

Falkirk Office HQ Project

Consultation & Engagement Report

August 2015

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1. Introduction to the Consultation and Engagement

At its meeting on 8 October Falkirk Council agreed to progress a headquarter project to provide new offices and civic accommodation on the basis of a business case. This indicated that a new HQ, on the Municipal Buildings/Westbank Clinic site, offered the best value for money for the Council and could be delivered from existing revenue costs. Prior to committing to the project's delivery, the Council agreed to undertake consultation on the proposal.

The Council has an approved Participation Strategy which seeks to demonstrate openness and transparency in decision making. It was agreed that consultation and engagement on the project should also be undertaken in line with this, following the October Council decision.

Coinciding with this, it was recognised that the consultation should support the statutory process necessary for the submission of a planning application.

Details of the activities undertaken and responses are summarised in this report.

Consultation Activities

The consultation took place over a period of 12 weeks, from 11 May to 31 July. The consultation was promoted through a range of channels, including advertising in the Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal, information on the Council's website and Twitter account and via the plasma screens in One Stop Shops. An article on the project was included in Falkirk Council News, issued to all households. In addition, the Falkirk Herald ran a series of articles throughout the pre application period. A number of means were used to gather feedback:-

- Consultation Drop In Sessions were held in the Howgate Shopping Centre on 2,5 and 6 June 2015
- An online consultation on the Council's website, promoted via advertising and social media
- Invitation to directly email the HQ Project Manager/HQ Project with comments
- Briefing session for the Community Forum involving Chairs of the area's Community Councils, with an opportunity given to attend meetings.
- Letters and emails sent from members of the public

The information pack was issued to all elected members and the information on the project is available at <http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/places/general-offices/municipal-buildings/headquarters-project.aspx>.

The consultation exercise was undertaken using an approach that would be consistent with the requirements for the submission of a planning application for the project, as detailed below.

Statutory Consultation for the Planning Application

Large development proposals such as the HQ project, under the Planning Acts are deemed major planning applications and as such, must undertake a statutory Pre Application Consultation (PAC) prior to the submission of a planning application. There is specified guidance as to how a PAC should be undertaken and this is included within the PAC report.

The basic intention of the PAC is to alert adjoining residents and the general public to the basis of the proposed development and to provide high level detail on the extent of the proposals e.g. scale, massing, general layout, etc. This allows interested parties to comment on the principle of the proposed development and enables the applicant to consider whether there are any aspects which should be altered, in light of these comments, prior to submitting the detailed planning application.

The PAC period is 12 weeks and thereafter the applicant should consider the issues raised and provide a response on how these issues have been considered in finalising and submitting the planning application. A PAC report is then produced which is submitted to the planning authority, when planning consent is applied for.

The pre application consultation for the HQ buildings was carried out from May to July 31st. The Council, as developer, will require to consider the consultation undertaken to date, the outcome of the Stage 1 process and then decide whether it wishes to progress the submission of a detailed planning application and Stage 2 of the project. Subsequently the Council, as planning authority, will consider the planning application, including the consultation report.

Consultation Comments and Responses

This consultation report details the comments given by members of the public sorted initially between:

- Comments giving views on the general perception of the project (Annex A)
- Comments concerning the design and delivery of the project which are relevant considerations for the purpose of submitting a planning application (Annex B)

The Annexes to this report capture the comments made and the suggested response from the Council. In some cases, responses have already been given, to give additional information, arrange further meetings to discuss the project or respond to direct concerns.

2 Statutory Pre Application Consultation Process & Report

Ryder Architecture, as the designers of the Office HQ Project, have undertaken the statutory PAC process in consultation with the Project Team, and have produced the formal PAC report.

As was outlined earlier, the PAC report only provides information on what was undertaken as is required statutorily in relation to :-

- Submitting a Pre Application Notice
- Formal PAC Advertisements
- Engagement with the local community council – in this case the Community Council Forum, as no local community council exists
- Holding public information sessions – in the Howgate Centre
- Analysis and feedback on the comments received

The PAC process is concerned only with material planning considerations that are in relation to the detail of the proposal. Comments on a number of other comments received which would not be deemed 'material' to a planning application have also been received and these are addressed in the report.

3 Consultation Feedback

The Feedback to the consultation is presented in the attached reports. The feedback gained from each stage of the consultation is summarised below:

a) Howgate Sessions

The project team undertook three sessions, for 14 hours in total, in a vacant shop unit in the Howgate Centre on Tuesday 2nd, Friday 5th and Saturday 6th June. The Howgate was chosen due to its high footfall and a front facing presence in a vacant shop close to the main entrance was accessible to the public when they were shopping in Falkirk. These sessions were advertised in the press and on the Council's website a few weeks before the events were due to take place. In addition all adjoining neighbours were notified and invited to come and discuss any questions or issues they had with the project team.

A series of display boards were produced and used in the drop in sessions to explain the project and the HQ project manager/designers were on hand to answer any questions. The display boards were also displayed in the shop window from the 1st -6th June.

The Howgate Sessions attracted around 58 attendees. The comments from the attendees are included within the formal PAC report. In discussing the project with attendees, they found it helpful to understand the background to the project and especially how it was being funded as a "spend to save" project. Many attendees had views about design elements and in the main the majority supported the principle of building a smaller, modern more efficient back office, where staff from a variety of buildings could be co-located within the town centre.

b) Website Consultation

At the beginning of the 12 week period, information on the project and the consultation process was also posted on the Council's website. This included :-

- A summary page on the consultation, which outlined the Howgate dates and included an online feedback form
- Key background facts & sketch images
- A page of frequently asked questions.

The link to the information is as follows - <http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/consultations-surveys/previous-consultations/hq-project.aspx> During the PAC a total of 140 comments were made via the online consultation. Of these comments 86 are viewed as material comments and are included within the formal PAC report. The remaining comments are considered as not being material to the planning application specifically and a set of responses are given separately in Section 3 of this report.

c) Direct Emails

20 responses were sent directly to the Project Team and the bulk of these responses are from adjoining residents who are concerned about the massing and proximity of the development and the impact this will have on their amenity, privacy, and enjoyment of their properties both during the construction period and when the building is completed. The HQ Project Manager has been in direct contact with each of the respondents and their issues and the project response are also contained within the PAC document.

d) Community Forum Briefing

In addition to the above, members of the Forum of Community Councils (represents 17 active Community Councils) were invited to a briefing on the project on the 21 May. There is no active Community Council for the central Falkirk area and the HQ project was considered to be of interest to all Community Councils. Nine Community Councils were represented and further information was subsequently sent to all Forum Members on the background to the project along with information on the issues that had been raised at the meeting. This is included in the PAC document. At the meeting, the project team made the offer to attend any Community Council meetings to take them through the same presentation as the Forum had received. Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood CC were the only Community Council that took up this offer and the HQ project manager attended their meeting on the 29th June. A response was received from the Community Council (also contained in the report).

External Communication

e) Letter to Adjoining Neighbours

The HQ Project Manager wrote to 139 adjoining neighbours to provide them with information on the project, to alert them to the pre application consultation process, to confirm details for the open sessions and to confirm that she was available to discuss any concerns that they may have. This pre-notification is not required in terms of the statutory process but was considered useful to raise awareness for the project.

f) Council Website

As was discussed in Section 2, the HQ project had information prominently displayed on the home page of the Council website to raise awareness of the project:-

<http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/consultations-surveys/previous-consultations/hq-project.aspx>

In addition, the Council's Twitter feed was used throughout June and July to raise awareness and encourage viewing of the HQ Project information. The Twitter feed is followed by c 13.5k people and tweets were used to drive traffic to the online consultation and information about the HQ project on the Council website. Over the period 4 May to 31 July the consultation on the website was viewed around 2000 times, the project information had c1000 views and the FAQs c600 views.

Twenty seven tweets were sent from the Council's corporate account which is followed by 13.4k users and these tweets were viewed 45,922 times, with around 500 users clicking through to the FAQ or consultation on the website.

Of the 140 responses to the online survey , as was discussed in Section 2, 86 responses have been considered as part of the pre application response as they raised material planning or project issues. The remaining 54 responses have been summarised and responses are given separately. They will not form part of the PAC report submission. It is proposed that a summary of these reports will be published on the Council's website.

g) Falkirk Council News

The June issue of Falkirk Council News included an article about the Office HQ Project and the consultation process. The newspaper was distributed directly by Royal Mail to over 70,000 households in the Falkirk Council area.

h) Citizen Panel Sessions

A direct invitation was sent by e-mail to members of the Citizens Panel asking if they wished to attend a consultation session on the HQ project and six people attended a session at the start of July.

i) Falkirk Herald Editorial

The Falkirk Herald was provided with information about the project and has run several articles and editorials on the HQ project during May-July.

Internal Communication

In addition to the programme of external communication a number of channels are in place to ensure that internal stakeholders have information about the project and are able to put forward their views. These included:

Member Officer Group –cross party group remitted to oversee the project from a political perspective.

Steering Group – representatives from all of the affected services and the main work stream leads for the project

User Group – which has representatives from each services involved in the project

In addition, the Project Team have undertaken Briefings for elected members and managers to explain project progress since May.

j) Briefing & Engagement for Falkirk Community Trust Board

As there is synergy and linkages with the HQ project and the project for the replacement of the Falkirk Town Hall, Trust Officers and the Board have had updates on the HQ project and have been contributing to the options appraisal that is currently ongoing for the replacement FTH project.

k) Staff Lunchtime Briefings

Four staff lunchtime briefings were held at the end of May, with 84 staff attending the various sessions. These sessions provided information on the project, the pre application consultation and highlighted the roll out of mobile and flexible working and IT changes that would run in parallel with the new HQ project.

l) Transport Assessment Survey (Internal Staff)

As part of the Transport Assessment for the project a survey questionnaire was also issued to all staff on their current and existing travel patterns. The survey was open for two weeks in May and resulted in 453 responses, which are being analysed and will form part of the Travel Plan that will accompany the detailed planning application.

4 Implications for the project and submission of Planning Application

In conclusion, the consultation has raised a number of issues some of which require to be resolved as part of the consideration of the planning application process, such as construction hours or the materials to be used on the building. Others, such as the building height and location, how the site will be organised, how construction will occur and how to minimise any effects for adjoining properties will be evolved in the next design phase (Stage 2). Adjoining neighbours, e.g. in Wellside Court have legitimate concerns about the project and these will be worked through in more detail by the project team prior to an application for planning consent being submitted. In response to the comments submitted, it is proposed that the design as a minimum address the following:

- A reduction in height of the building adjacent to Wellside Court by 1.3 metres to reduce the risk of over-shading and protect privacy
- Moving the building a distance of 7 metres from the Wellside Place blocks
- Preparation of a green travel plan to address parking issues
- Examination of the scope to include solar panels and other renewable energy technologies
- Ensuring that public areas are fully accessible to all staff and members of the public (including disabled people)
- Preparation of landscape plans
- The conduct of tree surveys to retain tree cover where feasible on the site and provide amenity features
- Inclusion of protective measures during the demolition phase
- the addressing of working hours during the period of construction

Other project related issues, such as maximising community benefits through the provision of jobs and training or improving the environmental performance of the building, will be managed by the Project Team as part of Stage 2.

Additional issues raised are as follows along with the Project Team's comments:-

Project Issues		
Issue	Comment	Action
Why this site?	The HQ Project at earlier option appraisal stages has considered a number of other sites and this was considered the most favourable site as part of the previous Council decisions in 2014.	No action
Why not refurbish Municipal Buildings & sustain status quo of various back offices?	The HQ Project at earlier option appraisal stages has considered a number of other options such as refurbishing and maintaining the existing building. The option of building a new HQ was the cheapest option, giving best value hence it was approved by the Council in 2014	No action
Why not use alternative existing buildings e.g. Callendar Square or existing office parks	These options have been considered and discounted by the project team.	No action
Local Business should	The Project Team are already in discussion to ensure	Community Benefit KPIs to

benefit from the Project	that community benefits for both local contractors and training opportunities are maximised through the construction activity.	be publicised, monitored and delivered.
Town Hall	It was agreed that a staged approach be adopted to the development with a separate business case being developed for the town hall replacement. This has been addressed in the report to the Council.	Council decision on options appraisal and potential development of business case.
Use of alternative and sustainable technology	Options for the use of renewable energy technologies are being considered.	Investigate options.
Awareness of Facts behind the Project	An information pack was compiled and presented on the Council's website and used at meetings or drop-in events.	No action

Design Issues

Issue	Comment	Action
Parking & Transport Sufficiency	A green travel plan will be prepared for the project.	Design team to prepare
Internal design issues e.g. enough desks	The proposal has adopted a standard of 8sq.m. per desk space and a ratio of 0.8 desks per FTE. This is in accordance with industry standards.	No action
Flat roof sufficiency	To be addressed in the Stage 2 design	Design team to progress
Elevational design and materials	To be addressed in the Stage 2 design	Design team to progress
Construction disruption	To be addressed through liaison between the contractor and planning authority.	Project team to address
Massing, overshadowing & Height of Building	The design has been reduced in height by 1.3m and moved 7m from the original suggested. Any remaining issues will fall to be addressed through the planning process.	Design team to progress
Privacy & Amenity	As above.	Design team to progress

5 Conclusion & Next Steps

In conclusion, the Project team has undertaken an extensive programme of consultation which has provided a range of ways for people to contribute their views, including online and in person at public drop in sessions. It is important to note that, for those people who attended the open public sessions in the Howgate Centre, at Community Council meetings or with the Community Forum, after presentation and discussion on the facts of the project with members of the project team many expressed that they were in favour of the project. Only one written response was received from a Community Council (Larbert & Stenhousemuir) who did not reach a firm conclusion. They indicated that they understood the Council's case for the project but that they had received expressions of concern in relation to the impact of spend on frontline services.

The responses to the consultation exercise undertaken on the project suggest that a level of interest in the project amongst the general public is apparent, but not significant. Some people expressed concern over the Council committing significant expenditure on the project at a time of austerity. This may have misconstrued the project's purpose and, when explained that it has to be delivered within fixed office budgets unavailable to be re-directed, there was a level of satisfaction with the Council's approach. People located close to the facility have expressed views that are material to the project's design some of which have been addressed in amendments to the design or will need to be resolved in the subsequent stages seeking planning approval.

It is worth noting that staff surveys undertaken have indicated that some staff anticipated to be located in the building have concerns relating to the roll-out of modern working practices including open-plan working, mobile and flexible working and in regard to issues such as the availability of parking. Experience from other authorities has shown that these issues can be addressed successfully and it is proposed that these be progressed in the project design and subsequent management. Staff surveyed also indicated that at least two-thirds will use the facilities in the town centre at least once a week. With an additional 285 staff transferring to the town centre from Abbotsford House, this will offer a boost to local retailers.

The pre application process will deal with the statutory requirements and many of the detailed concerns of neighbours. These are addressed in the main report to the Council and will be refined further by the design team in advance of submitting a planning application as part of Stage 2.

The project team will continue to act in a transparent manner and will utilise the Council website to provide project updates for those who are interested. Feedback will also be provided in the next issue of Falkirk Council News. Staff will be kept apprised and consulted as the project progresses and it is intended to put information on the Underground.

Analysis of the Feedback from Consultation (not relevant to Planning Application Submission)

The following feedback has been received in response to the consultation on the Council HQ project. These comments capture general perceptions of the project and do not focus on issues considered as material to the submission of a planning application (i.e. not querying project specific elements such as location, building characteristics or project delivery elements). As a consequence they have been captured separately and a response given to the issues raised.

Queries 1 to 54 have arisen from the Council Survey Monkey on the website, with the remainder coming from either the public consultation sessions in the Howgate Centre or from direct letters. emails to the HQ project email address.

A response to each comment has been provided, and duplicate comments are referred to earlier responses.

