

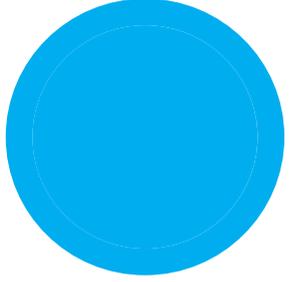
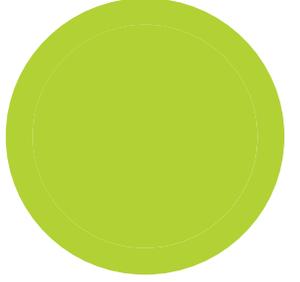
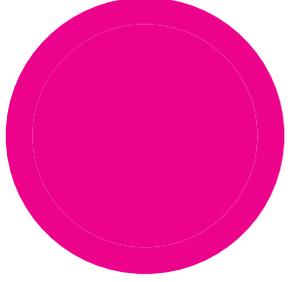
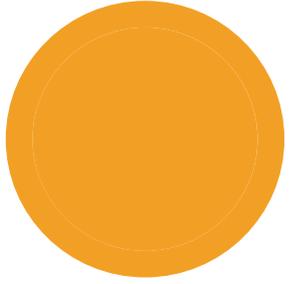


# The Council Plan 2022-2027

## Year 2



Falkirk Council



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# Foreword

**What has been achieved during the first year of the Council Plan has been significant and extremely important. We have made decisions that had been avoided for too long and given the green light to projects that will fundamentally shape the future of the whole area.**

As a Council, we have focused our efforts on alleviating poverty and supporting our most vulnerable residents. We have agreed the location of the new Falkirk town hall and a way forward for the Strategic Property Review. Important reviews of our libraries and waste services have been undertaken and our overall performance remains strong, particularly in Education.

Work to deliver infrastructure projects at Westfield A9/A904 and the Denny Eastern Access Road have also begun. Once complete, these projects will help unlock significant economic and social benefits for the area.

Our nomination for four COSLA Excellence Awards underscores the diverse and outstanding work our employees are doing to support communities and uphold our values of being responsive, innovative, trusted, and ambitious.

## Making it happen

The progress highlighted, however, is just the tip of the iceberg and helps showcase our commitment to becoming a modern, efficient and effective Council that uses data to inform decisions and improve performance.

These accomplishments can be attributed, in part, to changes in our Senior Management team and the Council itself, with a 50% turnover of Councillors following the 2022 local elections. These changes have injected renewed energy and have begun to deliver the collaboration needed to drive transformation.

The outcomes of our Best Value report have also been influential but, the reality is, none of this would have been possible without the hard work of every single Council employee. That is why prioritising employee wellbeing is one of the core objectives of our Workforce Strategy.

This strategy will also ensure we have the right people in the right jobs with the right skills and attitude who will help us continue to support communities, reduce inequalities, foster a thriving economy, and embrace a greener future despite ongoing financial pressures.

## Looking forward

Over the next 12 months, our focus will remain firmly on supporting communities struggling with the ever-increasing cost of living. We must also double down on our

efforts to make our organisation financially sustainable, which is the objective of our Financial Strategy. The strategy provides us with a roadmap that will help us bridge our deficit and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

The Verity House Agreement, signed by the First Minister and COSLA President earlier this year, should also bring new opportunity. The agreement recognises that public service delivery should be 'local by default' and sets out the Scottish Government's commitment to review Council powers and funding. If progress can be made on the Fiscal Framework, including a much-needed reduction in ring fencing, that will help us continue our journey of transformation and improvement.

By getting our house in order, we will be able to capitalise on the positive outcomes that will flow from the Forth Green Freeport and the Falkirk Growth Deal. The Freeport is Scotland's greatest opportunity for a just transition to net zero and, together with the Growth Deal, it will bring inward investment and create thousands of new jobs, particularly in the renewable energy sector.

There are still enormous challenges ahead, and our financial position remains critical, but if the first year of the Council Plan has taught us anything, it is the fact we can achieve great things when we work alongside our partners and local communities. By continuing to do this, we will build a brighter future for everyone in the Falkirk Council area; a future where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved.

## Kenneth Lawrie Chief Executive



# Key Facts



Population of **158,400** in the Falkirk Council area



**72,500** Households



Workforce of **7,800+** people employed by the Council



**949,000** visitors in 2019, bringing **£137m** to the local economy, supporting **2,200** jobs



**44** community projects benefitting from **£1.3m** of Community Choices funds in 2022/23



Budget for 23/24

**£428M**

## Our Strategic Framework

The Council Plan will be supported by a number of other key strategies, programmes and plans.

