Signage within Parks and Open Spaces

4.12.1 Signage and notice boards within parks and open spaces are often the only contact that people using them have with the people who are managing and maintaining them. Having clear, high quality signage within parks and open spaces is an important way of presenting a positive image of the Council and of the Council area. It is proposed that all parks and open spaces should have signage at the entrance to the site stating:

- The name of the park or open space,
- Who manages it; and
- How to contact them to report problems/raise queries.

### High Profile Sites

4.12.2 For a high profile site (see section 4.11) it is important that visitors as well as residents can find the site and so directional signage on key routes to the park, as well as a clear welcome message at the entrance is important in maximising the impact of the open space. The welcome signage at a high profile site should include:

- Information about what can be found within the site;
- A map to help with navigation; and
- Information about other nearby places of interest.

4.12.3 Internal signage should not only way-mark visitors around the site but also interpret the natural and man-made heritage of the site and promote routes such as the John Muir Way and features such as the Antonine Wall.





## 5. Area Strategies

Wellsfield Farm, Denny

### 5.1 Introduction

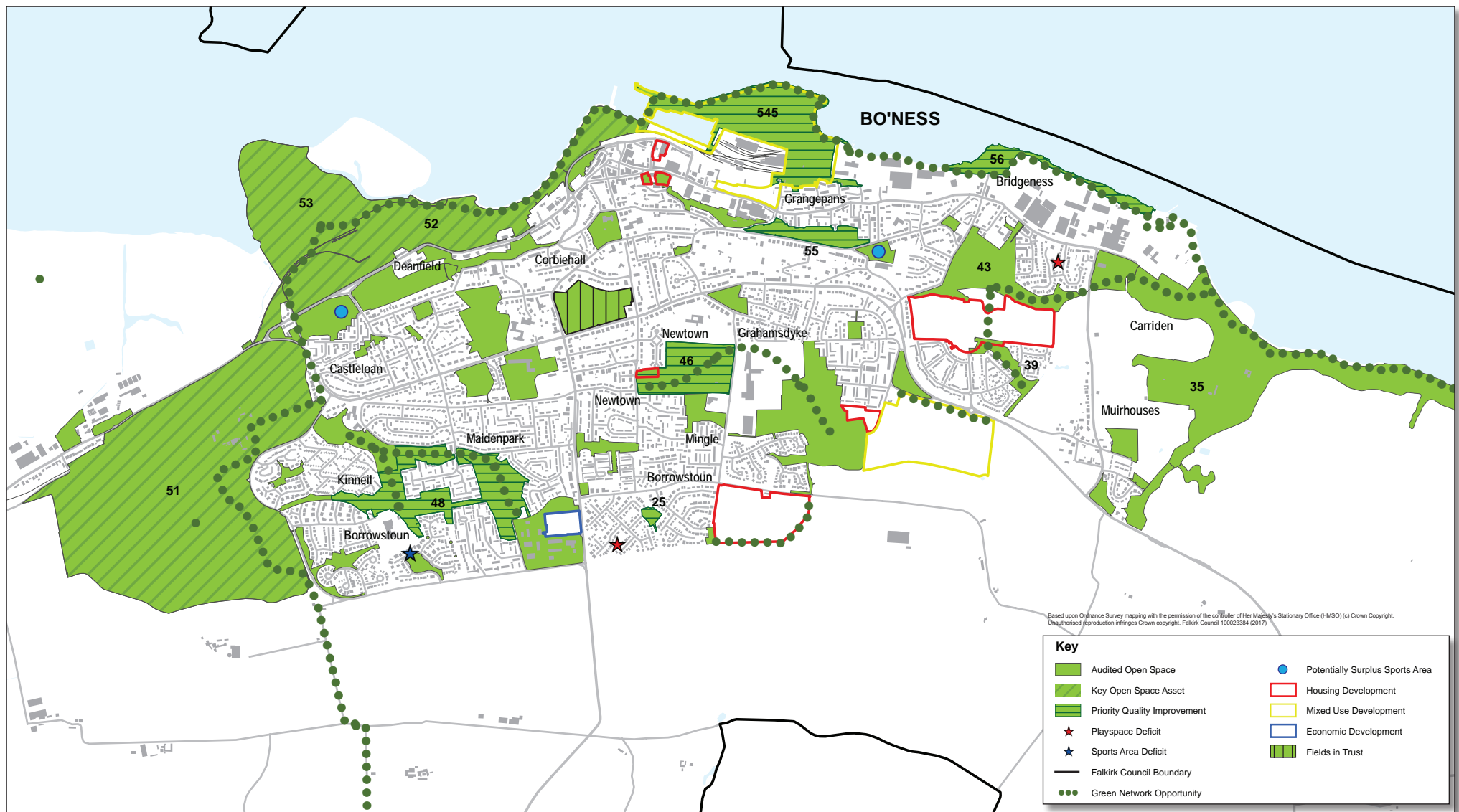
5.1.1 Area strategies have been produced for each of 9 sub areas as defined in the Council's Local Development Plan. These are: Bo'ness; Bonnybridge and Banknock; Denny; Falkirk; Grangemouth; Larbert and Stenhousemuir; the Polmont Area; the Rural North and the Rural South. The area strategies all follow the same structure as follows:

Sub Section Name	Content
<b>Analysis</b>	This sub-section summarises the findings of the open space audit for the relevant sub area, showing how it performs against some key performance indicators in comparison with the Council average. Where the area performs 10% or more above the Council average the indicator is shaded green, where it performs 10% or more below the Council average the indicator is shaded red and where it performs within 10% of the Council average the indicator is un-shaded.
<b>Relevant Objectives</b>	<p>This sub-section lists the relevant strategic objectives which specific actions within the sub area will be trying to achieve. The full list of strategic objectives is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community</li> <li>2. Raising the quality standard of our national and regional level open spaces</li> <li>3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision</li> <li>4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need</li> <li>5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need</li> <li>6. Developing new park or amenity open space in areas of identified need</li> <li>7. Developing new semi natural space in areas of identified need</li> <li>8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites, corridors and connectivity.</li> <li>9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality</li> <li>10. Provide new open space where the rate of open space provision is below the 5ha/1000 people standard</li> </ol>
<b>Priority Actions</b>	<p>This sub-section highlights the specific actions needed within each sub area to achieve the relevant strategic objectives of the Open Space Strategy. Where specific open spaces are mentioned a reference number is quotes in brackets which can be cross referenced to that open space on the indicative spatial strategy map.</p> <p>For each specific action the following details are given: the strategic objectives the action will help to deliver; the agencies who will be involved in delivery and the mechanisms that could be used to fund the action; and the Council wide priority of the action within that particular strategic objective in relation to other actions which also help to deliver that strategic objective<sup>3</sup>. There is also a column for recording the local priority of the action where this has been identified during the consultation process.</p>
<b>Indicative Spatial Strategy</b>	This comprises a map spatially representing the information contained in the sub sections above.

<sup>3</sup>The criteria used for prioritisation within each strategic objective are detailed within the Parks Development Plan at appendix 5.



## 5.2 Bo'ness





## Analysis

Bo'ness is very well provided for in terms of open space scoring above the Council average in every measure. It has the third highest amount of open space, the third highest proportion of the total area of open space which is fit for purpose and the highest percentage of households with access to parks and amenity space of over 0.2ha within a 400m walk amongst all settlement areas. Its key open space assets have been identified as Kinneil Estate, Bo'ness Foreshore and Kinneil. Despite this high performance the areas of Borrowstoun and Carriden do not have access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk and the area around Borrowstoun Mains does not have access to a sports area within 1200m.

	Bo'ness	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	48	632
Area of open space (hectares)	243.7	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	16.8	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	69.3%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	75.0%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	98.8%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	97.2%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	95.7%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	98.5%	96.6%

## Relevant Objectives

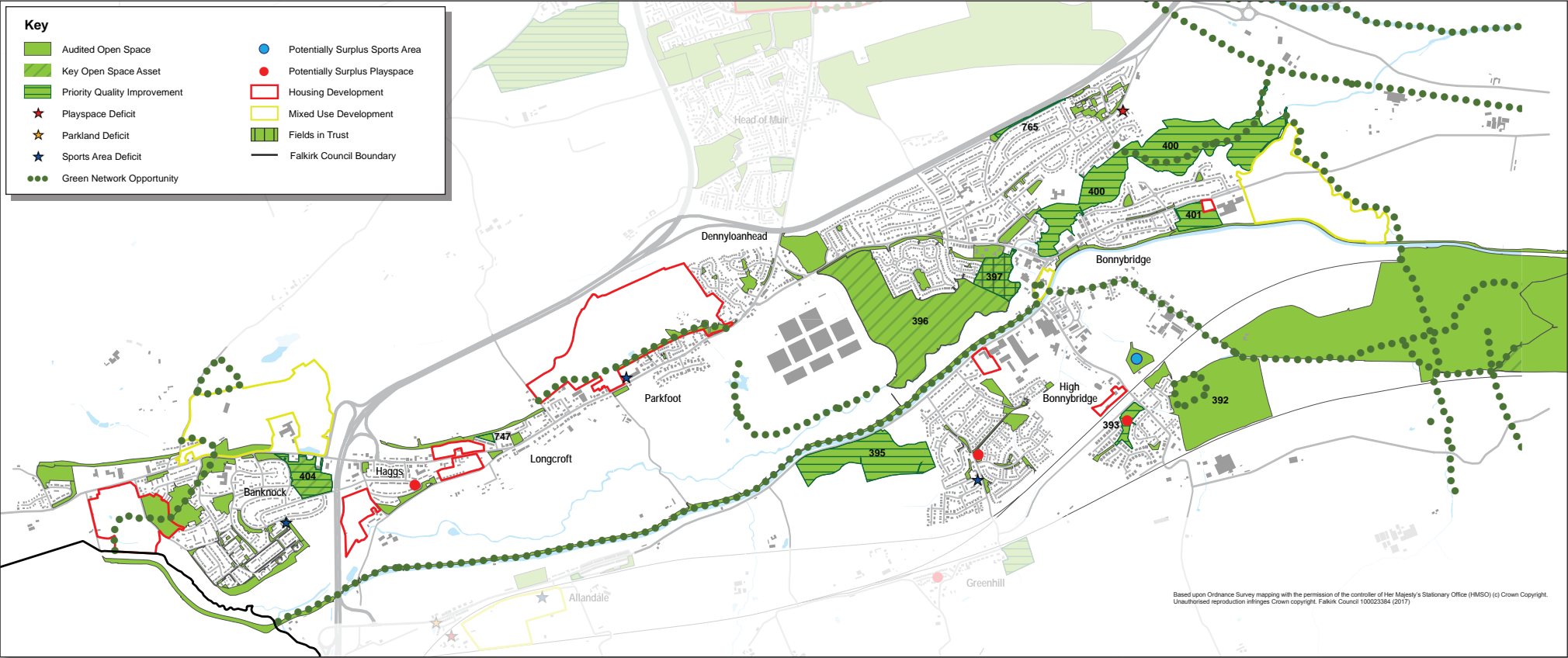
1. Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
2. Raising the quality standard of our national and regional level open spaces.
3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.

## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.01 &amp; 02</b> Implement Kinneil Estate (51) masterplan and expand masterplan to incorporate Bo'ness Foreshore (52) and Kinneil Foreshore (53).	1,8	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Kinneil Estate: Priority 4 Kinneil and Bo'ness Foreshore: Priority 2	Top Local Priority
<b>MNATREG.05 &amp; 07</b> Improve Bo'ness Foreshore East (56) and consider temporary greening at Bo'ness Foreshore West (545).	2,8	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought. Improvements at Bo'ness Foreshore East could be delivered in conjunction with mixed use development at Bo'ness Foreshore.	Priority 2 Dependent on timing of development.	Top Local Priority
<b>MQUAL.01-03 &amp; 46</b> Improve open spaces at Maiden Park (48); Newtown Park (46); Victoria Park (55) and Borrowstoun 1 (25).	3,8	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available.	Priority 4	
<b>MPLAY.01 &amp; 02</b> Investigate the potential to create new playspaces in the Borrowstoun and Carriden areas.	4	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available to assist.	Priority 3	
<b>MSPOR.01</b> Investigate potential for new sports area in Borrowstoun Mains.	5	Falkirk Council.	Priority 3	
<b>MGNT.05</b> Carry out landscape and access improvements along the length of the John Muir Way which runs along the coastline and through Kinneil Estate.	8			
<b>MGNT.04</b> Improve quality, function and diversity of open space corridors within Bo'ness.	8	Falkirk Council.		
<b>MGNT.01</b> Develop link between Drum open space (39) Kinningars Park (43) and the Crookies (35).	8	In conjunction with development of Drum Farm North site.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.02</b> Develop green corridor along Drum Farm South frontage.	8	In conjunction with development of Drum Farm North site.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.03</b> Develop woodland corridor along urban edge at Kinglass Farm.	8	In conjunction with development of Kinglass Farm 1.	Dependent on timing of development.	
Rationalise sports area provision in the Deanfield and Grange areas.	9	Falkirk Council.		



5.3 Bonnybridge and Banknock



Analysis

Although there is an abundance of open space within Bonnybridge and Banknock, it has the lowest average quality, lowest percentage of open spaces which are fit for purpose and second lowest percentage of the total area of open space which is fit for purpose of any settlement area. It is also the only settlement area where the quality of open space has deteriorated between the 1st and 2nd open space audits. Improving the quality of open space in Bonnybridge and Banknock should be one of the Council’s highest investment priorities. The area has an above average number of households with access to: park or amenity space of over 2000m² within 400m; and natural/ semi natural open space within 1200m. Access to fit for purpose open space within 400m and to a sports area within 1200m is well below the Council average and access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk is marginally below the Council average with a notable deficit in north east Bonnybridge. There appears to be localised scope for rationalisation of the portfolio of playspaces in the High Bonnybridge, Milnquarter and Haggs areas without reducing the percentage of households which have access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk.

	Bonnybridge and Banknock	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	82	632
Area of open space (hectares)	127.8	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	10.3	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	44.0%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	55.8%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m² or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	92.9%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	96.2%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	71.9%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	99.5%	96.6%



## Relevant Objectives

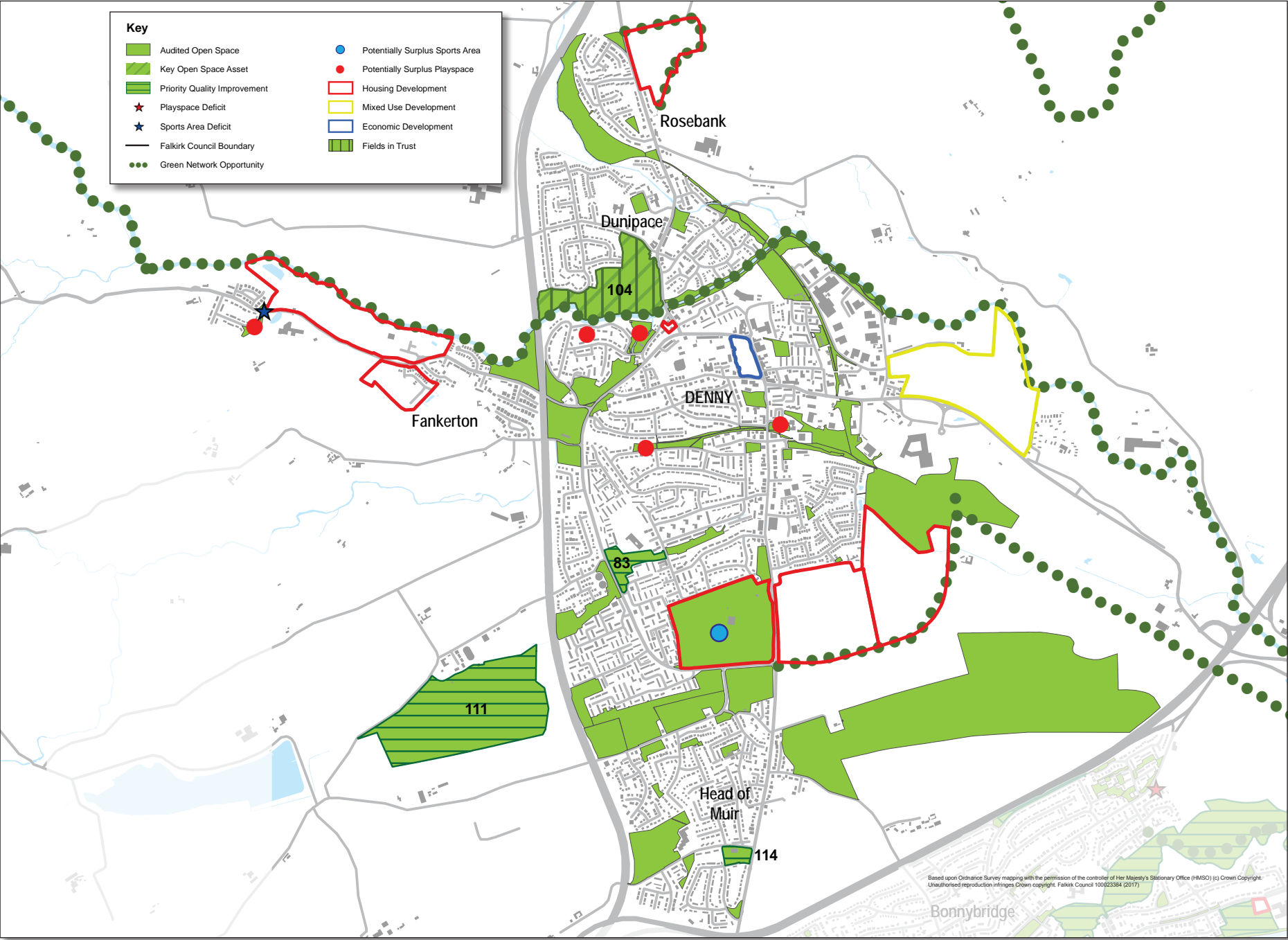
1. Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
2. Raising the quality standard of our national and regional level open spaces.
3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.

## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.03</b> Develop and implement a joint masterplan for Duncan Stewart Park (397) and Bonnyfield Nature Park (396) and improve the quality of Duncan Stewart Park.	<b>1,8</b>	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 1	Top Local Priority
<b>MVAL.04 &amp; MQUAL.04</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Hollandbush Park (404).	<b>1,3,8</b>	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available to assist.	Priority 1	Top Local Priority
<b>MNATREG.01 &amp; 02</b> Improve the quality of the Bonny Water Corridor (400) and Seabegs Wood (395).	<b>2,8</b>		Bonny Water Corridor: Priority 4 Seabegs Wood: Priority 3	Top Local Priority
<b>MQUAL.05 &amp; 07-09</b> Improve open spaces at Anderson Park (401); Reilly Road (393); Anderson Terrace (747) and Ure Crescent 4 (765)	<b>3,8</b>	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available.	Priority 2	Improving Anderson Park is a top local priority
<b>MPLAY.03</b> Investigate the potential to create new playspace in North East Bonnybridge.	<b>4</b>	Falkirk Council.	Priority 4	
<b>MSPOR.02,03 &amp; 05</b> Investigate the potential to create a new sports area in Banknock, Longcroft and the Milnquarter area of Bonnybridge.	<b>5</b>	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available to assist.	Priority 1	Creating a new sports area is a top local priority in Banknock and Longcroft
<b>MGNT.05</b> Carry out landscape and access improvements along the length of the John Muir Way which runs along Bonnyside Road, Bridge Street and the Forth and Clyde Canal.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council, Scottish Canals		
<b>MGNT.06</b> Develop green corridor along the dismantled Kilsyth to Bonnybridge Railway in Dennyloanhead.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development at Dennyloanhead.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.07</b> Develop link between the Bonny Water corridor and the Denny to Falkirk footpath.	<b>8</b>		Dependent on progress with the Denny-Falkirk path project	
<b>MGNT.08</b> Develop green corridor along the Rowan Tree Burn.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development of East Bonnybridge.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.09</b> Develop nature park specifically managed for use by Great Crested Newts in Banknock.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development of Banknock North.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.10</b> Develop a managed wetland park alongside the Doups Burn corridor in Banknock.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development of Banknock South.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.11</b> Improve sports area provision at Loch Park (392).	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council. Sportscotland. Funding to be secured through the sale of Broomhill Park (394).	Short Term, dependant on timing of the sale of Loch Park	
<b>MGNT.12</b> Expand Bonnyfield Local Nature Reserve to incorporate wetland habitat at Parkfoot Moss to the west of the bonded warehouse complex, enhance riparian habitat along the Bonny Water and improve access to LNR via the Seabegs Pend.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council, Diageo.		
Rationalise play space provision in High Bonnybridge, Milnquarter and Haggs.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		
Rationalise sports area provision in High Bonnybridge.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		



5.4 Denny





## Analysis

There is a significant amount of open space within the Denny area, although the level of provision is below average amongst urban settlements, it is still over double the 5ha quantitative standard. The quality of that open space is more of a concern with its open spaces having the third lowest average score, percentage of sites scoring good or better in the fitness for purpose; and percentage of the total area of open space scoring good or better in the fitness for purpose assessment. This marks the settlement out as one of the priorities for open space investment. Distribution of open space is of less concern as the settlement scores above the Council average in every other measure. There appears to be localised scope for rationalisation of the portfolio of playspaces in the Stripeside and Stoneywood branch disused railway corridor areas without reducing the percentage of households which have access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk.

