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FALKIRK COUNCIL

Place Services

Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE

Scale: 1:2,500

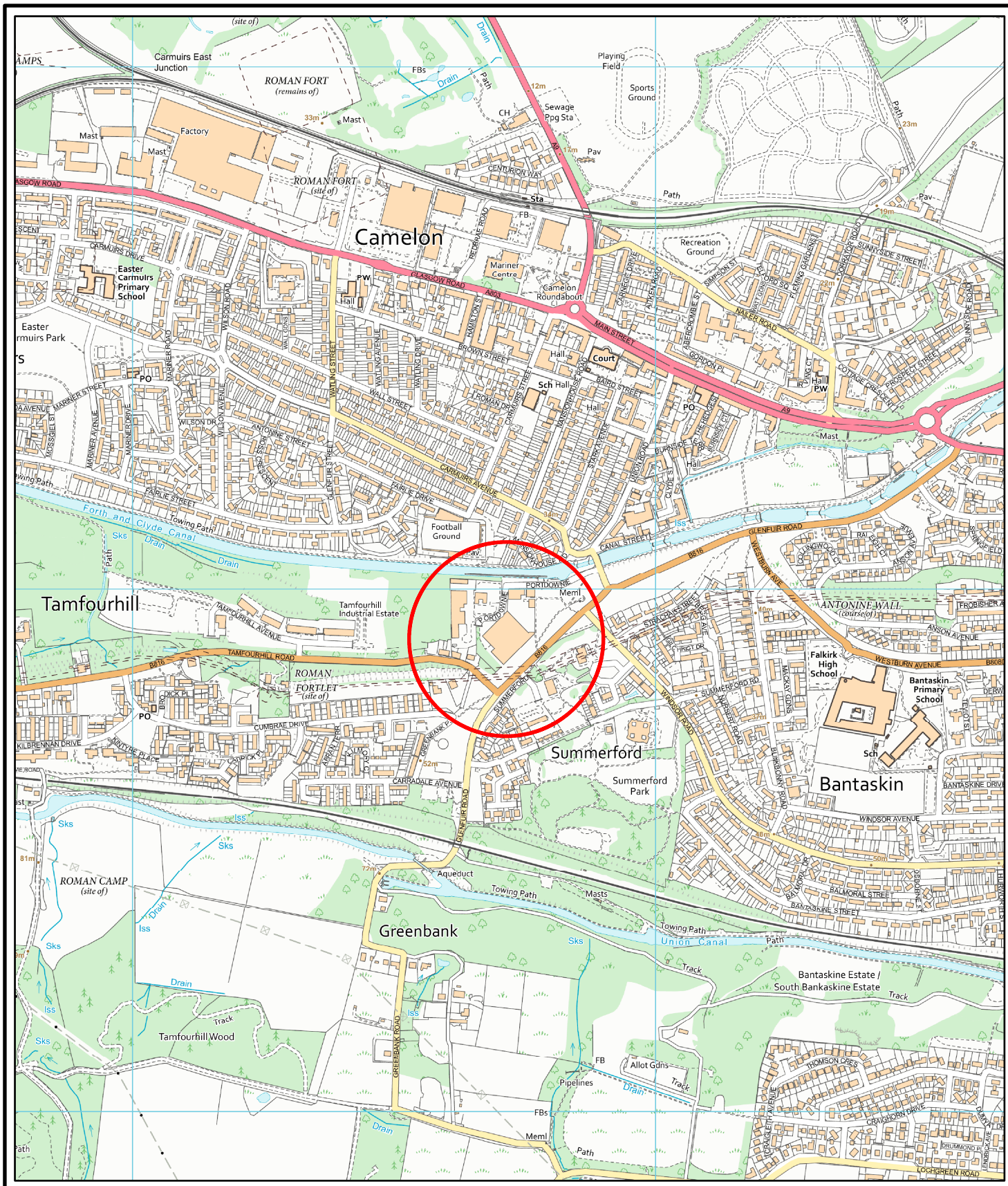
Date: 27.10.2025



Subject

Loch Sixteen, Portdownie, Falkirk

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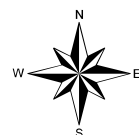
FALKIRK COUNCIL

Place Services

Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE

Scale: 1:10,000

Date: 27.10.2025



Subject

Loch 16, Portdownie, Falkirk

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Appendix 2



Lock 16: Scotland's Centre of Excellence for Canals and Traditional Skills

Executive Summary



Scottish
Canals



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
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Executive Summary

The historic built environment sector faces a skills crisis, with an ageing workforce, outdated qualifications, limited regional access, and unsustainable funding models. Rising costs have stifled innovation and left much of Scotland without vital training to preserve heritage and support the transition to net zero.

The project, **Lock 16 - Scotland's Centre of Excellence for Canals and Traditional Skills'** involves the regeneration of the former AG Barr building in Camelon, Falkirk to establish an operational base for Scottish Canals and create an accredited training hub to expand traditional skills and volunteer training (upskilling, reskilling and transition) for maintaining Scotland's built and canal heritage.

The project is being led and delivered by Scottish Canals (SC) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) who are both major asset managers of heritage assets and provide public benefit through access and engagement. The organisations share many cross-cutting objectives with a focus on the stewardship of cultural heritage assets across Scotland from properties and scheduled ancient monument infrastructure to collections, archives to intangible cultural heritage, providing public access, and delivering revenue generating activity which supports their corporate objectives.

Phase one of the project is complete, with SC having invested £3.65m to regenerate the site and make the building wind and watertight. Phase two has secured an additional £3.7m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and combined with funding from the Falkirk and Grangemouth Growth Deal (FGGD) and commitments from project partners, the Centre of Excellence will now focus on building a sustainable, multi-generational system for skills development and pathways, supporting long-term economic and community growth. The Centre of Excellence has the overall ambition to:

1. Preserve Scotland's heritage.
2. Regenerate and strengthen communities.
3. Open opportunities for diverse learners to engage in traditional and canal-related skills.

Project Deliverables

The project aims to deliver against its ambition through:

- Creating a new consolidated operational hub for SC to support the Lowland Canals.
 - Relocation of SC Canal operations, maintenance, and engineering base.
- Creating a dedicated national hub and centre of excellence that will provide classroom, workshop, networking, and engagement/outreach space. The hub will offer the right blend of functional space by integrating workshops and 'hands on' training space with digital innovation and e-learning:

- Relocation and consolidation of HES Skills Training Centre (which is currently delivered from the Stirling Skills Centre at Cunningham Road, Stirling) to enhance capacity within the existing Modern Apprenticeship programmes for stone masonry and rural skills.
- Establish a new dedicated hub for SC volunteer and employability training.
- Delivering a programme of outreach engagement to inspire people to get involved and volunteer in the historic environment.
- Creating and delivering new accredited workforce micro-credentials to enhance the capacity and capability of the historic environment and heritage sector:
 - SCQF 8: Planning, Surveying and Recording the Condition of Built Assets for Conservation.
 - SCQF 6: PDA: Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Masonry Structure.

Impact on Existing Provision

While there is a strong case for developing the project based on business need, market demand, and policy fit, it is also important to consider the impact on existing provision from consolidating and relocating activity to the Centre of Excellence.

HES skills and education training - the training will be relocated from its current site at Cunningham Road, Stirling. HES have been based there since 2021, however, it was always intended to be a temporary location. The proposed site offers a larger, more affordable and appropriate space that will allow HES to expand its training provision. The facility at Cunningham Road, which is leased from a private sector operator will be closed and all operations relocated, including:

- 7 FTE staff.
- 48 Stonemasonry Modern Apprentices per annum.
- Maximum of 12 Craft-fellows per annum.