The Falkirk Plan 2021 - 2030

The Council Plan

**Core Strategies & Programmes:**

Financial Strategy  
Council of the Future - Transformation and Improvement  
Workforce Plans  
Best Value

**Other Core Strategies- including:**

Local Housing Strategy, Falkirk National Improvement Framework, Digital Falkirk, Falkirk Economic Strategy, Litter Strategy - A Cleaner Falkirk, Green Fleet Initiative, Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan.

Service/Directorate Plans

Performance Management Framework

Falkirk Performs



# The Council Plan

## Vision:

Strong communities where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved

## Priorities:

Supporting stronger and healthier communities

Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities

Supporting a thriving economy and green transition



## Values:

Responsive

Innovative

Trusted

Ambitious



## Enablers:

Financial Sustainability

Transformation & Improvement

Valued Sustainable Workforce



# Values

## We will be a Responsive, Innovative, Trusted & Ambitious Council

### Responsive:

By embracing technology and modern working practices, we will enhance people's lives and use our own data to create services that meet the needs of our customers 24/7, 365 days of the year.

We will do this by:

- Becoming a fully digital Council
- Recognising our financial circumstances and targeting resources to areas of greatest need
- Cementing strong working relationships with partners to provide joined up services that are customer focused
- Providing robust connectivity and taking a digital first approach to service delivery, customers will be able to interact directly online 24/7, 365 days a year
- Harnessing technology to modernise the Council and ensure services are sustainable.

### Trusted:

By removing bureaucracy and red tape, we will enable and empower people to develop new skills to live rewarding and happy lives as independently as possible within their own community.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring employees have the skills and are empowered to be flexible, adaptable, and ready to respond to customer need using the right tools and technology
- Transforming and delivering services by listening and acting on what customers tell us, putting their needs at the centre of decision making
- Being open and honest about the difficulties we face, working with employees, communities, and partners to find solutions that ensure the best possible outcomes for all
- Having leaders that inspire and make employees feel valued for that work that they do
- Openly communicating how we are performing.

### Innovative:

By celebrating creativity and learning, we will inspire employees and communities to solve shared problems and create unique services that make Falkirk the place to live, learn, work and visit.

We will do this by:

- Empowering local people to be less dependent on services we have traditionally provided
- Using digital technologies to enhance customers' experience
- Taking a place-based approach rather than a process-based approach to ensure transformation delivers benefits to challenges the area faces
- Being unafraid to think and work differently, increasing collaboration to fix problems before they arise
- Responding to the needs of diverse communities, understanding that one size does not fit all.

### Ambitious:

By working together, employees and communities will help create sustainable services that positively impact peoples' lives.

We will do this by:

- Having fewer but well-maintained buildings to meet the needs of a wide range of people as well as our climate change target
- Focusing on getting it right first time for our customers, especially those most in need
- Using data and information to focus resources on the services most in demand
- Transforming education to provide our children and young people with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive in an ever-changing world
- Working collaboratively with businesses, communities, and partners to create new and exciting opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

# Priorities

## Supporting stronger and healthier communities

**Communities that are empowered, inclusive, resilient, and safe**

The Falkirk Council area will be thriving, sustainable and dynamic – a great place to live, learn and work.

Communities will be supported to be healthy, happy and engaged, enjoying a great quality of life.

Local communities will build on their energy, knowledge and expertise to shape and create neighbourhoods to be proud of and services that meet their needs.

## Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

**An economy that is competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive, and sustainable and an environment that we value, enjoy, protect and enhance**

Falkirk is an area committed to growth and attracting investment, ensuring more people can benefit from our competitive, entrepreneurial economy.

Transitioning to a greener, smarter, and more sustainable economy will allow us to enjoy, protect and enhance our natural environment.

Our dynamic and skilled workforce will be key to our success, with employability support given to those who need it.

## Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities

**Educational excellence, reduce poverty and inequality, and improve wellbeing**

Falkirk is a place where everyone can fulfil their potential.

Families will be supported to give children the best start in life.

Health and socio-economic inequalities will be tackled by using a targeted approach that focuses on early interventions.

All children and adults deserve to feel safe and protected from harm and this will be overseen by the work of Falkirk's Child Protection Committee and Falkirk Adult Protection Committee.





Image by ScotDrone

# Priority

## Supporting stronger and healthier communities



### We will:

- Support community groups to deliver services that help address inequalities.
- Alleviate homelessness by increasing housing supply and providing early interventions and housing options advice.
- Encourage and support local third sector organisations to increase and develop community owned assets through the management and operation of community halls, centres and other public assets available for community transfer.
- Ensure our housing stock meets quality standards and our tenants live in good quality homes.
- Support and safeguard children and adults where protection concerns have been raised.
- Improve the way we engage with residents to increase residents influence on decision making.
- Help people participate in activities that improve health & wellbeing with particular focus on inclusivity and those who experience barriers to participation such as poverty, inequality and disability.
- Develop community mental health and wellbeing services to provide a range of support for everyone in the community.
- Work with Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and partners to deliver adult health and social care services in line with the IJB strategic plan.