This analysis should be read in conjunction with the report on comments considered material to the planning application.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
1	13/5	At a time of increasing pressure on the Council's budget, coupled with the threat of redundancies and changes to staff terms and conditions, I am dubious that this is a spend-to-save exercise. If Falkirk Council has been aware of the poor condition of Municipal Buildings for some time, it is a failure of elected members to act promptly in dealing with this, and it should not fall on members of staff and the public to make savings elsewhere in order to facilitate the development of new Municipal Buildings. The decision is also being taken mid-way through the life of the current Council, which makes it effectively difficult to scrutinise. The move towards open plan working has been poorly received by staff in other local authorities. Such environments tend to be noisier, have less parking (especially for disabled staff and visitors), and is predicated upon staff agreeing to adopt more flexible working to suit the local authority rather than to suit staff. Given that the amended local development plan also	<p>A full option appraisal and business case has been prepared for the HQ project. This examined the Council's existing civic and office portfolio and considered alternatives for the future including refurbishment, a complete new build or a staged approach (the preferred option. The Council has acknowledged that, due to the poor condition of the Municipal Buildings premises, 'do nothing' is not an option. Decision papers on the Council website.</p> <p>This project is part of the Council's asset management agenda which fully accepts that it is imperative in times of budget difficulties that the Council rationalise its office estate to accommodate modernisation and greater efficiency in its services. It will help ensure that it makes the best use of its property assets with the explicit aim of protecting front line services and those staff that deliver them.</p> <p>This is a spend to save project with the project to be delivered within 'ring-fenced' existing office-related budgets of £1.9m per annum. If it cannot be delivered on that basis, the Council is unlikely to pursue it. The project aims to rationalise the</p>

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
		threatens to veto any new proposals to increase local car parking within Falkirk town centre, I feel the Council will force through proposals for sustainable transport, no matter how difficult it makes the new premises to access. I do not trust the present Council, which has resisted attempts at proper scrutiny of both changes to terms and conditions, and to another internal re-organisation from bringing reports to the full Council in terms of fully costed proposals for these. I think that this consultation is a sham and will be used by the Labour and Conservative members for whatever political capital they can make of it.	<p>Council's existing office base from four office buildings into one, with a reduction of floorspace usage by 50% and reduction of carbon emissions by c80%.</p> <p>It will also assist with the introduction of modern ways of working. Many organisations have adopted open plan working and found it to increase productivity and team working. The Project team is working with Managers, and staff representatives to ensure that the Council achieves open plan working correctly, to meet how services will work in the future. The project will also deliver new civic accommodation which will be available for use by community groups and other organisations.</p> <p>The project offers additional benefits in bringing additional staff into the town centre and assisting with the regeneration of the west end of the town centre.</p> <p>The key decision papers and information on the project are publically available and the Council is as open and transparent as possible in its decision making, in line with its Participation and Engagement strategy.</p>
2	14/5	i don't think this should even be up for consideration when people who work for the council (myself included) are at risk of loosing there jobs. How can the council justify this amount of spending when services are being cut, many of which effect the more vulnerable people in our society I hope those who make these decisions think again, there will be an outcry of utter disbelief if this goes ahead.	This spend to save project is about reusing existing Council office related budgets to fund the new project and deliver a solution that is more sustainable for the future and will have lesser running costs. It is intended to achieve delivery of the project without adverse impact on budgets in other areas of service. .
3	14/5	Is this serious!! This beggars belief that the council is forging ahead with this, considering the amount of cuts the council have made to local services, and also trying to cut budgets through cutting school hours. I will most definitely be voting with this in mind in the next local elections, and it will not be for the currently Labour/Conservative run council at the moment.	The project aims to reduce the money it spends on its office portfolio so that it can protect and limit the cuts being made elsewhere.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
4	14/5	Waste of money , at a push there is a well maintained fire service offices in maddiston which would be perfect for admin staff. Sell off a section of the land keep a section and build a new purpose built town hall to allow for multi purpose use ie ice skating area even (a bit like a smaller breahead arena	<p>The Scottish Fire & Rescue Services at Maddison are too small for the Council HQ in terms of number of staff to be accommodated and would require upgrade to accommodate modern ways of working. It would also require additional acquisition costs for the Council.</p> <p>There is a separate feasibility study looking at a replacement of the Falkirk Town Hall and it will consider which services it is financially feasible for the Council/Trust to deliver.</p>
5	15/5	This is ridiculous in light of the £40m + cuts that have been proposed for the region, impacting most on those most in need. I find this kind of expenditure utterly appalling in the current financial climate! This project should be scrapped with immediate effect and the funds put to better use for the good of the community.	The funds for the project are those currently being spent on maintaining and sustaining the offices that are being replaced. If the project does not go ahead, the funding will still require to be spent on the existing offices and capacity for reallocation to other services would be very limited.
6	15/5	Bloody disgusting to have money for this when care homes are being closed.. hope none of your employees in your new state of art municipal building have parents that live long enough to have to go into care as the private ones that will be left leave s lot to be desired like new Carron!!!	.
7	15/5	No children, sick, disabled and the poor should come first not building an expense new building	See response to comment 1 above
8	15/5	I find it absolutely astonishing that you are considering this project with its massive budget at a time when you are still holding the threat of reducing school hours for primary school children over the region. A far better use of public money would be to rent affordable office space somewhere in the region, not necessarily in Falkirk town centre. I hope the selfish selfserving nature of this council can come to there senses and realise that the local community should come first , not the needs of council staff members	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>Renting office space is more expensive than the Council owning a property outright. The Council currently rents property at Abbotsford House and Callander Square and it is considered financially beneficial to come out of these leases.</p>

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
9	15/5	When you are going to make cuts and we have to tighten our belts you are proposing to spend 21m because your building is in a bit of a mess seems to me like you don't really care how much hardship we suffer. Cut the bankers bonuses make them suffer	See response to comment 1 above
10	15/5	21 million new build or 10 million to repair. At a time when you are making cuts to vital front line services, it is rather glaringly obvious which option should be taken....	The £10M refurbishment is the costliest option in the long term. It will not assist the Council to move to new ways of working, it will retain existing methods of operation to prevail in a building which has been repaired but will have a limited serviceable life..
11	15/5	Disgusted, you're making staff redundant but going to spend on this	See response to comment 1 above
12	15/5	At a time when Falkirk Council is cutting essential services, it is simply breathtaking that they should be considering this. The problems with the current building are not new. This is a longstanding issue and yet you choose now to deal with them. This reeks of financial mismanagement and poor management of assets. You need to look at other options.	As explained above, other options have been explored and this is the most cost effective solution. Investment in the Municipal Buildings has been minimised for many years to allow expenditure to be focussed on frontline services. Unfortunately this is not sustainable and the Council has reached a stage where the buildings either need investment or an alternative approach such as is being proposed.
13	15/5	I think it is a bad idea and if it had been put out for consultation before now you would know this. When there are children starving and people needing help do you really think this is the best thing to do with £21 million. You were threatening to cut childrens school hours for God's sake.....what world do you live in. This is NOT needed and is an affront to everyone who pays tax to you.	See response to comment 1 above
14	16/5	Obscene use of public money at a time when Tory go ernment is hammering poorer people with their "austerity". Falkirk Council will be remembered as the administration that blew at least £21m of public money on this grandiose and self aggrandising scheme.Meanwhile we have foodbanks, homeless poor roads and a cuts after cuts to public services.	See response to comment 1 above

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
15	16/5	I do not understand how this can be justified when Falkirk council is closing two adult care homes, these homes do not meet the criteria set out by the care inspectorate but Falkirk council have been aware of this for many years and did nothing. It has now been decided these homes are not fit for purpose, people are losing their home and employees are losing their security of employment. There is a proposal for a new home to be built but as to date no decision has been made and the exact plans of what this new home will be and who will be employed in it has not been decided yet or it has not been disclosed. How can Falkirk council justify spending £20 million on new office space when vulnerable people will lose their homes, this is older adults who need familiarity, security and understanding of their needs all of which the staff working in the care homes are aware of.	See response to comment 1 above
16	17/5	I am amazed that the council can find £10 million for this when they have told all of their residents and employees that savings of £40 million will have to be made across the region. Surely they could alter existing buildings or fix up the buildings they are currently using. why do they need to build new buildings. i wonder who will be getting the contract and £10 million off Falkirk tax payers' money?	See answer to comment 1 above This project is part of the Council's business transformation agenda which aims to save as much money as possible to allow budgets to be focused on front line service delivery. The building will reduce the Council's office floorspace requirements by over 50% from the buildings it is replacing..
17	17/5	This is an absolute disgrace at a time when the Council is complaining about lack of funds. £21 million!	See answer to comment 1 above
18	17/5	I think this is disgraceful at a time of austerity and cuts to education and services. You should be ashamed of yourselves and the sooner local elections come the better. This should not be happening at this time, you have lost sight and focus of your roles.	See response to comment 1 above This project is about prudent financial management in looking at what the Council currently spends, and what it will require to spend on its office portfolio to continue to deliver services in the future. The option appraisal undertaken highlighted, that moving to a smaller and more efficient office, which the Council owned, would save money and reduce the risk of a critical building failure in the future.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
19	19/5	Does this only affect Falkirk? You would think so given that all 3 events are being held in the Howgate. This idea that you can spend £21m on new premises whilst cutting back on essential services is fanciful. You really need to get a grip. Or you'll pay the price in 2 years time for your arrogance.	<p>The Council's current HQ is at the Municipal Buildings in Falkirk and this is a replacement for this and other leased properties mainly in the Falkirk area.</p> <p>Community Councils from across the Falkirk area were invited to a Forum to discuss the proposal, where officers outlined the facts. An offer was made to provide this presentation at all Community Councils in their local areas as this affects the entire Council area. The Howgate Centre was selected as many people from across the Falkirk area shop here on a weekly basis.</p>
20	20/5	Not great	See response to comment 1 above
21	22/5	I think that given the current climate and the cuts the council are imposing on services which affect people and their lives, making it very difficult for the council to meet their legal obligations to people, the new municipal buildings should not be going ahead. Perhaps other options should be looked at. I appreciate the current municipal buildings considered not fit for purpose but it does not merit a replacement which costs so much. I think that any further funding from the public, eg. Council Tax increases which are long overdue, should be used for the good of the vulnerable residents, both young, old and disabled, and not to pay for a new municipal buildings	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>.</p> <p>This project will not impose further revenue pressure on the Council ie Council tax rises as it is a spend to save project which is attempting to save the Council money by reducing its running costs and future liabilities</p>
22	24/5	I think this should be shelved due to current budget restrictions	See response to comment 1 above
23	25/5	I cannot believe that in these times of austerity when I get my bucket collected once every three weeks the council think it the right time to develop a new Headquarters. As a rate payer I object strongly to this.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This is part of the Council's business transformation agenda to make everything it does as efficient as possible. The project will make our use of offices far more efficient. The budget for offices is totally separate from the Waste budget.</p>
24	2/6	preposterous from a council who are supposed to be saving money not squandering it	See response to comment 1 above

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
25	2/6	Waste of tax payers money, you left Denny in a dilapidated state for years so suck it up and suffer like the rest of us	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council require to have appropriate offices for staff to deliver necessary Council functions. This project is about modernising the office portfolio to utilise it better and to deliver greater value for money for each square metre occupied</p>
26	2/6	Total waste of money,my severely disabled son has had no daycare for 4 years ,and I'm trying to cope with a heart condition and old age and have him fulltime, The money should be put into needed services instead of cutting them,they cut the money for Denny shops then magically find money for there fancy offices	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>If the buildings are not replaced they will continue to be a larger draw on existing funding.ie will require further cuts.</p> <p>Denny town centre regeneration is being funded from the Council's capital budgets and its delivery is unaffected by this proposal.</p>
27	4/6	Council cutting jobs, increasing rents but council have spent over budget but now have the money to build this its a disgrace	See response to comment 1 above
28	4/6	I think that it is absolutely preposterous that Falkirk Council is even considering spending 20m pounds on a new headquarters, especially when the town looks like 1970's Czechoslovakia. Our roads are a disgrace. From Grahams Road to Langless (included) is a disgrace. The entire town is a run down shambles.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council own very few properties within the town centre and by focusing its scarce investment in the town centre is trying to assist regeneration at the west end and promote business confidence through relocating staff into the town centre. As stated above, this is not a new investment it is about altering the way the Council spends by means of rationalising its existing office portfolio.</p>
29l	5/6	I object to this planning application. Falkirk council have one of the biggest debts amongst other local councils. Where is the money for this coming from? You tried to cut education, I don't believe this is totally off the cards. Something that is of the utmost importance to the future of falkirk. If our young people aren't adequately educated, how can you justify a new fancy building. It is starting to appear that this council is corrupt. It's a disgrace that this is even being considered in the current financial predicament.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is about saving the Council money on its office portfolio by reducing their running costs by reducing the office floorspace on necessary office space for a back office functions outlined above. .This is a totally separate budget from education and roads repairs.</p>
30	5/6	Waste of money that could be spent on local services. My council tax has went up yet my services go down.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>Council Tax rates have been frozen since 2007.</p>
31	5/6	Waste of more money	See response to comment 1 above

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
32	5/6	This is ridiculous! You can't forward plan for a new school that has been open for seven years and is bursting at the seams with even MORE mobile classrooms, to give a grand total of 6, being added to a VERY small playground and yet you want to spend tax payers money on another newer building. DUE TO STAFF CUT BACKS there should be AMPLE office space to forward plan for the foreseeable future. Get your priorities right... Kinnaird Primary is in more need of an extension than a new office block.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is not about taking money away from Education which has separate budgets. This project is about looking at existing office running costs and reducing them by moving to a smaller office, which is more sustainable in terms of running costs and will be owned by the Council to house office based staff that support the Council's functions such as Finance, Legal, HR, .and other statutory services.</p> <p>Work to consider the options for Kinnaird Primary is taking place and will be considered in due course by the Council.</p>
33	8/6	Bad idea. £10 million could be spent on much better things that will aid more people. A new council building only helps the councillors, who already earn plenty, and not the working people. Hospitals, schools, youth clubs and community projects all could aid from that £10m.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is not taking money away from schools or other community projects. It is reviewing how existing office budgets are spent and redirecting them in a more efficient way to deliver a modern and efficient building. If the project does not progress it is likely that office costs within the Council will increase over time.</p>
34	8/6	I think that it is shocking that after announcing cuts to many services, which affect the most vulnerable in our society, and many jobs being lost that they can justify spending this amount of money on a new building. Its a disgrace.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is part of the Council's business transformation strategy to make every service as efficient as it can be. The project has looked at existing office running costs and proposed a solution that will reduce the rate per sq meter that the Council spends providing necessary office space. The building will reduce the Council's office floorspace by over 50%.</p>
35	10/6	In the present climate where jobs and front line services are being cut back it is ridiculous to be replacing the municipal building.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Municipal Building has reached the end of its useful life and has become functionally obsolete. The options appraisals considered above highlighted that refurbishing the Municipal Building would cost more and that doing nothing was not an option as it may result in a building failure. This spend to save project aims to ensure that back office functions are delivered as efficiently as possible to protect front line services in a time of significant austerity</p>

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
36	15/6	I think it is ludicrous to build new HQs in times of austerity. I think you need to focus the spend in key public services, EDUCATION, HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE, I think using money in this way for a new HQ is completely IRRESPONSIBLE! No one needs an ivory tower but everyone needs health and education.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is not about taking money away from Education or Social Care. This project is about looking at existing office running costs and reducing them by moving to a smaller office, which is more sustainable in terms of running costs and will be owned by the Council to house essential office based staff that support the Council's functions such as Finance, Legal, HR, .and other statutory services.</p>
37	25/6	I think Falkirk Council would be better waiting until they can afford to do this without cutting money to vital public services. They should be concentrating on clawing back the huge deficit they have created rather than spending ridiculous sums of money on themselves.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>Delivery of this project cannot wait as the Council's leases are expiring and the longer the project is delayed the more money it will cost . The review has been ongoing for a period of time, and like many other authorities across Scotland Falkirk Council requires to act now to save money for the future..</p>
38	16/6	I think it is appalling that this should be a consideration at this time due to the amount of funds available in the area and the savings that have to be made, it would suit you better if you put the money into the community and made sure there were enough care and care home places for residents	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This is not new money that can be diverted into other projects or areas, this is about the prudent reuse of existing office costs, which will actually reduce the Council's overall office running costs.</p>
39	18/6	I do not agree that this money should be used on a new municipal buildings whilst Falkirk's schools remain over crowded, over capacity and using modular classrooms. Whilst the current building may have deteriorated it is far more fit for purpose than having our kids and their teachers in wooden huts which also take up some of the very little out door space at the schools. Only when school situation is rectified only then would it make sense to fund such an undertaking.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is being funded from the costs of running the Council offices, which are totally separate from the cost attributed to running schools. The Council requires to have offices for its staff and this is provided from a totally separate and necessary budget which cannot be diverted into the school estate.</p> <p>In asset terms, the school estate, including the 8 renewed high schools, is in a substantially better condition than other elements of the Council's property portfolio,. While some schools need investment this is managed via the School Asset Management Plan in a manner consistent with the approach across the rest of Scotland.</p>
40	24/6	A total waste of Council money!	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>.</p>