HES operates two other training centres in Elgin and at the Engine Shed in Stirling, these will continue to operate as current, and the Centre of Excellence will have no impact on these facilities. All regulated training that HES delivers is done under the Engine Shed Scottish Qualification Authority & National Open College Approved Centre status. This approval will be extended to cover training delivered at the Centre of Excellence. HES will continue to support training interventions across Scotland, as resources allow. Key to the success of the Centre of Excellence is the creation and support of an ecosystem of training provision across Scotland, a Hub & Spokes model.

Scottish Canals - operations, maintenance and engineering hub at West Mains. The building is leased from Falkirk Council and there are 27 staff that are 'based' there. However, it is important to highlight that the building operates as more of a transient hub, as opposed to a home base for the team where they store equipment, plant, tools, etc.

The staff based there are responsible for maintenance across the entire Lowland Canal network – which stretches east to west across Scotland. Necessarily, the team are required to be mobile and 'on site' for most of their time.

At the Falkirk level the impact will be minimal as the staff are only being moved to a more appropriate and affordable location within the same local authority, so no jobs will be 'lost'. At the very local Grangemouth level there will be a reduction in induced spending i.e. staff that are based there spending money in the local shops and services (lunch, shopping, etc).

In addition, there may be some benefits to the local area as SC relocation will free up floorspace in an attractive industrial estate - leasing the unit vacated by SC to a private operator will bring new permanent jobs to the area (SC were using the facility as a transient hub) and could attract sectors aligned to the Greener Grangemouth proposals.

Scottish Canals - Volunteer Programme - Scottish Canals has a long-standing commitment to volunteering, currently supporting over 2,000 volunteers annually through a mix of public volunteering, corporate days, and partnerships with schools, canal societies, and community groups. These activities are promoted through the Scottish Canals website, social media, and wider corporate communications, and are coordinated by two existing staff members, one based in the Lowlands and one at the Treehouse in Inverness, a growing canal-side community hub for engagement and wellbeing.

As part of the Centre of Excellence, these existing strategies will be expanded and formalised. The Centre will provide a dedicated space for volunteer training, outreach, and engagement, enabling Scottish Canals to increase capacity, diversify opportunities, and reach new audiences. The two new SC roles, a Volunteering and Employability Manager and a Volunteer Co-ordinator, will be appointed to lead this work, joining the existing team to form a national volunteering network.

Definition of Traditional and Rural Skills

To assist the reader, the following definitions are provided.

'Traditional' and 'heritage' skills are an umbrella term as defined as those required to conserve, adapt, manage, protect, maintain, and repair an historic environment asset. This includes skilled crafts such as stonemasonry, blacksmithing, carpentry, timber framing, plasterwork, traditional roofing (slating and thatching), architectural and ornamental metalwork, and lock gate manufacture.

Training provision in traditional and heritage skills straddles between elements of formal, regulated training provision for crafts such as Stonemasonry and Roof Slating, to the informal and unregulated areas of thatching, earth building and metal conservation.

Rural Skills within the context of this business case refers to an area of vocational skills that straddle the natural and historic environment, that provide entry-level training and employment opportunities within HES and SC and other similar heritage sector organisations. Skills include habitat management, grounds maintenance including basic construction skills such as fencing, pathways, as well as general building conservation skills such as repointing, traditional roof repairs and monument consolidation. The Rural Skills Modern Apprenticeship is at SCQF 5, providing opportunities for candidates to move on to higher level MAs or other training in Construction Crafts, Heritage Skills and Environmental Conservation.

Community Wealth Building

The project has embraced the overarching principles of Community Wealth Building to ensure that (where feasible and appropriate), benefits and impacts are retained within the Falkirk and Grangemouth area. We would note our intended approach to¹:

- Progressive procurement – through the use of specific community benefit clauses with the main and associated subcontractors.
- Fair employment – both SC and HES are Living Wage employers, and this will be a requirement for the capital construction works.
- Socially productive use of land and assets – the Centre of Excellence will be a mixed-use space that supports employment but also offers training, skills and volunteering opportunities for local people.

Engagement and Promotion

SC and HES will utilise their existing extensive networks (local, national, international and digital) to help engage and promote the project. As noted above, SC will employ two dedicated roles to deliver the enhanced volunteer programme while HES will build on their relationship with DYW Forth Valley and with other DYW regional groups.

For example, [Build Your Future](#) was a DYW Forth Valley project that HES was instrumental in developing and is now core to our national skills outreach offer and will be fully embedded in our the Centre of Excellence programme. Once the delivery team are in place, HES will reach out to local schools through DYW coordinators and careers service to ensure that opportunities are flagged to young people appropriately.

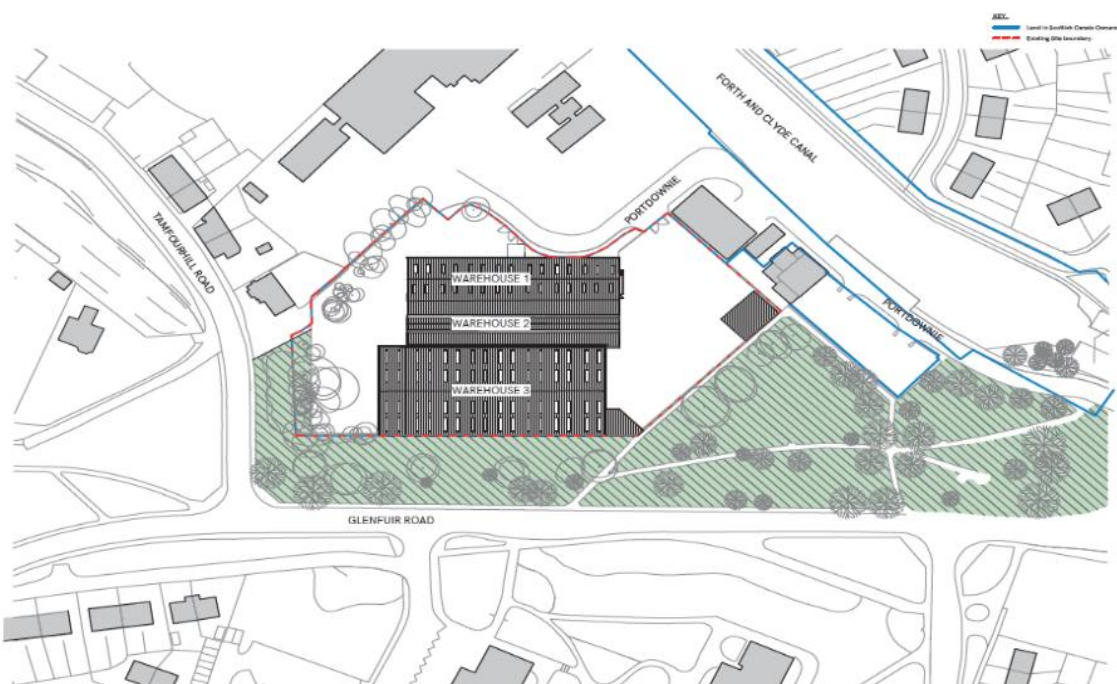
¹ Please note that the bullets are indicative and not exhaustive. Project partners will work with stakeholders to develop approaches once the project is approved and commenced.

HES is also in discussion with sector partners including SCQF & Education Scotland about a National 5 in Heritage Skills that would initiate a pathway for heritage sector careers within curriculum.