	Denny	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	51	632
Area of open space (hectares)	154.5	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	11.7	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	47.9%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	78.8%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	90.7%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	98.9%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	97.8%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	99.0%	96.6%

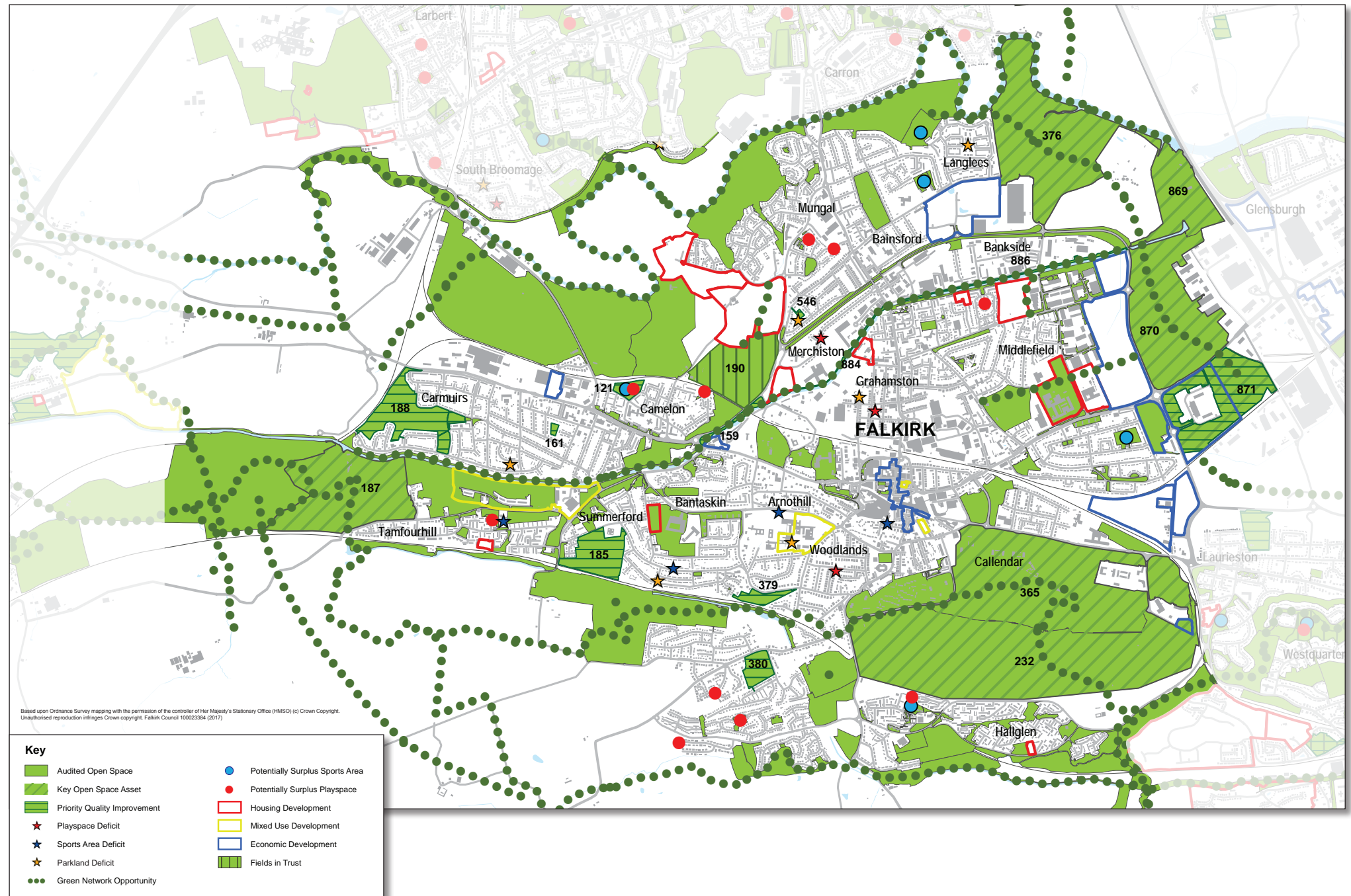
## Relevant Objectives

- Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
- Raising the quality standard of our national and regional level open spaces.
- Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
- Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
- Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
- Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.

## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.05</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Herbertshire Castle Park (104).	1,8	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 2	Top Local Priority
<b>MNATREG.03</b> Improve the quality of Little Denny Reservoir (111).	2,8	Falkirk Council, Callendar Estates.	Priority 3	
<b>MQUAL.10 &amp; 11</b> Improve open spaces at Archibald Russell Centre (114) and Little Denny Burn (83).	3,8	Falkirk Council.	Priority 4	
<b>MSPOR.08</b> Investigate potential for new sports area in the Fankerton area.	5	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available.	Priority 4	
<b>MGNT.13</b> River Carron Corridor improvements.	8	Falkirk Council, CAICA. Developer contributions may be available to assist.		Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.14</b> Develop broadleaved woodland corridor on the southern edge of the Denny Eastern Access Road.	8	In conjunction with development of the Mydub 1 and Mydub 2 sites.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.15</b> Develop woodland corridor along the northern edge of the Rosebank site and retaining woodland on eastern edge.	8	In conjunction with development of the Rosebank site.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.16</b> Create a new path between Denny and Camelon using the solum of the disused railway line.	8			Top Local Priority
Rationalise play space provision in the Stripeside and Stoneywood branch disused railway corridor areas.	9	Falkirk Council.		
Rationalise sports area provision at the former Denny High School.	9	Falkirk Council.		

## 5.5 Falkirk





## Analysis

Falkirk has highest rate of open space provision of any of the urban settlements, it also has the highest: average quality score; percentage of open spaces which are fit for purpose and total area of open spaces which are fit for purpose. Despite this high performance there are some challenges in relation to distribution of open space, most notably in relation to access to sports areas in which the area performs below the council wide average. Although access to fit for purpose open space is well above the Council average, there are still pockets of the town which do not have access to open space which is fit for purpose. Certain parts of the town have a deficit of play space provision (Merchiston, Grahamston and Woodlands) whereas others have an abundance of play areas (Tamfourhill, Mungall, Hallglen, Etna Road, Lionthorn and North East Camelon) with scope for rationalisation.

	Falkirk	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	124	632
Area of open space (hectares)	795.0	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	20.4	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	69.8%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	74.5%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	87.5%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	97.6%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	91.8%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	99.4%	96.6%

## Relevant Objectives

1. Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
2. Raising the quality standard of our national and regional level open spaces.
3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
6. Developing new park and amenity space in areas of identified need
8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.



## Priority Actions

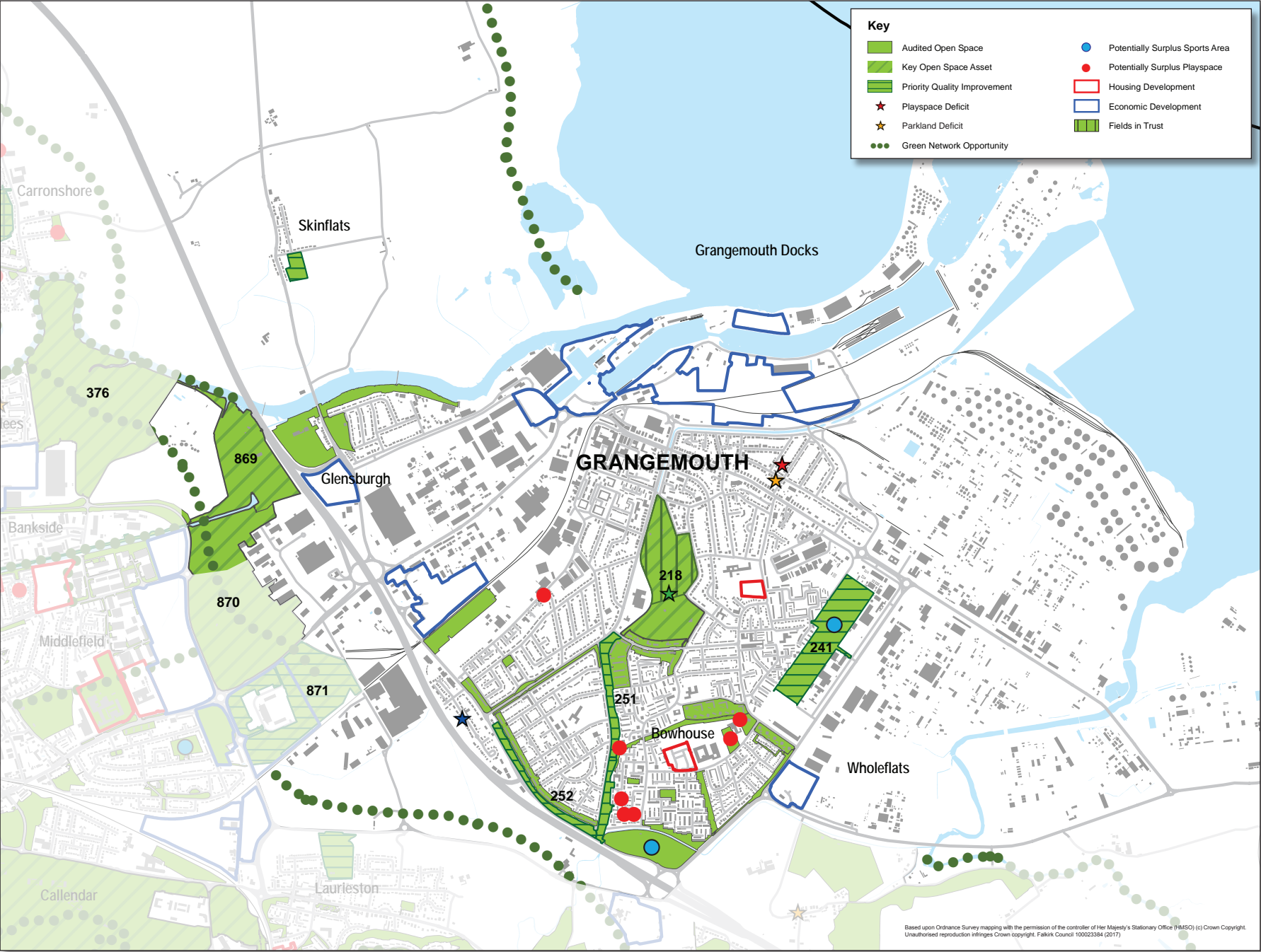
Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.06</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Callendar Park (365) and Callendar Wood (232) and maintain the quality of these open spaces.	<b>1,8</b>	Falkirk Council, Forestry Commission Scotland. External funding to be sought.	Priority 3	Top Local Priority
<b>MVAL.07 &amp; MNATREG.06</b> Develop a long term masterplan for the Helix area incorporating all land between Dalderse (376) and Falkirk Stadium (871) and prioritise improvement of the Falkirk Stadium area whilst maintaining the quality of Dalderse, Helix Park(870) and Helix North/Canal Hub (869).	<b>1,2,8</b>	Falkirk Council, Falkirk Community Trust, Scottish Canals.	Wider masterplan : Priority 2 Falkirk Stadium: Priority 3	
<b>MVAL.08</b> Develop a masterplan for the Falkirk Wheel (187) and maintain the quality of this open space.	<b>1,8</b>	Scottish Canals.	Priority 5	
<b>MNATREG.04</b> Improve under performing parts of the Forth and Clyde Canal (Falkirk Helix to Rosebank) (159, 884 & 886).	<b>2,8</b>	Falkirk Council, Scottish Canals. Developer contributions may be available.	Priority 1	
<b>MQUAL.12-18</b> Improve open spaces at Blinkbonny Park (379), Summerford (185), Princes Park (380), Merchiston Road Park(546), Easter Carmuir (188), Nailor Park (121) and Roman Drive (161).	<b>3,8</b>	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions have already been secured for Summerford (185) and may become available for other sites.	Priority 4	
<b>MPLAY.05-07; EACC.02 &amp; 08</b> Investigate opportunities to create new playspaces in Merchiston, Grahamston, and Woodlands areas.	<b>4</b>	Falkirk Council. Opportunities may arise in association with new development. New playspace coming forward as part of the St Mungo's Council Housing site should address the deficiency in Merchiston.	Priority 4 Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>EACC.10 &amp; 11</b> Investigate the potential to widen public access to the sports areas at Falkirk High, and Woodlands Sports Hall.	<b>5</b>		Priority 1	
<b>EACC.01 &amp; 04</b> Investigate potential to provide new sports areas in association with new development at the Portdownie and Falkirk Royal Infirmary site.	<b>5</b>		Priority 1 Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MPARK.02-07; EACC.02 &amp; 08</b> Investigate opportunities to create new park or amenity space of over 0.2ha in the Mechiston, Grahamston, Arnothill, Bantaskin, East Dawson and Southern Camelon areas.	<b>6</b>	Opportunities may arise in association with new development.	Priority 4 Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.05</b> Carry out landscape and access improvements along the length of the John Muir Way which runs through the Falkirk area.	<b>8</b>			
<b>MGNT.13</b> River Carron Corridor improvements including a new bridge across the Carron connecting Carronshore to Abbotshaugh and the Helix.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council, CATCA. Developer contributions may be available to assist.		
<b>MGNT.17</b> Develop an improved sports area at the Lionthorn Policy Bing.	<b>8</b>	Developer contributions are available.		
<b>MGNT.18 &amp; 19</b> Develop a new green corridor along the Mungal Burn path as part of the development of the Cauldhame Farm 2 housing development site. Investigate the potential to incorporate part of the site into an extension of Sunnyside Playingfields North (190).	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development site at Cauldhame Farm 2.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.20</b> Improve the recreational function and setting of the Forth and Clyde Canal corridor.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development sites at Potdownie, Gowan Avenue, Etna Road 2 and Falkirk Gateway.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.21</b> Develop new green corridor linking the Helix to Victoria Park.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development sites at Forth Valley College and Falkirk Gateway.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.22</b> Investigate the potential for channel restoration of the Ladysmill Burn.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with the development site at Etna Road 2.		
Rationalise play space provision in the Tamfourhill, North East Camelon, Hallglen, Etna Road, Lionthorn and Mungal areas.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		
Rationalise sports area provision in the Dawson, Westfield, North East Camelon and Hallglen areas.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		







