



# **Agenda Item**

**4**

**Application for Financial  
Assistance – Forth Valley  
Sensory Centre**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Application for Financial Assistance – Forth Valley Sensory Centre

**Meeting:** Falkirk Common Good Sub-Committee

**Date:** 23 February 2017

**Submitted By:** Director of Corporate & Housing

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 An application has been received from the Forth Valley Sensory Centre for funding towards rebuilding their sensory garden. The assistance applied for will be used to “unlock” other funding which requires a 10% third party contribution.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

**2.1 Members of the Sub-Committee are asked to agree:-**

- (1) the award of £1,700 from Falkirk Common Good Fund towards the development of the Sensory Garden at Camelon.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Forth Valley Sensory Centre is a place where people with a visual or hearing loss, their friends, families, carers and the wider community can access quality services and advice from partner organisations. The centre was the first of its kind constructed in the UK 10 years ago.
- 3.2 The current sensory garden has been in existence for 10 years and is in need of transformation and improvement. The project will create an accessible safe, inter active space which is open to the public and will utilise new innovative sensory ideas. The improved garden will include an educational section for children and a memorial section and should appeal to all generations. Currently the Centre attracts around 500 visitors per week and it is expected the transformed garden will increase this number.
- 3.3 The proposed start date for the project is May 2017 and anticipated completion is July 2017.

**4. Considerations**

- 4.1 The balance of the Falkirk Common Good Fund is £728,640 after commitments still to be paid. This sum includes interest and rentals for the financial year 2016/17.

- 4.2 Although there have been a number of large grants made from the Fund during the last year the balance is still healthy and the application for £1,700 will unlock other funding to enable a £34,000 project to proceed.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 There is support for the project from users of the centre and the general public. A professional landscape design company will be used that specialises in sensory gardens to ensure objectives are met.

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial**

- 6.1 The total cost of the project is £34,000 with 60% of the sum being used to buy materials. The sum of £12,000 has already been secured as part of the Tesco Bags of Help Initiative whilst the centre is also providing £5,000 of its own funds, mainly received from donations.
- 6.2 An application has been made to Falkirk Environment Trust (FET) for the balance of £17,000. The application to the Common Good Fund for £1,700 represents the 10% third party funding required as part of this FET application. If approved the Common Good Fund assistance will not be released until Officers are satisfied that the FET funding is secured and the project will proceed as planned.

### **Resources**

- 6.3 There are no resource implications (such as staff and assets) which arise from the report recommendations.

### **Legal**

- 6.4 The land and building is owned by the Forth Valley Sensory Centre.

### **Risk**

- 6.5 There are no risk implications which arise from the report recommendations.

### **Equalities**

- 6.6 An equality and poverty impact assessment has not been required.

### **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

- 6.7 A sustainability assessment has not been completed as part of compiling this report. The Sensory Centre has a number of willing volunteers who support the Centre and will be actively involved in the maintenance and up-keep of the garden following its transformation, thus ensuring sustainability.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The project should encourage more visitors to the centre and greatly improve the facilities offered. The sum requested of £1,700 is small in comparison to the overall project cost and is required to release the environmental body funding.

---

Director of Corporate & Housing Services

Author – Hilary MacArthur, 01324 506354, [hilary.macarthur@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:hilary.macarthur@falkirk.gov.uk)

Date: 6 February 2017

## **Appendices**

None.

## **List of Background Papers:**

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- Application received from Martin Allen, Partnership Manager, Forth Valley Sensory Centre.