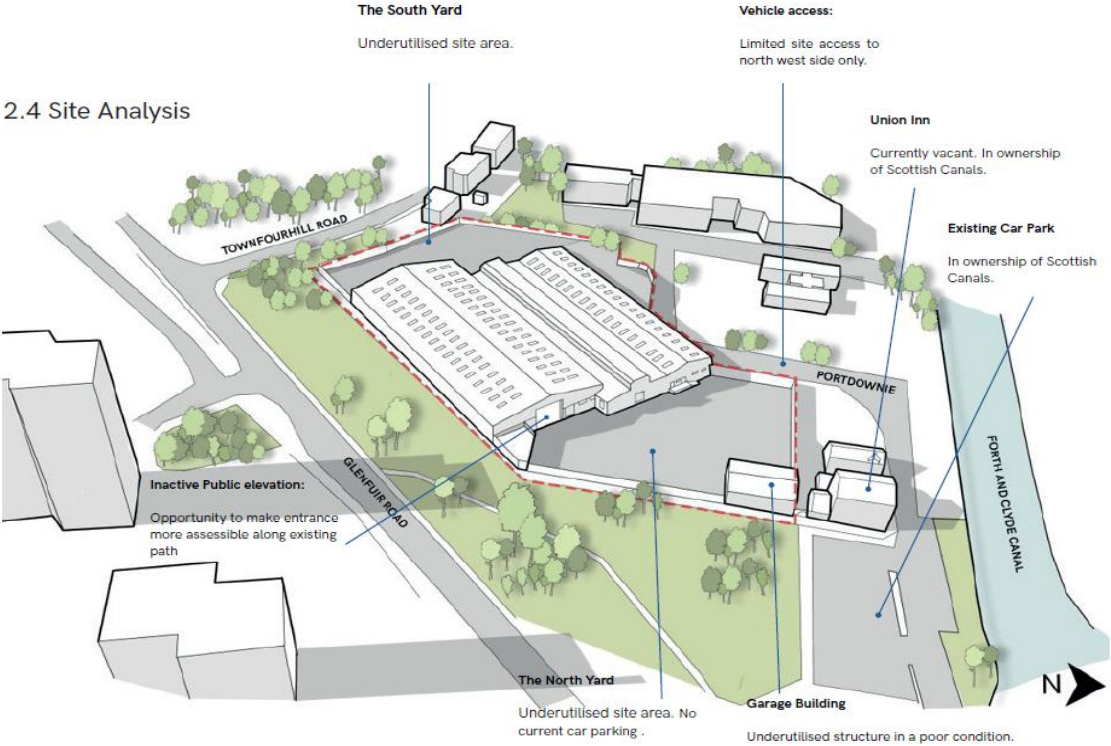
Funding Ask

This Full Business Case (FBC) is requesting capital funding of £4 million from the FGGD to support the development of 'the Centre of Excellence - Scotland's Centre of Excellence for Canals and Traditional Skills' which will provide the largest single space in Scotland, dedicated to the development and delivery of high-quality traditional and heritage skills training.

Figure 1: Site Location and Boundary



2.4 Site Analysis



Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Organisation:	Scottish Canals & Historic Environment Scotland	EPIA Leads:	Amelia Morgan Colin Tennant
Proposal:	Lock 16: Scotland's Centre of Excellence for Canals and Traditional Skills	Roles:	SC People, Safety & Governance Director HES Head of Technical Conservation

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	Yes
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal:

The project, Lock 16 - Scotland's Centre of Excellence for Canals and Traditional Skills' involves the regeneration of the former AG Barr building in Camelon, Falkirk to establish an operational base for Scottish Canals and create an accredited training hub to expand traditional skills and volunteer training (upskilling, reskilling and transition) for maintaining Scotland's built and canal heritage. Lock 16 has the overall ambition to:

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SECTION TWO: EVIDENCE	
Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)	
Age	Key evidence
Demographics	In 2021 in Falkirk, the 45 to 64 age group was the largest, with a population of 46,596. In contrast, the 75 and over age group was the smallest, with a population of 13,587. Between 2018 and 2028, the population of Falkirk is projected to increase from 160,340 to 165,462. This is an increase of 3.2%, which compares to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole. ¹
Employment and skills	In 2023, 2.8% of people aged 16-64 were unemployed in the local area. Unemployment is a significant issue for those aged 16-24, where 4.1% of the population aged between 16 and 24 are unemployed. This high rate of youth unemployment can lead to long-term unemployment and reduced life chances for this demographic. ²

¹ Falkirk Council Area Profile, available at <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/falkirk-council-profile.html>

² Falkirk Council, Economic information and analysis, available at <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/statistics-census/economic-info-analysis.aspx>

Socio economic circumstances	<p>The proportion of people in Falkirk in the most deprived areas (15%) is higher than the national rate. Nationally, the youngest adults (16-24 year olds) have been consistently more likely to be in relative poverty compared to older adults.¹</p> <p>"Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019-2024"³ provides specific data related to the protected characteristic of age, focusing on two distinct age groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single Pensioners: It is noted that single pensioners are more likely to experience poverty. In Falkirk, 37% of older households are affected by fuel poverty. 2. Aged 16-19: 489 pupils aged 16-19, who attend school or participate in an Activity Agreement, receive Education Maintenance Allowances. These allowances are provided to students from families with an annual income of less than £24,421 (with one dependent) or £26,884 (with more than one dependent). The number of recipients is expected to increase due to enhanced publicity and a simplified application process.
Health and wellbeing	Age can significantly impact an individual's vulnerability to the health risks associated with climate change. For example, children and older adults are generally more susceptible to climate-related health issues such as asthma. ⁴
Disability	Key evidence
Demographics	Nearly one in five residents in both Scotland and Falkirk report having a disability. Physical limitations are the most prevalent, followed by learning disabilities and mental health conditions. In Scotland, the number of disabled individuals is steadily rising, partially due to an aging population. This rise isn't uniform, with urban and deprived communities facing higher disability rates. A higher-than-average proportion of residents in Scotland claim Disability Living Allowances. Deprived areas within Falkirk demonstrate a clear correlation with higher disability rates. ⁵
Employment and skills	Disabled people in both Scotland and Falkirk are less likely to be employed than the non-disabled population. The disability employment gap in Scotland is significant, with disabled individuals less likely to secure and maintain employment compared to their non-disabled counterparts. This gap is even wider for women with disabilities. Additionally, regional variations exist, with

³ "Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019-2024", available at <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/people-communities/docs/poverty-strategy/Towards%20a%20Fairer%20Falkirk%202019-2024.pdf?v=201906271131>

⁴ Climate Emergency, Public Health Scotland, available at <https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/climate-sustainability-and-environment/climate-emergency/health-impacts-of-climate-change/health-impacts-across-different-groups-of-people/>

⁵ Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership Locality Profiles, available at <https://falkirkhscp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/01/Locality-Profiles.pdf>

	urban and deprived areas experiencing higher unemployment rates among disabled individuals. The higher proportion of DLA claims in Falkirk compared to the national average suggests a potentially larger population relying on disability benefits. ³
Socio economic circumstances	<p>Studies have shown that disabled households in Scotland are more likely to live in poverty than non-disabled households. For example, in 2019-22, just over half (51%) of people in relative poverty after housing costs lived in a household where someone is disabled. Disabled people are less likely to be employed, and when they are, they often face lower wages compared to non-disabled individuals. This can be due to discrimination, lack of accessible workplaces, and limitations caused by their disability. ⁶</p> <p>While benefits are available to support disabled individuals, they may not always cover all their needs or provide a sufficient standard of living. Additionally, navigating the benefits system can be complex and challenging. Deprived communities in Scotland often have higher rates of disability, creating a vicious cycle where poverty can lead to disability and vice versa. Lack of access to quality healthcare, education, and resources in these areas can exacerbate the situation. ³</p>
Health and wellbeing	<p>Increased air pollution, a consequence of emissions, can exacerbate respiratory issues, particularly for those with lung conditions like asthma or COPD. This is concerning in Scotland, where respiratory illnesses are already prevalent. Disabled individuals in deprived areas are more likely to experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorer physical and mental health outcomes: They may face higher rates of chronic illnesses, respiratory problems, and mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. • Barriers to healthcare access: Transportation challenges, lack of accessible facilities, and financial constraints can hinder access to essential healthcare services. • Social exclusion and isolation: Limited mobility and stigma surrounding disability can lead to social isolation, further impacting mental and physical health.⁴
Gender reassignment	Key evidence
Demographics	Approximately 0.5% of the Scottish population identifies as transgender (around 24,000 adults). This figure is expected to increase as understanding and data collection methods improve. ⁷
Employment and skills	More than half (55 per cent) of trans people have experienced negative comments or behaviour at work because of being trans

