

# HERITAGE STRATEGY for the Falkirk Council Area 2006-11



**Consultative Draft**  
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# Contents

	Page
1. Definition, Purpose and Scope .....	3
2. Profile of Falkirk Council Area .....	4
3. Strategic Context .....	5-8
4. Museum Provision .....	9
5. Vision and Strategic Objectives .....	10
6. Forward Plan 2006-11 .....	

# 1. Definition, Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The definition of heritage for the purposes of this strategy is '*the shared basis of social action*', which clearly places the perception of heritage held by individuals and communities as a major force in the decisions they make about their lives and futures.
- 1.2 The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that heritage has meaning for the lives of local people, now, and through this makes an impact on nurturing a creative, active, confident and tolerant community.
- 1.3 Our approach is to treat heritage as a key element in futures thinking, as a source of understanding the legacy that present generations pass on to the future, and to promote an approach where community confidence is based on an ability to conduct mature debate about different interpretations of heritage.
- 1.4 Experiencing heritage takes many different forms and the task of engaging people with it is shared by many different bodies. More than any other organisation, a museum has as its core purpose the task of engaging people with their heritage and, as is the case with the Council's museum service, many museums are representative of a community's cultural heritage. For these reasons, the Council's museum service is regarded as focal to taking the strategy forward and the service's forward plan (required for the national Museums Accreditation standard) is incorporated in this strategy.
- 1.5 The Heritage Strategy is an overarching one which seeks to provide a framework within which the various aspects of heritage: the built environment, natural heritage, cultural heritage and collections can be appreciated, understood, conserved and enhanced.
- 1.6 Development Services has produced the Built Heritage Strategy (November 2005) which recognises the importance of a partnership approach required to protect and raise awareness of the importance of the built environment and our role as custodians of a collective heritage.

## 2. Profile of the Falkirk Council Area

- 2.1 The Falkirk area forms part of a concentration of smaller towns in Scotland's central belt whose growth and prosperity was based on manufacturing industry from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Its geographical location places it at the heart of the national transport network, and within easy reach of Scotland's two largest cities.
- 2.2 The Council area has a growing population of 145,920 (based on the 203 mid-year estimate) with over 58000 people working in the area. The population is expected to grow to over 150 000 by 2018 making it one of the fastest growing in Scotland.
- 2.3 The largest town is Falkirk and the area also contains the former burghs of Grangemouth, Bo'ness, Denny and Dunipace as well as several other towns and communities such as Bonnybridge, Larbert and Stenhousemuir. All of these conurbations have strong and distinct identities.
- 2.4 There is a small percentage of people in the Falkirk area from minority ethnic groups other than white compared to the Scottish average of 2%. Falkirk's largest minority ethnic groups are the Pakistani and Chinese communities. Only 0.67% of the population have any knowledge of Gaelic.
- 2.5 A dynamic regeneration programme, My Future's in Falkirk, linked to the Town Centres' Regeneration Strategy and Strategic Community Plan, aims to address the continued economic development of the area (from coal to iron to petrochemicals to ... the future).
- 2.6 My Future's in Falkirk takes an aspirational approach which embraces the physical, economic, social and cultural aspects of regeneration within which an individual and collective sense of heritage plays an important part.
- 2.7 The local response to actual and anticipated change in economic circumstances has been accompanied by increasing recognition of the value of culture, not only in direct economic value terms through increasing tourism for example, but also through longer-term and indirect contributions, for example, through education and other lifelong learning opportunities. Indicators of this development are Callendar House, Falkirk Wheel, Big in Falkirk, and Bo'ness Townscape Heritage Initiative.

### **3. The Strategic Context for Heritage**

The strategic context, both local and national, for the development of the Heritage Strategy includes the recent report by the Cultural Commission, Falkirk Council's Corporate Goals and My Future's in Falkirk.

#### **3.1 Cultural Commission: Our next major enterprise....**

3.1.1 The Commission's report, the result of a one-year consultation, outlines 124 recommendations for the Scottish Executive to consider.