# Priority

## Supporting stronger and healthier communities

### Success measures:

- Undertake organisational health checks to identify and source training for community groups and committee members, to develop skills and assist with funding applications to increase capacity and resilience.
- Increase the number of people attending training/development courses to help increase capacity and resilience of community groups.
- Establishment of Community Anchor Organisations increases across the life of this plan.
- More community participation requests.
- More communities taking control over the places they meet in (asset transfers).
- Increase the number of additional affordable homes – by building new homes and through the 'buy back' programme.
- Track a number of measures to monitor homelessness including the number of days it takes to secure permanent housing.
- Reduce the number of days it takes to complete non-emergency repairs to our housing stock.
- Increase the percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Increase the percentage of stock meeting Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.
- Ensure that every child on the child protection register has a protection plan.
- Monitor the percentage of Child Protection Planning Meetings held within 28 days.
- Monitor the number of Duty to Inquire cases for adults.
- Monitor the number of Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD's) for adults.
- Monitor the number of Investigations for adults.
- Increase the percentage of Falkirk Council budgets subject to Participatory Budgeting.
- Increase income of our Sport & Leisure provision.
- Maintain participation of our Sport & Leisure provision.
- Maintain satisfaction rating for customers using the Sport & Leisure provision.
- Increase the 'GoCard Plus' uptake and usage within the Sport and Leisure service.
- Deliver three new projects focused on improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and supporting families.
- Work with Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and partners to monitor performance.

### Links to other plans...

The Falkirk Plan  
Grangemouth Community Action Plan  
Denny, Dunipace & Dennyloanhead Community Action Plan  
Local Housing Strategy  
Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan



# Priority

## Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities

### We will:

- Tackle poverty by offering financial health checks to improve access to services/benefits to help with the cost of living. Support school attendance by reducing the financial barriers in the cost of the school day.
- Shift the balance of care for those children who need to be looked after away from home, from residential care to family-based care.
- Ensure children will meet their individual developmental and attainment targets and school leavers will transition into positive, sustained destinations.
- Support school aged care experienced children to fully engage in education.
- Develop family learning programmes with all school areas that target families who would most benefit from family learning.
- Provide connectivity and support within library spaces to those who would otherwise be digitally excluded.
- Develop our Library Service to create attractive opportunities to further reduce inequalities and promote opportunities.
- Work with community partners to reduce unemployment and inactivity rates and increase the skills of the workforce within the Falkirk area.
- Embed equalities at the heart of strategic planning and decision making across the Council.



# Priority

## Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities

### Success measures:

- Increase financial gain (additional income to households) from benefits support provided by Council Debt and Welfare Benefits Services to households including those with children.
- Improve percentage of children being looked after in the community where possible.
- Increase the number of new foster care placements.
- Offer all Kinship Carers a benefit maximisation assessment.
- Improve attendance rates in our High Schools.
- Increase attainment for all – including those living in the most deprived areas.
- Increase P1/4/7 Literacy and Numeracy in our Primary Schools.
- Increase the percentage of children (including Looked After Children) entering positive destinations.
- Our educational provisions will be rated as good or better.
- Improve mental health & wellbeing outcomes through community learning activity for people of all ages.
- Increase the number of young people completing & receiving national awards or wider achievement awards via CLD.
- Increase the number of public space Wi-Fi Locations.
- Increase the number of unique clients accessing pc, internet and WiFi sessions in libraries (connectivity).
- Increase the number of individuals attending IT support sessions in libraries.
- Increase number of attendees at programmed events and activities offered by libraries.
- Improve the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated/funded employability programmes.
- Monitor and report against the number of people unemployed and claiming benefits in the area.
- Monitor and report against the proportion of people earning less than the living wage in the area.
- Focus on equalities by ensuring all decision-making reports to the Council, Executive and Education, Children and Young People Executive are supported by an Equalities & Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA).
- Ensure all Elected Members and Senior Officers complete Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) training.
- Increase the percentage of staff who have completed Basic Equalities Training in Falkirk Council.

### Links to other plans...

Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan  
Falkirk National Improvement Framework  
Digital Falkirk



# Priority

## Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

### We will:

- Deliver local and regional activity that drives sustainable growth within the local economy.
- Deliver transformational investment programmes to improve the economy through infrastructure investment.
- Push towards becoming net-zero by 2030.
- Create a cleaner and greener Falkirk area.
- Develop a more sustainable transport infrastructure and decarbonise the Council's fleet.
- Ensure the Council's property estate is fit for purpose and sustainable.