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
41	24/6	I have heard that there are a lot of council cut backs happening due to money saving. With that in mind, I am surprised that there is money for a new building	See response to comment 1 above
42	25/6	I don't understand how funds can be made available for this at a time when there are so many cuts being made & jobs at risk with the council. Standards of service within the community have deteriorated in so many ways recently that this area is now becoming a less attractive place to live and areas are beginning to become more and more unkempt.	See response to comment 1 above
43	25/6	It is not an essential requirement and at this moment in time when vital services are having to cope with extreme cuts, I think it would be a disgrace if this went ahead. Perhaps sometime in the future it could be reconsidered but only after essential and vital services see their budgets get the money they require.	See response to comment 1 above .
44	25/6	I would like to know where the money will come for this project in view of all the cuts the council are implementing?	See response to comment 1 above
45	26/6	waste of money! We in falkirk district should be spending money on front line staff not on new buiding.	See response to comment 1 above
46	26/6	I think it is outrageous that Falkirk Council is considering this project at this time of AUSTERITY! There must be a million ways the money could be better spent.	See response to comment 1 above
47	26/6	I think this is a disgrace at a time when there are so many cuts being made to services. The Council should not be thinking about this for at least another 5 or more years. How can you possibly justify this when there are schools in need of essential repairs? Cuts to education are NOTgetting it right for every child. It seems to be the young, vulnerable and old who suffer when savings need to be made. I hope these plans do not go ahead at a time when we need to save so much money within the Council.	See response to comment 1 above
48	27/6	This is the wrong time to even consider this. There are things that could be sold off like the ridiculous department just off Calendar Park with the high maintenance garden. Making back money and not spending unnecessary money is the way ahead. Please do not proceed with this project.	See response to comment 1 above This is not deemed as unnecessary spend and is an attempt by the Council to invest in a building that will save money in the medium/long term.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response
49	27/6	While I realise the existing building is in poor condition, the current austerity means it may be inopportune. Particularly when with a new court and police station a joint building is not viable	See response to comment 1 above Delaying the expenditure is likely to cost the Council additional money, that it is likely to have, in the future. The option appraisal process undertaken recommended that this option was the most economically advantageous to the Council.
50	1/7	I think this project is exceptionally difficult to justify given level of cuts in local services.	See response to comment 1 above
51	5/7	the municipal buildings having stood for a few years and at a time when government have cut spending seems senseless to spend money on such a project when many other small charitable companies have been forced to close due to high rents and expenses. The money may keep these necessary companies going till they can arrange funding without council support then the restructuring of local government building can go ahead.	See response to comment 1 above
52	6/7	A construction from start to finish in 2 years, well seen its no in Denny. How many services could you save from cuts, if this plan could be delayed for austerity to pass. Fat Cats need a new lair, here them roar louder than local needs.	See response to comment 1 above 2 years is a realistic timescale assuming all decisions are taken promptly.
53	6/7	I think that it is totally wrong of the Council to even consider spending such a large sum of money on new offices when at the same time you are seeking to make £40 million of cuts to your budget. I have no doubt that the current HQ is now past its best, but we are all being asked to make sacrifices and i think the councillors should live with it until £40 million issue is resolved. It seems to be not only to be financially irresponsible but also morally reprehensible to cut funding to essential services at at the same time spend money on a new HQ.	See response to comment 1 above .
54	24/7	It needs to be done, but not in this time of austerity. The money should be better spent on more deserving, budget starved departments such as education and our every deteriorating roads!	See response to comment 1 above

Howgate Centre Consultation Responses			
55		Why doesn't Council save money by turning off lights in schools/Municipal Buildings when no one is in	Issue will be passed to Energy Team to raise with Premises Managers
56		Falkirk Roads need the potholes addressing	Issue will be passed to Head of Roads & Design
Direct Email/Letter Responses			
57	25/5	<p>We are interested in tendering for the demolition and site clearance.</p> <p>Could you please let me know how same will be procured and the proposed timetable</p>	<p>The construction project is being procured by Falkirk Council through the Scottish Future Trust, hub East Central Scotland procurement route. The Hubco Project Manager for the project was made aware of your interest. The project is a very early stage and I do not envisage work packages being procured until much later in the year – the project does not yet have final approval which will be at the end of 2015.</p> <p>The Council may demolish the Municipal Buildings once the new HQ is completed, or may wrap this into the above construction contract -no final decision has been made on the procurement route at this juncture. If the Council demolishes directly the opportunity will be advertised via Public Contracts Scotland via the above link. The demolition of the buildings will not occur until summer 2017 at the earliest.</p> <p>http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/</p>

Analysis of the Feedback from the Consultation - Material to the submission of a planning application.

The following comments, received as feedback from the consultation exercise are viewed as material in planning terms for the purposes of submitting a planning application for the project. While some address the general purpose of the project they include comments relating to elements such as location, building characteristics (design, siting, massing), planning or project delivery elements (construction, project appraisal).

Queries 1 to 86 have arisen from the Council Survey Monkey on the website, with the remainder coming from either direct letters/emails to the HQ project email address (87 to 105) or the public consultation sessions in the Howgate Centre (106 -118)

A response to each comment has been provided, and comments on duplicate topics are referred to earlier responses.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
SURVEY MONKEY RESPONSES				
1	15/5	I think it is a disgrace. At a time when the council is cutting back on services and increasing charges for disabled and elderly people, introducing or increasing charges for community facilities, special uplifts etc and a range of other cost cutting activities, it makes no sense to spend £20M on a new HQ. A few issues: 1. Why does it need to be built in the city centre? Are there not cheaper options outwith the city centre, for example, in Grangemouth or near the Helix, land the Council owns. 2. Where are all the staff going to relocate to and how much will this cost? You do not seem to be providing information on this. If relocation is possible in the short term, then why not do that permanently? Could the council meetings not rotate around local community facilities - an opportunity for local people to watch the	<p>A full option appraisal and business case has been prepared for the HQ project. This examined the Council's existing civic and office portfolio and considered alternatives for the future including refurbishment, a complete new build or a staged approach (the preferred option. The Council has acknowledged that, due to the poor condition of the Municipal Buildings premises, 'do nothing' is not an option. Decision papers on the Council website.</p> <p>This project is part of the Council's asset management agenda which fully accepts that it is imperative in times of budget difficulties that the Council rationalise its office estate to accommodate modernisation and greater efficiency in its services. It will help ensure that it makes the best use of its property assets with the explicit aim of</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
		<p>debate too. 3. If repairs cost £10M then do that rather than spending £20M. We are in tight financial times... spend the money on a new HQ when the good years appear. Every other sector understands how to tighten its belt... moving to cheaper premises, making do and mending. Councillors and the public sector should be leading by example</p>	<p>protecting front line services and those staff that deliver them.</p> <p>This is a spend to save project with the project to be delivered within 'ring-fenced' existing office-related budgets of £1.9m per annum. If it cannot be delivered on that basis, the Council is unlikely to pursue it. The project aims to rationalise the Council's existing office base from four office buildings into one, with a reduction of floorspace usage by 50% and reduction of carbon emissions by c80%.</p> <p>It will also assist with the introduction of modern ways of working. Many organisations have adopted open plan working and found it to increase productivity and team working. The Project team is working with Managers, and staff representatives to ensure that the Council achieves open plan working correctly, to meet how services will work in the future. The project will also deliver new civic accommodation which will be available for use by community groups and other organisations.</p> <p>The project offers additional benefits in bringing additional staff into the town centre and assisting with the regeneration of the west end of the town centre.</p> <p>The key decision papers and information on the project are publically available and the Council is as open and transparent as possible in its decision making, in line with its Participation and Engagement strategy.</p>	

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
2	15/5	Hi I think its great. New energy efficient offices, consolidation of existing offices, it should be a place of civic pride. A full public consultation must happen. What about a planning aid for Scotland charrette +? However I would like to see local businesses benefit from the build, establish a park and ride for staff at wheel car park, etc... and really before you start ARE YOU SURE OF THE FINAL COST, LIKE REALLY SURE?	<p>The Council wishes there to be as much awareness about the project and the Project Team will ensure that information is made available on the Council website to keep citizens informed. The decision on the site has already been made by Council in October 2014, hence a Planning Aid charrette would be inappropriate.</p> <p>As part of the Community Benefit agenda for the project, the Council will be looking to encourage local contractors to apply to be subcontractors on the build and to look for apprenticeships from build process. This element is being considered in parallel with the new ASN secondary school proposal, so that the Council can maximise the benefits from these projects.</p> <p>By utilising the Scottish Governments East Central Scotland Hubco procurement process, the Council is looking for cost certainty on the project prior to its final sign off and contract conclusion. This procurement approach allows the costs to be capped as the design evolves, with numerous costing exercises to gain certainty.</p>	Ensure any meet the buyers events are publicised well in advance on website, via Business Forums and in newspaper
3	15/5	Appears to be a very high cost at a time when there are various options other than new build	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The cost has been benchmarked against other similar HQ office projects and is in line in terms of the rate per sq metre. This project will also deliver junction improvements at West Bridge Street and will contribute to a modernising of Council IT provision within the £19M project budget. Prior to the decision to progress this option, the Council considered an option appraisal of other sites and options (refurbishing the Municipal Buildings) and this option</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
4	15/5	A disgrace - you are cutting funding to all aspects of the council but feel you need a new shiny building. There are existing buildings in the area that could be used as the council buildings. There is no need to have all staff in the one base - why not make use of the local town halls for your meetings and lease a building for admin staff. This would allow for the needed upgrade of town halls and mean that you could save money.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The project is not cutting funding or impacting on other Council spend as it is looking to reuse existing budget expenditure.</p> <p>Following previous appraisals no other existing building was found that could accommodate the Council's requirements. By co-locating staff together there will be economies of scale.</p> <p>The funding for and upgrading of the Town Hall is being considered as a separate element of this project and the Council is currently considering whether both the offices and town hall facilities can be replaced within the existing budgeted expenditure.</p>	
5	15/5	Not enough parking spaces in the proposal! Limited desks available for staff. The expense of building a new office in the town centre which will be difficult to get to! Why not build flats on this site and off set the profit against building somewhere more suitable..	<p>The level of parking will be determined during the planning application and taking account of the Council's Travel Plan for the project. The site is within the town centre and in close proximity to the train and bus stations.</p> <p>The reduced number of desks will take cognisance of the fact that the Council is looking to work in more flexible and agile ways and if you look at the number of desks the Council currently has they are not all used, all of the time, so a reduction is possible.</p> <p>The site was considered the most economically advantageous when compared to other sites and the surplus part of the site, in the longer term, will be sold to contribute to the replacement project.</p>	<p>Further discussions with Planning Authority on parking requirements will be undertaken once Transport Assessment has been finalised.</p> <p>The next phase of the design will consider the office layouts including numbers of desks.</p>

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
6	15/5	I support the plan, however don't make the same mistake in having any more flat roofs. Also for 20 million I hope you are plastering solar panels all over it.	<p>Flat roof technology has moved on and if it is constructed properly will not leak. The building, will have a slightly sloping roof, which will be properly constructed so will not leak.</p> <p>The intention is to consider solar photovoltaic and solar thermal on the roof to meet the building's needs.</p>	The business case for PV, etc will be considered as part of the next Stage of design.
7	16/5	It is a great idea, great way to modernise Falkirk council and to keep staff in a brilliant new HQ, with state of the art technology.	It is envisaged by modernising offices, co-locating staff and reappraising how we carry out our business processes that the project will derive additional benefits that have as yet not been quantified. These benefits will assist the Council maintain services for less budget in the future.	None
8	16/5	There are many more things the council should be spending the money it has. Replacing there hq should be last on the list. Could they not just rent one or more of the existing office units that are in the area.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council already rents external property and the business case demonstrates that moving to owned property will be cheaper for the Council.</p>	None
9	17/5	I would like to know why its be allowed to get into such a state of disrepair. Also more information regarding other options. Approx 21M in the face of ongoing austerity cuts is ludicrous. And the rhetoric about the funded council tax freeze just isn't cutting it anymore. FC are going to have to have a serious rethink of their priorities.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The previous background information is available via the following link:</p> <p>Feb 14 - http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=9571</p> <p>Jun 14 - http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=9961</p>	Further information and details will be put on the Council website as the project progresses.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
			<p>Oct 14 – http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=10324</p> <p>Investment in the Municipal Buildings has been minimised in the past to enable expenditure to be focussed on frontline services. This is not sustainable and unfortunately the Council has reached a point where investment is required.</p>	
10	17/5	Absolutely disgusting waste of money at this time, cuts being made in care sector and education yet funds can be found for this? Why has the original building been allowed to deteriorate so much? Is there no other council building that could be taken over and used without the expense of building an entire new premises	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council does not have other buildings that could take the numbers of staff involved in this co-location project. Where the Council has leases of smaller properties, they are also being reviewed and will be terminated if there is no need for the office spaces.</p>	None
11	17/5	Under no circumstances should the council be spending money on a new building while at the same time warning of cuts of £40m are being made with threats to teachers etc. There are many empty buildings in industrial estates in the area, move there. This is disgusting!	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is utilizing existing office running cost to fund a new HQ which will be far more efficient and allow staff to work in a more effective manner, through co-location and adopting mobile and flexible technologies. The project, will reduce “back office” costs and deliver savings to the Council on this function, which may minimize the need for further cuts in other areas.</p> <p>There are empty industrial buildings but these would require adaptation works to make them fit for occupation as offices and the new HQ was deemed the most cost effective solution for the Council.</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
12	17/5	I am amazed that the council can find £10 million for this when they have told all of their residents and employees that savings of £40 million will have to be made across the region. Surely they could alter existing buildings or fix up the buildings they are currently using. why do they need to build new buildings. i wonder who will be getting the contract and £10 million off Falkirk tax payers' money?	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council is not finding any “new” moneys for this project but plans to utilise existing budgets being spent on running costs and rents for inefficient offices, reusing these sums to build and run a new HQ as a spend to save project.</p> <p>The Council looked at a number of options including refurbishing the existing building but the new build option was considered the cheapest option.</p>	None
13	17/5	Yes, building a new HQ sounds like over the years will reduce costs. It is an investment for the future	The building is being designed to be far more energy efficient and to minimise running costs.	None
14	18/5	Whilst I have no overall objection (at this time) I am concerned about the construction phase. It will come down to two main factors; noise and traffic. I would be unhappy if there was overnight noise though building or roadworks although I understand some may be inevitable. I would also be concerned about any diversions or restrictions which force traffic (indirectly) into Arnothill. This is a narrow road and is already used by some as a shortcut. A large amount of traffic could cause serious issues and I would like to see a traffic plan in place. I would be keen to see plans when available As one of the few properties which has a direct view of the office from the front I am especially interested in the facade. Although I think it is likely to be an improvement!	As part of the Planning Application the construction times will be controlled and it is unlikely that there will be any night time working. The Council and the contractor will work to ensure that there are proper site facilities and that traffic flows are controlled as much as is practical. The plans are evolving and a full set of elevations will be available when the planning application is lodged at the end of August. The Council is looking to construct a functional and sustainable building, which will improve the townscape.	<p>Discussions on hours of construction will be conditioned by the Planning Authority as part of their consideration of the project.</p> <p>The Transport Assessment will consider traffic implications of the project.</p> <p>Elevations will be made available as part of the formal planning application.</p>

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
15	18/5	With budget cuts think council leadership have lost their minds proposing a rebuild. A downsizing of staff and offices to one of the local business parks would make more sense.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This is a downsizing of the Council's office services, reducing 4 premises into 1. The building will have less than 50% of the current floorspace and it is envisaged that the building running costs will be around a 1/3rd of current costs.</p> <p>There is no suitable accommodation with any of the business parks that would meet the Council's requirements. The option to new build on a business park was more expensive than the costs proposed.</p>	None
16	18/5		<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The links above highlight the appraisals that have been undertaken and decisions reached by the Council.</p> <p>The Council is reducing floorspace by 50% in the properties in scope and altering the way that staff will work to reduce the number of vacant desks in Council offices. A setting that is appropriate for an HQ is being designed, while at the same time accepting that the Council should not retain land or property for which it does not have a direct requirement – this land will be sold to generate receipts that can contribute to the project</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
		<p>I think the council should first submit a detailed explanation of the requirement for the new project for the public to view, with explanations and pictures explaining the need for this project/spending. It's unclear to me what is meant regarding the downsizing of the building - in what way? Does this mean downsizing floor space overall? Building a taller building to reduce ground cover? etc. How can this then be rectified with the later statement that the council intends to sell off surplus buildings? Surely the advantage of downsizing the HQ is cancelled out by selling off parts of the site because it would lead to greater land use density and put increasing pressure on the town centre and make it more urbanised. Instead, the extra space could be transformed into low maintenance parkland/garden or combined with the car parking to create a more beautiful area for people to enjoy as well as increasing/maintaining car parking capacity. Don't chop down mature trees on the site. Plant more if space permits. Overall the council HQ and development has I think a responsibility to set an example by being designed in an environmentally aware manner and incorporating modern environmental practices into all aspects of development. This would be good for the Council and Falkirk's PR. The plan to sell off part of the site sounds suspicious - it's not even stated how much of the site will be sold off. I would think that beautiful & functional spaces are more important than selling off areas of the site for the council to make a quick buck that will be quickly spent and you might be left with an overdeveloped, underused, possibly concrete eyesore. If</p>		