5.6 Grangemouth





## Analysis

Grangemouth has the lowest rate of open space provision amongst all of the urban settlements but still has more open space than the 5ha/ 1000 people standard. The average quality of open space and percentage of the total number of open spaces is above the Council average, however the total area of open space which is fit for purpose is below the Council average. This marks the settlement out as one of the priorities for open space investment. Grangemouth scores below the Council average for the percentage of households with access to all types of open space functions. In particular access to park and amenity space of over 0.2 hectares and playspace in the older part of the town to the north east of Zetland Park is limited due to the historic settlement pattern. There appears to be scope for rationalisation of the portfolio of playspaces across in the Bowhouse and Wood Street areas without reducing the percentage of households which have access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk.

	Grangemouth	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	33	632
Area of open space (hectares)	100.1	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	5.8	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	50.3%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	60.5%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	78.3%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	96.4%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	99.0%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	86.2%	96.6%

## Relevant Objectives

- Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
- Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
- Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
- Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
- Developing new park and amenity space in areas of identified need.
- Developing new semi natural open space in areas of identified need.
- Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
- Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.

## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.09</b> Implement the masterplan for Zetland Park (218) and maintain the very good quality of this open space.	1,8	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 4	Top Local Priority
<b>MVAL.07 &amp; MNATREG.06</b> Develop a long term masterplan for the Helix area incorporating all land between Dalderse (376) and Falkirk Stadium (871) and prioritise improvement of the Falkirk Stadium area whilst maintaining the quality of Dalderse, Helix Park(870) and Helix North/Canal Hub (869).	1,2,8	Falkirk Council, Falkirk Community Trust, Scottish Canals.	Wider masterplan : Priority 2 Falkirk Stadium: Priority 3	
<b>MQUAL.19-21</b> Improve open spaces at Portal Road 1 (252), Grange Burn (251) and Inchyra Park (241).	3,8	Falkirk Council.	Priority 3	
<b>MPLAY.04</b> Investigate opportunities to create new playspaces in the area to the north of Bo'ness Road.	4	Falkirk Council.	Priority 4	
<b>MSPOR.13</b> Investigate opportunities to create new sports areas in the Beancross area.	5	Falkirk Council.	Priority 4	
<b>MPARK.08</b> Investigate opportunities to create new park or amenity space of over 0.2 hectares in the area to the north of Bo'ness Road.	6	Falkirk Council.	Priority 3	
<b>MVAL.09; MSEM.01</b> Investigate opportunity to create new semi natural open space within Zetland Park (218).	7	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 2	Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.34</b> Extend the access network along the River Avon downstream from Linlithgow Bridge to Grangemouth.	8			
<b>MGNT.23</b> Opportunity along the coastline to the north of the River Carron to create new supporting habitat for Firth of Forth Special Protection Area species and new visitor facilities for bird viewing and improve access to the area from the Helix.	8	Falkirk Council, RSPB.		
Rationalise play space provision in the Bowhouse and Wood Street areas.	9			
Rationalise sports area provision to the south and east of the town.	9			





## Analysis

The Larbert and Stenhousemuir settlement area, which includes Carron and Carronshore has a significantly lower rate of open space provision than the Council wide average and contains a large amount of semi-public open space such as Falkirk Tryst Golf and Cricket Clubs and Larbert Cemetery which makes the availability of fully public open space even more acute. Nonetheless the rate of open space provision is still well above the 5ha/ 1000 people standard. Quality of open space is a more significant issue as the settlement area has the 2nd lowest average quality of open space, 2nd lowest percentage of the total number of open spaces which scored good or better in the fitness for purpose assessment and the lowest percentage of the total area of open space scoring good or better in the fitness for purpose assessment. Although there have been significant quality improvements since 2010, there is still much work to be done. Improving the quality of open space in Larbert and Stenhousemuir should therefore be one of the Council's highest investment priorities. Access to fit for purpose open space within 400m is below the Council average. Although the Larbert and Stenhousemuir settlement area performs at or above the Council average for access to every function of open space, there is still a deficit in access to playspaces in South Broomage, and East Antonshill and sports areas in Kinnaird Village. There appears to be widespread scope for rationalisation of the portfolio of playspaces across the settlement area without reducing the percentage of households which have access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk.

## Relevant Objectives

1. Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
6. Developing new park and amenity space in areas of identified need.
8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.

	Larbert and Stenhousemuir	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	109	632
Area of open space (hectares)	223.6	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	8.8	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	40.5%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	58.1%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	90.8%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	98.7%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	97.0%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	99.6%	96.6%



Crownest Park, Stenhousemuir

## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.10</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Crownest Park (211).	<b>1,8</b>	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 2	Top Local Priority
<b>MVAL.11</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Gairdoch Park (207).	<b>1,8</b>	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 1	
<b>MQUAL.22-26 &amp; 50</b> Improve the quality of Chapel Burn Park East (208); Chapelburn Park West (209); Broomage Park (386); Hillview Road (353); Drumlanrig Place Wood (358) and Symington Park (822).	<b>3,8</b>		Priority 2	
<b>MPLAY.08 &amp; 13</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new playspace in South Broomage and East Antonshill.	<b>4</b>		Priority 4	
<b>MSPOR.12; EACC05</b> Investigate opportunities to provide a new sports area in Kinnaird Village.	<b>5</b>	Falkirk Council.	Priority 3 Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MPARK.09 &amp; 10</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new park or amenity open space of over 0.2 hectares in South Broomage and the residential area to the south of Larbert High School.	<b>6</b>	Falkirk Council.	Priority 6	
<b>MGNT.13</b> River Carron Corridor improvements.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council, CATCA.		Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.24</b> Introduce buffer planting as part of Bellsdyke/ Hill of Kinnaird urban expansion. Investigate opportunities to secure the management and reinforcement of remnant parkland landscapes along the eastern edge of Stenhousemuir and Carronshore.	<b>8</b>			
<b>MGNT.25</b> Investigate opportunities to improve the quality, function, connectivity and diversity of opens space corridors running alongside the Chapel Burn and the How Burn.	<b>8</b>			
<b>MGNT.26</b> Investigate opportunities to provide a missing link in the core path network to enable a circular route between North Broomage and Denny via Glenbervie and Torwood.	<b>8</b>			
Rationalise play space provision in Stenhousemuir, Larbert, Carron, Carronshore and Kinnaird.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		
Rationalise sports area provision in Stenhousemuir and South Broomage.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		