⁶ Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people, Scottish Government, 2019, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-wellbeing-measuring-national-outcomes-disabled-people/pages/13/>

⁷ Community briefing paper, Scottish Trams, 2019, available at <https://www.scottishtrams.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Community-briefing-paper.pdf>

	and one in four trans people report having been discriminated at work because of being trans. In an online survey of trans people in the UK in April 2011, difficulty in gaining and retaining employment was considered the most important challenge that trans people face. ⁸
Socio economic circumstances	Information is not currently available on poverty relating to trans people, but there is evidence that trans people often face discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Employment status has a direct impact on poverty outcomes.
Health and wellbeing	A survey in 2012 found that trans people more frequently experience mental health issues with 55% of the sample size having been diagnosed with depression at some point. ⁸
Marriage or civil partnership	Key evidence
Demographics	In 2021, there were 26,093 marriages registered in Scotland, with Falkirk recording 468 ceremonies, and 1,009 civil partnerships were registered in Scotland, with 29 in Falkirk. ⁹
Employment and skills	There is limited data on this topic. Studies suggest that married individuals, on average, experience higher earnings compared to their unmarried counterparts. This "marriage premium" may be due to various factors like specialisation, household economies, and childcare support within marriages. ¹⁰
Socio economic circumstances	Relevant evidence available for this group is relatively limited, however the available evidence demonstrates links between poverty and income inequality in Scotland based on marital status. Relative poverty rates are highest for single, divorced and separated adults, and lowest for married adults. In 2017-20, the relative poverty rate after housing costs was highest for single adults (27%) and divorced (or separated) adults (27%). Married adults were the least likely to be in poverty (13%), and widowed and cohabiting adults were in the middle (19% and 19%). ¹¹

⁸ Trans Key Stats, Stonewall, available at https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/trans_stats.pdf

⁹ Marriages and Civil Partnerships – Time Series Data, National Records of Scotland, available at <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/marriages-and-civil-partnerships/marriages-and-civil-partnership-time-series-data>

¹⁰ Marriage Premium and Class, R Bonilla, 2017, available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/327343043.pdf>

¹¹ Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation Programme 5, Scottish Government, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation-programme-5-fairer-more-equal-society-equality-impact-assessment-record-results/pages/15/>

Health and wellbeing	Research suggests that strong and supportive marriages and civil partnerships can contribute to better mental health and overall well-being for individuals. However, factors like relationship quality, financial stress, and social support networks can influence how marriage or a civil partnership impacts individual well-being. ¹²
Pregnancy or maternity	Key evidence
Demographics	In 2023, there were approximately 2,000 live births in Falkirk, which was around 4% of total births in Scotland (this is more frequent than the national average as the size of the population of Falkirk as a percentage of the national population is 2.86%).
Employment and skills	Analysis of data from the Growing up in Scotland Study found that younger mothers (aged under 20) were less likely to have a qualification at Higher grade or above compared to mothers aged 25 and over. (17% vs. 80%). ¹³
Socio economic circumstances	There is evidence that pregnancy is one of the key triggers that increase the risk of women living in poverty, particularly where they are lone parents. ¹⁴ The Fairer Falkirk report highlights that lone parent families are at significantly greater risk of entering or remaining in poverty. It also mentions that there are 4,443 children living in the 20% most deprived areas in Falkirk, and 4,680 children live in low-income families in Falkirk. These statistics indicate the vulnerability of lone parents and their children to poverty.
Health and wellbeing	Pregnant women are more vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution including an increasing risk of miscarriage as well premature births and low birth weights. ¹⁵ Poverty, lack of stable housing, and limited access to support networks can exacerbate feelings of insecurity and vulnerability for pregnant women.
Race	Key evidence

¹² Relationship and community: statistics, Mental Health Foundation, available at <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/statistics/relationships-community-statistics#:~:text=Being%20happily%20married%20or%20in,outcomes%20than%20unhappily%20married%20people>.

¹³ Skills Development Scotland Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report 2019 – 2021, available at https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/43248/0892_equality-mainstreaming-report_updated-june-2019.pdf

¹⁴ Scottish Government Pregnancy and Maternity Evidence Review, 2013, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-equality-outcomes-pregnancy-maternity-evidence-review/>

¹⁵ Leiser. C, Hanson. H, Sawyer, K, Steenblik, J, Al-Dulaimi, R, Madsen, T, Gibbins, K, Hotaling, J, Oluseye Ibrahim, Y, VanDerslice, J & Fuller, M (2019) Acute effects of air pollutants on spontaneous pregnancy loss: a case crossover study, Fertility and Sterility, Volume 111, Issue 2, 2019, Pages 341- 347

Demographics	White Scottish or British account for 95.8% of the Falkirk population. This is broadly similar to national demographics. ¹⁶
Employment and skills	<p>Like the gender pay gap, Scotland has an ethnic pay gap, with individuals from some ethnic minority groups earning less (approximately 10%) than white counterparts. Data for Falkirk specifically is limited, but studies suggest similar disparities can exist in local contexts.¹⁷</p> <p>Ethnic minorities are often overrepresented in low-paid and insecure jobs, impacting their economic opportunities and career progression. This issue is evident nationally across sectors like cleaning, care, and hospitality.¹⁷</p> <p>Language barriers, discrimination, and lack of access to training and networks can hinder employment opportunities for certain ethnic groups in Scotland and Falkirk.¹⁷</p>
Socio economic circumstances	Individuals from some ethnic minority groups in Scotland are more likely to live in poverty compared to the white Scottish population. poverty rates for people in minority ethnic backgrounds have been steadily increasing whilst the rate for white people has remained relatively constant, with more than two in five (44%) minority ethnic people living in poverty in 2017-20. Almost half of minority ethnic children in Scotland live in poverty to the national average of 25%. ¹⁸ While data for Falkirk is limited, similar trends likely exist within the local context.
Health and wellbeing	Ethnic minorities in Scotland often experience poorer health outcomes, with higher risks of chronic diseases, mental health issues, and maternal health complications. The reasons behind these disparities include social determinants like poverty and discrimination. Language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of understanding of healthcare systems can create barriers to accessing healthcare services for some ethnic minority communities in both Scotland and Falkirk. ¹⁹

¹⁶ 2011 Census, Falkirk Council, available at <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/statistics-census/docs/census/2011/5%20Key%20Results.pdf?v=201906271131#:~:text=White%20Scottish%20or%20British%20account,up%2091.8%25%20of%20the%20population>.

¹⁷ Scotland's minority ethnic labour market outcomes, Scottish Government, 2019, available at <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2022/12/fairer-scotland-anti-racist-employment-strategy2/documents/analysis-labour-market-outcomes-scotlands-minority-ethnic-population/analysis-labour-market-outcomes-scotlands-minority-ethnic-population/govscot%3Adocument/analysis-labour-market-outcomes-scotlands-minority-ethnic-population.pdf>

¹⁸ Briefing – Ethnicity, poverty and the data in Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, available at

¹⁹ An analysis of health inequality and ethnicity in Scotland, 2018, Scottish Government, available at <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2015/08/ethnic-groups-poorest-health/documents/analysis-health-inequality-ethnicity-scotland/analysis-health-inequality-ethnicity-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/00484303.pdf>

