

Enabling smarter investment decisions for Grangemouth's industrial future



LOCATION: Falkirk

DATE: August 2026

OUTCOME:  Strategy



Background

Grangemouth is one of Scotland's most strategically important industrial clusters, but its future is being shaped by significant uncertainty. The transition to a low-carbon economy presents complex challenges around energy systems, utilities, land ownership, environmental constraints, infrastructure funding and changing industrial demand.

While partners had already developed a strong evidence base, including the [Grangemouth Industrial Cluster Strategy](#), the [Just Transition Plan](#) and emerging utilities studies, there was no single spatial framework to bring this information together. Without this, it was difficult to understand infrastructure dependencies, assess future development options or prioritise investment.



Whilst the original brief called for a conventional masterplan, through early stakeholder engagement it became clear that a fixed land-use plan risked becoming outdated before it could be implemented. Instead, the challenge was to create a flexible framework capable of supporting decision-making in an evolving policy, infrastructure and investment landscape.

Actions undertaken

The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) acted as a trusted strategic partner to Scottish Enterprise and the wider Grangemouth partnership, helping reshape both the ambition and delivery approach for the commission.

Working closely with Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish Government and the [Grangemouth Future Industry Board \(GFIB\)](#) Infrastructure Sub-Group, SFT facilitated a series of structured workshops that shifted thinking away from individual projects and traditional masterplanning towards viewing Grangemouth as an interconnected industrial system.

These workshops explored:

- Infrastructure capacity, constraints and future dependencies
- Relationships between land use, utilities, planning, investment and governance
- Alternative development scenarios and investment sequencing
- Infrastructure corridors and enabling interventions

- The distinction between decisions partners could control, influence or simply plan for
- How just transition, community wealth building and long-term stewardship could be embedded within spatial and investment decisions rather than treated as separate workstreams

This collaborative process reframed the commission as an infrastructure-led Strategic Spatial Framework (SSF), a dynamic decision-support tool designed to identify what is deliverable today, what can be unlocked through targeted investment and what remains dependent on future policy, infrastructure or market conditions.

SFT then translated this strategic thinking into a procurement-ready commission. The team played a leading role in drafting the specification, defining the workstreams, deliverables, programme and success measures. The brief prioritised:

- Synthesising existing evidence rather than duplicating studies
- Scenario testing to support decision-making under uncertainty
- Identification of 'no-regrets' infrastructure investments
- Investment-readiness and sequencing
- Alignment with [Falkirk Council's emerging Local Development Plan 3 \(LDP3\)](#)
- Transferable GIS outputs and practical, decision-ready reporting

SFT also strengthened the procurement process by defining the multidisciplinary expertise required, refining quality assessment criteria, developing interview questions focused on integration and delivery, and preparing the supporting evidence base. The organisation continues to support tender evaluation and delivery oversight through the GFIB Infrastructure Sub-Group.

Results achieved

The project has fundamentally changed the way Grangemouth's future development is being planned.

Rather than commissioning a static masterplan, Scottish Enterprise and its partners now have a procurement-ready Strategic Spatial Framework that is designed to remain relevant as circumstances evolve. The framework provides a practical basis for coordinated decisions on infrastructure, land, planning and investment despite ongoing uncertainty.

The work has also established a shared understanding among partners of key concepts including infrastructure capacity, development constraints, investment readiness and delivery sequencing. By bringing together planning, infrastructure and economic considerations within a single framework, the commission is better aligned with Scotland's net zero ambitions, just transition objectives and Falkirk Council's LDP3 process.

Importantly, the revised approach reduces the risk of commissioning duplicate technical studies or producing outputs that become obsolete once consultancy support concludes.

The procurement specification now requires consultants to deliver:

- A cluster-wide strategic spatial framework
- Three or four priority development zones
- Scenario-based spatial and investment analysis
- A land control and influence strategy
- A package of no-regrets enabling infrastructure interventions with indicative costs and delivery timescales
- Community wealth building and socio-economic considerations
- A transferable GIS dataset to support ongoing decision-making

By embedding integration into both the procurement process and delivery model, the partnership is better positioned to appoint a genuinely multidisciplinary team capable of translating strategy into implementation.

As the Strategic Spatial Framework is delivered, its long-term success will be measured by its ability to improve investment prioritisation, support delivery of LDP3, strengthen alignment between public and private sector decisions, and provide greater confidence about what development can happen, where it can happen, and in what sequence.



SFT's input helped us move from a conventional masterplan brief to a more useful, infrastructure-led framework. Their challenge and facilitation brought, deeper industry and stakeholder engagement, greater clarity to the scope, strengthened the procurement and ensured the commission is focused on decisions, sequencing and delivery.

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