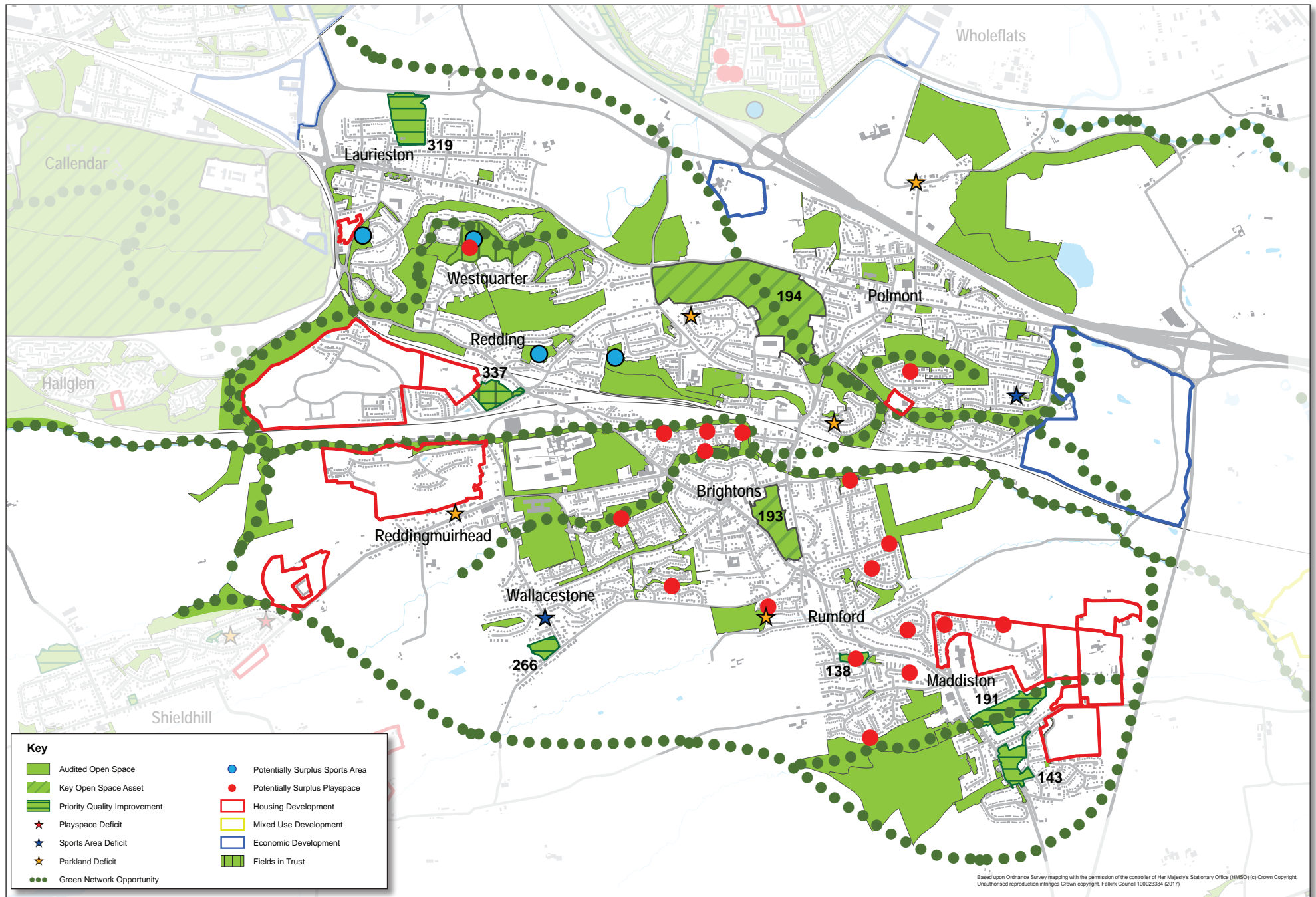




Larbert Loch, Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Larbert



## 5.8 Polmont Area





## Analysis

The Polmont area includes a number of historic villages which have, over time merged into a single urban area including the villages of Polmont, Laurieston, Westquarter, Redding, Reddingmuirhead, Brightons, Wallacestone, Rumford and Maddiston. The area has a lower rate of open space provision than the Council average, but over double the 5ha/1000 people standard. The quality of open space in the Polmont area is generally very good and is above the Council average on all three measures of quality. It also performs well in relation to distribution of open space, only falling significantly below the Council average for access to a sports area within 800m where eastern Polmont and Wallacestone have a deficit of provision. There appears to be widespread scope for rationalisation of the portfolio of playspaces across the settlement area without reducing the percentage of households which have access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk.

	Polmont Area	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	97	632
Area of open space (hectares)	274.0	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	12.3	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	66.0%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	66.0%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	81.9%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	94.1%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	91.8%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	99.1%	96.6%

## Relevant Objectives

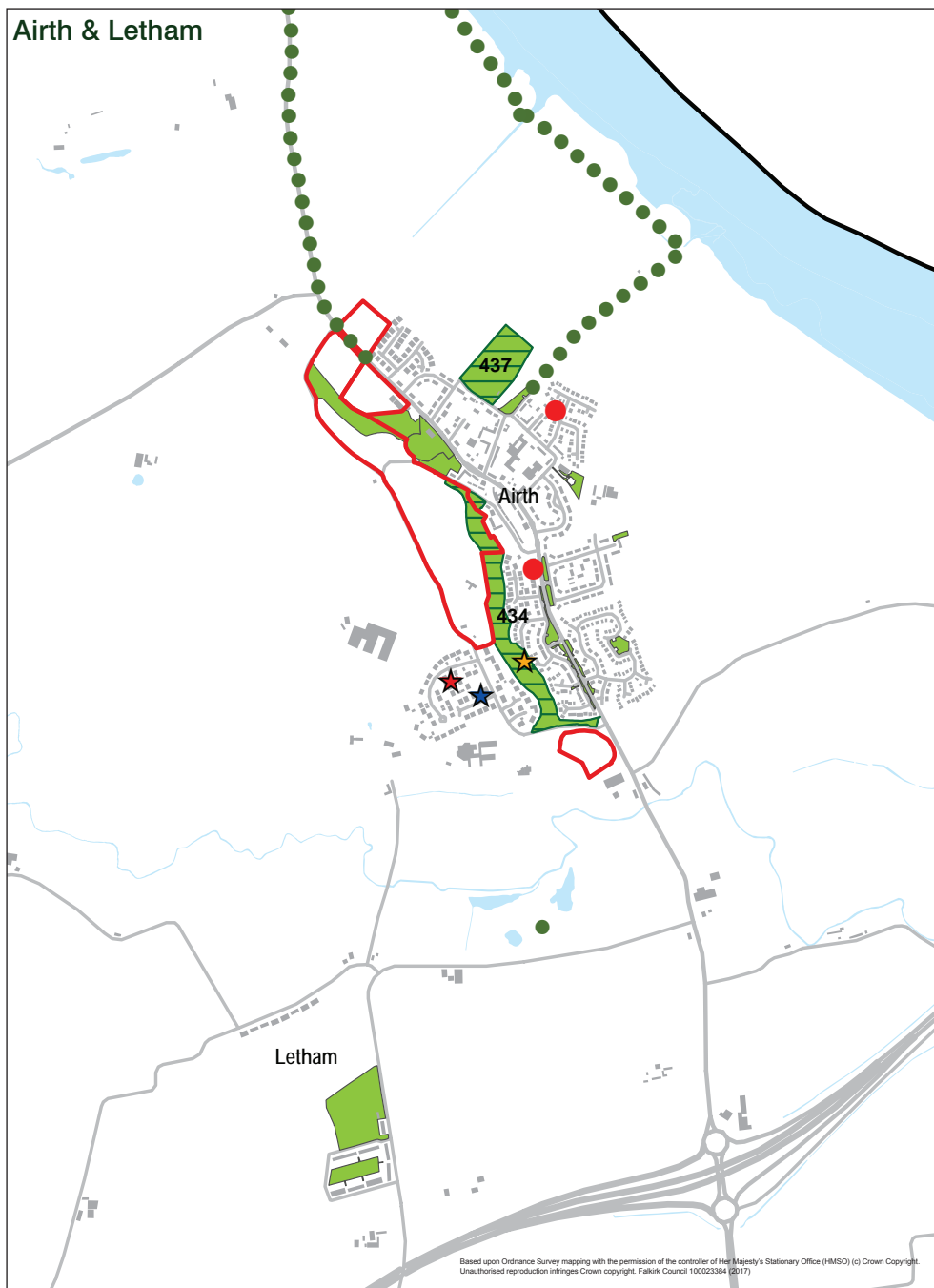
- Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
- Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
- Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
- Developing new park and amenity space in areas of identified need.
- Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
- Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.

## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.12</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Gray Buchanan Park (194).	1,8	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 4	
<b>MVAL.13</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Laurie Park (193).	1,8	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 2	Top Local Priority
<b>MQUAL.27-31 &amp; 47</b> Improve the quality of The Thrums (319); Wallacestone Park (266); Abercainey Crescent (138); Valley Park (191); King George V Playingfields (337) and Main Road, Maddiston (143).	3	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions have already been secured for Valley Park and may become available to assist with improvements to other open spaces.	Priority 3	
<b>MSPOR.07 &amp; 11</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new sports areas in East Polmont and Wallacestone.	5	Opportunities may arise in association with new development.	Priority 2	
<b>MPARK.11-15</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new park or amenity open space of over 0.2 hectares in Rumford, Old Polmont, West Polmont and Reddingmuirhead.	6	Falkirk Council.	Priority 4	
<b>MGNT.27</b> Retain and enhance the Manual Burn corridor as an amenity and biodiversity asset.	8	In conjunction with housing development sites at Parkhall Farm.	Dependent on timing of development.	Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.28</b> Develop a green corridor along the Gilston Burn.	8	In conjunction with economic development site at Gilston.	Dependent on timing of development.2	
<b>MGNT.29</b> Enhance connectivity to the Polmont and Westquarter Burn corridors and the Union Canal. Improve the quality, function and diversity of open space corridors running through Polmont.	8	Falkirk Council.		
<b>MGNT.30</b> Create new woodland edge along the eastern edge of Maddiston.	8	In conjunction with housing development sites at Parkhall Farm and Vellore Road.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.31</b> Improve internal path networks and access to the Helix from Laurieston and Polmont.	8			
Rationalise playspace provision in Rumford, Maddiston, Brightons, Redding, Wallacestone, Polmont and Westquarter	9	Falkirk Council.		
Rationalise sports area provision in Westquarter and Redding.	9			

## 5.9 Rural North

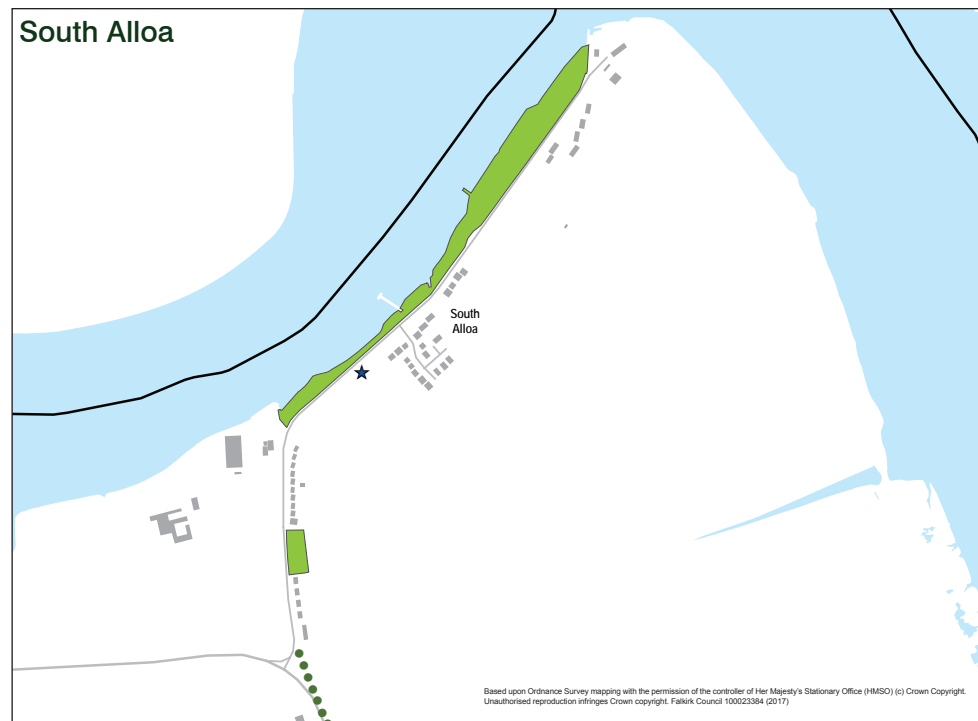
### Airth & Letham



### Dunmore



### South Alloa





## Analysis

The rural north area contains the villages of Airth, Dunmore, Letham, Skinflats, South Alloa and Torwood. Although the area has a higher rate of open space provision than the Council average, the villages of Dunmore and Skinflats have a rate of open space provision lower than the proposed 5 hectare per 1000 people standard. The average quality of open space and the percentage of the total number of open spaces which are fit for purpose is the highest of all settlement areas, however, notably it has the lowest percentage of the total area of open space which is fit for purpose, this is because a few, extremely large open spaces score below 3 in the fitness for purpose assessment.

