

## Grant for huge horse sculptures

An artist's impression of the 100ft-high kelpie boat lift

Two 100ft-high equine sculptures which will function as a boat lift will be built next in the Falkirk area, as a result of a £25m lottery grant.

The artwork depicting horses' heads is the main part of The Helix Project, which aims to transform more than 300 hectares of unused land over six years.

The Big Lottery Fund grant will fund a new section of canal, linking the Forth and Clyde Canal into the Forth Estuary.

It will also pay for 750,000 new trees and 34kms of paths and cycle tracks.

The grant is part of the Lottery's Living Landmarks programme.

The award is the first of its kind in Scotland through the programme and the largest ever awarded by the Big Lottery Fund to an individual project.

Designed by the equine sculptor Andy Scott and based on the mythical Scots legend of water-based spirits or kelpies, project backers believe they will be the largest equine sculptures in the world.

They will also have a working role as a part of the canal's new boat lift at the entrance to the Forth and Clyde canal.

The overall project costs will be in the region of £49m.

Falkirk Council led the successful bid for the Lottery grant in partnership with British Waterways and Central Scotland Forest Trust.

Councillor Linda Gow, the council leader, said: "The award of £25m is recognition that The Helix Project is an inspirational and sustainable project.

"For many years to come, as the project develops, the benefits will be felt by local people, businesses and the environment alike."

Simon Rennie, chief executive of Central Scotland Forest Trust, said the project was an example of "partnership working at its very best".

'Engineering marvel'

Steve Dunlop, Scottish director of British Waterways, said: "This is great news, not just for the many local communities in and around Falkirk and Grangemouth but for Scotland as a whole.

"The Helix has captured the imagination of the public both locally and nationally and I have no doubt that this groundbreaking environmental project will become a great source of pride for everyone.

"The breathtaking Kelpie boat lift is quite simply an engineering marvel which is set to become a major tourism asset for Scotland, attracting visitors from across the globe."

Falkirk East MSP Cathy Peattie said: "This project will provide a major boost to the local economy, a creative and sustainable environmental improvement, and an outstanding leisure and recreational facility for local people and visitors to the area.

"This is great news for my constituents and everyone in surrounding areas."

In Pictures: The Helix Project

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Artist's impression of how the kelpie boat lift will look when it is completed

Glasgow Sculptor Andy Scott's best known pieces include the Clydesdale horse on the M8 at Easterhouse

The kelpies will be the largest equine sculptures in the world

The kelpies are based on the mythical Scots legend of water based spirits

The 100-foot high sculptures will be positioned between Falkirk and Grangemouth

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