

## EX65. Falkirk Council – Helix Business Strategy 2023 - 2028

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Place Services which sought approval of the Helix Business Strategy (2023-2028). As part of a suite of local attractions, the original £43m invested to create Helix Park and the Kelpies had contributed to growing tourism spend in the Council area. In 2021 almost 600,000 visitors spent £85m which had created and supported a wide range of jobs and businesses. An increasing number of visitors helped support local shops, restaurants, cafes and pubs, events and other facilities.

The Business Strategy focused on driving the business forward over the next five years. In recognition of the current economic challenges facing Falkirk Council, opportunities were sought to further close the gap between income and expenditure.

During 2022/23 864,506 people visited the park and 436,912 people came into the Visitor Centre. There was an increasing proportion of overall visitors coming into the Visitor Centre which was helping achieve income targets. In 2022/23 total income for The Helix was £1,539,845.

The Helix was an integral component of the Council's placemaking agenda and provided a high-quality open space for local communities and visitors. The vision for the Helix Business Strategy was that: *Helix Park is a sustainably managed 5-star visitor attraction offering opportunities for people to engage with the landscape, interact with nature and enjoy an inspirational visitor experience.*

The overall purpose of the strategy was to set out how the vision would be achieved. By 2028, Helix Park would be:-

Recognised locally, nationally and internationally for its excellence in customer service by:-

- Remaining a 5 star visitor attraction;
- Attracting 1 million visitors a year;
- Providing a quality experience for every visitor.

Recognised for excellence in delivering its sustainability values by:-

- Continuing to monitor sustainability goals and adapting practices to drive the highest standards within the visitor attraction and tourism sector;
- Retaining Green Flag and Green Tourism Business Gold Award.

A successful, dynamic and inspirational place to visit:-

- Achieve £1.75M income from across Helix trading opportunities (catering, tours, car parking, retail, on-site business operations);
- Deliver one key event per season at the Helix as part of a vibrant, inspirational, and nationally important outdoor events programme which was more financially sustainable with less reliance on public sector financial support.
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## **Decision**

**The Executive approved the Helix Business Strategy (2023-2028).**