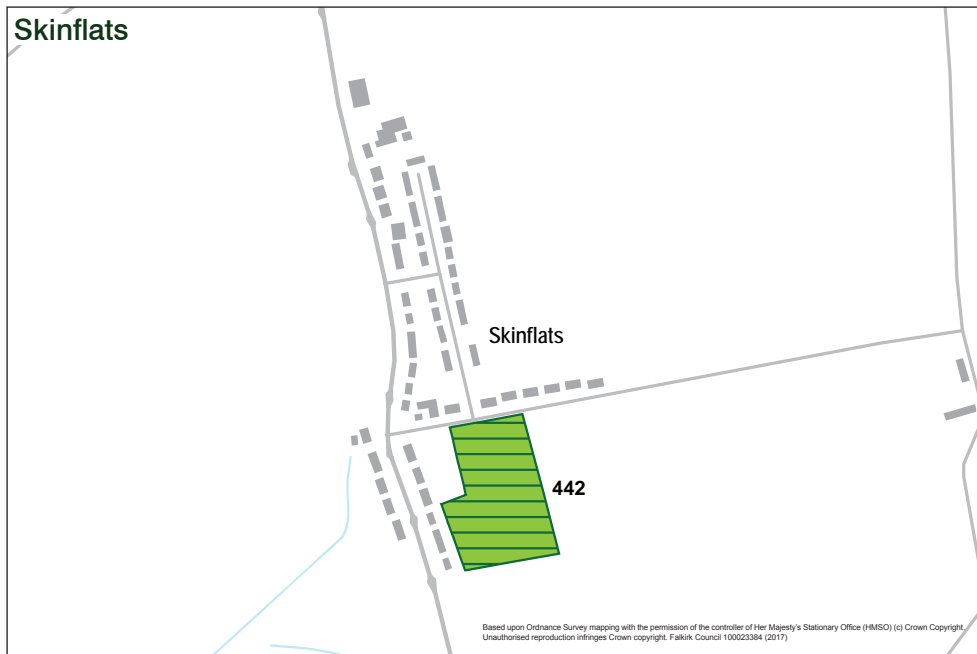
There is a very high percentage of households which have access to fit for purpose open space within 400m, however none of the households in Dunmore, Skinflats or Torwood have access to an open space which is fit for purpose. The area has the lowest percentage of households with access to park or amenity space of over 0.2ha within a 400m walk. Torwood does not have a public park or amenity space of that size in or close to the village. The area has a below average percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m. Torwood is the only settlement in the Council area that does not have access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m. The area has a lower than average percentage of households with access to sports area within 800m, mainly due to the lack of such a facility in South Alloa and Torwood. There may be scope to rationalise the portfolio of playspace in Airth without reducing the number of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within an 800m walk.

	Rural North	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	21	632
Area of open space (hectares)	70.9	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	26.3	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	5.1%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	59.9%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	51.9%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	88.3%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	82.7%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	93.0%	96.6%

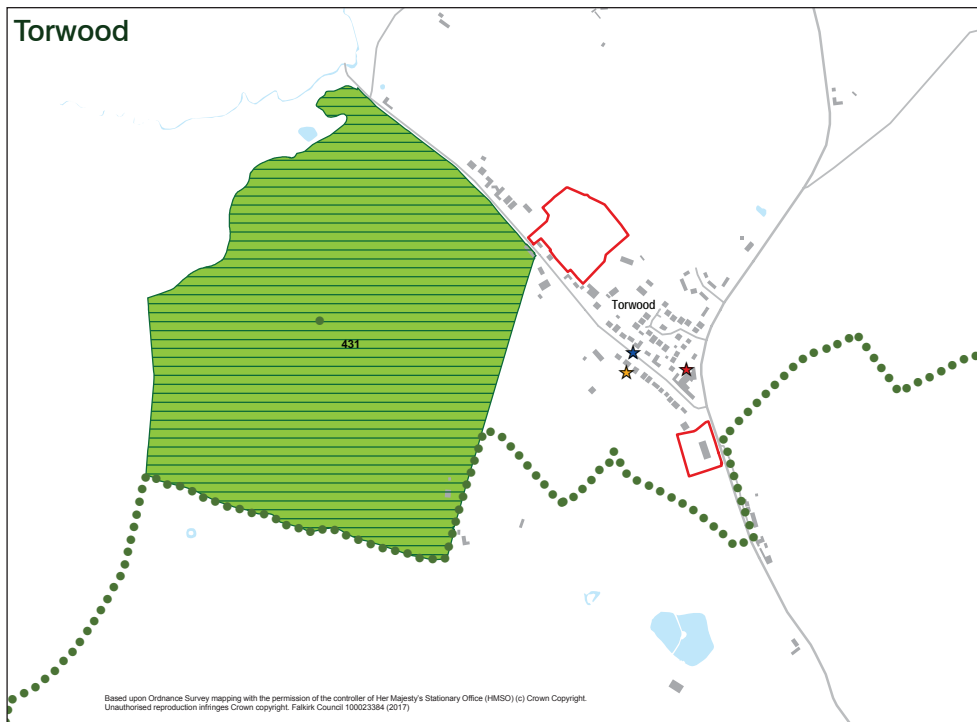
### Key

	Audited Open Space		Green Network Opportunity
	Priority Quality Improvement		Potentially Surplus Playspace
	Playspace Deficit		Housing Development
	Sports Area Deficit		
	Parkland Deficit		

## Skinflats



## Torwood



## Relevant Objectives

2. Raising the quality standard of our national and regional level open spaces.
3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
6. Developing new park and amenity space in areas of identified need
8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.
10. Provide new open space where the rate of open space provision is below the 5ha/1000 people standard.