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
		the new development goes ahead, I think it would be very wise to think of the future and enact as many pro-environment aspects as possible, incorporating measures such as SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) incorporated into the areas of paving, parking (permeable surfaces), and the building itself, etc - in addition to energy efficiencies mentioned. Also these energy efficiencies should be explained and outlined to public - not simply stating that "80% reduction will take place". They should explain them concisely so people can see/understand the good work being done instead of just sound bites. For example use of a grass roof would reduce precipitation runoff into the drains (reduce flood risk) and would retain heat in the building, lowering your energy costs long-term. Artistically/culturally it would be interesting in my opinion to develop buildings or structures or parts thereof which utilise and reflect the resources of the local council area, e.g. locally sourced timber from fallen trees or metal from an ex works, from within Falkirk council.		
17	20/5	I think given the current financial position this is a waste of money as there are other buildings that could be better utilised throughout the council area.	See response to comment 1 above The Council considered other buildings within its portfolio and none were suitable. The ability to co-locate so many staff into a single, smaller building will save money, reduce staff travel time between buildings and improve staff productivity	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
18	22/5	This concerns me when services are being cut all the time, waste collection being one of the biggies, charging for special collections and much more but especially when there are so many council houses that need upgrading and are being ignored at the moment. There is also the concern of moving the one stop shop out of the town centre. The whole idea of these one stop shops was that they would be easily accessible to the public as they would be in town centres, moving it to the site takes it away from this and would mean that many of those using this service would have to make a special journey to a part of the town outwith easy accessible premises as they are.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This project is looking to only relocate back office staff from Callander Square to the new building. The Council will continue to retain a one stop shop presence in the town centre/Callander Square.</p>	None
19	25/5	Bearing in mind the cuts that are being made due to money restraints in Falkirk district would it not be more 'savvy' for the council to knock down and sell the 'premium land' for housing and move the council workers and various departments into the other buildings and offices they own around Falkirk?	<p>See answer to Question 17</p> <p>This is the first part of the Council's review of all office services. The Council does not own another property or site sufficient to co-locate this number of staff into. By co-locating staff the Council will generate greater efficiencies of scale to back office services.</p>	None

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20	29/5	These buildings are desperately needing replaced with a new building that is fit for purpose and easy to access. In addition to the practical needs for replacement, the headquarters reflect the image of the council. The current building is out-of-date, tired and drab. A new building that reflects a forward-thinking council that will take us well into the 21 century and meet the diverse needs of the communities that make up Falkirk Council will be a refreshing change. Personally, I would prefer the new building to be situated somewhere that is easier to access, rather than in the centre of town.	It was considered that a town centre location was accessible for both public transport and for those coming by car.	None
21	2/6	there are more important things needing financing than a comfy office for the high heid yins. the old building must be used as long as possible. if the office is truly beyond use then there are other buildings that can be used. why not rent the callander square shopping centre from its bankrupt owners and use the empty shops as offices. use the old schools etc.	See response to comment 1 above To acquire or lease from a private owner, and adapt would cost the Council more than the current proposal.	None
22	2/6	I do not trust this council or its facts and figures. Has an independent assessment of the current building taken place? Only months ago this council threatened to cut primary school children's hours to save £1.9m. The council then publicly accused parents and opposition councillors of wasting money by asking for a meeting in which the council would make an official reversal on that cruel threat. Suddenly you now have £20m to splash out on comfy new offices for yourselves in which to plan further cuts detrimental to all the people of Falkirk. I think this proposal is an absolute scandal. The Calendar centre sits empty all year, use that or even the Howgate now that the town centre is all but a ghost town. I know	See response to comment 1 above The public consultation is an attempt by the Council to share the facts in an open and honest way and for the public to understand the difficult decisions that the Council has to make. The previous report on the appraisals are available, see answer to question 9. Neither Callander Square nor the Howgate Centre offer any realistic opportunity to provide the necessary office accommodation on a cost effective basis.	None

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		this consultation is a sham as you will go ahead with this regardless but I am not alone in my sentiments, it's shameful		
23	4/6	I'm not 100% sure where or what these building are. But if they are not historically noted for any reason, then building a new modern facility with greener technologies is sure to be beneficial.	The aspiration is for the new building to be significantly more efficient and sustainable than the existing buildings which it will replace.	None
24	4/6	the building you have is fine. it is not structually unsafe so use the building you have with its inconveniences and use this whopping sum of money to better use. remove damp from council house, improve services for elderly and disabled and keep ASSET in tamfourhill open.	The Municipal Building is not structurally unsafe but it has a number of issues relating to building services, plant and fabric that require addressing as a matter of some urgency. If these issues are not addressed there is a significant risk that the building will fail and that staff will have to be relocated. The costs of the work and the relocation were all looked at as part of an option appraisal process and to provide a replacement building that fitted the Council's needs was the most cost effective solution.	None
25	5/6	In principle I am in favour. However little has been said about funding the new building. I believe it is hoped to borrow over a period of 30 years. It is essential that the building is bought outright, rather than having a PFI like model. I note that FTH is to remain for the foreseeable future. Replacement of this is also well overdue.	The Council will borrow to fund the building and will pay the borrowing from existing revenue budgets. The building will be owned by the Council. A separate business case is being considered for the Falkirk Town Hall	None

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26	5/6	Unnecessary expenditure by the council, considering they were complaining about funding for education just a few months ago, which was a mere 1/10th of what the council are intending spending on a new HQ. The council priorities are totally wrong. The existing buildings could and should have been maintained to a high standard which would have negated the need to consider new premises. Refurbish the existing building and utilise porta-cabins as required, there is more than enough space around the existing buildings. Instead of spending scare money on new show off premises, utilise that same money on school buildings, many of which are unsuitable for the purpose which they were originally built for. Proper education premises is far more important than a fancy HQ building.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The options appraisals undertaken by the Council highlighted that refurbishing the existing buildings and utilising temporary decant would actually cost the Council more than a new building (see links above). This project is about a sustainable and efficient HQ utilising the scare moneys that are currently being spent on the office portfolio. Over the past 20 years, Council have under invested in their property portfolios as adequate maintenance was viewed as an easier saving than front line services. This project utilises moneys that are and will require to be spend on the office portfolio and cannot be diverted to other sectors such as Education.</p>	None
27	6/6	I can see the logic in replacing the existing structure to build a more sustainable building and open up use of the facilities more widely. I am therefore in favour of the idea. I would expect to see more detailed plans for the building which include: - what is being done to include sustainable energy into the fabric of the design e.g. will the building incorporate solar energy or other sustainable energy technology? - accessible space for the community - how much space and how that space would be accessed and serviced, forecast costs to users etc.? - what options been considered for joining up the HQ with other public services? - have any joint funding opportunities with other public services been explored? I think that it is important that the Council HQ remains in a town centre location to ensure that it is accessible to both staff and the public.	<p>During this next design phase, the Council will consider the sustainable technology to be incorporated into the building. At this phase, we are trying to site and orientate the building to make the best use of passive energy design principles. The project will work collaboratively with the introduction of new technology to try and make service processes as efficient as possible. Discussions where held at the start of the project but no other public service had a space requirement at this time, however, the project will co-locate staff from a number of Council service (and buildings) within one building.</p>	None

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28	8/6	Necessary. The old building is inefficient and no doubt costly to run and maintain.	Yes, that is the fundamental reason the project is being considered as these costs are not sustainable.	None
29l	8/6	The demolition costs seem excessive. Can the new building be environmentally friendly and secure employment for local contractors who commit to on going community benefits. Can we make sure it can be used by the community at weekends and evenings etc. Similarly outdoor spaces that can be used by the public. There may be good examples elsewhere.	The demolition costs will be tendered as the project progresses and all costs are budget estimates at this time. The Council is looking to make the building as sustainable as possible and the Council will look at future running costs as well as capital costs to adopt the most sustainable solution. The main contractor will hold a series of meet the buyer sessions to ensure that local businesses contribute to the community benefit that such a project can deliver. The intention is to create a series of modern, attractive and flexible meeting spaces on the ground floor that can also be used by the community.	None
30	9/6	good idea to replace although how will that affect the town hall space?	See response to comment 1 above A separate business case is being looked at for the replacement of the town hall but as is recognised, money is tight. It may be that savings from the office project could be used to “pump prime” a replacement town hall.	Information on the Town Hall will be put on the Council website when available
31	9/6	A cost effective idea that should go ahead.		None
32	14/6	I would like you to consider building on the east elevation of westfield stadium as this would serve the needs of both the community and falkirk fc.	One of the previous options considered was building at Westfield but this did not offer investment in sustaining the town centre, maximizing public transport travel opportunities and was not considered the best value for money for the project.	None
33	15/6	While it's part of the 'Spend to Save' measures, and long-term it should save money - the problems are bigger than this. Having worked for the Council myself, I have seen first hand how things are run; where improvements can be made; how efficiencies could be improved, and ultimately how the Council could serve the people of the	See response to comment 1 above The Council is looking at all aspects of its business to improve efficiency and deliver effective public services. This is one of a number of spend to save strands which include looking at asset utilization, council structures and shifting	None

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		<p>area better. Salaries and pensions most definitely need to be looked at in terms of savings. People on six figure salaries is not a fair and proper use of funds. Another area in which money could be saved would be getting rid of agency staff. In Social Work, qualified Social Workers could cost the Council up to £43p/h, over a £37 hour week, that equates to £1,591, which is a vastly inflated sum. Structurally, the Council is bloated and is too middle management heavy. I'm not suggesting that people losing their jobs is the way to go, but surely there are more efficient models - look at all of the LGC Award winners, most of those have a far more streamlined structure. All in all, I believe a new headquarters would save money long term, but it just the tip of the iceberg; the Council itself verges on the shambolic; it doesn't provide efficient services across the board, it's too top heavy; there is too much money wasted.</p>	<p>channels of communication in the way that customers and citizens do business with the Council.</p>	
34	16/6	<p>I feel money could be better spent on updating current Falkirk Council buildings. I also have concerns over the disruptions to surrounding homes, my grandmother lives in the retirement block and will be disrupted during the demolition and building of the new facilities.</p>	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The above option appraisals highlight that this was the most cost effective solution open to the Council and would cost less than investing in time expired buildings. The Council will attempt to minimize the disruptions to all neighbours as much as is possible.</p>	<p>As the design evolves, there will be further discussions with adjoining properties re disruption.</p>
35	17/6	<p>Were the refurbishment quote and assessment of the current building provided by an independent surveyor? If so, who was this? What is your answer to the numerous people who have suggested using existing vacant buildings in Falkirk town centre? How does this borrowing and spending reconcile with the fact that mere months ago the council wanted to make cuts</p>	<p>The option appraisal was carried out by a specialist team of external advisers using Council data on running costs, rents etc. The Council do not own vacant buildings in the town centre and such a solution would be more costly in that the Council would require to acquire and convert vacant properties and it is likely that the timescales for the project would be elongated. The option appraisals undertaken over</p>	<p>None</p>

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			<p>the past two years were reported to Council and the reports are publically available using the following links:-</p> <p>http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=9571</p> <p>http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=9961</p> <p>http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=10324</p>	
36	19/6	how much will a new building cost and from which budget will the money come from	The budget for the building is £19M and it is being funded from the running costs of the existing office buildings. The project is a spend to save project, which it is envisaged will save the Council money year on year on office running costs – it will deliver significant savings on office running costs, not increase them.	None
37	21/6	why build in town centre when we have space on central retail park and at helix park. Selling buildings in denny, grangemouth, langless and town centre and centralising should be a key policy, with staff working flexibly and hot desking.	The Council do not own any land at central retail park and are therefore looking to build on a serviced site that they mainly own at West Bridge Street. The sites at the Helix Park are not zoned for this type of development and are not serviced. The Council aims to concentrate investment in the town centre, by co-location staff from 4 buildings into 1, at less than ½ the floorspace of the current buildings, to ensure there will be significant efficiencies.	None
38	24/6	In common with quite a few comments in the Falkirk Herald I would only ask that you do not opt for a flat roof when building the new offices	Please see answer to Question 6.	None

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39	26/6	I know money is in the interest of all and the Council have to account for all spending , if you really thinks that the new building will improve the standard which the council has to work to then go ahead, but be sure that this building will upgrade your standard of work to the community, and not to be a waste of your budget.	By co-locating staff into a single building, and stopping staff traveling between buildings will save money as will providing more flexible office accommodation.	None
40	24/6	I cannot comprehend why the Council choose to go ahead with this development when there is a readymade structure at Callendar Square with ample parking provided for staff and visitors. Falkirk Council could easily take over this building as it is only uses at about 30% of it's capacity anyway. Instead they choose to steam roll ahead with this new development when there is very little money in the council budget. This idea was mentioned in the Falkirk Herald a few months ago but seems to have typically gone ignored. If the Callendar Square site for some inexplicable reason is not worthy why don't they look at Building a structure at Abbotsford Park behind Abbotsford House? They seem hell bent on having a town centre presence while many would not wish this. It would be an ideal location as it is easy to get to via the FND and it would be simple to provide bus links. The current land on which the Municipal Buildings site could be sold off as premium land for apartments/houses which would self finance this new build. Once again Falkirk Council councillors ignore the wishes of the people.	See response to comment 1 above Callander Square is in private ownership and would have to be acquired, remodelled and turned into offices all of which would cost more than the current proposal. Other sites and options were considered as has been outlined in the above answers.	None

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41	24/6	It never fails to strike me and I have no doubt a lot of others , how government , both local and national , can find any amounts of money in times of austerity and cut backs , when it comes to pampering themselves . Do NOT overpay for ANYTHING . Do NOT use foreign consultants , planners architects or workers NOR cronies . Stick to an agreed budget , with no overspends under any excuse . Would it not be cheaper and more cost effective to have people working from home ? Keep finishes to reasonable standards , which excludes expensive wood panels etc. It is meant to be a working office and does not need any fancy fixtures or fittings , nor does everyone need separate offices , with common shared working areas ,allied to a few private interview rooms . If the building is built , do it with all the money saving features possible to keep running costs and maintenance as low as possible , ie solar panels , ground source heating , insulation and air tightness , NO expensive flat roofs , which seldom seem to work properly in Scotland and always seem to leak or require repair/upgrading. Remember it is a public funded office, it does not need to be some fancy expensive design statement or edifice of incompetence . Lastly , has a check been made of empty or unused buildings which could be used or utilised , even industrial buildings which could be adapted more cheaply than building a new office block ?	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council is considering the long term running costs as it designs the buildings in an attempt to ensure that the life cycle maintenance costs can be predicted and are sustainable/affordable in the short, medium and long terms,</p>	Information on how the design has evolved will be available on the public website and will be detailed in planning and building warrant applications.