# Priority

## Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

### Success measures:

- Invest more money into tourism in the area.
- Council procurement spend spent on local enterprises, where appropriate.
- Improve the number of Business Gateway start-ups through investment.
- Lower town vacancy rates.
- Increase the percentage of business properties leased by the Council that are occupied.
- Increase Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita.
- Increase Employment Level.
- Reduce percentage of overall carriageway length to be considered for maintenance treatment
- Increase percentage of programmed budget spent in the Council's Capital Plan.
- Report against the progress towards the Council's net zero target by 2030.
- Report against progress towards the 2030 Falkirk area-wide interim carbon reduction target.
- Improve street cleanliness score.
- Increase the percentage of total household waste that is recycled.
- Reduce biodegradable waste sent to landfill to zero.
- Ensure residents within Forth Valley are within a 10-minute walk from a publicly accessible EV charge point.
- Increase the percentage of our vehicle fleet that are zero emission vehicles.
- Reduce CO2 emissions from fleet.
- Reduce CO2 emissions from operational buildings.
- Increase the proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use.

- Increase the proportion of operational buildings in satisfactory condition.
- Increase the number of people that have progressed to employment as a result of their participation in Council funded or operated employability activities.
- Improve the percentage of properties that require an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which are rated 'D' or better.

### Links to other plans...

Falkirk Economic Strategy  
Litter Strategy - A Cleaner Falkirk  
Waste Strategy,



# Enablers

## Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability means having short, and long term, financial stability. We will spend money in the most efficient and effective ways, so we can have the greatest impact on improving quality of life and ensure we provide the best value to the people of Falkirk. Our strategy will be underpinned by better budget control, a focus on service needs and on business transformation.

Our procurement processes will maximise the use of council funds and spend them locally, where possible. By cultivating a commercialisation plan for relevant services, we can harness our efficiencies for maximum impact on our resources.

We will provide affordable and efficient services with the limited resources we have and ensure we deliver our priorities and improved outcomes for people in our communities. This includes developing a sustainable approach to Council Tax setting.

We must develop a balanced approach to the difficult task of achieving financial sustainability with our limited resources with a clear focus on the needs of people, businesses, and the communities at the very heart of our decision making.

## Transformation & Improvement

Our Council of the Future (COTF) change programme is the Council's framework for Transformation and Improvement. Our COTF projects will support the delivery of our vision and priorities by doing things in a more **Responsive, Innovative, Trusted & Ambitious** way.

Transformation Projects: These are our Wave 3 Council of the Future Transformation Projects. These projects are set to deliver significant financial and transformational benefits, moving at pace, as we continue to embrace new ways of working and new models of service delivery.

Improvement Projects: These are our efficiency, improvement and enabler projects. They will deliver a mix of efficiency savings, drive continuous improvement in core Service areas and enable the delivery of our key transformation projects.

The COTF change programme will help us deliver on our financial sustainability commitments and support the development of a valued and sustainable workforce.

## Valued Sustainable Workforce

We will continue to embed new ways of collaborative working, providing our employees with the tools and support they need to deliver quality service and deliver upon the priorities and commitments in this plan.

We will recognise our employees' achievements and provide appropriate learning and development for all.

Our Good Conversations Framework aims to ensure that our employees feel valued, motivated, engaged, and empowered - we will build on this by implementing a wellbeing strategy for staff.

We aim to ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusivity are at the heart of everything we do, and we value the strength of a diverse workforce.

We will continue to recognise the importance of recruitment and retention of the right calibre of employees to sustain a professional workforce and will review our employment package to bolster this.

We will create and expand opportunities for young people within our workforce and further support them through development programmes with a clear focus on succession planning for the future.

We will implement a programme of culture change activities to ensure we are a Council of the Future.



# Risk and The Council Plan

Many of the challenges facing the Council are intrinsically affected by external socio-economic, environmental, and geo-political uncertainties.

The table below overlays the key risks to delivering the Council Plan across the three main priorities, the enablers and some other inherent organisational risks for the Council.



## Current Corporate Risks

Supporting stronger and healthier communities		
● Health & Social Care Transformation	● National Care Service (Feeley) Review	● Public Protection: Harm to Adults/Children
Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities		
● Attainment and GIRFEC	● Equalities duties	● Poverty - Fairer Falkirk
Supporting a thriving economy and green transition		
● Climate Emergency - Delivery of Declaration	● Sustainable growth	● Delivery of major capital projects
Enablers - Finance, Transformation, Workforce		
● Financial Sustainability ● Transformational Change	● HR and Workforce Planning	● Strategic Assets (Fleet, ICT, Property, etc)
Key Organisational Risks (rated high and/or limited assurance)		
● Cyber Security ● Resilience - Partnerships and Business Continuity	● Health, Safety, and Wellbeing ● Leadership, decision making, and governance	● Housing Fire Safety (poss. changes to regs) ● Terrorism inc. CONTEST and Martyn's Law





Image by ScotDrone



**Falkirk Council**