## Priority Actions

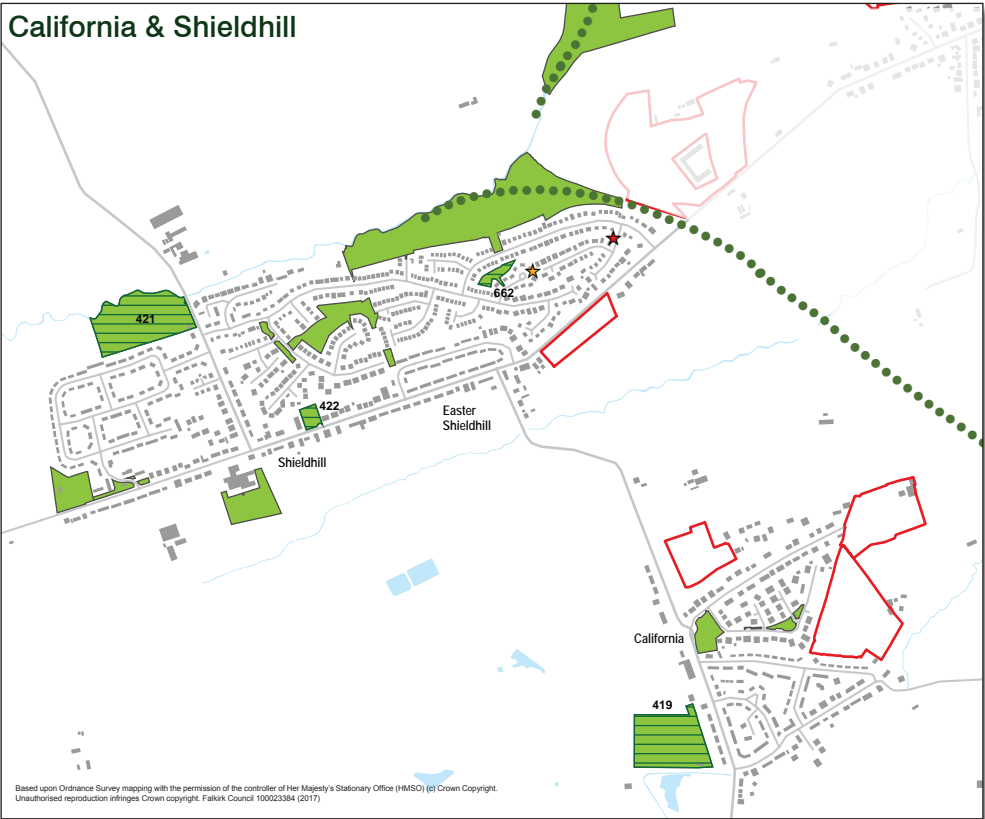
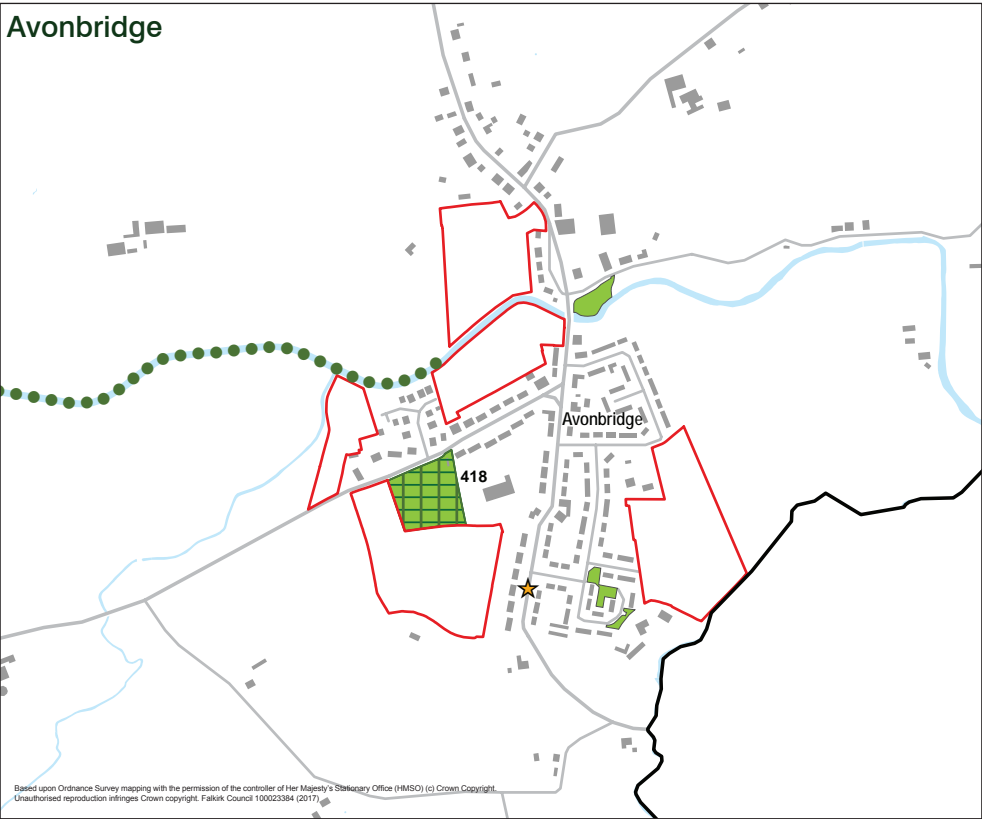
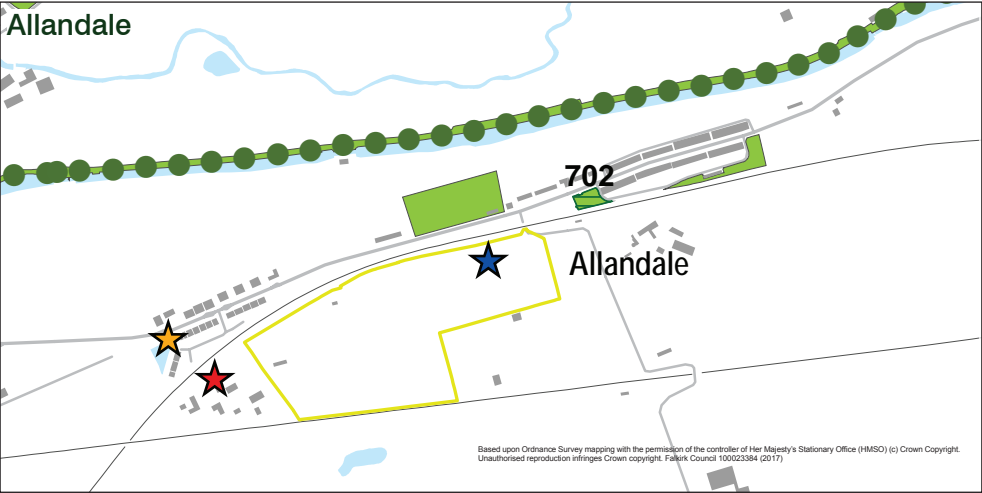
Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MQUAL.33; MNATREG08</b> Improve the quality of the Torwood (431) exploring opportunities for woodland management and development of an outdoor access network around Torwood.	<b>2,3,8</b>	Private landowner.	Objective 2: Priority 3 Objective 3: Priority 1	Top Local Priority
<b>MQUAL.32,34-35 &amp; 48</b> Improve the quality of Dunmore Village Green (438); Airth Castle Woodlands (434); Airth Recreation Ground (437); and Skinflats Park (442).	<b>3,8</b>	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may be available.	Skinflats: Priority 1 Dunmore: Priority 1 Airth: Priority 4	
<b>MPLAY.09 &amp; 12</b> Investigate opportunities to provide a new playspace in Torwood and South West Airth.	<b>4</b>	Falkirk Council.	Torwood: Priority 1 Airth: Priority 3	
<b>MSPOR.14,17 &amp; 18</b> Investigate opportunities to provide a new sports area in Airth, South Alloa and Torwood.	<b>5</b>		Priority 4	Creating a new sports area in Airth is a Top Local Priority
<b>MPARK.01 &amp; 16</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new park or amenity open space of over 0.2 hectares in South Airth and Torwood.	<b>6</b>	Falkirk Council.	Torwood: Priority 1 Airth: Priority 1	Creating a new park or amenity space in Torwood is a Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.26</b> Create missing link in in the core path network to enable the creation of a circular route between North Broomage and Denny via Glenbervie and Torwood.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council, Private Landowners.		Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.32</b> Create missing link in the Round the Forth Foreshore Path between Airth Sewage Works and Dunmore.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council.		
<b>MGNT.33</b> Investigate opportunities to enhance the abandoned opencast site at Waterslap between Airth and Letham including potential river restoration along the Pow Burn and access improvements from Airth and Letham.	<b>8</b>			
Rationalise playspace provision in Airth.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		
Investigate opportunities provide new open space to increase the rate of open space provision in Dunmore and Skinflats.	<b>10</b>	Falkirk Council.		



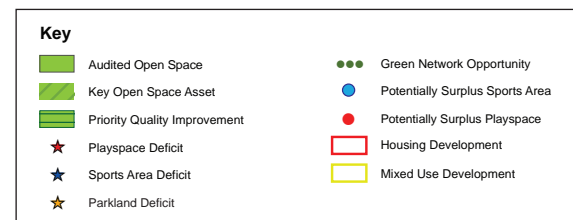
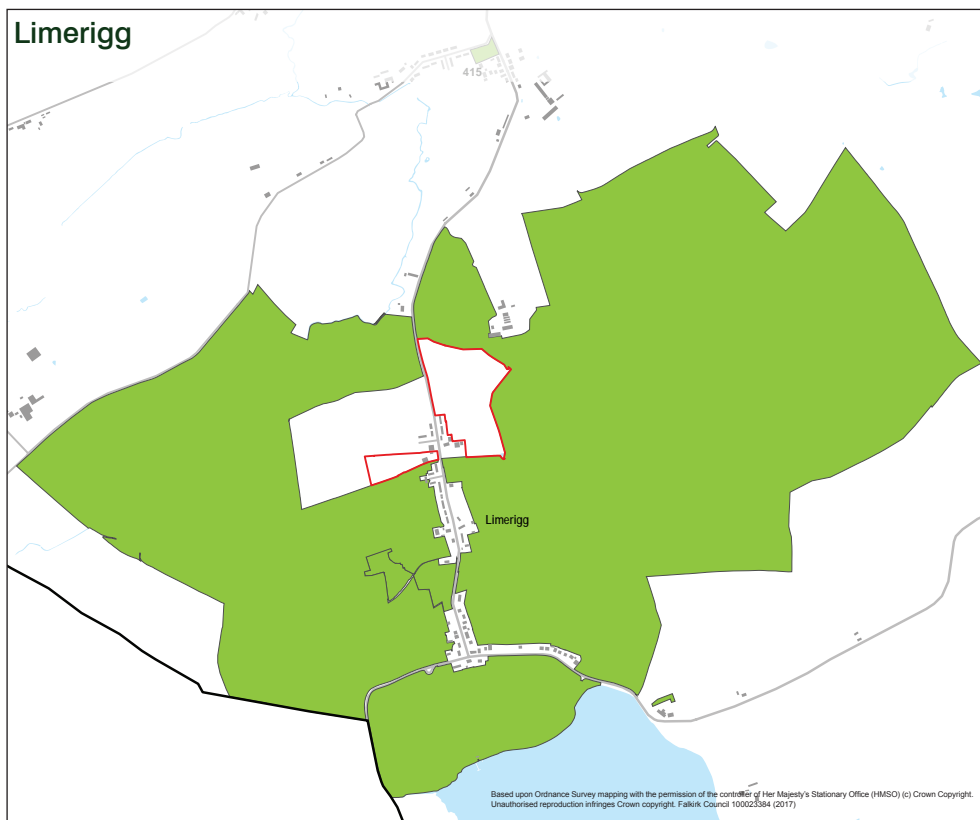


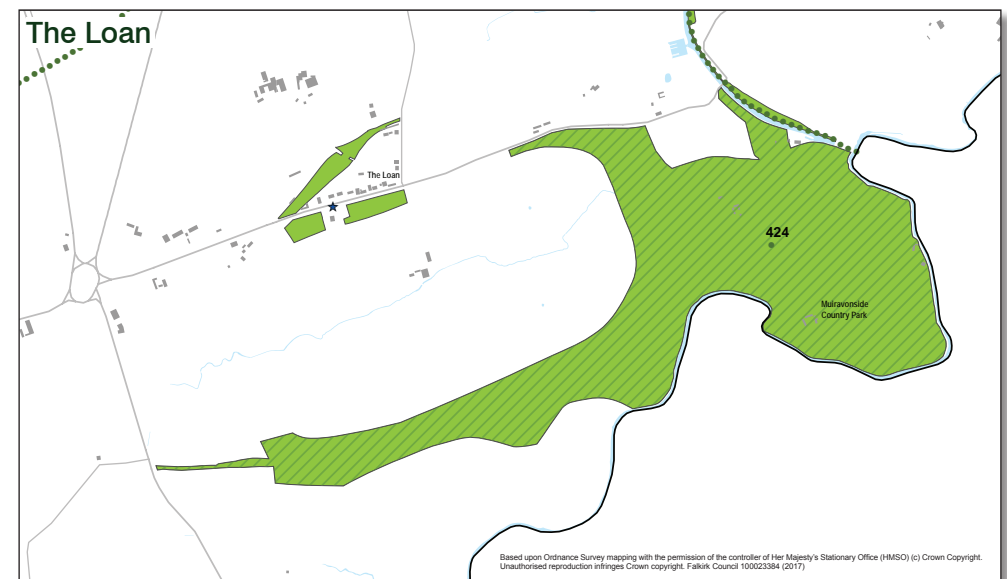
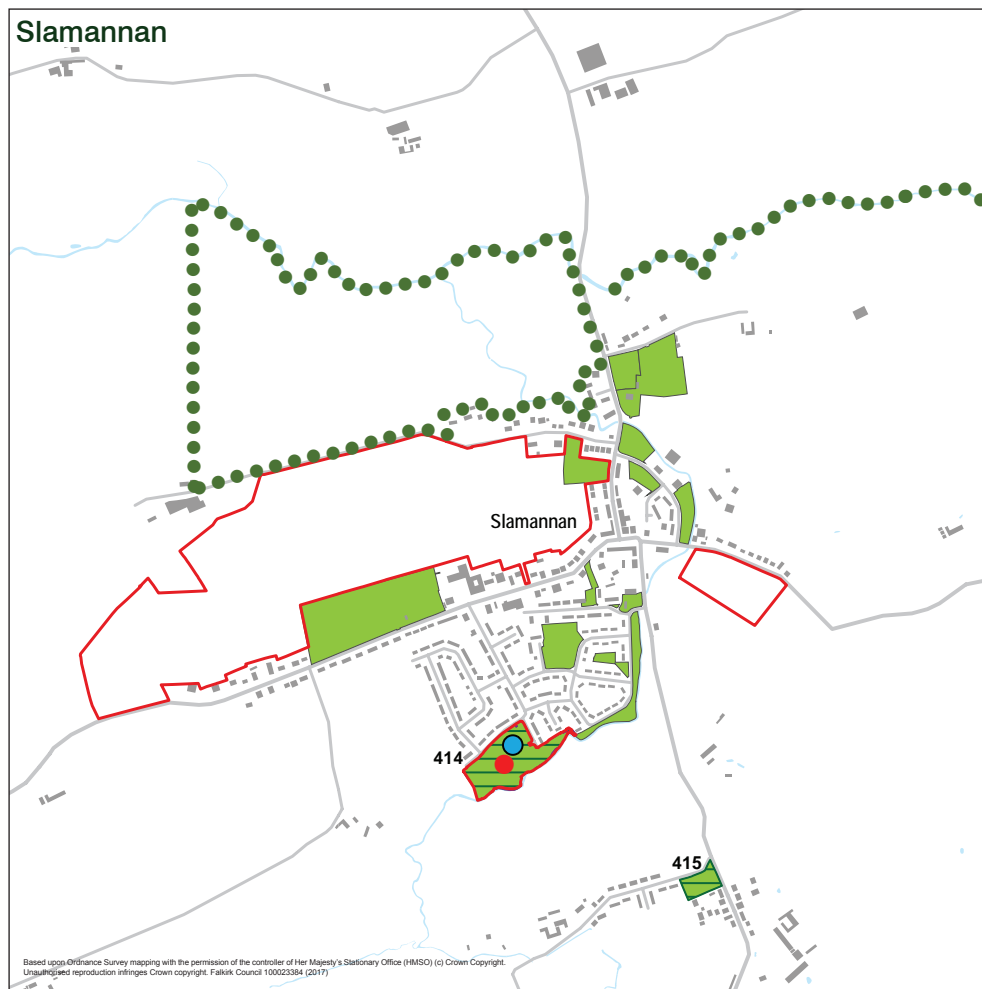