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42	24/6	Great idea. Don't think the size should be reduced. Would it not be better to plan for additional capacity? Could the new building accommodate Park Street and/or Sealock House / Camelon staff as well? Having as many staff as possible in the one place can enhance communication and free up resources and funding being used for other buildings	The HQ is a replacement for Abbotsford, Municipal Buildings, part of Callander Square and Willow House only. The functions and staff will inevitably change over time as the Council reviews other elements of its office portfolio.	None
43	24/6	Having been in the existing Council Building many times it is well past sell by date, not fit for purpose and needs to be replaced, refurbishing would be costly and only medium term solution. Also the fact that £600k is the annual rent for Abbotsford house this has to stop. So I am in agreement that a New Council Building is required. I am against it being located on the existing site and maybe it should have been located into one of the other areas of the Burgh, ie Fire Headquarter site at Maddison, Next to Football Stadium both location have room for ample parking and on main bus routes.	Please see answer above re other locations considered.	None
44	24/6	The artists impression of the building shows it with a flat roof, OK for Tenerife but not Scotland. The best choice would be to take over Callendar Square shopping mall and the adjacent car park. Existing businesses could get help relocating to the Howgate shopping mall. Because of it's size you would need to compromise with BHS but other than that it's pretty straight forward.	Please see answer above	None
45	24/6	I would like to suggest, that due to the current financial situation, and budget constraints, not only for local governments, but the people living in their areas, that spending a lot of money 'on a building' isn't viewed as a necessity by many opinions. I have read the report in the Falkirk Council Local supplement and appreciate that if	See response to comment 1 above	None

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		the current building isn't fit for purpose then yes, steps do have to be taken to safeguard the inhabitants and services, however I would like to know that you have considered alternative 'current' alternatives, for example, making use of the shopping centre at the East End of Falkirk High Street and other vacant properties which you may have knowledge of. I would also like to suggest that any 'building' which you make as the 'headquarters' of a historical burgh is located in a central location and also reflects the culture, longevity and pride of a town like Falkirk.		
46	24/6	I think it's a good idea especially the environmental impact that it will have	Noted	None
47	24/6	About time	Noted	None
48	24/6	It looks like a good idea to bring 3 building to one central location . Would you be looking to bring the staff from the forum and education also and bring all the main service into one location.	Please see answer to question 42.	None
49	24/6	I accept the view that replacement is necessary, and that would allow a reduction in the number of Council buildings to be serviced and maintained, ultimately reducing on-going costs. My main concern is how, in less than 50 years, the existing building has been neglected to the extent that it needs upwards of £10m spent on it to make it 'fit for purpose'. Clearly, the existing policy regarding maintenance of Council buildings needs serious over hall!	Please see answers question 9	None

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50	24/6	In the present economical climate I would like to know where the money for this venture will come from. The council is making massive cutbacks on Jobs and services so how can we afford this . Why do they not just move to the nearly empty Callendar Square which has plenty of room and ample parking and is sitting there ready to move in at virtually no cost to the taxpayer. I would be interested in seeing any comments on this.	See response to comment 1 above	None
51	25/6	The building works are very costly - renovation/repair/new building construction plus demolition of old building, therefore it would be appropriate to make the public aware of all the different quotes sourced for the project. Also, the public should know if loans/PFI are being used to fund this building project to understand the total cost over time. It is wrong to cut budgets of other local authority departments to pay for this construction project. In this current climate, it is wrong to prioritise an office building project for Council staff over other areas in need of funding	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council has stringent procurement rules to ensure that tenders are the most economically advantageous.</p> <p>The project is being funded by taking existing running costs budgets and using part of these budgets to borrow ie capital costs to pay for the construction funded from revenue budgets. These office budgets are not impacting on education or other service related expenditure.</p>	None

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52	25/6	I think it is disgraceful that Councillors can vote to allot themselves £10 Million of public funding to have a new building for their own use - partly, because they didn't have the foresight to maintain the current one over time and partly because they don't have a mandate to do this - put it in the next election manifesto and see who gets voted in with this as part of it. Questions to ask, are their other buildings suitable for purpose in the Falkirk area? What can the tax payers expect as a return for this money spent - improved councillor performance?, improved public services? Where is the money coming from and what detrimental impact will this have on other services?	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>Resources have been tight for a number of years in local authorities and resources are allocated to the areas of greatest need. The Municipal Building are reaching the end of their design life and it is normal practice for buildings to require substantial investment after 50 years of use. A modern building will deliver greater efficiency in running costs, energy efficiency and will assist staff productivity.</p>	None
53	25/6	It's a pity it wasn't better built in the first place - or is it poor maintenance? My house was built at the same time and is still sound, though it has had some repairs over the years. It's a good idea to plan to keep it in the town centre, though I gather there is no agreement yet with the NHS on the price for Westbank.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council has agreed Heads of Terms for the acquisition of the Westbank Clinic from NHS.</p>	None
54	25/6	I think it is questionable to spend so much at a time of cuts to essential services. It seems that consideration to ensure Councillors have a state of the art building to work in takes priority over services to those they supposedly serve. There are many council owned buildings that are in very poor condition and little consideration seems to be given to them. If there was to be a consolidation of many of the offices and services which are currently in close proximity to the existing buildings then I could see that this may make sense of having as much as possible under one roof in the town centre. I would hope that the building in more accessible	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>This is a consolidation of 4 offices into one HQ. The design will ensure that the building, and all public areas, are accessible to the staff and citizens that will be using it.</p> <p>Parking provision, including staff, visitor and disabled parking will be specified in consultation with the planning authority once the results of the Transport Assessment are known.</p>	None

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		to all sections of the community it serves. I would also hope that there is better parking for both all staff working in the building and members of the local community who need to access the building and services housed therein. The current provision is not adequate and the building is not easily accessed.		
55	25/6	IT APPEARS TO BE A SOUND ECONOMIC DECISION, GIVEN THE STATE OF THE CURRENT BUILDING, AND THE MONEY WHICH WOULD BE SAVED. HOWEVER, THIS PROJECT WILL ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL IF THE BUILDING IS CONSTRUCTED PROPERLY, AND WILL NOT BE FALLING TO PIECES WITHIN 9-10 YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION.	The building will be designed to have a design life in excess of 30 years. The Council will adopt a pragmatic life cycle approach to maintenance and will be specifying components that have a significant lifespan.	None
56	25/6	I work for West Lothian Council and fully agree that a new building is a better alternative. There are huge cost savings which should be the main aim. However the building should incorporate the police and court. The building must be within walking distance to the town centre. It will be the final nail in the coffin Without a major office within the town centre.	Police Scotland built a new purpose built Police Station in Falkirk a few years ago and the Court Service have a modern premises at Camelon, so there are no opportunities for co-location with both agencies as is the case in the successful West Lothian new HQ. The Council is examining a col-location opportunity with Forth Valley College for the Town Hall project.	None
57	25/6	The current building is ugly and decrepit - an embarrassment to the town. I don't have any optimism that the new building will in the longer term be any better. There doesn't seem to be enough room for staff, the plans show a building being shoehorned into a small space, the neighbouring occupiers and owners will be livid about the plan, the inconvenience in the town centre will be horrendous, and given the council's track record in selling derelict sites, I have no hope that the former site will be sold: it will probably lie empty for years and be yet another eyesore in the town. It might even be suitable for a new headquarters when the one planned now falls apart and needs replacing.	<p>The Council has employed award winning Architects to produce a pleasing and sustainable design. The new buildings will take as much space as it needs to fulfil the Council requirements and is being developed partly on the site of a building which many neighbours consider is an eyesore.</p> <p>The Project Team and Designers are looking at the construction/build plan and are mindful that the building will be constructed while the Municipal Building and FTH remain operational and the site adjoins a number of residential properties. Measures to mitigate disruption around the site are currently being considered.</p>	The construction phasing will be discussed as part of the planning application consideration.

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58	25/6	The council has far more important things to prioritise before this project. There are many buildings that are perfectly fit for purpose that could be used for the re-housing of the operations. There is no need to have all of the Council in one building and this is a massive waste of public money. I strongly object to this proposal.	<p>The Council has been unable to find another building that fulfils its requirements and that is why the current proposal is being pursued.</p> <p>The benefits of co-location of staff will save the Council money and offer economies of scale for some office functions.</p>	None
59	27/6	why is the council HQ to be in the town center as there is a lot of traffic bottle neck where it is now why not build at a better access site on the edge of the town as some other council have done the town is and will in the next decade have a lot of traffic problems for future people using the town	As part of the project, the Council will attempt to improve the traffic in this part of town. Being within the town centre allows staff and the public to access the building in a central location, easily accessible from public transport and from existing town centre car parks. Many citizens believe there is a benefit from the office being in the town centre as it lets them join up town centre journeys.	None
60	27/6	I received an email from you inviting my feedback on the proposed new building on 24 June and was dismayed to discover that the viewings at the Howgate had already taken place. It seems to me that Falkirk Council's decisions have already been made and will be carried out despite the requirement for the public to be consulted. I have seen the articles in The Falkirk Herald, however, and some of the derogatory comments in the Letters to the Editor, concerning the artist's impression of the proposed new building. I agree that a new Municipal Building would be good. However, it seems to me that the proposed design of said building is no better than the old one. It looks like another featureless rectangular block building, resembling the architecture that it is replacing and presumably it is likely to have the same limited lifespan. It is a great pity that this kind of design is being considered at all, because it has no character to recommend it. In it's favour, I suppose it	<p>The consultations were advertised in the Falkirk Herald and emails were sent to the Citizens Panel inviting them to additional sessions to raise further awareness. Decisions on the project continue to be considered by the Council in an open forum and papers are available to the public via the Council website.</p> <p>The design is evolving and full details will be made available on the Council website. Citizens will be able to comment on the design when the planning application is submitted and it is hoped that the respondent finds the elevations more attractive than the concept sketches.</p>	The design is being refined and full elevational treatments will be available as part of the planning application.

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		might blend in with the awful new police station building. Have Falkirk Council learned nothing from past architectural mistakes and is it the intention to destroy the whole town?		
61	27/6	Aware it needs done as the current building is falling apart. It needs done sensitivity though given the economic climate with funding being transparent to staff + public eg what comes from grants or sale of land + running costs	The building is being funded from current office running costs, rents, and the sale of whatever surplus land there is. The Council is unable to attract external funding or grants for this project.	None
62	27/6	I think this would be a good idea. It seems more logical to build a new head quarters and to be able to include good access for mobility users. I myself am Partially Sighted so would appreciate things like larger signage and easier access. The old building has some mobility aids, but I feel it needs more to be done	The building will be designed to be fully DDA compliant, unlike the existing building.	Design will be fully compliant with current DDA regulations and when the design is further advanced the project team will engage with the Local Access Panel to receive their feedback.
63	28/6	At best this is spectacularly bad timing. At worst it is a symbol of how out of touch local government is! We are having to live with overflowing bins because you have cut our collections beyond the bare minimum. You were even talking about reducing school hours and forcing us all to fork out for extra childcare. Yet there is cash spare to fund a vanity project like this? Can I assume that if it is only the building that is not fit for purpose then the desks, chairs etc will be re-used in the new building? Or more likely you will also be spending my money on ergonomically designed furniture - bought after several taxpayer funded away-day meetings to discuss the issue. Awful idea. Really poor.	See response to comment 1 above Part of the office furniture will be reused however the desking is extremely inefficient (being mostly large L shaped desks). New desking will require to be acquired but the Council is exploring reusing the desks at other locations where efficient space planning is not as much of an issue eg in schools and will look to trade in any surplus furniture.	None

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64	29/6	Makes sound economic sense, good luck. It is important the our local authority presents itself as well as possible	Noted	None
65	29/6	My main concern regarding this project will be the car parking, at present being a Falkirk resident and small business (Taxi operator) who will visit this venue in excess of 20time a year from 10 minutes to being there for 2/3 hours for meetings is the cost of parking. As I already contribute through council tax/ licensing fees there should be free parking for short visits of under 15 minutes and free parking when attending meetings, if this is not possible then every person attending this venue should pay to park whether it is staff, councillors or the public.	A Travel Plan will be prepared and there will be visitor parking at the building.	None
66	30/6	it be nice to have new council building but you have self purpose build right under your nose - calleneder, Square, that dosent get used much and can be used for council offices, it be nice to see the hole town getting a new face lift and more shops and bissness.	See response to comment 1 and comment 40 above	None
67	1/7	Good idea to modernise the council and council's image. Hopefully the Town Hall will be part of the new development too as this is in much need of an upgrade too.	The Town Hall is the subject of a separate business case and the Council is looking to replace it on a similar spend to save basis as the office HQ project, potentially through a joint venture with Forth Valley College. The Council is looking to replace time expired facilities and modernise its operations while utilising its current expenditure budgets – these projects are about trying to get more facilities or assets from the existing budgets.	None
68	1/7	Sounds good. Get it done.	Noted	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
69	4/7	<p>I attended the Citizens Panel meeting on 2nd July. In principle I agree with the plan. If cost savings on leases etc. can fund the borrowing the project is cost neutral and will have no effect on the Council's ability to fund other services and embark on other projects, e.g. replacement of FTH. I am delighted that this is on the Agenda. Essential that borrowing is paid off within the effective life of the building. Also pleased that it would be built in such a position that buildings housing complementary services, e.g. police, courts, could be built nearby in the future. Not so sure about the fact that there will only be enough workspaces for 80% of those to be employed there. There is a real danger that some staff will be forced to work from home against their wishes and those of their families. I am not convinced that people work as effectively from home, particularly if they are combining it with looking after children. It also impinges on the rights of others staying there. It is also almost impossible to effectively supervise those working from home. Having said all that I do agree that if a group of employees, e.g. planners, are only in the office about 10% of the time it make no sense for them each to have their own desks.</p>	<p>The project will only be finally sanctioned if it is cost neutral as stated.</p> <p>The issue of the ratio of desks to staff numbers is being worked through with services to ensure that there is adequate numbers. No staff member will be forced to work from home and there are some tasks that will not be able to be performed out with the office.</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
70	4/7	How can a council that's looking for annual cost savings justify a capital outlay of £19m? It's only an office block, can the council not rent one of the many empty office blocks around the town (Calendar Estate etc)? The council doesn't need to own its office. It would be interesting to know the cost per square foot and compare this to the cost of a similar office in Edinburgh (it should be way less expensive in Falkirk) unless it's a vanity project by FDC. Demolish the old one, rent an existing one and keep the One Stop Shop for people needing to interact with the council in the town.	See response to comment 1 above As Councils can borrow at preferential rates, it is in the main more beneficial for Council's to own rather than rent properties. There are no suitable properties available on the rental market to accommodate Falkirk's needs.	None
71	5/7	It is important that it is aesthetically pleasing. The current building is pure 1960s box; poorly constructed and visually unappealing. As this building will be physically closer to the town centre, and designed to help draw people to the centre, it has to be attractive. The sketches all seem to show another dull box, with artistic trees. The reality on a wet winter's day can look pretty grim. Let's not make that mistake again for another generation of Falkirk folk.	The sketches do not do the concept justice and as the elevational treatments are produces as the design evolves it is hoped that the building is viewed as more architectural pleasing. Creating a building of merit to contribute to the townscape is a fundamental criteria of the project.	The elevational treatments and relationship to townscape will be part of the planning application pack.
72	6/7	The project presents an enormous opportunity for the Council to make a clear statement on its support for active and sustainable travel, especially given the restrictions on car access and parking which will inevitably have an impact on those who currently travel to their place of work by car as a single occupant. Promotion of car sharing should be prominent, with an allocation of parking spaces deisgnated and reserved for registered car sharing vehicles. Cycling facilities should be of the highest standard, with good security, clear and safe access and changing and showering facilities provided as a minimum. Walking routes and cycling	The Transport Assessment and Council Green Travel Plan will identify the Council's commitment to the points raised.	A Green Travel Plan will be submitted as part of the Planning Application.

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
		routes should be clearly promoted, and incentivised where this is possible to encourage uptake of active travel modes. Public transport access will be critical, and should be included within the design of the new building and access to it. A clear statement on policy and approach to travel to the new building needs to be made prior to its opening, and promotion of improved facilities for active and sustainable travel need to be publicised in order to encourage early adoption, as to leave this to post opening will be a missed opportunity and more difficult to carry out once travelling habits become established.		
73	6/7	A new modern building where all the Council services are easily accessible to the users and situated in an area where this access is convenient will be much appreciated.	Noted	None
74	8/7	I have no objections to the idea of replacing the current building but both the building and the car park look ridiculously small. It seems to be a common problem when building things like this (thinking of some new schools in the area such as Kinnaird and Maddiston) that the space required is grossly underestimated. It would not surprise me if 2 years after the completion of the new building that mobile offices similar to the mobile classrooms at schools are drafted to house staff! It is unrealistic to expect staff to car share especially when some will be unwilling to commit to such an arrangement as they need to be flexible for childcare and other commitments outwith the workplace. Staff morale will be affected by the stress of not knowing if they are going to get a parking space in the morning. Open plan working is an awful idea, again it will affect	<p>The project team is working with staff and managers to ensure that there is sufficient office space for service requirements.</p> <p>The Transport Assessment is looking at the car parking and considering the requirements but the Council is keen to adopt a green travel plan where staff walk, cycle, use public transport, car share, etc . This is a route that many larger employees have adopted to reduce their carbon footprint.</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
		staff morale and sickness as you have a large group of people squeezed into one space. There will either be too much noise or too little and no privacy for personal conversation.		
75	9/7	I fully support the project for the reasons which you have outlined	Noted	None
76	10/7	Sensible - however - it is crazy that the largest service in the Council (and arguably the most important) is not to be included or housed here. I don't think that's acceptable and think that Children's Services, which is at the heart of the Council and the local area, must be included. Instead, you will have this very important service running out of dilapidated accommodation, costing money, which it can't afford. I can't believe that a new HQ is being built at an enormous cost for less than one third of the Council. You need to re-look at the plans and include Children's Services.	See response to comment 1 above. The proposal is being developed within ring-fenced budgets committed to the existing buildings that are in need of replacement or extract the Council from external leases. Childrens Services occupy buildings that have recently been occupied and do not require re-location at this time.	None
77	10/7	The current building is an eyesore and spoils a nice approach into Falkirk past Dollar Park and Arnot Hill. The look of this new building will be very important. It will almost 'set the agenda' for the town and have a huge influence on visitors' first impressions of Falkirk. Therefore a bland office style glass box is unacceptable. This building really needs to fit into it's Scots Baronial surroundings and make a striking and positive impression. Something to be proud of!	See answer 71	None
78	12/7	Falkirk Council HQ does not need to be in the town centre, its an admin building, rent an empty office block in the district for use. Keep the one stop shop as a drop in centre for people needing help with services. Better to look after children and OAP's than give yourselves a nice	The Council's preference is for the building to be in the town centre easily accessible by public transport. A number of respondents felt that there was a benefit of the building being within the town centre as it offered the ability for multi trip visits to the town centre.	None