Religion or belief	Key evidence
Demographics	According to the 2021 census, over 55% of the population identifies as Christian (primarily Church of Scotland and Catholic). Around 40% do not identify with any religion, with smaller communities representing Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jewish faiths. Falkirk reflects a similar trend, with a predominantly Christian population and smaller, growing minority faiths.
Employment and skills	In Scotland in 2018, the highest employment rates were seen for those with no religious beliefs (75.3 per cent) followed by Christians (74.1 per cent), Other religion (64.8 per cent), Buddhists (60.8 per cent), Hindus (54.8 per cent) and Muslims (52.3 per cent). The employment rate for Scotland was 74.1 per cent. Over the year, there were decreases in the employment rates for all religious groups except for the employment rate for Christians which remained unchanged. ²⁰
Socio economic circumstances	Nationally, Muslims and Buddhists are the most likely religious groups to have a low income, although this is associated with their young age profile. Roman Catholics are over-represented as residents in deprived areas. ²¹
Health and wellbeing	Surveys show Hindus in Scotland as the religious group with the best self-reported health and the most positive mental health scores. Health behaviours are mixed across religious groups, but in general, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists have better health than Christian groups. Language barriers, cultural differences, and specific religious beliefs around healthcare practices can pose obstacles to accessing healthcare services for some religious groups. ²¹
Sex	Key evidence
Demographics	Both Scotland and Falkirk have higher proportions of women than men (around 51% women in Scotland and 52% in Falkirk). This aligns with the UK-wide trend. Life expectancy for women in Scotland is higher than for men (82.1 compared to 77.5 years in 2020). While Falkirk shows a similar disparity, the gap is slightly smaller (81.4 for women, 76.1 for men). ¹
Employment and skills	In Scotland, men have a slightly higher employment rate (76.4%) compared to women (71.7%). Falkirk reflects a similar trend with 77% of men and 72% of women employed. ² Women make up most part-time workers in Scotland (75%) with 41% of all women in employment working part-time, compared

²⁰ Regional employment patterns in Scotland, 2018, Scottish Government, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/regional-employment-patterns-scotland-statistics-annual-population-survey-2018/>

²¹ Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Religion and Belief Evidence review, 2013, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-equality-outcomes-religion-belief-evidence-review/>

	<p>to 13% of men. Economic inactivity rates are higher for women (16 to 64 years), than men. Three in five women are classed as economically inactive and inactivity rates continue to rise from pre-pandemic levels, alongside increases in the inactivity rate for men as a long-term post-pandemic legacy. Reasons for inactivity differ between men and women, with more women stating they were looking after family/ home than men, although the largest reason stated for both men and women is long-term sickness.²²</p> <p>Occupational segregation of men and women in certain kinds of jobs and in different levels of employment remains a key labour market issue. Women tend to be disproportionately affected by occupational segregation, impacting on their potential pay and career progression. Women are also more likely than men to be on zero-hours contracts across the UK, adding to issues of precarity in employment.²²</p>
Socio economic circumstances	<p>Women in Scotland are more likely than men to live in poverty (24.3% compared to 20.7%). This trend holds true in Falkirk as well, with 25% of women and 21% of men experiencing poverty.</p> <p>In Falkirk, lone parent families, who are predominantly female are at significantly greater risk of entering or remaining in poverty. There are 4,443 children living in the 20% most deprived areas in Falkirk, and 4,680 children live in low-income families in Falkirk. These statistics indicate the vulnerability of lone parents and their children to poverty. Additionally, 166 families who received debt advice from Falkirk Council or the Citizen's Advice Bureaus in 2017/2018 were lone parent families, further underscoring the financial challenges faced by this group.³</p>
Health and wellbeing	<p>Women in Scotland generally have better overall health and lower mortality rates than men. However, they face higher risks of specific conditions like mental health issues and certain cancers. Falkirk exhibits similar tendencies, with some evidence suggesting higher rates of specific chronic diseases among men.⁵</p>
Sexual orientation	Key evidence
Demographics	<p>In Scotland in 2019, 2.9% of the population identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. ²³</p>

²² Equality Evidence Review, 2013, Skills Development Scotland, available at <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/pzefcvl/equality-evidence-review-2023.pdf>

²³ Sexual minorities: Numbers in Scotland, Scotland's Public Health Office, available at <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/population-groups/sexual-minorities/data/number-in-scotland/#:~:text=In%20the%20same%20survey%2C%203.1,2.9%25%20as%20LGB%20or%20other.>

Employment and skills	LGBT+ individuals in Scotland can face discrimination in hiring, promotion, and workplace culture. This can lead to lower employment rates, career stagnation, and economic disadvantage. ²⁴
Socio economic circumstances	Studies suggest that LGBT+ individuals in Scotland are more likely to live in poverty compared to the general population. This may be due to various factors like discrimination, social exclusion, and limited access to support services. ²⁵
Health and wellbeing	<p>LGBT+ individuals in Scotland and Falkirk face higher risks of mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and suicidality compared to the general population. This can be attributed to social stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to mental health services.²⁶</p> <p>Healthcare access and discrimination: Concerns regarding confidentiality, lack of understanding from healthcare providers, and potential discrimination can create barriers to accessing healthcare services for some LGBT+ individuals.²⁶</p>
Poverty	<p>Key evidence</p> <p>Inequalities exist across Falkirk and benefits of economic development have not always been experienced equally. The Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a tool for identifying the places in Scotland where people are experiencing disadvantage across different aspects of their lives. Each of Scotland's 6,976 data zones are ranked from 1 to 6,976, with 1 being the most deprived and 6,976 the least deprived. The SIMD ranks all datazones in Scotland by a number of factors; Access, Crime, Education, Employment, Health, Housing and Income. Based on these ranks, each datazone is then given an overall deprivation rank, which is used to split datazones into Deprivation Quintiles which show the 5%, 10% and 20% most deprived areas. The most recent SIMD ranking was carried out in 2020.</p> <p>Datazones are a statistical geography with an average population of around 750. There are 214 datazones in the Falkirk Council area. Of these, 33 datazones are ranked in the 20% most deprived areas, an increase in deprivation when compared to the 2016 SIMD (33 datazones). Approximately 24,575 Falkirk residents, or 15% of Falkirk residents are living within the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.</p>

²⁴ Work Report, Stonewall Scotland, 2012, available at https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_scotland_work_report.pdf

²⁵ Sexual orientation in Scotland 2017: summary of evidence, Scottish Government, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/sexual-orientation-scotland-2017-summary-evidence-base/pages/6/>

²⁶ Health and social inequalities faced by Scotland's LGB community, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, available at <https://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/lgbt-health-news/health-needs-assessment-lgbt-scotland/>

	<p>A summary of Falkirk’s performance in the 2020 SIMD is given below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 datazones in the worst 20% in Scotland, an increase of 2 from 2016 • 5 datazones in the worst 5% - one more than 2016 • 9 datazones in the worst 6-10% - one less than 2016 • 11 datazones in the worst 16-20% - two more than 2016 <p>Additional indicators of poverty in Falkirk include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,443 children live in the 20% most deprived areas in Falkirk, which is 14.8% of the children in the area. • 4,680 children live in low-income families in Falkirk. • 273 families received debt advice from Falkirk Council or the Citizen's Advice Bureaus in Falkirk in 2017/2018, with 166 of them being lone parent families. • 37% of older households in Falkirk experience fuel poverty. • 18.3% of people in Falkirk are below the 60% median after housing costs, and 16.7% are considered to be in material deprivation.³
Younger people	<p>Following the 2008 recession, there was a substantial decrease in the employment rate for people aged 16-24 and the COVID-19 pandemic has also adversely impacted this age group. The employment rate for young people had been gradually increasing since April 2013-March 2014 but decreased significantly between April 2018-March 2019 and April 2020-March 2021. Young people (16–24-year-olds) are more likely to be unemployed than older age groups and are vulnerable to long-term employment 'scarring'. They are more likely to earn less than the real Living Wage and are more likely to be financially vulnerable and in unmanageable debt. Whilst historically decreasing across all age groups, from April 2020 to March 2021, the underemployment rate was highest for young people (double the national average).²⁷</p> <p>“Towards a Fairer Falkirk” report shows that children and young people in Falkirk face significant challenges related to poverty. In 2017, one in five children lived in poverty in Falkirk. Approximately 4,443 children live in the 20% most deprived areas in Falkirk, which accounts for 14.8% of the children in the area. Additionally, 4,680 children live in low-income families. The impact</p>

