

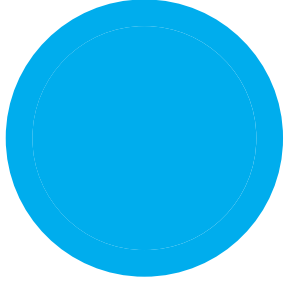
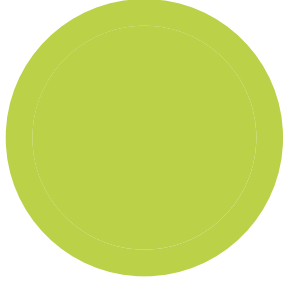
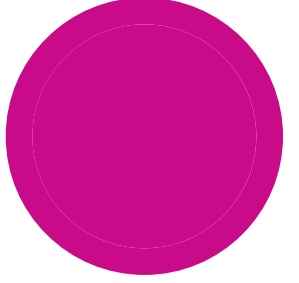
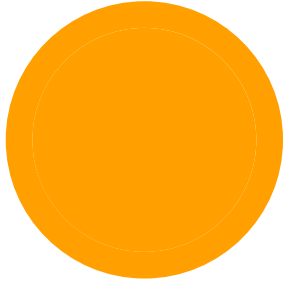


The Council Plan

2022-2027



Falkirk Council



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Foreword

The Falkirk area has much to offer – diverse businesses, abundant green space, renowned tourist attractions, excellent services and connections to Scotland’s main road, rail and waterway networks.

But its greatest assets are the communities that live within its boundaries. These communities banded together like never before during the pandemic, working alongside services to support friends, neighbours and strangers.

Now, the cost of living crisis is testing communities’ mettle once again. And it will be tested further, as we cannot continue to provide all the services we do, in the way that we do, as we face a financial crisis of our own.

A world in crisis

We need to save at least £69m by 2027. The effect of global price increases, soaring inflation and energy costs, and the broader economic impact of COVID-19, Brexit and conflict in Ukraine make it extremely difficult to manage the Council’s budget.

At the same time, more and more people are being forced to make tough choices due to the spiralling cost of living. Many are already struggling to put food on the table, heat their homes and keep a roof over their heads. Their focus is now on survival.

Local businesses worry about paying their bills and keeping their doors open. Low wages and job insecurity are a growing concern for many. Deepening poverty and increasing inequality are taking their toll on health and wellbeing.

As a result, an ever-increasing number of people are turning to our services for support, many for the first time. If we are to meet that growing demand and balance our budget each year, as we are legally required to, we must think and do things very differently.

Refocus resources

Tough decisions will need to be made to allow us to focus limited resources on services that support those most in need, create brighter futures for children and young people, drive economic recovery and a green transition, and help create jobs.

To do that, we need to work more collaboratively across the Council and with communities and partners, be customer driven and accountable, and ensure our systems and processes make it as easy as possible for those who can self-serve. To meet current and future demand, we must continue to transform services, reduce spend in non-priority areas and be prepared to think very differently about how services are delivered.

Reaching net zero

The climate change challenge also means we will need to radically rethink our wider energy usage, and work in partnership with others to put in place innovative solutions to meet our net zero target.

Key to this will be reducing the number of buildings we own, only keeping a small number of better quality and more energy efficient properties that will house a range of services under one roof. To help make it easier for people to make greener choices, and improve health, wellbeing and opportunity, we will have to adapt how we use public spaces as well as our infrastructure.

Staying on track

This plan sets out the strategic framework that will ensure our focus remains firmly on modernising services and improving outcomes for local people.

By building on the one-Council ethos that saw us through the pandemic, demonstrating collaborative leadership, enabling innovation, being less risk averse, and empowering employees to use their talent, energy and capabilities, we will make change happen.

Things will not always go smoothly, but by working together and in partnership we will support strong communities where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved.

Kenneth Lawrie
Chief Executive



Key Facts



Population of **160,560** in the Falkirk Council area



72,994
Households



63,000
Total number of jobs



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



80%
Rise in over-75 population by 2043



103 community projects benefiting from **£1.9m** of Community Choices funds in 2021/2022

The Falkirk Plan 2021 - 2030

Best Value Strategic Action Plan  The Council Plan

Core Strategies & Programmes:

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

Other Core Strategies including:

Local Housing Strategy, Falkirk National Improvement Framework, Digital Falkirk, Falkirk Economic Strategy, Litter Strategy - A Cleaner Falkirk, Waste Strategy, Green Transport Initiative.

