

Lottery fund backing

PLANS for an impressive new environmental development in Falkirk received a major boost this week when Lottery funders gave their backing to the project.

Falkirk Council discovered on Tuesday that The Helix project - which would complete the canal link between Falkirk and Grangemouth - will receive up to £250,000 and is now one of three Scottish schemes shortlisted for a multi-million-pound cash injection.

The Helix project is expected to cost £45m and is being developed in partnership between Falkirk Council, Central Scotland Forest Trust and British Waterways Scotland.

The 300-hectare development would host small businesses, nature parks, cycle paths and sculptures, as well as extending the canal another 1.85 km to Grangemouth docks and completing the Millennium Link.

The money allocated to the project this week will be used to carry out technical assessments of the site and begin a massive community consultation about The Helix.

Central Scotland Forest Trust's chief executive Simon Rennie welcomed the support of the Big Lottery Fund.

He said: "This next stage of funding is an important step towards improving not only the landscape but also the quality of people's lives."

The Helix is now one of 23 projects in the UK vying for a Living Landmarks grant of between £10m-£25m, which will be allocated by the Big Lottery Fund next September following the submission of a full-scale bid.

Falkirk Council leader David Alexander said: "The project offers a really different approach to improving our local communities and their environment. The next stage will see widespread work with schools, landowners, the business sector and voluntary agencies in order to shape the final design of The Helix and develop its true potential as a community resource.

"We are determined to build a successful case for The Helix now we have this additional funding in place."

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