

The background of the slide features a large, faint, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver coat of arms. The crest includes a crown at the top with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: an eagle), and a banner at the bottom with the motto "ANNE FOR A".

Agenda Item 12

Strategic Parks Masterplanning

Falkirk Council

Title: Strategic Parks Masterplanning
Meeting: Executive
Date: 4 October 2022
Submitted By: Director of Place Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update following an action issued at Executive on 19 October 2021 that a report be brought back in spring (2022) with definite plans for Kinneil Estate including options for a potential Heritage Lottery Bid.
- 1.2. In addition, the report proposes how the Council responds to the transition of management of Kinneil Estate along with three other Strategic Parks (Muiravonside Country Park, Callendar Park and the Helix) back from Falkirk Community Trust to Falkirk Council as of 1 April 2022.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. **It is recommended that the Executive agrees that:-**

- (1) officers undertake reviews of the masterplans for Callendar Park, then Muiravonside Country Park and then Kinneil Estate along the indicative timescales as set out in paragraph 5.23;**
- (2) A report is brought back to Executive updating on the feasibility of transferring Newparks Farm to a third-party organisation to reduce ongoing costs;**

3. Impact on Climate Emergency Targets

- 3.1 This report will have a modest positive impact on the Council's Climate Emergency targets.
- 3.2 Extending both the lease duration and area for Sustainable Thinking Scotland (STS) in Kinneil Walled Garden would have a positive impact on the climate emergency given the organisation's sustainable objectives, including carbon sequestering biochar work and local food growing with partner organisations which lowers the carbon footprint of food production.
- 3.3 Further detailed consideration of environmental effects on climate change will follow from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of new masterplans coming back to Executive as set out in 4.22.

4. Background

- 4.1. A masterplan for Kinneil Walled Garden was presented to Executive on 19 October 2021 for approval following extensive consultation. Executive agreed:

1. *that the work of the Friends of Kinneil and Sustainable Thinking Scotland, are valued by the community and wider public, and should be commended, it is agreed to proceed with the works at section 6 of the report on page 139:-*
 - *Phase 1 enabling infrastructure works totalling £132,604;*
 - *Phase 2 structural alterations £28,161, and*
 - *Phase 3 other services £79,056.*
2. *that it is important that future plans for the walled garden are part of the Kinneil Estate masterplan. It is the centenary year next year of Kinneil Estate being in public ownership, this is the ideal time to ensure that the masterplan reflects the hopes and aspirations of Bo'ness residents, the Friends of Kinneil and other stakeholders, to ensure that the walled garden space is developed accordingly, it is requested that a report be brought back next spring with definite plans for Kinneil estate including options for a potential Heritage Lottery Bid.*

Masterplan enabling works progress

- 4.2 The majority of works approved by Executive are dependent on the range of acceptable uses proposed within the unapproved walled garden masterplan. These include drainage works, the glasshouse and polytunnel removal and modification, installation of services, storage building removal, private garage relocation, toilet installation, and wifi installation.
- 4.3 If those works were to proceed in advance of masterplan approval then they would constrain the ability of the masterplan to identify alternative uses for areas within the walled garden.
- 4.4 The exception to this is the demolition of the main large greenhouse, as this was not in a lettable condition and required to be removed to facilitate perimeter wall restoration works. Demolition of the main large greenhouse was carried out in July 2022.

Kinneil Estate Masterplan review

- 4.5 Until 1st April 2022 the majority of Kinneil Estate, was leased to Falkirk Community Trust. However, the ownership responsibilities are more complex with Kinneil House and the Walled Garden owned by Falkirk Council and the House in the guardianship of Historic Environment Scotland. Responsibility for preparing and reviewing plans for Kinneil Estate sat with Falkirk Community Trust (FCT) until 1st April 2022. A masterplan was prepared by FCT and approved by Executive on 17 March 2015 to cover a period to 2025.

- 4.6 Falkirk Community Trust's Parks and Sustainability Team did not have capacity to lead a review of the Kinneil Estate Masterplan within the time period specified by Executive, so consequently no reviewed masterplan or options for a potential Lottery Bid were brought forward as requested.
- 4.7 In April 2022 responsibility for parks development at Kinneil Estate, Muiravonside Country Park and Callendar Park transferred to the Planning and Greenspace Unit and that since then officers within that team have been assessing what recommendations should come forward for Executive consideration. They have concluded that rather than focussing on identifying a more realistic timescale for review of the Kinneil Estate Masterplan, Executive should consider the case for review of the masterplanning documents covering all four parks previously managed by Falkirk Community Trust: Callendar Park, The Helix Muiravonside Country Park as well as Kinneil Estate.

