

# PRESS RELEASE

16th March 2009  
For Immediate Release

## **Falkirk's Helix Project Takes Another Step Forward**

The Helix project - an ambitious plan to create a thriving environmental community on unused land between Grangemouth and Falkirk - took a significant step forward today with the confirmation of two important developments.

The Big Lottery Fund, which has awarded £25 million in funding to the Helix, has formally approved the project's final plans for the phase one design and construction of the 300-hectare community resource. Physical work on the site is expected to get under way towards the end of 2009.

Once completed, the Helix will offer a central park with water feature, paths and cycle networks, woodland areas and a new canal link connecting Grangemouth into Scotland's extensive canal network.

As a result of the Big Lottery Fund's approval, Falkirk Council's Policy and Resources Committee has approved arrangements for the formation and funding of the Helix Trust, the body which will deliver the completion of phase one on behalf of the Helix partners (see notes to editors).

Councillor Linda Gow, leader of Falkirk Council, said: "The Helix is a truly magnificent project and one we are delighted to be involved with. The announcement that The Big Lottery Fund has given its backing to the initial design and construction phase indicates their confidence that we can deliver this ambitious and innovative project and is to be warmly welcomed. We can now see the project move ahead with the formation of the Helix Trust and, in time, look forward to a complete transformation of the area."

Richard Millar, business development manager, British Waterways Scotland, said: "This is an exciting, pioneering project and we are looking forward to work beginning on site, particularly the new stretch of waterway which will connect The Helix to the Forth & Clyde Canal, flanked by another Scottish engineering masterpiece, The Kelpies. With a bustling marina and vast potential for new enterprise, this project will undoubtedly be Scotland's new iconic attraction. This is a prime example of how partnership working can lead the way in regenerating areas for the benefit of all."

Simon Rennie, chief executive of Central Scotland Forest Trust, said: "We are delighted about these developments. The Helix is a fantastic project which has already inspired and involved lots of local people. These announcements allow us now to get on and, with the help and input of local communities, to realise this wonderful asset for the people of Falkirk and beyond."

Of the many innovative elements to be included in the Helix, one which has already caught the public's imagination is the Kelpie boatlift which will be installed as part of the new canal link.

The Kelpies, in the form of two equine heads, will stand some 30 metres above the canal. Sculpted as though captured in movement, they will move to create the displacement of water required to operate the lock and lift vessels from one section of the canal to the other.

Sculptor Andy Scott, who was commissioned to create the Kelpies, has already prepared a series of models, known as maquettes, in his Glasgow workshop. A pair of 1:100 scale 'mini-kelpies' have undergone wind tunnel testing as part of the structural and mechanical engineering design process. The tests, which were carried out at the national laboratory of BMT Fluid Mechanics in Teddington, enable engineers to assess a number of important issues such as the localised wind loading on the Kelpies' panels. This data, for example, will be used to design the fixings and underlying support structure.

A second version of Andy's 1:10 scale maquettes have been scanned and mapped using laser technology to create three-dimensional computer models. Engineers will use these to scale up the full-size structures.

The final Kelpies are expected to be installed sometime in 2011 and will each weigh around 400 tonnes.

For more details about the Helix, visit [www.falkirkonline.net/helix](http://www.falkirkonline.net/helix)