		new office block to swagger around in.		
Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
79	20/7	In the current climate, with the cutbacks being taken I do not agree with the proposal to build a new Municipal Building at this present time. I would be grateful if information could be provided on why it is not deemed suitable to upgrade the present facilities rather than rebuild. I have also been advised by council workers that this new build will not be sufficient in accommodating all staff members required. Although home working has been mentioned, how will this be monitored, and security of information upheld.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The option appraisal undertaken at an earlier time highlighted that to refurbish the existing buildings was a more costly option for the Council.</p> <p>The Council is reviewing how it delivers services, how it uses technology and is keen to gain productivity from staff who are able to work at home, out on site, from citizens home (ie doing a visit), from other Council property, etc. By having this variety of approaches it is anticipated that the Council will require approximately 50% less floorspace than it currently occupies. Services will be monitored using an output based approach to ensure that requirements are being met.</p>	None
80	21/7	I understand that the Municipal Buildings are in a state of disrepair and the costs involved to remedy these issues are large. You would most likely gain support for this project if information was made freely available through Social Media, Local Press etc. This may be in the form of giving savings from having to rent buildings that are not owned by the council.	The Council has attempted to raise awareness of the critical issues behind the project by running open sessions. This is however a continual process .	Council key messages require further explanation.
81	22/7	I feel at a time of budget cuts it is irresponsible to spend 20 million on state of the art buildings. Even if it costs 10million to upgrade that is still 50% less than the intended spend. I cannot understand how buildings less than 50 years old can need so much upgrading.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Municipal Buildings at 50+ years old is now at the point that the main elements of the building are reaching the end of their design life (windows, roof covering, electrical systems, boilers etc). The Council has considered whether to invest in an obsolete building, replacing elements but retain a building that doesn't actually fulfil its needs or build a purpose built property. In the long run, a new building will have a longer design life and will be cheaper in the long term . Previous option appraisals considered this in detail and are</p>	None

			available on the Council website.	
Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
82	25/7	If the existing building had been properly maintained a new building would not be required. If your proposed building uses 50% less space that can only mean one thing - redundancies. It's shocking that the council puts itself before more pressing needs in the community, schools being the prime example. Forward planning is clearly NOT one of the councils priorities - Kinnaird Primary, Larbert Village School and Larbert High are examples that spring to mind. If you require more space to accommodate personnel due to lease expiring and refurbishment of existing building - utilise the council car parks at the existing buildings, they are under-utilised at present. So, in short, I object to this frivolous project of a new building.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council has to adopt choices and over the past decades money has been diverted into delivering front line services and perhaps has been at the expense of adequate property maintenance. The reduction in floorspace is around having some less staff due to co-location, etc. opportunities, investing in new technology, which will also reduce staff numbers and by using the space more efficiently.</p>	None
83	27/7	I do not approve of the project at a time when cuts to local services are making life difficult for people living in this area. We need to see an improvement in spending on areas such as education and roads. I do not think that the Council can justify this cost and that there needs to be a much better publicised, and a much longer, public consultation. Most people I have spoken with about the project are appalled at the costs involved - and surprised that they haven't heard much about it. It's not every citizen who buys the Falkirk Herald or uses the council website. We need a much more widespread and focussed consultation process - not this "box-tick" approach.	<p>See response to comment 1 above</p> <p>The Council has undertaken a significant amount of consultation on this project and has outlined the key facts in the Falkirk News which is delivered to every household in the Falkirk Council area.</p>	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
84	27/7	I have never heard or saw anything written about the impact this would have on the 64 old age pensioners living 10 metres from this proposed 4 stories high monstrosity of a building. We are all owners/ residents in here and are aged between 67 and 90+. This is not a nursing home it is a retirement complex built by McCarthy Stone. Everybody in the 50+ flats pay council tax . This proposed building was talked about by the council last October and the first notice we got was in May , we were never consulted until we got that letter. Why can't you move the building to Callander square where you have a gym for the staff and plenty empty shops you can use. Or maybe renovate the current building , we could spend the 20 million on other things like schools or the roads .	See detailed response in item 103 and response to comment 1 above.	See Actions in 103
85	28/7	I think as long as there are appropriate safeguards so that it doesn't run over budget then a move to reducing the environmental and cost impact for Falkirk Council is a positive move.	The Council will look at the capital construction costs as the design evolves and the project is procured. In addition, an analysis will be undertaken on the probable running costs of the building to ensure that the building is affordable in both capital (build) and revenue(running) cost prior to any final sign off of the project.	None
86	30/7	While I appreciate that the present headquarters are becoming not fit for purpose, it is hardly the ideal economic climate to spend vast sums of money on new premises. A less expensive alternative should be accepted. When the council is considering the closure of much needed, in fact vital services, it is an insult to those who may be deprived of these services to realise they are of less importance than either councillors or local authority staff. I am also less than impressed by the consultation exercise itself. It was hardly well publicised. I should point out that not every person in Falkirk District	See response to comment 1 above The Council has considered a number of alternatives as is explained in the answer to Issue 35 above, this was shown to be the most cost effective option open to the Council and it is perhaps more important that it is pursued now so that the Council can protect other vital services and budgets. See answer to Nos 83 above re consultation	None

Nos	Date	Comment	Response	Action for Planning Application or Project
		reads the local newspapers or has access to the internet. While the council may indeed be fulfilling its statutory obligations, it looks rather like a box ticking exercise.		

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
87	14/5	Site Investigations are being undertaken . Do these investigations include a tree survey? There are existing trees on the site (some of which are large mature trees and have a high amenity value for the neighbouring properties) and if a tree survey has not already been undertaken it should be carried out at this early stage. This information would be required from any applicant in relation to proposed new development and the council should be an exemplar in this respect.	A full tree survey will be undertaken and quotations have been sought to the Council's specification. The tree survey will be commissioned once Stage 1 has been approved by the Council to ensure that the arboriculturist can assess the impacts on the trees with the most up to date design layout.	The Tree Survey and various Tree Protection & Constraints Plans will be part of the information that is submitted with the Planning application.
88 A	17/5	Could you please email me the plans for the new municipal buildings. I am a resident in Wellside court. There are 52 flats in our building and some of us are concerned about the noise due to the construction of this new building.We are hoping the noise will be kept to a minimum, and it is only for five days per week. Our factor will probably be contacting you in the near future.	<p>The conceptual plans were made available (18/5) and copies of the Site Interface plan, which shows the conceptual layout superimposed onto where the Westbank and Municipal Buildings sit at the moment. The respondent was advised that the layout may alter as the design evolves and once the results of the site investigations come back. Links were also provided to the sketch information on the Council website. In terms of the hours of working, Planning will condition the hours of working and discussions will occur once the Planning application is submitted.</p> <p>An offer was made, and subsequently taken up, for the HQ Project Manager to discuss the concerns with the factor and all residents at their weekly coffee meeting.</p>	<p>Discussions will be undertaken with the Planning Authority on the Hours of Construction activity as it is recognised that there are residential properties nearby.</p> <p>The Project Team and Contractor will continue to keep all adjoining residents informed of construction activity at critical points in the project</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
88B	17/6	<p>I'm sure Falkirk council could have found ground for this somewhere else in Falkirk, like for example the old hospital site , instead of next to a retirement complex of 52 flats where there are people aged between 65 and 93 years old. They have to endure building work for the next 2 years and when it is finished be looking into a four storey office block that will be built within 6 or 7 metres from there flat.</p>	<p>The Council wish to a) invest in the Town Centre and b) using their existing landholdings and a small surplus landlocked property from one of their community planning partners (NHSFV) means that the land for the new HQ is far more cost effective than purchasing private property or an entire site from NHSFV.</p> <p>The building location has shifted 7 metres further away from the retirement block since the initial discussions.</p> <p>The Council is sympathetic to these concerns and will do everything possible to mitigate disruption, however, as the project is located within a town centre environment and a level of disruption must be anticipated. The Wellside Court properties will be subject to disruption when the Westbank Centre is demolished and when the site is redeveloped, for the HQ or for any other development should the HQ not proceed.</p>	<p>Building location has moved further west.</p> <p>Measure to mitigate disruption will be considered as part of next phase of detailed design.</p>
88C	19/6	<p>I'm sorry but I cannot agree with you saying that the neighbouring buildings would have had the same noise and disruption when our development was being built as we will have with the new HQ Project.</p> <p>Firstly, the buildings are all offices its staff working from 9 'till 5pm. The staff didn't own/live in the building. They were able to go home to their own homes after 5pm. This is our home and we have to live here 24/7. I'm sure the surrounding offices are delighted they now have flats instead of the car repair garage that was here previously.</p> <p>Secondly, we have had a similar situation to this when the new police station was being built. We had to endure the noise and also the lorries reversing into our</p>	<p>The project to construct the Police Station caused disruption to residents as it was constructed on a tight site and was accessed off Wellside Court. The HQ Project, will be constructed and accessed from the Municipal Building site where access is not as constrained.</p> <p>The degree of overshadowing and impact on light is being assessed by the project team and measures have been suggested to reduce this effect.</p> <p>Property prices will hopefully not be affected as the construction of a better designed building to replace the time expired Westbank Centre may be viewed as beneficial. The project will help with regeneration at the west end of the town centre. It also brings additional staff to the</p>	<p>The Project Team are undertaking overshadowing studies, have moved the building further west, away from Wellside Court and are reviewing whether there will be a loss of light.</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		<p>car park every day (apart from Saturday and Sunday), so we do know that it's going to be much worse - noise wise - as it's much closer.</p> <p>Thirdly, with the new building being so high and close (although I understand from your e-mail that the building has shifted further away), it will take away a considerable amount of light from the flats at the front and my concern is that this will decrease the value of the property . Also, it will be very difficult to sell the flats, especially during construction.</p> <p>I look forward to seeing you on the 24th with the updated plans and to discuss this further.</p>	location who will provide benefits for the town centre.	
89	20/5	Will there be reserved parking spaces for the mail vans near the mailroom and will there be a ramped access also.	The expectation is that there will be a series of Council vehicles spaces nearest the building and beside the disabled spaces. There are ongoing discussions with Managers who have Council vehicles and other requirements eg electric charging points. Once the design is at a more detailed level and as it is submitted for planning consent, this level of detail will be shown on the plans.	Council vehicle locations have been agreed and are shown on the plans.
90 A	21/5		<p>The Council have chosen this location for a number of reasons.</p> <p><u>Availability of Westbank Centre</u> NHSFV no longer have any requirement for the Westbank Clinic, as the staff are currently relocating to the Community Hospital in Falkirk and were looking to close/dispose of the building, potentially for redevelopment. The Council own all of the land surrounding the NHS building, which has reached the end of its current life, and it was felt that this afforded the Council the opportunity to assemble the site, with its own land holdings to promote a better redevelopment site</p>	The Project Team are undertaking overshadowing studies, have moved the building further west, away from Wellside Court and are considering uses and elevational treatments to reduce privacy and amenity concerns.

Direct Email/Letter Responses			
	<p>My sister and I own a flat at 7 Wellside Court, Wellside Place which is occupied by our 93 y/o mother, who is in a very frail condition (as are a number of the occupants of the block). One of the attractions of the block for the elderly is that it is not overlooked and is very quiet. The present NHS use has no impact upon it, and the Council offices are, of course, on the far side of the Council site.</p> <p>In particular, the secluded rear garden at Wellside Court is a valuable amenity, amounting to an oasis of calm where frail and elderly residents can sit.</p> <p>It appears to us that the proposed office headquarters will change that, perhaps radically. Apart from the obvious potential disruption from the works, the impact of moving large numbers of Council staff to the south east corner of the Council site, into multi-storey accommodation seems likely to be severe. It is an intensive development of that part of the site, and raises concern that it must intrude upon the privacy and quiet of the neighbouring property.</p> <p>In order to allay these concerns please advise how far north the accommodation is planned to extend, how high it will be, and what measures are planned to protect the amenity of the residential neighbourhood, and our premises in particular, from noise and from being overlooked. Are the trees to be protected?</p> <p>I should advise you that we are presently minded to object to the development unless we can receive appropriate assurances. In presenting any objection we would observe that there appears to be no imperative to</p>	<p>in closer proximity to the town centre.</p> <p><u>Need for a New HQ</u></p> <p>The Council has been considering a new HQ for a number of years, due to the poor condition of the existing Municipal Buildings, which is also reaching the end of its useful life (See response to comment 1 above).</p> <p>An options appraisal was undertaken in 2013/14 which considered a number of solutions ie refurbishment of HQ buildings versus new build, etc and the new build option was considered to be the most cost effective solution. At that time a number of sites, in Council ownership were assessed, including this site. This site was considered to be the most attractive as the Council could continue to operate from the existing buildings while the new HQ was constructed, and thereafter demolish the existing Municipal Buildings and dispose of any residual areas. There was also a strong desire to locate the building within the town centre and make a meaningful urban design contribution to this part of town.</p> <p><u>Concerns</u></p> <p>The HQ development fronts onto West Bridge Street to tie it into the town centre facades. The building footprint does not extend as far north as the existing Westbank footprint and should therefore not impact on the rear garden of Wellside Court. As part of the detailed design of the scheme we are also looking to minimise any overlooking of Wellside Court to ensure the residents continue to have privacy. To assist this, the building has been moved by 7 metres away from Wellside Court buildings and the height has been reduced by 1.3m.</p>	<p>Discussions will be undertaken with the Planning Authority on the Hours of Construction activity as it is recognised that there are residential properties nearby.</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		<p>using the NHS site, the overall Council site and car parking area being sufficiently large to accommodate the development outlined on the Council website, with room to spare, without moving east to be next to Wellside Court.</p>	<p>Any redevelopment of the Westbank Centre will cause disruption and this is inevitable when town centre sites are redeveloped. The Council will be considering the adjoining uses and will try to minimise the disruption as much as possible - these issues will be fully explored as the design process evolves and prior to the Council making a formal planning application.</p> <p>The site investigations have just been completed and have influenced where the building can be sited, bearing in mind the level differences across the Westbank/Municipal Buildings site. The block nearest Wellside Court is envisaged, at this stage, to be of a similar height to the Wellside Court block. The designers will continue to consider privacy, overshadowing and amenity issues in their final design. The trees along the Bleachfield path will be surveyed and the Council will attempt to retain as many of them as possible, to act as an amenity strip between the uses.</p>	
90B	24/5	<p>Thank you for your prompt and full reply, which is very much appreciated. Clearly you have already anticipated many of the obvious concerns and have allayed many of mine in respect of using the Westbank Clinic site. My only observation at this stage is that it will reduce the impact of the building on Wellside Court if:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The northern extension of the façade adjacent to it can be set back as far west as possible, to run next to the new access road to the rear, or at least to align, broadly, with the footprint of the present rear extension of the Westbank Clinic; -The height is disguised by setting the top floor in a “roof” treatment; -Some attention is paid to the aesthetic treatment of the 	<p>The building has now been moved by 7 metres as far west as possible while designing the new roundabout and amenity/setting area.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to altering the block massing and parapet detailing, reducing the height by 1.3 metres and this will be considered further prior to planning consent being applied for.</p> <p>The elevations are being worked on as part of the required level of detailing required to submit a planning application and the building is being viewed as having a number of “prime elevations”. The internal uses of spaces to this eastern façade are being considered to address the concerns raised.</p>	See above