²⁷ Supporting documents – Scotland’s labour market – protected characteristics, Scottish Government, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-labour-market-people-places-regions-protected-characteristics-statistics-annual-population-survey-2021/documents/>

	<p>of poverty on children's lives is extensive, affecting their educational outcomes, health, and overall well-being. Many children living in poverty experience poor health, higher rates of absence from school, and are more likely to be overweight with poorer dental health.</p>
Care experienced	<p>Around half of mental health problems (excluding dementia) start before 15 years of age, and 75% before 18. Nine out of ten children who have been abused or neglected at a young age will develop a mental health problem by the age of 18.²⁸ Care experienced children and young people can also be affected by physical illness induced by stress including IBS, heart disease or high blood pressure. These physical and mental health difficulties impact their participation in social activities and their ability to maintain attendance in education or employment. Care experienced adults are twice as likely to have experienced homelessness, usually before their 30th birthday.²⁹</p> <p>In Scotland in 2020/21, 37% of school leavers who were looked after within the year left school in S4 or earlier, compared to 11% of all school leavers. Highers, sometimes along with Advanced Highers, are the Scottish qualifications required for entry into Higher Education. At the higher levels of qualification, 15% of looked after school leavers have at least one qualification at level 6 or better, compared with 66% of all leavers. The percentage of looked after school leavers achieving all SCQF qualification levels is consistently lower than all school leavers.³⁰</p> <p>86% of young people looked after within the last year went on to a positive destination after leaving school, compared with 95% of all school leavers in 2020/21. When the 'positive destination' information is analysed further only 8% of looked after children go on to Higher Education compared with 45% of all school leavers.³¹</p> <p>Care experienced young people and care leavers are more likely to face challenges in the labour market than young people as a whole. They are over three times more likely not to have a job by the age of 26 and earn incomes which are 27% lower on average than their non-care experienced peers. They are also over one and a half times more likely to experience financial difficulties and are nearly twice as likely to have no internet access at home.³²</p>

²⁸ Sanders, R. (2020) Care experienced children and young people's mental health. Available at: <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/outlines/care-experienced-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>

²⁹ Sanders, R. (2020) Care experienced children and young people's mental health. Available at: <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/outlines/care-experienced-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>

³⁰ Scottish Government (2022) Education outcomes for looked after children 2020/21. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/pages/3/>

³¹ Scottish Throughcare Aftercare Forum (2022) Education outcomes for looked after children 2020/21. Available at: <https://www.staf.scot/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-20202021>

³² Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation Programme 5, Scottish Government, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation->

Employees	<p>The exact numbers of staff and the specific types of roles that will be affected by the relocation have not yet been finalized. The assessment of impact is iterative and will be continuously updated as more detailed information becomes available.</p> <p>In general terms, moving offices can present various challenges depending on individual circumstances and protected characteristics, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuting: A new location might lengthen commutes, impacting those with limited mobility, childcare responsibilities, or reliance on specific public transport routes. • Accessibility: Physical barriers, lack of assistive technology, or unsuitable public transport options can hinder access for individuals with disabilities. • Workplace Culture and Support Networks: Established support networks might be disrupted, leading to feelings of isolation. • Mental Health and Wellbeing: The stress of relocation, combined with changes in routine and potential disruptions to familiar environments, can negatively impact mental health.
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Best judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	N/a
What gaps in data / information were identified?	Scotland's 2022 Census data has not been used for this assessment due to revisions to the project and subsequent time constraints. The 2011 data which has been used will be updated for a further iteration of this EPIA to be submitted with the Full Business Case. It is the opinion of Scottish Canals and Historic Environment Scotland that any update will not materially impact the EPIA for this project.

Is further research necessary?	As above.
If NO, please state why.	The evidence which has been produced provides a sound basis for assessing impact and additional evidence will be reviewed by the project team throughout the lifecycle.

SECTION THREE: Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the proposal must take place		
Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	Falkirk Council Fairer Falkirk Community Planning partnership Green Action Trust AOC Archaeology Canal College The Conservation Volunteers Forth Valley Sensory Centre The Canal Inn Falkirk District Scout Network Residents living near Lock 16 Cycling Without Age Our Place Camelon and Tamfourhill Arlink Camelon, Tamfourhill & Bantaskin Community Council	Bantaskin Residents Association Tamfourhill Tenants and Residents // Tamfourhill Community Hub Committee Tidy, Clean & Green Community Group The Friends of Easter Carmuir Park Group Falkirk Local History Society Camelon Local Learning Centre Camelon Community Project Camelon Community Sport Hub Tamfourhill Community Hub Committee Forth Environment Link / Forth Bike Forth Valley Orienteers Tangled Boots Line Dancing Forth Valley College Port Downie Community Action Rocket Science Lab

If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	N/a
How was the engagement carried out?	What happened?
Social media	<p>Social media was used as a promotional tool to advertise the Creative Vision Workshop 2 and the Mini Mural Making/Pop-up Community Event. The ad was run on Facebook and targeted areas neighbouring Lock 16, particularly Tamfourhill, Camelon, and Bantaskin. The ad reached a total of 6,956 people, with 129 people clicking on the link to know more. Additionally, New Practice posted about the workshop on their own social media and requested stakeholders to share the details of the workshop with their members and networks. The use of social media was aimed at increasing awareness and participation in the public consultation programme.</p>
Surveys	<p>A survey conducted for the Falkirk Wheel and Lock 16 areas in 2022 gathered insights and feedback from the local community and other stakeholders. It was conducted online and through in-person events, such as pop-up consultations and town centre events, to engage with the public. The survey included questions about the current use, experiences, and expectations of the Falkirk Wheel and its surrounding area, the Forth and Clyde Canal, and Lock 16. The questions covered various themes, including local access, community, general access, values, desires, and feedback. The survey also addressed safety concerns, accessibility, heritage, sustainability, and biodiversity. Additionally, the survey aimed to understand the interests and leisure activities that appeal to the respondents. To encourage participation, QR codes and incentives such as ice-cream vouchers were used. The survey received a total of 363 responses, with 65.6% of respondents living in the area surrounding the Falkirk Wheel and Lock 16.</p> <p>The survey revealed several prominent themes of interest to the community, including heritage, accessibility, sustainability, biodiversity, arts, culture, tourism, and the local economy. Respondents expressed a desire for improved signage about the area's history, more amenities such as cafes and toilets, and increased water-based activities to attract more visitors. Additionally, there was interest in exploring nature, increasing tourism in the ancient woodlands, and creating a sculpture park to attract more people to the area. The survey also highlighted concerns about safety, accessibility, and the need for more activities for families and young children.</p>

Events	<p>The Creative Vision Workshop 1 took place on Thursday, 1st September 2022, at the Falkirk Wheel. It was attended by 13 members of local community groups and residents. The workshop aimed to gather visions and thoughts on the regeneration of Lock 16, focusing on themes such as access and sustainability, current and future uses, and the needs of the local community. The participants engaged in activities related to these themes, including worksheets and creative tasks to understand perceptions of the area and community needs. The workshop was designed to encourage conversations and flexibility to foster qualitative results.</p> <p>The Creative Vision Workshop 2 was intended to be open to the public and family-friendly. It was scheduled for Sunday, 4th September 2022, at the Falkirk Wheel. However, despite seven participants signing up for the workshop, three cancelled their tickets on the morning of the event, and the remaining four did not attend without notice. As a result, the workshop did not go ahead.</p> <p>A pop-up event, known as "Mural Making Day," took place on Saturday, 10th September 2022, at Lock 16 along the Forth & Clyde canal. The event was well received, with local residents showing interest in sharing their thoughts. It was advertised as part of the Creative Visions and Mural Making Workshop. During the event, New Practice engaged with a total of 15 people, including members of the active local community initiative Tidy, Clean and Green, who came specifically to share their thoughts and visions for the future of Lock 16. However, due to the lack of participants in the Creative Vision Workshop 2, the Mural Making exercise could not take place. The event was an important step in the public consultation program as it allowed engagement with the wider public and local residents who use the canal and the area surrounding Lock 16 on a daily basis.</p> <p>The key themes in stakeholder engagement include the need for more dynamic and colourful spaces, community engagement and safety, addressing employability and affordability, and ensuring that the development at Lock 16 does not conflict with neighbouring organisations. Additionally, there were discussions about the importance of incorporating nature, heritage, and community elements into the future vision for Lock 16. Participants also emphasised the need for promoting and supporting local businesses, community groups, and initiatives, as well as the desire for inclusive spaces and activities for people of all ages.</p>

Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	Yes
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes
Is further engagement recommended?	<p>Yes. Moving forward in the redevelopment, the future engagement strategy will be anchored in an iterative and responsive approach, adapting to the insights gained from past experiences and the evolving needs of the community. This approach will be integrated throughout the project lifecycle to ensure continuous alignment with community aspirations and project objectives. Strong community feedback has been received of a desire to see 'action' prior to further engagement, and this has been respected by the project partners. Now that National Lottery Heritage Fund investment has been secured for the project, with a outline activity plan in place, a new round of community engagement focused on what the 'offer' of Lock 16 is, will be undertaken towards end of summer 2025. This engagement will be aligned along the following themes and good practice.</p> <p>Digital Engagement Expansion: Given the success of social media in reaching a broad audience, future engagement will further leverage digital platforms. This includes more interactive online surveys, virtual workshops, and social media campaigns to continuously gauge community sentiment and gather fresh ideas.</p> <p>Diverse Event Planning: Learning from the varied attendance at past events, future engagement will focus on organising a wider range of events catering to different community groups. This includes smaller, more frequent workshops, pop-up events, and community meetings, ensuring multiple opportunities for participation and feedback.</p> <p>Feedback Integration in Design Phases: As the project progresses through its lifecycle, community feedback will be systematically integrated into the design and planning phases. Regular updates and feedback sessions will be conducted to ensure that the community's voice is continuously reflected in the redevelopment plans.</p>

	<p>Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships with local organisations, youth groups, and businesses will be a key focus. This collaboration will ensure that the redevelopment not only benefits from diverse perspectives but also supports local initiatives and economic growth.</p> <p>Monitoring and Adapting Strategy: The engagement strategy will be closely monitored for effectiveness and adaptability. Regular reviews will be conducted to assess the impact of engagement activities and make necessary adjustments, ensuring the strategy remains relevant and effective throughout the project lifecycle.</p> <p>Inclusive and Accessible Engagement: Ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in all engagement activities will be a priority. This includes providing various means of participation to cater to different age groups, abilities, and preferences, making sure that every voice in the community has the opportunity to be heard.</p>
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SECTION FOUR: ASSESSING THE IMPACT				
Protected Characteristics:		What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project?.		
Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age		✓		<p>This initiative could offer significant benefits to both younger and older age groups in Falkirk. For the younger demographic, particularly those facing higher unemployment rates, Lock 16 will provide essential job opportunities and skills development in canal maintenance and heritage skills. For the older population, the Centre could offer roles that use their experience and knowledge, fostering intergenerational collaboration and learning.</p> <p>The proposals could help address the educational and skills gap for younger individuals</p>

				<p>in Falkirk, particularly those from deprived areas. For older adults, lifelong learning opportunities will be included, promoting continuous personal development and engagement.</p> <p>The improvement and effective maintenance of the canal network could benefit residents of all ages by enhancing the accessibility and safety of these public spaces. For younger residents, this could mean safer areas for recreation and learning, and for older residents, it could provide easy access to leisurely activities and community engagement.</p>
Disability		✓		<p>The proposals could offer employment opportunities that are accessible and accommodating to individuals with disabilities. Lock 16 will have high levels of physical accessibility. Providing accessible learning environments can enhance skill development and employment prospects for disabled individuals. This approach aligns with the aim of advancing equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The improvement of infrastructure, including the canal network, will consider the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities. Safe, accessible, and navigable public spaces are essential for the inclusion and wellbeing of disabled individuals, contributing to their ability to engage fully with community assets.</p>
Gender reassignment		✓		<p>Accessible and inclusive educational and vocational training can provide transgender individuals with essential skills and qualifications, enhancing their employment prospects and supporting their economic independence.</p> <p>Improved infrastructure and maintenance of community spaces can indirectly benefit transgender individuals by providing safe, accessible, and welcoming public areas.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	✓			<p>The impact on this protected characteristic is comparatively remote and has been assessed as neutral. It is anticipated that there may be remote, indirect benefits, such as fostering community development which can enhance health and wellbeing.</p>

Pregnancy / Maternity		✓		<p>The focus on jobs for residents could reduce commuting stress for pregnant employees or new mothers.</p> <p>Given the lower likelihood of young mothers in Falkirk having higher qualifications, the provision of learning and training opportunities will help bridge the educational gap for young mothers, enhancing their employment prospects and supporting their long-term economic independence.</p> <p>The focus on net zero could indirectly benefit pregnant women and new mothers by contributing to the creation of a healthier environment, which is particularly important for this group due to their increased vulnerability to environmental pollutants and stressors.</p> <p>Improved maintenance of the canal network and related facilities could enhance the overall quality of community spaces. These improvements could provide safe, accessible, and pleasant environments for pregnant women and families with young children and contribute to their physical wellbeing and quality of life.</p>
Race		✓		<p>The proposals could enhance employment opportunities that may be particularly beneficial for ethnic minority groups, who are often overrepresented in low-paid and insecure jobs. The focus on canal maintenance operations and traditional skills will provide new avenues for secure and skilled employment, potentially helping to reduce the ethnic pay gap in the region.</p> <p>While the focus on energy efficiency primarily addresses environmental sustainability, it indirectly impacts ethnic minorities by contributing to the creation of a healthier environment in deprived areas, where ethnic minorities are more likely to reside. Improved environmental conditions can have a positive impact on the overall wellbeing of these communities.</p>

Religion or belief		✓		<p>Given the disparities in employment rates among different religious communities, skills development and employment will help in providing equitable job opportunities.</p> <p>Establishing new learning and employment pathways could be beneficial across all religious groups. Ensuring these opportunities are accessible and accommodating to different religious practices can enhance participation, particularly from minority faiths.</p> <p>Leveraging canal side investments could benefit communities in deprived areas, where certain religious groups might be overrepresented, indirectly addressing socio-economic disparities among these groups.</p>
Sex		✓		<p>Given the higher unemployment and part-time employment rates among women in Falkirk, the project's focus on job creation will help reduce this disparity. Efforts to promote skills for full-time, stable employment would be particularly beneficial to women, who are more likely to be in part-time or precarious employment.</p> <p>With women in Falkirk experiencing higher poverty rates, the project's potential to create local jobs could directly contribute to reducing poverty, especially among lone parent families, who are predominantly female. This could have a significant impact on the economic stability of these households.</p> <p>While women generally have better overall health, the project can contribute to both sex's wellbeing by providing a healthier public realm.</p>
Sexual Orientation		✓		<p>Increasing employment rates will provide inclusive employment opportunities, beneficial to LGBT+ individuals who face discrimination in the workplace.</p> <p>Leveraging canal side investments could indirectly benefit LGBT+ communities by enhancing the overall socio-economic environment, which can have positive knock-on effects on their living conditions and well-being.</p>