5.10 Rural South

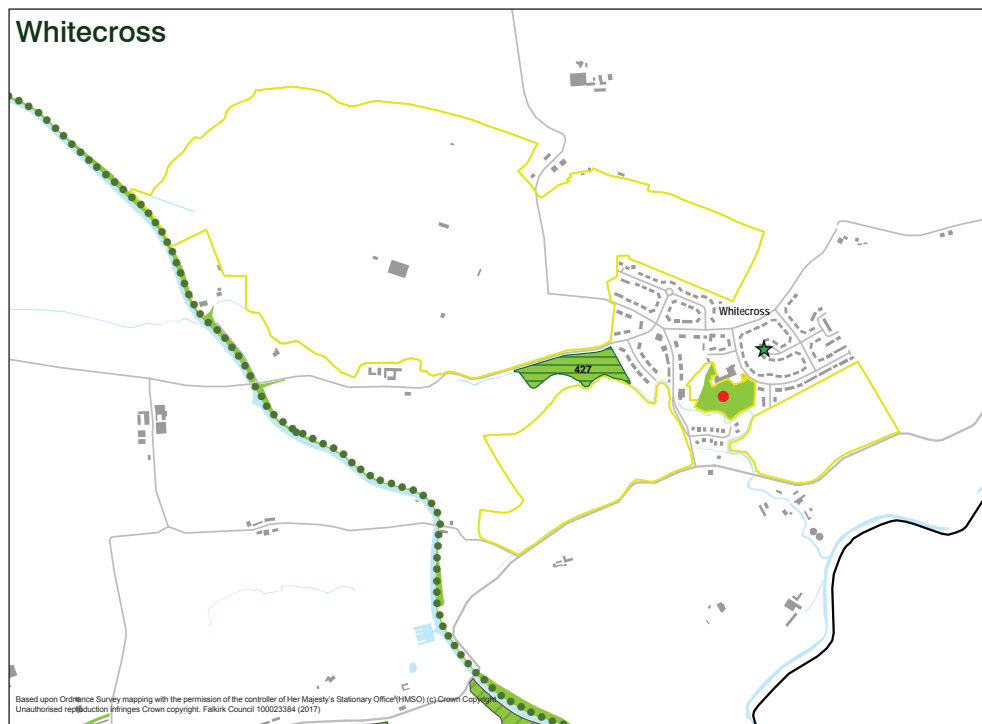












Key	
	Audited Open Space
	Key Open Space Asset
	Priority Quality Improvement
	Playspace Deficit
	Sports Area Deficit
	Parkland Deficit
	Green Network Opportunity
	Potentially Surplus Sports Area
	Potentially Surplus Playspace
	Housing Development
	Mixed Use Development



Muiravonside Country Park

## Analysis

The rural south area contains the villages of Allandale, Avonbridge, Blackness, California, Greenhill, Limerigg, Muirhouses, Shieldhill, Slamannan, Standburn and Whitecross . Although the area has the highest rate of open space provision of any settlement area across the Council; over 4 times the Council average; the villages of Avonbridge, California and Shieldhill have a rate of open space provision lower than the proposed 5 hectare per 1000 people standard. The average quality of open space in the settlement area is slightly above the Council average, it has the 3rd highest percentage of the total number of open spaces which are fit for purpose and the highest percentage of the total area of open space which is fit for purpose.

The settlement area has a very low percentage of households which have access to fit for purpose open space within 400m. None of the households in Avonbridge, California, Greenhill or Shieldhill, only 1 household in Whitecross and less than 15% of households in Allandale have access to an open space which is fit for purpose. The area has the lowest percentage of households with access to natural/ semi natural open space. None of the households in Avonbridge and less than 10% of households in California and Whitecross have access to a surveyed natural/ semi natural open space in or close to the village. The area has an average percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m but less than 80% of households in Allandale have with access to such a facility within that distance. The area has a higher than average percentage of households with access to sports area within 1200m but there is none of the households in Allandale, Greenhill or the Loan have access to such a facility.

## Relevant Objectives

1. Investing in the parks and open spaces that are particularly valued by the local community.
3. Investing in poorer quality parks and open spaces where there is no better quality alternative provision.
4. Developing new play facilities in areas of identified need.
5. Developing new sports areas in areas of identified need.
6. Developing new park and amenity space in areas of identified need.
7. Developing new semi natural open space in areas of identified need.
8. Improve the green network in and around the Council area by improving open space sites corridors and connectivity.
9. Rationalise our portfolio of playspaces and sports areas to improve overall quality.
10. Provide new open space where the rate of open space provision is below the 5ha/1000 people standard.

	Rural South	Falkirk Council Area
Number of surveyed open spaces	61	632
Area of open space (hectares)	458.6	2448.9
Rate of open space provision (hectares per 1000 people)	63.9	15.9
Percentage of total area of open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment	84.4%	64.0%
Percentage of households with access to an open space which scores 3.0 or better in the fitness for purpose assessment within a 400m walk (5 mins)	24.8%	65.7%
Percentage of households with access to a park or amenity space of 2000m <sup>2</sup> or greater within a 400m walk (5 mins)	82.4%	85.7%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a playspace within 800m (10 mins)	96.5%	96.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a sports area within 1200m (15 mins)	93.6%	92.9%
Percentage of households with access to an open space containing a natural/semi natural open space within 1200m (15 mins)	74.8%	96.6%



## Priority Actions

Action (Parks Development Plan action reference in bold, open space reference number in brackets).	Objective	Agency/Mechanism	Strategic/Thematic Priority	Local Priority
<b>MVAL.14</b> Develop and implement a masterplan for Muiravonside Country Park (424).	<b>1,8</b>	Falkirk Council. External funding to be sought.	Priority 5	
<b>MQUAL.37-45 &amp; 49</b> Improve the quality of: Avonbridge recreation ground (418); California recreation ground (419); Whitecross recreation ground (427); Shieldhill playingfields (421); Greenhill Park (440); Thorndale Gardens, Allandale (702); Main Street, Shieldhill (422); Ledi Place, Shieldhill (662) The Rumlie, Slamannan (414) and Binniehill Playground (415).	<b>3,8</b>	Falkirk Council. Developer contributions may become available.	Allandale: Priority 1 Avonbridge: Priority 1 California: Priority 1 Greenhill: Priority 1 Shieldhill: Priority 1 Slamannan: Priority 4 Whitecross: Priority 1	Improving the recreation grounds in Avonbridge and California and improving the open space at Main Street, Shieldhill and at Binniehill playground are Top Local Priorities
<b>MPLAY.10 &amp; 11</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new playspaces at Eastern Shieldhill and Western Allandale.	<b>4,10</b>	Falkirk Council, Shieldhill residents. Opportunities may arise in association with new development.	Shieldhill: Priority 4 Allandale: Priority 2 Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MSPOR.15 &amp; 16</b> Investigate opportunities to provide a new sports area in Allandale and The Loan.	<b>5</b>	Falkirk Council. Opportunities may arise in association with new development in Allandale.	Priority 4	
<b>MPARK.17-19</b> Investigate opportunities to provide new park or amenity open space of over 0.2 hectares at Allandale; Southern Avonbridge; and Eastern Shieldhill.	<b>6,10</b>	Opportunities may arise in association with new development.	Allandale: Priority 2 Avonbridge: Priority 2 Shieldhill: Priority 3	Creating a new park or amenity space in southern Avonbridge is a Top Local Priority
<b>MSEM.02</b> Investigate opportunities to provide access to semi-natural open space in Whitecross.	<b>7</b>	Investigate opportunities to provide access to semi-natural open space in Whitecross.	Priority 1: Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.05</b> Carry out landscape and access improvements along the John Muir Way which runs along the Forth and Clyde Canal, Union Canal, River Avon Heritage Trail and the Forth Foreshore Path.	<b>8</b>			Top Local Priority
<b>MGNT.34</b> Improve access network along the River Avon upstream from Avonbridge to Slamannan.	<b>8</b>	Falkirk Council. Private Landowners.		
<b>MGNT.35</b> New greenspace incorporating extensive tree planting to be created as part of the housing development site at Hillcrest near Shieldhill.	<b>8,10</b>	In conjunction with development.	Dependent on timing of development.	
<b>MGNT.36</b> New greenspace specifically managed for use by Bean Geese (and not made available for public recreational use) to be created as part of the Hillend Farm housing development site in Slamannan.	<b>8</b>	In conjunction with development.	Dependent on timing of development.	Top Local Priority
Rationalise playspace provision in Greenhill, Slamannan and Whitecross and sports area provision in Slamannan.	<b>9</b>	Falkirk Council.		
Investigate opportunities to increase the rate of open space provision in Avonbridge, California and Shieldhill.	<b>10</b>	Falkirk Council.		





# **Falkirk Council**

## **Open Space Strategy**

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