5 Considerations

- 5.1 Broad responsibility for the management and development of Kinneil Estate, Muiravonside Country Park and Callendar Park now sits with the Council's Planning and Greenspace Unit, whilst management and development responsibility for the Helix sits with the Council's Culture and Helix Unit.
- 5.2 Table 1 below shows the current position of all masterplanning documents prepared for the Council's 4 Strategic Parks.

Strategic Park	Plan Name	Date of Plan Adoption	Period of Plan
Kinneil Estate	Masterplan	17.3.2015 Council Executive	2015-2025 - active
Muiravonside Country Park	Management Plan	FCT Board approved.	2015-2020 expired
The Helix	Asset Management Plan	FCT Board approved.	2017-2025 active
Callendar Park	Management Plan	FCT Board approved.	2015-2020 Expired

Table 1: Position of masterplanning documents for ex FCT parks

- 5.3 Appendix 1 of this report contains a review of progress made with implementation of the masterplans at each of the Strategic Parks. A summary for each of those parks is contained below.

Kinneil Estate

- 5.4 Kinneil Estate has a limited annual revenue budget (£14k/annum) and no dedicated capital budget other than that ringfenced for repair and

development of the Walled Garden. There is no income target for the Estate but it has generated an average annual income of £3.5k per year (between 2017/18 and 2021/22). Progress has been made implementing the opportunities identified within the Estate Masterplan through working in partnership with external organisations and securing significant external funding (£107k grant income invested in estate improvements since masterplan approval in 2015.) At the time of writing a further £422k of capital investment has also been made by the Council into the repair of the perimeter wall of Kinneil Walled Garden since masterplan approval in 2015 with repair works due to complete in early October 2022.

- 5.5 Implementation of the existing Estate Masterplan is far from complete. Some of those opportunities still to be realised have a realistic prospect of being completed within the lifetime of the plan such as Kinneil Woods Phase 2, developing play and exercise areas, and biodiversity improvement and enhancement. Others will need a longer timeframe for delivery and need their financial viability reappraised (Kinneil House Development, Coach House Development. Relocation of Kinneil Halt Railway Station). Further reports to Executive would come on these when recommendations were ready. Delivery of the existing agreed masterplan should meet the aspirations of Elected Members and partner organisations and continue to see improvements take place at Kinneil.
- 5.6 The Kinneil Advisory Group has historically overseen masterplan implementation at the site. The group have not met for some time due to the Covid pandemic and officers will commit to rescheduling the group in the near future to help guide and prioritise work.
- 5.7 Sustainable Thinking Scotland (STS) wish to extend the scope and duration of their lease within the walled garden as this will better enable them to raise grant funding to expand their food growing and climate focussed environmental research operations within the walled garden. In a response to the developing cost of living crisis and the increased demand for use of foodbanks by Council residents that this generates, rather than delay conclusion of lease negotiations until the Walled Garden Masterplan and Wider Estate Masterplan have been reviewed, officers will negotiate to extend the area and duration of STS' lease as appropriate using delegated powers.

Muiravonside Country Park (including Newparks Farm)

- 5.8 Muiravonside Country Park has a modest annual revenue budget (c£84k/annum excluding staff costs) alongside a commensurate annual income target (c£72k/annum). Typically, annual income at Muiravonside has not met this target (average income 2017/18– 2021/22 is £52k/annum) and expenditure at the park has also exceeded the available budget (average overspend 2017/18 – 2021/22 is £44k/annum).
- 5.9 Although the park has no dedicated annual capital budget, it has benefited from limited one-off funding injections from the Council's Capital Programme totalling £51k since the management plan was first enacted in 2015. Through working in partnership with external organisations it has also

secured significant external funding to invest in park improvements (£275k grant income spent on Country Park improvements since masterplan approval in 2015)

- 5.10 The objectives of the park management plan are wide ranging and significant progress has been made with implementation. Some opportunities remain to be realised (creation of a woodland management plan, development of additional play opportunities, development of the park as a visitor hub for users of the nearby John Muir Way) but the management plan objectives have largely been met.
- 5.11 The management plan for the park is now beyond its original outlook and there are significant financial challenges which need to be addressed if the park is to run more sustainably. The management plan should focus on the need to generate additional income and reduce overall expenditure (albeit current income targets are already very high).
- 5.12 In light of this it is recommended that officers bring a report forward to Executive on the feasibility of transferring Newparks Farm to a third-sector or commercial organisation in an effort to reduce the cost to the Council of running Muiravonside Country Park. Specialist advice will be required to inform market testing of the potential for third sector or commercial organisations to deliver the unique range of services Newparks Farm offers. The potential for generating lease income, whilst reducing revenue and staff costs together with the timescale for achieving those saving will be investigated and inform future recommendations. Discussions with staff and Unions would clearly be required as part of this exercise.