Service Plans

Performance Management Framework



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 creating 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:

- Encourage the development of a strong and independent third sector - with an infrastructure that understands and supports the needs of communities.
- Provide support to community projects and partner agencies to help with transforming/improving local areas and amenities for the benefit of local communities.
- 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.
- Coordinate and develop the way we inform and engage with communities to make it easier for people to have an active role in decisions that shape Falkirk's future.
- Deliver housing services that reduce homelessness, support people to sustain tenancies and provide good quality and affordable homes.
- Support and safeguard children where protection concerns have been raised.
- Help people participate in activities that improve health & wellbeing in a place that is appropriate for them - 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 HSCP Strategic Plan.



Priority

Supporting stronger and healthier communities

Success measures:

- More anchor organisations established in communities.
- More conversations with community projects and partner agencies engaging in capacity building.
- More communities taking control over the places they meet in (asset transfers).
- Percentage of Falkirk Council budgets subject to Participatory Budgeting.
- A full suite of housing and homeless services indicators are measured through the Local Housing Strategy.
- All inter-agency referral discussions to take place within 24 hours.
- Cost per attendance of sport and leisure facilities.
- 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 and benefits to help with the cost of living.
- Support school attendance by reducing the financial barriers in the cost of the school day.
- Support care experienced children and young people to live and learn in their community.
- 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.
- Develop a family learning programmes with all school areas that target families who would most benefit from family learning.
- Provide connectivity and support to those who would otherwise be digitally excluded.
- Develop our library service to create attractive opportunities (including digital), 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.



Priority

Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities

Success measures:

- More financial health-checks conducted.
- Reduce the number of placement moves for looked after children.
- Increase percentage of children being looked after in the community.
- Increase the number of foster care placements.
- Improve school attainment and attendance rates.
- 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 number of young people completing & receiving national awards through community learning.
- Increase number of library staff trained as 'Digital Champions'.
- Increase the number of public space Wi-Fi locations.
- Reduced cost per visit to libraries.
- Increase customer satisfaction with libraries.
- Increase the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated/funded employability programmes.

Links to other plans...

Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy to eradicate violence against women
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 economic strategies - including tourism - that drive sustainable growth within the local economy.
- Leverage external Government funding and policy interventions to support economic development and improvements to infrastructure.
- Implement the new development plan system (NPF4), to support growth in the Falkirk area.
- Deliver, with our strategic partners, the Growth Deal and other transformational investment programmes to improve the economy through infrastructure investment.
- Push towards becoming net-zero by 2030.
- Protect the environment in the community by implementing the council's strategies on litter, waste and green transport initiatives.
- Develop a more sustainable transport fleet and explore Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) opportunities.
- Ensure all upgrade, modernisation and new build projects are designed to be as carbon neutral as possible within the finances available.
- Manage our property assets effectively and efficiently - including the school estate.



Priority

Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

Success measures:

- Increase immediately available employment land as a percentage of total land allocated for employment purposes.
- Increase the number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population.
- Lower town vacancy rates.
- Increase percentage of business properties leased by the Council that are occupied.
- Total external funding leveraged and invested into Falkirk.
- Local Development Plan milestones achieved in line with delivery programme.
- Increase the percentage of Growth Deal projects approved to business case stage.
- Percentage of 2030 carbon reduction targets achieved.
- Reduce CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of the Local Authority per capita.
- Improved street cleanliness score.
- Increase the percentage of total household waste that is recycled.
- Increase the percentage of our vehicle fleet that are zero emission vehicles.
- Reduce CO2 emissions from fleet.
- Increase proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use.
- Increase proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition.
- Reduce CO2 emissions per m2 of Council buildings.

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.

Key Success Measures

- Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure.
- The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax.
- Gross rent arrears (as a percentage of rent due for the reporting).

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.

Key Success Measures

- Projects will have clear benefits which can be measured.
- Projects will be monitored and reported.
- Projects will be delivered on time and on budget.



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.

Key Success Measures

- Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher).
- Sickness absence days per teacher.
- Staff turnover rate.

Links to other plans...

Best Value Strategic Action Plan
Falkirk Council Corporate Risk Management Strategy



Image by ScotDrone



Falkirk Council