3.1.2 Key recommendations relating to heritage include:

- A strategy to tackle the funding gap and lever a further £100m each year into culture in Scotland (1% of the Scottish Executive's annual budget).
- Four cultural rights ensuring that every person in Scotland can share in any publicly funded cultural activity.
- National standards to raise the quality of provision in the arts, heritage, libraries, museums, galleries, architecture and the creative industries.

3.1.3 A formal response from the Scottish Executive is expected by the end of 2005 and this in turn will shape strategic developments in the Falkirk area.

#### **3.2 Falkirk Council Corporate Goals**

**Increase jobs, income and enterprise for all our citizens.**

3.2.1 We will develop the area's tourist economy through its heritage assets - museums, sites and monuments. Maximising income to the area through tourism will be balanced against the need to conserve the attraction visited. Investment (human as well as financial resources) in the development of attractions should be measured against a realistic assessment of potential 'drawing power'. The representation of heritage to visitors will encourage critical understanding, and we will try to avoid simplistic interpretation.

3.2.2 We will respond to the national priority given to raising creativity for a new economic reality. At the heart of learning delivery will be an understanding of how a critical appreciation of heritage leads to a creative view of the future. We will be directly involved in developing skills through raising the contribution to the local economy of the cultural and creative industries.

**Enable our Citizens to Live healthily and safely.**

3.2.3 We recognise holistic views of health and will seek to promote well-being and confidence through investigation and understanding of cultural and environmental heritage.

- 3.2.4 We will promote safe communities by encouraging respect for the heritage environment, and for mutual respect and understanding between cultural communities.

**Stimulate Working Partnerships amongst Agencies, Organisations, Citizens and Communities**

- 3.2.5 We will ensure that a critical understanding of cultural heritage plays a significant role in enabling communities to take ownership of planning their futures. The influence of cultural heritage on community action, both in restrictive and positive terms, is recognised on a global scale, and developing an understanding of this influence and its effect on future planning should be integrated into the community planning process.
- 3.2.6 We will actively seek and engage with partners to achieve the aims of this strategy, which are those of Falkirk Council. This will include partnerships between Council departments, between local authorities, with communities, and between all manner of agencies. Such co-operation is designed not only to reduce competition for limited resources, but also to take advantage of different areas of skill and knowledge, to broaden the impact of, and participation in, service delivery, and to widen the relevance of heritage.

**Tackle Disadvantage and Discrimination in all its Forms**

- 3.2.7 We will work to reduce cultural divisions in Falkirk's communities. In all parts of the world, a key issue for heritage policymakers is achieving the balance between preserving ways of life and culture with ensuring respect and positive, creative crossover between communities of cultural practice. As a predominantly urban community with aspirations to continue to be an effective economic player in Scotland, it is important that cultural difference is celebrated.
- 3.2.8 We will promote engagement with cultural heritage as a necessity for an active, informed, healthy, open, confident and creative community. However, any scheme of entitlements (Cultural Commission, Final Report, June 2005) should balance people's right to culture against unreasonable demands on public bodies to provide for limited communities of interest or projects/provision of limited scope.

**Create and Sustain an Environment in which People want to Live, Work and Visit**

- 3.2.9 We will take into consideration a balance of factors in relation to the growth potential of existing facilities, and proposals for new facilities. An active cultural sector within a community is a mechanism for encouraging people to remain resident within an area, and an attraction for visitors and those who are considering moving to an area. Cultural facilities should be able to function as community spaces and also have sufficient profile outside the area.

3.2.10 We will aim for innovation and challenge in programmes of activity. As with cultural facilities, the needs of the local community and the impression conveyed to audiences outside the community also govern activities programmes. Common to both perspectives - internal and external - is an understanding that cultural activity provides the opportunity for people to rethink their view of the world.

3.2.11 We will direct resources towards the preservation and interpretation of heritage items according to their cultural value, their accessibility and their learning potential. Preservation of cultural heritage - which includes cultural practice as well as physical remains - is a task fundamental to the global heritage sector. Preservation of cultural heritage assets supports wider policies of sustainability and is a demonstration of the authority's intention to enhance quality of life through environmental sensitivity. At the same time, change and resource availability requires that not every heritage item can or should be preserved or interpreted. Judgement on this matter will be made according to the above three criteria.