The Helix

- 5.13 The project to develop the Helix was awarded the largest single BIG Lottery grant so far achieved in Scotland with £25 million awarded. Falkirk Council as well as being a funder and landowner is contracted with the Big Lottery Fund for period of 40 years in relation to the grant funding and the budget set at a level where that commitment could be maintained.
- 5.14 The Helix Park has an annual budget of c£785k (excluding staffing costs) reflecting the costs of running what is now an internationally recognised VisitScotland 5-star visitor attraction. This budget is used to fund site maintenance and management, building maintenance and management, events, catering and retail costs. The income target for the 2022/23 for the site is c£1.4 million.
- 5.15 The Helix Asset Management Plan runs until 2025 and details the vision for maintaining and improving the site. Long-term objectives set out in the Plan feed into Helix Unit Action Plans which direct delivery priorities for the team on an annual basis. The Park Management Plan will be reviewed in 2025

Callendar Park

- 5.16 Facilities at Callendar Park are now managed across different parts of the Council:

- Callendar House and park events are managed by the Culture and Helix Unit;
 - summer amenities, outdoor catering and the Par 3 golf course are managed by the Sport and Leisure Unit;
 - planned park maintenance is managed by the grounds maintenance unit; and
 - park development and unplanned maintenance/ infrastructure repair is managed by the Planning and Greenspace unit.
- 5.17 The park has a limited annual park development/ unplanned maintenance revenue budget (£7k/annum). This is augmented by any annual income the park generates (average income 2017/18 – 2021/22 (excluding kiosk/ golf related income) is £16k/annum)
- 5.18 Although the park has no dedicated annual capital budget, it has benefited from one off funding injections from the Council's Capital Programme totalling £148k since the management plan was first enacted in 2015. Through working in partnership with external organisations significant external funding has been secured (£508k grant income spent on park improvements between since masterplan approval in 2015.)
- 5.19 The objectives of the park's management plan have largely been met but some challenging projects remain still to be realised. These include works to the arboretum, development of the site's derelict historic buildings at the stable block and the factor's house and improvement of the park's place setting. Other opportunities/ priorities have emerged in preceding years notably plans to develop the park as a cycle sports hub, the need to reimagine the golfing offer within the park, and the need to better connect the park to the public transport and active travel network which are not reflected in the 2015 management plan which is now beyond its original outlook.
- 5.20 Preparatory work was carried out in previous years by FCT to develop a significant funding bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund but progress was delayed following a change of staff. Given the significant opportunities remaining to be realised within the park and the preparatory steps taken by FCT to develop a new masterplan to inform fundraising, it is recommended that Callendar Park is prioritised for a masterplan review.

Park Masterplanning

- 5.21 Preparation of park masterplans, (or management plans), is resource intensive over a long time period and includes community consultation, specialist consultant input, prior to the reporting and adoption of any masterplan. These plans are a pre-requisite to any potential funding bids, including Lottery bids, and require significant lead in times and Council resource commitments.
- 5.22 To illustrate this point table 2 below sets out the timeline involved with masterplan preparation, securing Lottery funding and project implementation for the recently completed Council led Zetland Park Project.

Task	Date
Expression of Interest submitted to Lottery	October 2014
Draft Masterplan prepared for consultation	December 2014
Masterplan approved by Executive	October 2015
Stage 1 Lottery Funding bid submitted	August 2017
Approval of stage 1 bid	December 2017
Preparation of stage 2 bid, including masterplan revision.	March 2018 – August 2019
Approval of stage 2 bid	December 2019
Works commence on site	March 2021
Completion of project	September 2022

Table 2: Zetland Park Project timeline

- 5.23 It is considered that there is capacity to work on the preparation of one strategic park masterplan at a time. It is recommended that Callendar Park should be prioritised, followed by Muiravonside Country Park, followed by Kinneil Estate. Table 3 below sets out an indicative timescale for masterplan review.