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		<p>east and northern façades such that it looks as little as possible like an institutional block; in other words, although these sides might be seen as the “back” of the building they should be treated as though they were public frontages (which is what they will be from Wellside Court);</p> <p>-The outlook from the sides immediately facing Wellside Court serves stairs and other services, with as few windows as possible, rather than offices with desks.</p>		
91A	26/5	Please could you send me full details of the formal proposal for demolition of the Municipal Buildings Complex/Westbank Centre and erection of the new headquarter office facility for Falkirk Council, including upgrading site access.	The information links were made available to the respondent and the public information sessions were highlighted.	
91B	27/5	<p>I am a little confused by the drawings.</p> <p>In the first drawing the buildings across the road from the proposed project are representative of the real buildings however in the second drawing the buildings opposite and indeed beside the new building are all tall boxes like the project buildings.</p> <p>Is the West Bridge Street conservation area going to be compulsorily purchased and offices built there or is it drawn like that so that the new building doesn't look like it is overshadowing the dwelling houses?</p> <p>Either way the drawing is misleading and shouldn't be shown to the public as representative of anything but the artist's imagination.</p>	<p>The artists sketches are indicative and the exact position and levels are being considered during the consultation period. There appears to be 17m from the back pavement to the property mentioned to the back pavement of the site ie where the grass starts and the project team will have a better idea of the distances and building line when an agreed position for the new junction is finalised as part of the planning application.</p> <p>The exact siting of the new HQ building is influenced by the access position and the level differences across the site. The concept drawings show that the frontage of the new building will be on West Bridge Street, with part of it set back – the area nearest the property mentioned will be four storey. The consultation drawings at present are about the “principle” of the shape and form of development. For the actual planning application the detail, elevations, layouts, etc will be evident.</p>	<p>The design have evolved over the 12 week consultation period, and will do so before a planning submission is made. Updated drawings will be available on the website and will be linked to the planning submission</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			There is no intention to compulsorily purchase any of the West Bridge Street dwellings and these will remain unaffected. Any concern on overshadowing will be examined as the project team model overshadowing scenarios.	
91C	29/5	<p>My further thoughts are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Bridge Street is the 10th most polluted street in Scotland surely siting a building on the street would exacerbate this condition plus are staff and their unions aware they will be made to work in these conditions? 2. The character of Dollar Park Arnothill. West Bridge Street will be adversely affected by the imposition of a modern building which takes it's inspiration from a Police Station more than 100 yards away rather than the area in which it is set. 3. Properties previously not overlooked will now have serious overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, etc. 4. The project is out-of-scale in terms of its appearance compared with existing dwellings in the vicinity. 5. The project is out-of-character in terms of its appearance compared with the Conservation Area it faces. 6. The blossom has just faded on the trees opposite my home and the rhododendron and roses are in bloom. I would rather look at that than a slab of concrete. I am not the only person W Bridge St dweller or otherwise who admires this feature of Falkirk. <p>Shame you can't get the floral clock going again.</p>	<p>The project team will be investigating all transport issues as part of the Transport Assessment that is being undertaken for the project and will form part of the planning application information. The TA is helping to inform the junction improvement solutions that will be required as part of the project and is hoped will assist with mitigating the existing pollution issues you have raised.</p> <p>Staff are aware of the project via employee briefings and an employee user group that is part of the project governance.</p> <p>The site is within the town centre and as such the project team are looking to construct a building that will enhance the urban townscape of Falkirk town centre and complement the adjoining Conservation area. The intention is to provide the building with a suitable setting using a mixture of hard and soft landscaping to create public spaces which improve the current outlook to the Westbank Centre.</p> <p>The team are considering if there are overshadowing and loss of privacy issues and will address this as part of the information submitted for the planning application.</p>	The TA and evolution of the design over the past 12 weeks will produce information that mitigates some of these concerns.
	24/6	I would be interested to find out if the people of Falkirk have any appetite for the proposals	<p>Noted</p> <p>See response to comment 1 above</p>	None

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
92	2/6	<p>I am the house manager at wellside court retirement development and my estates manager has asked me to ask a few questions as some of the owners here are a bit worried about this new build.</p> <p>1) can you come along to one of our coffee mornings on a wednesday and give a presentation to the residents.</p> <p>2) advise how many floors this new build would be</p> <p>3) start dates</p> <p>4) duration of build</p> <p>5) working times ie days/ weekends/ working.</p>	<p><u>Attendance at a Coffee Morning.</u></p> <p>I can appreciate that some of your owners will have concerns and require more information and it is no problem to come to one of your coffee mornings.</p> <p>Meeting Attended on 24 June. Matters raised:</p> <p><u>New Building Height</u></p> <p>It is envisaged that the new building will be 4 storeys but there is a significant level difference across the site and we are currently looking at the height, building position, etc in relation to the new roundabout that will be required to service the site and the levels onto West Bridge Street.</p> <p>This element is being tied down and a more definitive answer on how the building will relate to Wellside Court is being produced. The concept drawing previously produced shows the building on the boundary of the footpath, but the design team are already looking at how far west ie away from this boundary, we can pull the building. Subsequently the building has been moved by 7 metres from the original proposed location, with a height reduction of 1.3metres.</p> <p><u>Construction Dates, Duration of the Build and Working Times</u></p> <p>There are effectively a number of phases of development and at the moment they are indicative and are being worked on as this is quite a complicated phasing arrangement. The following are anticipated at this stage of the project but will obviously firm up as the project progresses through the next set of detailed design phases.</p>	<p>Discussions have been on-going with the contractor and the design team who are happy to attend briefings with the residents throughout the project to keep them informed.</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			<p>Site Investigations – This phase of site investigations have finished (bore holes) – residents may have seen the piling rigs at the Westbank Centre and around the Municipal Buildings. They were also in the Road, along West Bridge Street and continue to monitor some of the sites. This phase of works is to ascertain that the site is suitable for development. There may be additional site investigations later in the year but until the results of this tranche are completed it is uncertain if a second phase is required. Residents should not be inconvenienced with this work although they might hear “dull thuds”.</p> <p>Westbank Demolition - NHSFV are moving out of the Westbank Centre, as the staff are relocating to the new Community Hospital in Falkirk and the Council/NHSFV are in discussions about who will demolish the Westbank Centre. It is envisaged that this will be demolished in the next few months. The Council/NHSFV will confirm the arrangements once they are known and residents will be advised once the plans have a definite timescale – perhaps another visit may be appropriate, to keep residents up to date? The Council will minimise the inconvenience and the intention is to pull the building down into the area in front of the Municipal Buildings, although there may be some dust, noise and vibration. Once there is a definite plan, and a contractor appointed, these issues can be discussed in greater detail with residents.</p>	

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			<p>Construction of the New HQ – The new HQ, assuming planning consent and viability are agreed by the Council, is envisaged to commence on site in February 2016 for 60 weeks. There will not be 60 weeks of work continuously adjacent to Wellside Court, as the contractor will be working across the wider Municipal Building site. The Council/Contractor will prepare a detailed work plan that will be shared with you, as well as the staff occupying the Municipal Buildings, as we appreciate the sensitivities associated with this site. Issues such as restrictions on working times, will be discussed as part of the granting of planning consent, most likely in the autumn. Detailed discussions will take place when these plans are being formulated.</p> <p>There may also be a short enabling or “pre construction phase” in January 16 when a new access is formed from West Bridge Street into the site, which effectively allows the existing access to be closed – the new access will be further west than the existing junction and at this time the statutory utilities (telecoms, water, electricity, gas) will be diverted. I would not envisage this having any effects on your residents but they again should be made aware that the work is happening, when there is definite programme for the work.</p> <p>Demolition of the Municipal Buildings – As part of the above HQ project, the Chambers portion of the Municipal Building will be demolished to allow a new access road to be constructed to the car park at the rear. It is envisaged that this portion of the building will be demolished when the main part of the HQ is substantially complete and again this demolition will be occurring, while the rest of the Municipal Building is still live.</p>	

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			<p>The main part of the Municipal Building will be demolished thereafter and decoupled from the Town Hall which is likely to be staying in the short/medium term.</p> <p>This area of the project has not be looked at in any degree of detail and will start being looked at after the summer.</p> <p>Construction of the new Roundabout – The last phase of development will be the construction of the new roundabout to access the site.</p> <p>This is quite a complicated project and I am happy to discuss the various issues with you/residents, but hope this gives you a flavour of what may happen and when.</p>	
93	5/6	can you tell me how Climate Change issues are being addressed in the plans for the new HQ? We want the building to perform well in future decades! Any advice appreciated!	<p>The designers have commenced to examine the detailing of the building performance. In the outline business case, design scenarios had been modelled to indicate energy efficiency and life cycle cost issues, which will evolve as we move to detailed design.</p> <p>As the building design evolves, the Council will require to ensure it specifies an appropriate output specification for such elements. At present we are ironing out the exact location for the building, the superstructure design (concrete vs steel) and the possible elevation/glazing issues with the express desire to not have mechanical cooling. Once these three elements are advanced further we will test some of our potential requirements.</p>	The internal design and services, including the use of sustainable elements will evolve as the detailed design evolves for building warrant during late summer/early autumn.

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
94	8/6	<p>We called to see the plans last Friday, we were pleased you listened to our concerns, my mum lives in Wellside Court very close to the proposed buildings. There are 50 older residents in Wellside Court</p> <p>We are concerned about the effect of building works, noise, dust and general upheaval this will cause. My mum is elderly and has already been upset by the drilling noise at Westbank.</p> <p>The effect on property prices is also a concern, nobody wants to be overlooked by an office full of people!</p>	<p>As discussed, the project team are moving the building as far west (7metres) as we can taking account of the level differences across the site. The height has also been reduced by 1.3 metres. We will consider the construction disruption issues as the project progresses and will try to minimise these where practical.</p> <p>Property prices need not be affected as the construction of a better designed building to replace the time expired Westbank Centre may be viewed as beneficial.</p> <p>The Council will be keeping in regular contact with the residents via the House Manager.</p>	As per Nos 92.
95	8/6	<p>thanks for talking to me on Friday after noon hear are some of my ideas</p> <p>1/ access to the building to be disabled friendly</p> <p>2/ reception information on a tv display monitor eyed level</p> <p>3 /all electric socket in rooms to be inserted into the floor</p>	<p>These issues are all being incorporated into the design</p>	None
96	25/6	<p>Thank you for taking the time to answer my queries re the proposed Council HQ build. As explained, I own a flat at West Bridge St. Falkirk which is on the second/top floor of the building. The two front facing bedroom windows face on to the existing Council buildings site.</p> <p>My concerns are as follows:</p> <p>1. Blocking out the light. The proposed scale of the building will cast a shadow over my property.</p>	<p>The design team are considering whether there will be overshadowing/a loss of light to properties in West Bridge Street and will consider whether there are likely to be privacy issues as the detailing of where the building sits is finalised. The building has been moved 7 metres to the west and reduced in height by 1.3metres,</p>	<p>The overshadowing and light diagrams have been produced by the design team and are being considered prior to applying for detailed planning permission. Consideration is being given to the uses in certain areas of the</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		2. Privacy. The proposed glass fronted Chamber looks directly into my property's bedroom.		building to mitigate privacy concerns.
97	26/6	<p>I refer to your email of 24th June to all FC Citizens Panel members.</p> <p>Firstly I am disappointed at the very short notice given, only some eight days.</p> <p>Secondly and more importantly, I am most perturbed at your arrangement to hold this public discussion on 2nd July, during the very first week of the Falkirk Trades. Surely you must be aware that many local residents will be away on holiday during this period? Or are you simply following the well known route that developers take to "bury" contentious planning announcements during the local trades holidays ?</p> <p>I look forward to your reply and to hearing that a re-think and postponement on this matter is</p>	<p>The Council is undertaking a consultation on the HQ Project. This is also required as the project will be a major planning application. The consultation period commenced on the 11 May and runs until the end of July.</p> <p>The Council advertised the Consultation in the Falkirk Herald and Bo-ness Journal in May (insertions Falkirk Herald – 14 & 21 May, Bo’ness Journal – 15 & 22 May). As part of the formal process, the Project has engaged with the Community Council Forum (21 May meeting) and has undertaken a series of open public sessions in the Howgate Centre (2,5 and 6 June). There is also information available on the Council’s website, which includes a banner on the homepage highlighting the consultation to users.</p> <p>As the Project is considered of significant public interest additional exposure has been sought including having articles within the press, information on the Project within the Falkirk News (which is delivered to every address in the Falkirk area) and writing to everyone who neighbours the proposed site. Engaging with the Citizens Panel was viewed as a further resource from which to draw a range of people to express their opinions. There are in excess of 1000 members of the Panel and it is hoped that despite the consultation running into the holiday month of July that some members would be available for these sessions.</p> <p>The Council sought to have the session in early July to allow citizens sufficient time to make their comments know before the end of the formal period on the 31 July.</p>	None

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			<p>Contrary to the suggestion that the Council are trying to "bury" this application, the Council has been open and transparent in attempting to seek views. We have been driving followers of our corporate Twitter account to the consultation information on the website for several weeks.</p> <p>The outcome of the consultation will also be reported to the Council in August, when again the Consultation Report and papers will be available publically on the Council website.</p> <p>I hope you can now understand that there has been an extensive amount of work with the explicit objective of getting true engagement.</p>	
98	5/7	<p>Sure it will have been covered, however can I ask, If/When, the new building goes ahead, is it going to be fitted with Solar Panels, to enable it to run as a cost effective unit? I would not fit them to my house, as I would not make a return on the initial investment, however on a project, such as the one you are running, surely this must be a consideration.</p>	<p>The project team are considering the installation of solar PV and solar thermal and this will be agreed as we get to the next stage of detailed design and costing. The Council intention is to make the building as environmentally sustainable and possible.</p>	Will be considered at Stage 2 of detailed design and costing.
99	9/7	<p>MSP Enquiry</p> <p>I have recently been contacted by residents of Wellside Court who have expressed considerable concern at the council's plans for the building of a new municipal buildings, which will be adjacent to their existing properties .</p> <p>Having met with the residents it is very clear to me that there is a significant level of anxiety amongst the residents of the Impact that this proposal will have on their own property and their quality of life . Additiona lly, I was also extremely disappointed to hear of the lack of</p>		See Actions at 103

Direct Email/Letter Responses			
	<p>consultation that has taken place with the residents in Wellside Court given the impact that this will have on them . To date I understand that an official involved with the project only met with residents following representat ion from a local resident when the proposal was on display in Falkirk Town Centre.</p> <p>I have enclosed a copy of the ten issues (see Item 103) which residents have highlighted as their principal concerns, and they would be grateful for a detailed response from the council to each of these points.</p> <p>Prior to having discussed this matter with the residents of Wellside Court, I must state that I am extremely surprised that the council would seek to take forward a development of this nature given the many other priorities that could be identified for capital expenditure by Falkirk Council. You will recognise that many constituents I have spoken to find it very strange that Falkirk Council considers a new Municipal building as a priority, particularly given the present situation regarding public sector finance . I do not believe that this is the appropriate time for the building of a new Municipal buildings given the many other priorities wliich should be considered by the council for capital expenditure.</p> <p>I would be grateful if the council could provide a detailed response for each of the questions raised by the focal residents of Weflside Court in order for me to respond to their concerns on this matter.</p>	<p>The Council is very aware of the significance of the project both in physical terms and the financial implications of building a new HQ building at a time when expenditure is so restricted. The project is being funded by savings in revenue expenditure that will result from the staff in three separate existing office buildings combining into a single HQ. The floor area of the new building is half that of the existing buildings, which is made possible by the Council adopting new ways of working and introducing a more flexible approach to work place usage. In common with many other local authorities across Scotland the number of desks being provided in the office is at a ratio of 0.8 to one FTE. This approach, along with home working, flexible hours and the variety of work spaces within the new HQ will allow a more modern, efficient, way of working for Council staff, in a healthier, more energy efficient and sustainable environment. Other tangible benefits will include our carbon emissions dropping substantially and a green travel plan for employees being introduced.</p> <p>I must emphasise that the funding that will be directed to this project is currently being applied to accommodate staff. It will continue to be required for staff accommodation, albeit in a far more efficient and effective way. There will therefore be no free proceeds available to be applied to other Council projects save for the replacement of the Falkirk Town Hall facility which is part of the existing HQ complex.</p> <p>The application for planning permission for the project is planned for August this year, and the current public consultation period which started in early May will run for 12 weeks until the end of July. The consultation is extensive;</p>	

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			<p>public displays of the proposals with staff on hand to answer questions, articles in the Falkirk News (delivered to every household in the Council area), Council website information and meetings with local interest groups such as Falkirk Community Forum, Stenhousemuir Community Council and Falkirk Citizens Panel. The project manager also made a point of going along to Wellside Court resident's coffee morning to listen to residents' concerns and to take those concerns back to the design team.</p> <p>A full report will be prepared on the outcome of the consultation process which Falkirk Council's elected members will consider at the Council meeting in August.</p> <p>Answers to the points raised are detailed in Item 103</p>	
100	14/7	<p>The Community Council discussed the consultation on the proposed new Council Headquarters at our meeting on Monday 29th June. We would like to note our appreciation for the time taken to attend our meeting to provide us with an overview of the proposals and to answer questions.</p> <p>The Community Council understands the pressures the Council now faces in relation to the state of its existing buildings and the case being made to spend to save in relation to the proposals. However, we also appreciate the concerns which have been raised by local residents to us on our Facebook page, website, and discussed at our meeting, in relation to spending at a time when there are significant cuts being made by Falkirk Council which will have an impact on frontline services to the local community. The most notable concerns raised have been in relation to cuts to care and education services.</p>	<p>The Council welcomes the response of the Community Council. See response to comment 1 above ref the issues relating to the project cost.</p>	None