### **3.3 My Future's in Falkirk**

3.3.1 MFIF, although focused primarily on economic regeneration, is a process which requires wider community transformation and involves all aspects of community experience and public service delivery.

3.3.2 It is a process which requires the development of a community-wide futures literacy - a sense of the future options for the community and its active input into creating them.

3.3.3 The community's understanding of its cultural heritage is crucial to this, firstly to know what stories the community tells to understand itself - its framework of understanding - and secondly, to consider alternative perspectives on these stories. We believe that this is a key component of futures literacy, as the complexity of heritage revealed by it opens up new ideas about the future.

3.3.4 MFIF places a new value on heritage, opening new opportunities for understanding by the community, and giving heritage practitioners a new sense of purpose. The priority for those practitioners is to understand that the community's relationship to heritage should be one of awareness and understanding, and not necessarily of detailed knowledge. Such awareness allows an explanation of why the local environment, cultural and physical, is as it is, and leads that community to make decisions about its future with consideration for the legacy it chooses to pass to future generations. We will act upon these through service delivery and through professional development.

### **3.4 Other Strategic Linkages**

- 3.4.1 The approach of this overarching Heritage Strategy for the Falkirk area will also complement other existing and proposed Council strategies and policies including the revised Strategic Community Plan (2005-10), the Community Learning Strategy, the Culture and Leisure Strategy, Strategy for the Arts and Sustainable Falkirk reflecting the concept of a shared basis for social action being contingent upon partnership, joint action and shared objectives.

## 4. Museum Provision in the Falkirk Area

- 4.1 At the core of delivering this strategy is the Council's Museum Service. No other organisation has as its core purpose **the task of relating the value of heritage to the lives of the Falkirk area's people now and in the future.**
- 4.2 The first Council-run museum service was established in 1926. This closed in 1964, to be re-opened with local government reorganisation in 1972. Until 1990, the service was developed as a series of small-scale facilities in Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness.
- 4.3 Between 1990 and 2000, expansion of functions within the service, and a 6-fold increase in staff numbers accompanied a high-profile re-siting of the service in the redeveloped Callendar House. Visitor figures increased from 10000 to 30000, a significant proportion of which were from the wider UK and overseas - a component completely new to Falkirk. The development marked the start, pre-Wheel and pre-MFIF, of a new profiling for Falkirk.
- 4.4 Cultural Services was restructured in 2002 creating three sections: Heritage and Learning, Arts and Visitor Services. Heritage and Learning is responsible for the management of the museum service which, in 2005, consists of Callendar House, Kinneil Museum, Grangemouth Museum and the Museum Workshop, also in Grangemouth and Birkhill Clay Mine.
- 4.5 Staffing covers archive management, collections management, curatorship, archaeology, costumed interpretation, education, security.
- 4.6 Of the non-Council run museums, the Scottish Railway Preservation Society in Bo'ness is the most significant focus for railway heritage in Scotland. SRPS is part-funded by Falkirk Council, and the partnership at management level was strengthened between 2003-5 by a collections management project funded by the Scottish Executive.
- 4.7 Grangemouth Heritage Trust operates in the town's La Porte Precinct. It is run by volunteers and has collections relating to the local area, with a large proportion of photographs and archive material. As a community-based creation, it demonstrates the possibilities of community ownership of heritage. In contrast to the arrangements with SRPS, there is little or no partnership between the professional sector and Grangemouth Heritage Trust.

- 4.8 The Council's museum service has taken a step towards supporting community-based heritage developments through its Access and Outreach project. Developing this approach, however, needs to be balanced against the availability of resources, the application of the museum sector's professional standards by which the Council service is bound, and the degree to which any proposed development meets the Council's strategic priorities for regeneration.