Poverty		✓		<p>The proposals aim to increase local employment opportunities, which is crucial in areas facing high levels of deprivation. By creating jobs in canal maintenance and related operations, the project will offer stable employment to residents living in the most deprived areas of Falkirk. This would not only help in reducing unemployment but also contribute to improving the overall economic status of these communities.</p> <p>The provision of new learning opportunities could be particularly impactful in addressing the educational disparities highlighted by the SIMD. By offering training and pathways for employment to residents of deprived areas, the project could help in reducing the education and skills gap. This is especially relevant for children living in low-income families and could lead to long-term improvements in socio-economic outcomes.</p> <p>While primarily environmental, energy-efficient buildings and renewable energy sources could help in reducing fuel poverty, particularly benefiting older households in Falkirk which experience a high rate of fuel poverty. This approach aligns with the objective of reducing material deprivation among vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Improved maintenance and development of the canal network could have wider economic benefits. By enhancing local infrastructure and public spaces, this objective could contribute to the overall attractiveness and livability of deprived areas, potentially encouraging further investment and community development.</p>
Young people		✓		<p>Given the higher unemployment and underemployment rates among young people, the project's job creation initiatives will provide crucial employment opportunities, helping to mitigate long-term employment 'scarring'.</p> <p>The emphasis on learning opportunities and skill development can be especially beneficial for young people, providing them with valuable experience and skills that</p>

				<p>enhance employability.</p> <p>The enhanced public realm and community spaces could offer recreational and social opportunities for young people, contributing positively to their mental health and overall wellbeing, while also addressing issues related to poverty and social exclusion.</p>
Care experienced	✓			<p>While the overall impact on care-experienced individuals is assessed as neutral, it's important to note the correlation with poverty and the positive impact the project may have in this area. Care-experienced individuals often face challenges in mental and physical health, education, and employment, which are compounded by poverty. By positively impacting poverty, the project could indirectly support care-experienced individuals, potentially improving their access to education and employment opportunities, and contributing to better health and social outcomes. This indirect benefit aligns with the aim to reduce inequalities and support vulnerable groups.</p>
Employees	✓			<p>The impact is assessed as neutral, considering the varied impacts across different protected characteristics. While the relocation presents challenges such as increased commuting difficulties and accessibility issues, particularly for those with disabilities or childcare responsibilities, these are not inherently discriminatory but rather logistical and environmental changes. The neutral alignment suggests that while the move does not directly advance equality objectives, it also does not significantly exacerbate existing inequalities, provided that mitigatory measures like flexible working arrangements and accessibility accommodations are effectively implemented.</p>

	Evidence of due regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	<p>The proposals align with the duty to eliminate discrimination by offering equitable opportunities and addressing disparities across different protected characteristics. The initiative's focus on inclusive employment, learning pathways, and community engagement is designed to ensure that all groups, regardless of sex, religion or belief,</p>

	and sexual orientation, have equal access to the benefits of the project. This approach actively works to reduce existing gaps in employment, socioeconomic circumstances, and health and wellbeing, thereby supporting the goal of eliminating discrimination and advancing equality for all community members.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	The proposals advance equality of opportunity by creating accessible and inclusive initiatives for all, particularly focusing on underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. Through targeted employment and training opportunities, the project aims to bridge gaps in workforce representation and skill development. This approach not only provides equitable access to economic and educational resources but also fosters an inclusive environment that respects and values diversity, thereby contributing to the broader goal of promoting equality of opportunity within the community.
Foster Good Relations: (Promoting understanding and reducing prejudice)	The proposals foster good relations by encouraging interaction and understanding among diverse groups within the community. Through the creation of a shared space for learning, engagement, and collaboration, the project enables different groups to come together, promoting mutual respect and understanding. This approach not only enhances social cohesion but also provides opportunities for different communities to contribute to and benefit from the project, strengthening community bonds and fostering positive relations among all members.
Active consideration of reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage (Fairer Scotland Duty)	The proposals actively consider reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, in line with the Fairer Scotland Duty. By creating employment and learning opportunities in economically deprived areas, the project aims to directly address socio-economic disparities. This focus on inclusive development and community engagement is designed to provide tangible benefits to those most affected by socio-economic disadvantage, thereby contributing to the reduction of inequality and promoting a fairer, more equitable society.
Inclusive growth	How will this be achieved?
Explore opportunities to maximise the impact of the	To maximise the project's impact, a multifaceted approach focusing on robust

project	communication strategies and partnerships will be adopted. Effective communication, both internal and external, will ensure stakeholder engagement and public awareness. Collaborating with local partners, including community groups, educational institutions, and businesses, will leverage diverse expertise and resources. This collective effort should enhance the project's reach and efficacy, ensuring it addresses the varied needs of the community and aligns with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty, ultimately leading to a more significant and sustainable impact.
Allow the benefits to be shared by all	To ensure the benefits of the project are shared by all, specific measures will include targeted outreach to diverse community groups, collaboration with local organisations to identify and address specific needs, and the development of inclusive, accessible facilities. There will be active involvement of underrepresented groups in decision-making processes. Additionally, monitoring and feedback mechanisms will assess the equitable distribution of benefits. This focused approach will help in achieving widespread and inclusive community benefit.
Advance overall equality of opportunity under the Equality Act 2010 and the Fairer Scotland Duty 2018	To advance overall equality of opportunity in alignment with the Equality Act 2010 and the Fairer Scotland Duty 2018, the project will implement strategies that specifically address inequalities across all protected characteristics. This will involve designing initiatives that not only meet diverse needs but also proactively seek to reduce existing disparities. Emphasis will be placed on creating equitable access to employment, education, and community resources, alongside fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity. These efforts will contribute to building a fairer, more equitable community, embodying the spirit of both legislative frameworks.

SECTION FIVE: ACTION PLANNING

Actions(s)	Leads – Colin Tennant (HES)	Review date
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	Amelia Morgan (SC)	
Community Engagement: Develop a plan for engaging with diverse communities, ensuring their voices and needs are integral to the project development.	SC/HES	Sept 2025
Impact Assessment Refinement: Continuously refine the EPIA to include emerging data and feedback.	SC/HES	On-going
Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Establish a framework to monitor and evaluate the project's impact on equality and socio-economic disparities, with regular reporting mechanisms.	SC/HES	Will be integrated into benefits realisation framework, reporting to Growth Deal & NLHF. Reviewed and reported on Quarterly.
Stakeholder Collaboration: Foster collaborations with local organisations and groups that work directly with underrepresented or disadvantaged communities.	SC/HES	On-going. Refreshed engagement plan commencing Sept 2025
Staff Engagement: Regular consultation with staff who may be affected by relocation, to include understanding and addressing their specific needs and concerns related to the move.	SC/HES	Commencing April 2026
Capacity Building: Invest in capacity building within the project team to understand and address equality and socio-economic issues effectively.	SC/HES	Commencing April 2026
Transparent Reporting: Maintain transparency in reporting progress, challenges, and achievements in relation to equality and socio-economic goals.	SC/HES	Will be integrated into benefits realisation framework, reporting to Growth Deal & NLHF. Reviewed and reported on Quarterly.
Feedback Integration: Actively incorporate community and stakeholder feedback into the development of the full business case.	SC/HES	July 2025

Accountability Mechanisms: Set up clear accountability mechanisms for meeting the objectives related to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty.	SC/HES	Sept 2025. Joint governance board between SC&HES established.
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SECTION SIX: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Canals are confident that the project as outlined in the Outline Business Case, with the NLHF approved Activity Plan, has been developed in such a way as to enable its delivery to have a positive impact on addressing the inequalities identified in this assessment. Both organisations are committed to operating for the benefit of all the people of Scotland and maximising their opportunities with the canal and wider historic environment. To that end this Assessment will be subject to regular review and enhancement as appropriate.
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION SEVEN: LEAD SIGN OFF

Proposal Lead: Colin Tennant, Head of Technical Conservation, Historic Environment Scotland of behalf of HES and Scottish Canals.

Signature:		Date:	18-5-25
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