Task	Callendar Park	Muiravonside Country Park	Kinneil Estate
Begin preparation of Park Masterplan	October 2022	October 2023	September 2024
Undertake Consultation on draft -Masterplan	April 2023	April 2024	March 2025
Present Finalised Masterplan for Executive Approval	August 2023	August 2024	August 2025
Begin fundraising for masterplan implementation	September 2023	As resources allow	As resources allow

Table 3: Indicative Timescale for review of ex FCT parks masterplans

6 Implications

Financial

- 6.1 Preparation of a park masterplans needs to be informed by background studies procured from external consultancies. External funding will need to be secured to progress these studies to augment existing parks revenue budgets.
- 6.2 Securing external funding will form a key part of officers' activities in implementing a park masterplan and often capital match funding contributions are necessary. As an example, the Council's total financial contribution to the recently completed £2.52m Zetland Park project was £0.78m.

- 6.3 Development of Masterplans and more importantly delivery of aspirations within our masterplans normally requires financial support from the Council. It should be noted that there will be real challenges ahead for the Council to support Capital projects and indeed provide match funding to unlock external funding offers of support. It is important however to progress our masterplans for 'friends' groups or other community groups to access external funding to progress our ambitions with a park masterplan.

Resources

- 6.4 Without additional staff resources any masterplan review, fund raising, and Lottery bid preparation will need to be carried out by officers currently within the Planning and Greenspace Unit.

Legal

- 6.5 Work will be required to draft a new lease for STS at Kinneil Walled Garden.

Risk

- 6.6 There is a risk that community groups with an interest in Kinneil Walled Garden may not agree with the plan to extend the scope and duration of STS' lease. Officers will work closely with these groups to support their aspirations where possible and to ensure public access to the walled garden is retained on a managed basis through the likes of open days.
- 6.7 There is a risk that capital funding from the Council necessary to implement park masterplans will be difficult to secure. To mitigate this, officers will work in partnership with external funders to secure additional funding.

Equalities

- 6.8 The Council is required to have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty (PSED). The PSED places a statutory duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 6.9 These decisions will impact on people so as part of the masterplan review process we will ensure that we will meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.10 Strategic Environmental Assessment of park masterplans will be required if any significant environmental effects (either positive or negative) are identified through a screening process.

- 6.11 Park masterplans will be able to broadly assess opportunities for reducing existing carbon footprints and sequestration of carbon within the park.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Review of the Kinneil Estate Masterplan and preparation of options for a potential Lottery bid was not possible within the timeframe previously requested by Executive.
- 7.2 It is recommended that Executive agree to: give immediate priority to the review of the Callendar Park masterplan; and prepare a study to assess the feasibility of transferring Newparks Farm to a third-sector or commercial organisation.

Director of Place Services

Author – Danny Thallon, Environment Coordinator
danny.thallon@falkirk.gov.uk
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Appendices

Appendix 1- Parks Masterplan Implementation Review

Background Papers

- Kinneil Estate Masterplan 2015-2025
- Muiravonside Country Park Management Plan 2015-2020
- Callendar Park Management Plan 2015-2020
- Helix Asset Management Plan 2017-2025

Strategic Park	Plan Name	Date of Plan Adoption	Period of Plan	Masterplan Opportunities delivered	Masterplan Opportunities remaining	Emerging Opportunities
Kinneil Estate	Masterplan	17.3.2015 Executive	2015-2025	<p>Kinneil Woods Phase 1</p> <p>Gateway enhancement (main entrance)</p> <p>Access improvements</p> <p>Kinneil Wood bike trails – skills loop and pump track</p> <p>Estate Signage - not all</p> <p>Interpretation – not all</p> <p>Antonine Wall WHS Interpretation</p> <p>Biodiversity Improvement and</p>	<p>Kinneil House Development</p> <p>Coach House Development</p> <p>Kinneil Woods Phase 2</p> <p>Kinneil Wood bike trails – mountain bike trails</p> <p>Duchess Anne Cottages Renovation</p> <p>Walled Garden Development (long term future use)</p> <p>Developing Play and Exercise</p>	

				<p>Enhancement (ponds -3 scrapes have been created, trial meadows and orchard)</p> <p>Walled Garden Development (Wall repairs)</p> <p>Play park extension</p> <p>Hill Climb Revival Infrastructure – return road resurfacing for spectators</p>	<p>Areas – Hidden heritage</p> <p>Car Parking Improvements (minor overflow improvements + creation of separate car park)</p> <p>Northern Paddock Development</p> <p>Hill Climb Revival Infrastructure – return road cars</p> <p>Relocate Kinneil Halt Railway Station</p> <p>Biodiversity Improvement and Enhancement</p>	
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					(larger meadow enhancement)	
Muiravonside Country Park	Management Plan	FCT Board approved. Not formally adopted by Falkirk Council	2015-2020	<p>Signage and Interpretation Plan</p> <p>Installing new signage and interpretation on site (most)</p> <p>Seating, path and access improvements (most)</p> <p>Café operation and working relationship with partners (done but now closed)</p> <p>Volunteering (loads dry stone walling, working with hard to reach groups)</p>	<p>Improving waste management</p> <p>Woodland Management Plan (may have been started)</p> <p>Employment of a Community Engagement and Education ranger</p> <p>Large scale desirable and long term woodland management works</p> <p>Increased play equipment provision (small improvements made but</p>	Tendering of café reopening