## 5. Vision

- 5.1 For the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the drivers for the museum services' development is the strategic context outlined in section 3. The vision is to **expand the totality of inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge within Falkirk's communities, in order to revitalise the shared basis of social action**; in short, the Strategy seeks to provide a context in which communities and individuals in the Falkirk can question the past, understand the present and influence the future.
- 5.2 The strategic objectives for achieving this vision are:
- to strengthen community-driven engagement with cultural heritage
  - To resource collections management to meet the requirements of national standards
  - To develop Callendar House's role as cultural hub for the community, re-positioning the commercially-driven, historic house ethos
  - To tackle the legacy of the pre-1990s museum service and review current provision in accordance with Best Value.
- 5.3 The strategic objectives will be linked with the actions detailed in the Forward Plan (section 6) to produce a clear action plan for strategic and operational development of the service over the next five years.

## **6. Museum Service Forward Plan 2006-11**

- 6.1 A Forward Plan for the Museum Service is a key element of meeting standards demanded by the Museum Accreditation Scheme; however, this plan must also acknowledge the wider objectives of the Heritage Strategy which seek to expand the level of engagement by both local people and visitors to the area with aspects of cultural heritage

### **Collections**

- 6.2 Create a documentation plan, resulting from the SMC collections survey (2003) and to comply with Accreditation (May 2006), and to consider sustainable resource improvement for collections management following the completion of the Strategic Change Fund project (Spring 2006).
- 6.3 Increase access to collections through temporary exhibition programmes, education and outreach programmes, and new capital projects. The new post of Curator contains the former Collections Manager post, and is designed to enhance public use and value of the collections.
- 6.4 Develop a new collecting and disposal policy in the context of community-based cultural engagement, MFIF and sector-wide debate (Cultural Review, Collections for the Future, Museums and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life).
- 6.5 Respond to medium and long-term storage requirements for the Archive Service - like the museum service, part of the Heritage and Learning section - and consider options for developing access to archives.
- 6.6 Develop the wider significance of locally-generated collections by working with other museums across administrative boundaries to move the distributed national collection "from concept to operational and strategic reality" (Cultural Commission, Final Report, June 2005).

### **Archaeology**

- 6.7 Review effectiveness of the archaeology service in the contexts of provision of such services by Scottish local authorities generally, of its effect on curatorial provision within the Heritage & Learning section, and of the impact of the World Heritage Site bid for the Antonine Wall.

### **Facilities**

- 6.8 Develop capital options for the presentation of the Falkirk area's cultural heritage, and the collections that illustrate it, in the context of Cultural Service's capital priorities.
- 6.9 Develop options for new permanent displays in Callendar House.

- 6.10 Review future provision of services offered through Kinneil Museum, Grangemouth Museum, *Charlotte Dundas* replica, Birkhill Clay Mine.
- 6.11 Improve facilities and operations management to enhance our custodianship of Callendar House - itself an important heritage asset - and to support our ability to provide activities designed to meet cultural entitlement.

#### **Income generation**

- 6.12 Redefine the role of income generation as an ancillary function, ensuring effective integration with priority objectives of the service.
- 6.13 Improve presentation and content of product to fit cultural sector practice.
- 6.14 Introduce free access to Callendar House.

#### **Access and Learning**

- 6.15 Change and expand remit of costumed interpreters and integrate into a learning team within Heritage and Learning.
- 6.16 Develop community engagement through the creation of a permanent outreach service beyond the completion of Heritage Lottery Fund support (Spring 2007) and integrate into the learning team.
- 6.17 Increase innovation and challenge in the temporary exhibition programme.
- 6.18 Develop learning potential of service via digital technology.
- 6.19 Replace the Callendar House cardholders' scheme with new mechanisms of community support

#### **Professional standards**

- 6.20 Raise the threshold of professional knowledge and skills available to the service by establishing clearer and relevant qualification and knowledge requirements, and by placing greater emphasis on the uptake of sector-based CPD.
- 6.21 Increase understanding of the purpose and practice of museums by staff, elected members and public through formal adoption of the Museum Association's Code of Ethics.

#### **Marketing**

- 6.22 Develop a Cultural Services marketing strategy which will:
- 6.23 Increase our understanding of visitors' motivations, needs and aspirations.

- 6.24 Increase our effectiveness in attracting both new and repeat visits to our museums.
- 6.25 Co-ordinate marketing with other facilities and attractions to encourage an overall increase in visitors to the area and movement between facilities within the area.

