

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest includes a crown with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: a grizzly bear), and a banner at the bottom with the motto "A NE FOR A".

Agenda Item 9

**CLD - Community Halls –
Update on Transfer/Disposals**

Falkirk Council

Title: CLD - Community Halls – Update on Transfer/Disposals
Meeting: Education, Children and Young People Executive
Date: 9 November 2021
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Education, Children and Young People Executive with an update on the lease arrangements and progress regarding the transfer and disposal of community halls.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the Education, Children and Young People Executive:

- (i) note the current position and progress made regarding the transfer and disposal of the community halls referenced in the report for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 workstreams detailed in Section 4;
- (ii) agree to the proposal to amend the leases from a 15-year full repairing and insurance lease to 15-year schedule of condition and schedule of works lease for the reasons outlined in Section 4.3; and
- (iii) agree that the Director of Children's Services can instruct the award of the new lease to hall management committees where agreement has been reached by both parties.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Council agreed as part of the 2015/16 Budget that Officers should progress the transfer or closure (where no local interest was expressed) of all 22 community halls.
- 3.2 To date, 2 halls have been closed and sold; Polmont and Bothkennar and this report provides an update on the 5 halls that were agreed should be in Phase 1 of the transfer process.

4 Considerations

Update - Offer of Leases – Phase 1

- 4.1 On 4 June 2019, the Education, Children and Young People Executive agreed that 15-year, full repairing and insurance leases could be issued to the Management Committees in respect of the following 5 halls:

- Banknock
- California
- Limerigg
- Tamfourhill
- Westfield

4.2 Officers have been working with the Management Committees, Community Ownership Scotland, and Falkirk CVS to ensure that the lease offered by Falkirk Council reflects the unique relationship between the Management Committees and the Council.

4.3 Since the previous agreement to use 15-year repairing and insurance leases was taken, several factors highlighted by both Community Ownership Scotland and individual Management Committees have led to the proposal to change this to a 15-year lease which includes a Schedule of Condition and a Schedule of Works. The views expressed that have led to the proposed change were:

- that the new leases were fairer and better reflected the condition of the facility that they were leasing;
- that having a Schedule of Condition as part of the Lease, provided comfort to them if they had to return the facility back to the Council, as the condition requirement would be clearly outlined in the new Lease; and
- that having a Schedule of Works as part of the new Lease provided them with an assurance on the work the repair and improvement that the Council had committed to do.

4.4 The purpose of both leases remains the same, that is to ensure that any Management Committee who returns the building to the Council, must do so in the same condition as it was at the time the Lease was signed.

4.5 Details of the current status, regarding the award of leases in respect of each of the 5 halls, is shown below:

Community Hall	Update on Current Status/Position with Award of Lease
Tamfourhill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services have issued a draft long-term Lease to the Management Committee. • The Management Committee are taking legal advice prior to signing.
Westfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Management Committee have indicated that they will be able to sign a long-term Lease for the Community Hall in January 2022.
California	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Management Committee have indicated that they will be able to sign a long-term Lease for the Community Hall by 31 January 2022.
Limerigg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Management Committee have recently dissolved. • However, a group of local people have indicated a desire to over the running of the Hall.
Banknock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Management Committee have indicated that they will be able to sign a long-term Lease for the Community Hall by 30 April 2022.

- 4.6 The Covid pandemic has had significant impact on the work of the Community Hall Management Committees. Covid restrictions have meant that the halls have been closed for normal business for over a year. During this time however, some Management Committees reprioritised their work to assist with the supply of emergency food and community support.
- 4.7 During this closure period Management Committees have had limited income streams which has in many ways impacted on their commitment to sign lease agreements.
- 4.8 Officers currently remain committed to this and are proactively working with the Management Committees to support and progress them to sign the long-term Lease for their Hall.

Update on Next Phase of Potential Transfers

- 4.9 Officers have also been liaising with a number of additional Community Hall Management Committees/Groups to support and progress Phase 2 of the workstream. At the current moment those discussions are sufficiently advanced to include the following 7 Halls in the next phase:
- Avonbridge
 - Bainsford
 - Brightons
 - Broompark
 - Cowdenhill
 - Newlands
 - Shieldhill

Note: Other Halls may be added as appropriate.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Officers have and will continue liaising with Management Committees and other interested groups to help progress this work.

6 Implications

Financial / Resources

- 6.1 Once disposals/leases are finalised, it will enable Children's Services to realise previously agreed budgetary savings.
- 6.2 The Education, Children and Young People Executive previously agreed to provide some short-term financial support to Management Committees/local groups who take over the running of a Community Hall. This support would take the form of a 'parachute payment' and would be made to them over a 3-year period; £2,500 for small halls and £3,250 for large halls.

Legal

- 6.3 Formal leases and conveyances, as appropriate require to be prepared by the Council's Asset and Legal Teams prior to them being agreed and signed by Hall Management Committees.

Risk

- 6.4 Should any of the halls Lease Agreements be unsuccessful, the consequences would involve the hall being returned to Falkirk Council to manage.

Equalities

- 6.5 Being locally run and managed means that the halls can offer opportunities for local groups, support disadvantaged groups, and promote activities for local people to become engaged in as they know what best suits the needs of their own local communities.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 Community Halls can utilise the facilities they have and the groups they support to provide opportunities for local people to stimulate activity which may offer some elements of regeneration to local areas.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Officers remain committed to progressing this workstream, but it must be recognised that the speed, success and outcome of this has been affected by the development work associated with the types of lease and by the wider Covid pandemic.

Director of Children's Services

Author – Gary Greenhorn, Head of Planning & Resources, Children's Services
01324 506683 gary.greenhorn@falkirk.gov.uk

Appendix

None

List of Background Papers

None