				<p>Friends of Muiravonside</p> <p>History research and interpretation community project (3-5 panels installed)</p> <p>Meadow management</p> <p>Community growing</p> <p>Invasive species control (TCV Rhody control – trained volunteers on spraying)</p> <p>Fruit for our Futures - Orchard projects</p> <p>External Events bookings</p>	<p>further room for improvement)</p> <p>Timber Sales</p> <p>John Muir gateway project (create park as JMW hub)</p>	
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				<p>Internal Events Program</p> <p>Biodiversity Poetry and Sculpture trail</p> <p>Efficiency savings – toilets</p> <p>Reopening the River Avon Trail</p> <p>Main drive and car park resurfacing and extension</p> <p>Wildlife interpretation and activities and features</p> <p>Play improvements including natural play (two play trails)</p>		
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				<p>Farm events/interaction (done)</p> <p>Car parking improvements (resurfacing and lining, woodland carpark reopening and grassland matting)</p> <p>Visitor Centre building restoration and repurpose (done)</p> <p>Pond creation and enhancement (done)</p> <p>Bee Keeping (done)</p>		
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				<p>John Muir Way links (done)</p> <p>Small to medium scale short term woodland management work (done – minor coppicing)</p> <p>Firewood sales (done)</p> <p>Egg Sales (done)</p> <p>Recruit summer Ranger (done when funding allows)</p> <p>Rare Breeds Program (done)</p>		
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The Helix	Park Management Plan	FCT Board approved. Not formally adopted by Falkirk Council	2020-2025	<p>Woodland management</p> <p>Hedge planting – beech hedge and mixed native species hedging</p> <p>Grassland management, including wildflower meadows</p> <p>Wetland management: Frog ponds installed in conjunction with FrogLife to create a “soggy corridor”</p> <p>Asset management: Ongoing maintenance and replacement of facilities and to keep the park</p>	<p>Interpretation and nature trails throughout site, including alterations to Welly Walk to accommodate TIF works</p> <p>Additional hedge planting to continue green corridor through site</p> <p>Tree replacement programme</p> <p>Ongoing woodland, grassland and wetland management</p>	<p>Pedestrian management to keep people away from the road and create lighting from the car park to The Kelpies. This will create a new path connection between Forth Bikes station/car park and Visitor Centre</p> <p>Informal circular paths through previous heather mound area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic management upgrades to improve staff safety and
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				<p>in pristine condition</p> <p>New doors for Plaza Café to create usable inside seating space that can be used year-round</p> <p>Installation of bespoke artwork commissioned for previous events has added interest to Park</p> <p>Car park upgrade to mono-block finish</p>		<p>enhance visitor experience: Turning circle to improve visitor experience at peak times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic pricing signage installation <p>Improved lighting, including at Boardwalk to improve staff and visitor safety</p> <p>Improved interpretation to enhance visitor experience</p>
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Callendar Park	Management Plan	FCT Board approved. Not formally adopted by Falkirk Council	2015-2020	<p>Grassland management</p> <p>Bedding/shrub management (reducing management)</p> <p>Signage and interpretation development (WIAT funded – check if it's been installed)</p> <p>Parking revision (access road round corner of the stables)</p> <p>Play and Activity Improvements</p> <p>Park Furniture Improvements (most, other than bike racks)</p>	<p>Stable Block Development –</p> <p>Place Setting (park gateways – sculptures and artworks)</p> <p>Long lasting community involvement</p> <p>Parking revision (East gate)</p> <p>Arboretum management</p>	<p>Wheeled Sports development</p> <p>Improved cycling connection to Falkirk High, the Helix</p> <p>Par 3 investment</p>
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				<p>Public Toilet improvements (40k refurb)</p> <p>Park Event Development (new pricing structure)</p> <p>Path re-surfacing (mostly done)</p> <p>Rhododendron Management</p> <p>Encouraging increased use. (linked to people counters hard to quantify)</p>		
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