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		As a result, we are unable to reach a firm conclusion in favour or against the proposals.		
101	18/7	<p>THE BUILDING OF A FOUR STOREY COUNCIL OFFICE AND CAR PARK SO CLOSE TO WELLSIDE COURT WOULD MEAN THE LOSS OF LIGHT, HEAT AND PRIVACY TO THE FLATS, PARTICULARLY THOSE NEXT TO THE PATH WALL ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE BUILDING.</p> <p>I AM OPPOSED TO THESE PLANS</p> <p>THERE ARE AREAS IN GREATER NEED OF ATTENTION BY THE COUNCIL</p> <p>THE UNEVEN PAVING SLABS AND TARMACED AREAS OF PAVEMENTS IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND THROUGHOUT FALKIRK AS A WHOLE.</p> <p>THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE HOUSES BUILT/PLANNED UNTIL MORE DOCTORS AND DENTISTS ARE IN PLACE TO COVER EXISTING AND FUTURE HOUSING</p> <p>THERE IS A LACK OF FORETHOUGHT WHEN BUILDING NEW SCHOOLS IN AREAS WHERE PLANNING PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN FOR NEW HOUSING AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT FURTHER PLANNING PERMISSION IS BEING CONSIDERED. SCHOOLS SHOULD BE BUILT TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH AND CHILDREN SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BE TAUGHT IN WOODEN HUTS.</p> <p>I CAME WITH MY HUSBAND AND OUR THREE CHILDREN TO LIVE IN THIS AREA IN 1975 AS IT HAD A CLEAN, PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT AND PLENTY OF GOOD SHOPS- THIS CANNOT BE SAID FOR THE AREA NOW.</p>	<p>The final building position on the site and in relation to Wellside Court has been altered and moved further west by 7 metres and reduced in height by 1.3 metres as the design has evolved during the 12 week consultation period. The design, position and massing may alter again as the design reaches the next level of development. The design team are considering shading and privacy issues as they evolve the design.</p> <p>This project is looking to take the funding currently being expended on office provision and alter how it is spent. This is not an additional project and the current expenditure cannot be reallocated to other areas as the Council will continue to require to fund office space to accommodate back office staff.</p> <p>The issue of Roads expenditure is currently being reviewed in light of available budget and priority of repairs.</p> <p>The Planning Authority considers suitable sites for residential development and is in discussions with NHSFV to ensure that there is adequate planning and provision for health facilities.</p> <p>The Planning and Education Services work collaboratively to ensure that there is adequate provision and capacity planned for the school estate when new residential development is granted.</p> <p>The Council is seeking to sustain the environment and Town Centre within the available resources. However, shopping</p>	<p>The overshadowing and light diagrams have been produced by the design team and are being considered prior to applying for detailed planning permission. The building has already been moved further west away from Wellside Court. Consideration is being given to the uses in certain areas of the building to mitigate privacy concerns</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		<p>THE TOWN NEEDS MONEY SPENT ON IT NOT WASTED ON NEW COUNCIL OFFICES AND A CAR PARK</p>	<p>trends eg out of town facilities, and the general retail position in light of the 2008 recession, have affected the viability of private investment in the shopping offer within Falkirk</p> <p>As discussed above the project is being funded by savings in existing revenue expenditure that will result from staff in 3 separate existing office buildings being co-located into a single HQ. The reduction in office space, running and operating costs by moving to a new operational model will allow the Council to fund this as a “spend to save project” and deliver future savings that can assist with other Council priorities.</p>	
102	20/7	<p>Councillor Enquiry</p> <p>I along with a number of other Elected Members have been contacted by representatives of the Residents Association of the retirement living complex at Wellside Court in Falkirk in relation to the proposal for a new council HQ building.</p> <p>They have expressed their concerns and the impact that they see such a development having on their properties and their quality of life. They believe that any such proposed building of the magnitude planned will impact negatively on their existing environment and as such are seeking to make representation.</p> <p>I have therefore on their behalf attached a copy of their views and while I appreciate that Officers have recently engaged with them, I would ask that their views be recorded and taken into account as part of the consultation process.</p>	See answers below nos 103	See Action to 103

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		<p>I would ask if you could ensure that these comments are taken on board during the consultation process and provide any feedback including to myself on this matter</p> <p>DETAILED COMMENTS AS DISCUSSED IN No 103.</p>		
103	21/7	<p>Petition from 43 Wellside Court Residents</p> <p>We, the residents/owners of flats in Wellside Court, 6 Wellside Place, Falkirk FK1 5RG wish to register our objection to the proposed new council building on the site of the Westbank Clinic</p> <p>There are 53 flats in our building. 52 privately owned by the residents/owners. The 53rd flat is owned by McCarthy & Stone (the builders) and is occupied by our House Manager.</p> <p>We, the residents/owners are very concerned about this proposed new development. Our ages range from 60 to 90+ and we feel that if this new build goes ahead, it will be an intrusion to our lives! The building is far too close to our homes! It is also too high and will not only block out our light but also our views!</p> <p>These are only two points of concern and we would ask you, therefore, to please find attached our signed petition of objection and two lists showing our concerns raised at meetings held on the 24th June 2015 and 5th July 2015.</p>	<p>Answers using same numbers:-</p> <p>24 JUNE ANSWERS</p> <p>1.The Council has a Duty of Care to manage Asbestos in line with the HSE guidelines and that is while both the building is occupied and when it get demolished. The Council will appoint a competent contractor to carry out any demolitions to the required Codes of Practice ie in a safe manner.</p> <p>2. The building location on the site and in relation to Wellside Court has been altered and moved slightly further way as the design has evolved during the 12 week consultation period. The design and position may alter again as the design reaches the next level of development.</p> <p>3. The intention is to create a public square which will provide an appropriate setting for a public building/HQ within the town centre. There is an entrance plaza to the front of the building, which forms a hard landscaped area and is required to provide adequate access on what is a sloping site along West Bridge Street. The area will also provide an open plaza area for people coming to the Council building and for those using the café on the ground floor. A green landscaped square is also being provided to the west of the building and again this is required to provide an appropriate setting for the building. The designers are working with Police Scotland to ensure the design for both areas minimizes the potential for any antisocial behavior'</p>	<p>The designers are considering all of the issues raised and will deal with them during the next design phase. Assessments are being considered in terms of privacy, light, overshadowing etc as is discussed above.</p>

Direct Email/Letter Responses			
	<p>Finally, would like to point out that:</p> <p>43 Residents/Owners signed the petition 5 Flats are currently vacant & up for sale 4 Residents/Owners were unable to sign due to illness</p> <p>I am sure you will be able to see from the above breakdown, the very deep concern we all have about this proposed new building being erected so close to our homes.</p> <p>ISSUES RAISED Points from Meeting held on 24th June</p> <p>1. We've been told there is ASBESTOS in buildings going to be demolished. Advised asbestos will be bagged and taken away. Surely it will still be in the air! What about people with breathing problems, especially those residents at the front of development.</p> <p>2. Building needs to be further away. Told new building will be 10 metres from our building. Currently 20metres away from existing building.</p> <p>3. Do we need a PUBLIC SQUARE? We feel it would be used as a skateboard area, a place where people would congregate close to the building-drinking, creating noise and disturbance for the residents! Police Station nearby WILL NOT be a deterrent. Also, putting pot plants</p>	<p>The topography of the site makes it problematic to bring the eastern wing of the building hard onto the frontage of West Bridge Street without making the site inaccessible in terms of Disability Discrimination Act compliance.</p> <p>4. The development of a modern adjoining building will presumably improve the situation. The Assessor (not Falkirk Council) would consider any applications for a reduction in Council tax.</p> <p>5. The Council does not currently have any surplus office accommodation that could accommodate the staff within the Municipal Buildings and in fact is currently leasing in accommodation eg Abbotsford House. To relocate the staff temporarily, demolish and the rebuild on the existing site would be unaffordable.</p> <p>6. During the next phase of design development, the project team will undertake a structural survey of the boundary walls, Wellside Court/Campfield House to establish the current condition of all properties. The designers, including the structural engineers, will be designing to ensure the chance of damage caused to adjoining properties is minimised</p> <p>7. The Planning Authority will impose hours of working and this will be discussed when the planning application is submitted but the project team are mindful of the proximity of the works.</p> <p>8. Discussions are ongoing with the contractor about netting and scaffolding to ensure that debris is contained within the development site.</p> <p>9. The properties at Wellside Court are already adjacent to the Westbank Clinic which could be viewed as an eyesore.</p>	

Direct Email/Letter Responses			
	<p>around the square will not make any difference!</p> <p>4. Part of the SQUARE could be used to bring the right hand side of the new building further forward, therefore taking it further away from our building.</p> <p>5. Could the staff in the EXISTING MUNICIPAL BUILDING not be moved to vacant council buildings in the area and the building then demolished. A new municipal building then erected on the same site?</p> <p>6. Due to the closeness of the construction of the new build, we are concerned this may damage our foundations. This needs to be taken into account and checked out.</p> <p>7. Due to the noise, disruption & dust we are asking that they work from Monday 'till Friday and no later than 5 pm. (No Saturday/Sunday working).</p> <p>8. Put netting around the scaffolding to stop debris blowing into our car park possibly causing damage to the parked cars.</p> <p>9. Our concern is that it will decrease the value of our property. If this is the case- looking at council tax being reduced.</p> <p>10. It takes away some of the light from the flats at the front of the building.</p> <p>AT MEETING HELD ON 8TH JULY 2015</p> <p>1. Council failed to engage/advise us at the early stages of this project.</p> <p>Surely someone in the council must have known that there are 52 retirement apartments here!</p> <p>2. Who will visit this new building? The public go to the one stop shops now</p>	<p>10. The designers are considering the implications for overshadowing from the proposed building</p> <p>8 JULY ANSWERS</p> <p>1. The pre application consultation period is the stage at which the engagement commences. The project team have written to all adjoining residents in an attempt to have open engagement over and above what is required by the planning legislation</p> <p>2. At present, some services at both Abbotsford House/Municipal Buildings have a public interface and it is considered that this interface would continue at the new buildings. The intention is that the new HQ would be a hub for back office services, which is a different set of people to the frontline interface at Callander Square, which will remain</p> <p>3. The Council has a number of leases that are expiring that accommodate some of the staff intended to be in the new HQ. There are no buildings that could currently accommodate all of the staff envisaged to be located at the HQ and the Council would rather own a building than continue to pay rents which increase.</p> <p>4. In general terms, retirement market sales have slowed over the past few years, in particular re-sales ie not first time sales from the developer</p> <p>5. The initial site investigations (boreholes) have been undertaken to establish the foundation details that the structural engineers will design to. Further site investigations will be required during the next design phase.</p> <p>6. A Transport Assessment is about to be completed to understand the existing and forecasted traffic implications of the scheme. It is envisaged that there will require to be a</p>	

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
		<p>if they have a problem.</p> <p>3. Are there no other buildings/offices that can be used to house the administration staff.</p> <p>4. We've been advised that apartment sales are already slowing down because this new proposed building has now been made public</p> <p>5. There has already been drilling next to our building to see if they can find bedrock for a foundation. We understand that the drilling has gone down as far as 45ft and so far, they haven't found any bedrock!</p> <p>6. With the consolidation of the council premises & employees into the new building, we are concerned with the increased traffic at West Bridge Street into Hope Street. Currently, there is an horrendous flow of traffic creating increased difficulties for both motorists & pedestrians.</p>	<p>new junction into the Municipal Buildings site (possibly a roundabout) to mitigate the increased traffic levels. If a roundabout is created, this will actually reduce the traffic along Hope Street/ and the portion of West Bridge Street at Wellside Place as traffic will be able to go along Camelon Rd without going round the existing one way system</p>	
104	23/7	<p>If the Council lodge a planning application for the above, can you give me a summary of all the procedures (including objections to the proposed planning application) that will be followed prior to the Council making a final decision.</p> <p>If residents wish to raise an objection (s) including residents in a communal block of flats, will each person/household require to submit it individually for it to be counted as a separate objection ?</p>	<p>The new HQ Project Building is currently a proposal that is going through a "Pre Application Consultation (PAC)" in line with the Scottish Governments Guidance for Major Developments as defined under the Town & Country Planning Regulations. The Council has decided that the changes in the area as a result of the proposals ie the proposed new HQ, the demolition of the Westbank Clinic and the Municipal Buildings, should be considered as a single entity as this ensures the Council consider the land use changes openly and transparently as a Major Development in Planning terms.</p> <p>The outcome of the PAC will be reported to a special</p>	None

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
			<p>meeting of Council as part of an update report on the project in August and this report will be available on the Council website when prepared. The Council meeting will consider whether the project progresses and whether a formal planning application will be submitted.</p> <p>The PAC process allows interested parties responses to be openly aired and the design team (and ultimately the Council) to decide whether the project will proceed as originally intended, be altered or reviewed further.</p> <p>Assuming all this progresses, the Project Team would then formally apply to Planning Service who would then consider the Planning Application as a normal planning application. All adjoining neighbours would be formally notified of the application by the Planning Authority and advised of the timescales to a) view the application details, b) make comments on the application and c) the intended timescales for formal consideration. Much of this information, can now be gained from Falkirk Council's e-planning website:-</p> <p>http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/planning-building/development-management/planning-applications-decisions/</p> <p>Representations made in respect of a planning application can made submitted by individuals or groups of persons. All matters submitted will be afforded detailed consideration. The advantage of single letters or emails is that this allows Falkirk Council to keep individuals directly advised of the application process.</p>	

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
105	26/7	<p>Falkirk Floral Art Club has used the Lesser Town Hall as it's venue from many years and hope to be able to have the same (or better) facilities if and when a new Town Hall is built. We currently have a membership of 45-50 people and regularly have another 20+ visitors attending.</p> <p>The majority of our members are over 45 but we are open to all people interested in gardens and flowers. The lift and disabled facilities are important as is a raised platform with good lighting and a sound system for use during our demonstration evenings. We hire the hall between 6 pm and 11 pm for these. We also pay for the use of the kitchen (to make tea) at the same time as hiring the hall. We run 6 practical classes a year which last from 7 pm to 9 pm. Our club night is a Monday - It is important to us that we can still meet on this day as other floral clubs operating within a 20 mile radius meet on other nights of the week and some of our members are also members of these.</p> <p>We would be grateful if you could take into account our requirements when considering future planning.</p>	<p>At this stage, the Falkirk Town Hall remains unaffected by the Office HQ project as it will remain on the site once the Municipal Building is demolished. The intention is to replace the FTH at some point in the future and a business case is being looked at separately, for this element and will be reported to Council over the next few months.</p> <p>During the construction phase of the HQ project it is intended that the FTH will be able to operate normally with perhaps some of the parking having to be rearranged slightly.</p>	None
Howgate Centre Consultation Responses				
106	Jun	As a neighbouring property, I am concerned about the loss of my view	The project team are considering whether there are any privacy concerns as the design evolves.	Privacy to adjoining residents will be considered as part of the detailed planning application information
107	Jun	An opportunity for improved civic space in the centre of town	Noted	None
108	Jun	Existing traffic speeds on Camelon Rd are high at peak time. Difficult to get out of my drive, without further development.	The Transport Assessment will have a look at existing traffic issues and the effect of the development on the surrounding areas and produce recommendations where mitigation	Transport Assessment and detailed designs will look to mitigate

			measures may be required.	any issues identified.
Direct Email/Letter Responses				
109	Jun	Need a new HQ building – it is about time	Noted	None
110	Jun	Will you have another fish tank at reception?	The internal layouts and detailing will be considered at the next stage of design.	None
111	Jun	Would like to see a blg of quality, not like the Police Station but like Camelot Court Bldg. It should be a blg Falkirk can be proud of.	The design team have evolved the design and are looking to produce a quality building that will enhance the townscape of Falkirk Town Centre	Will be specified as part of planning application
112	Jun	Hope the design will make a fab building and a ROI	Noted	None
113	Jun	Wall at Burnbrae Grds to be kept to discourage car access to site	The detailed design will consider these issues but as there is a level difference at Burnbrae Gardens it is likely that there will be no change to the current arrangements.	Will be specified as part of planning application
114	Jun	Parking is an issue for West Bridge St residents who have permits with people indiscriminately parking - may be worse with new development as less car parking for staff	The Transport Assessment will have a look at existing traffic issues and the effect of the development on the surrounding areas and produce recommendations where mitigation measures may be required.	Transport Assessment and detailed designs will look to mitigate any issues identified and the Council will produce a Travel Plan as part of the application process.
115	Jun	Parking issues at Burnbrae Gardens/Kilns Rd – will they be worsened with less staff parking, will Council look to control with double yellow lines	The Transport Assessment will consider existing traffic issues and the effect of the development on the surrounding areas and produce recommendations where mitigation measures may be required.	Transport Assessment and detailed designs will look to mitigate any issues identified and the Council will produce a Travel Plan as part of the application process.
116	Jun	Seems like a good idea to bring into the one building all the services from the town hall, Abbotsford and build an efficient new building. I only hope the town hall is not moved away from the town centre as public transport is not good enough	The site to the front of the Municipal Buildings is the preferred site and was chosen as an accessible location.	None

Direct Email/Letter Responses				
117	Jun	Some concerns about the closeness of the new building, this will block out light for residents in Wellside Court, some of whom are 80/90 years old. Also concerns about noise and dust and contractors working hours	The design has been amended, moving the building 7 metres from its original proposed location and reducing the height by 1.3metres. The designers are looking at overshadowing implications for adjoining properties and will attempt to mitigate the construction issues raised.	<p>The overshadowing diagrams have been produced by the design team and are being considered prior to applying for detailed planning permission.</p> <p>The working hours and construction mitigation issues will be discussed as part of the planning application.</p>
118	Jun	Likes building concept but wants it to take cognizance of the proximity to the conservation area	The design team have evolved the design and are looking to produce a quality building that will complement the conservation area	Will be specified as part of planning application