

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: FALKIRK COMMUNITY TRUST – BUSINESS PLANS 2016/17**  
**Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL**  
**Date: 16 December 2015**  
**Author: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Funding Agreement between the Council and Falkirk Community Trust (“the Trust”) requires that the Trust submit, on an annual basis, a draft Business Plan for the following financial year for approval by the Council. The Council approved a five year Business Plan Strategy in February 2014, which set out the priorities and objectives for the period 2014-2019. The draft Business Plan for 2016-17 has been submitted by the Trust by way of a Briefing Note by the Chief Executive of the Trust. The Briefing Note is attached as Annex A and contains three attachments comprising the Trust draft Action Plan (Appendix 1), the draft Helix Business Plan (Appendix 2) and the Trust’s Fees and Charges Proposals (Appendix 3).
- 1.2 As noted above, the Trust’s draft Helix Business Plan has been submitted to the Council for consideration and is attached as Appendix 2. This draft plan identifies the funding commitment for the Helix Park. The funding commitment forms part of the overall Annual Service Payment to the Trust.
- 1.3 There is provision in the Funding Agreement between the Council and the Trust for the parties to have an initial dialogue in relation to the proposals in the draft Business Plans prior to final approval. The Council may request further information from the Trust and propose amendments in relation to the Trust’s funding commitment and service specification. The Trust will consider these requests and proposals and may, as a result of this process, adjust the Business Plans. The purposes of this report are, firstly, to provide an overview of the draft Business Plans and, secondly, to allow Members to discuss the proposals in the draft Business Plans with a view to, if Members are so inclined, seeking additional information from the Trust and/or requesting the Trust to consider proposed amendments to the draft Business Plans prior to consideration of the draft Business Plans at Council Budget meeting on 17 February 2016.
- 1.4 The Trust has previously sought to accommodate savings to the Council’s funding commitment by way of increasing income, achieving efficiencies and limited service reductions. This has been successfully done by the Trust who have managed to accommodate previous reductions in their funding while growing the overall business and services offered to the community. The Trust advises and it is acknowledged, however, that the scale of the savings now requested require them to look at matters such as staffing costs and asset rationalisation given the significant proportion of the Trust’s budget they represent. It is also acknowledged that the Trust has carried out a considerable amount of work and provided a good deal of information to the Council in relation to its proposals.

## 2. SERVICE PROVISION

- 2.1 The Trust's activities sit within the over-arching framework of "Inspiring Active Lives", the 10 year strategy for culture & sport in the Falkirk area.
- 2.2 The Business Plan Strategy sets out three high level objectives over a five year period as described below:

- Meeting Customer Needs
- Organisational Development
- Financial Sustainability

Moreover, these objectives are supported by five strategic priorities:-

- Marketing
- Information & Communications Technology
- Venues & Programmes
- People & the Organisation
- Planning Together

- 2.3 The Council's Scrutiny Committee reviewed the performance of the Trust at its meeting on 12 November 2015 consistent with the Following the Public Pound regime. The Committee recognised the significant range of work carried out by the Trust on behalf of the Council and the partnership working involved.

## 3. REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17

- 3.1 As a contribution to meeting the Council's estimated deficit of £18.4m in 2016/17, the Trust was asked to find savings of £1.2m. Their savings proposals, summarised in the following paragraphs, reflect a situation where customer income is plateauing following significant rises in previous years. The Trust attributes this to several factors including the ongoing impact of the recession, competition and the tired state of many of the service assets.
- 3.2 The Trusts savings proposal are grouped into 3 categories:-

	£'000
Income generative & growth	56
Efficiency savings	509
Service reductions	930
	£1,495

Members will note that this is more than the £1.2m requested by the Council. The Trust advises that the extra is headroom to help finance the employee related costs associated with implementing the savings, notably voluntary severance. The capacity within the Trust's reserve is projected to be insufficient to cover these costs. Members may wish to consider whether they would be prepared to allow these costs to be covered from the Council's Spend to Save Reserve, possibly with a staged repayment arrangement. This would require further discussion with the Trust.

3.3 The specific savings are set out in the following table:-

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>16/17 (£)</b>
<b>Income Generation &amp; Growth</b>	
1 Reduce net subsidy to Helix – Increased income from car park charges	50k
2 Stenhousemuir gym income – additional surpluses	6k
<b>Sub-Total Income</b>	<b>56K</b>
<b>Efficiency Savings</b>	
3 Reduction in pension strain fund costs within budget (libraries)	42k
4 Box off/Sports Administration review & withdrawal from Steeple	14k
5 Reduce level of Callendar Park supervisory staff	9k
6 Staffing review at Trust main office (assuming FCSL takeover)	75k
7 Review of staff first aid allowances currently paid to staff	14k
8 Revised opening times at Bo'ness Recreation Centre	60k
9 Reduction in marketing expenditure	25k
10 Amendments to staff terms and conditions	170k
11 Management review	100k
<b>Sub-Total Efficiencies</b>	<b>509K</b>
<b>Service Reductions</b>	
12 Withdraw support for Football Development Officer post	18k
13 Reduce Book Fund in libraries	39k
14 Restructure and reduce libraries staffing	300k
15 Restructure and reduce Culture and Callendar House associated staffing	252k
16 Reduced opening of crèche at Grangemouth Sports Complex	10k
17 Closure of Hallglen Sports Centre	108k
18 Withdrawal of Mobile Library	93k
19 Closure of Denny Football Centre	46k
20 Closure of Grangemouth Town Hall	47k
21 Withdrawal from Woodlands Games Hall	17k
<b>Sub-Total Service Reductions</b>	<b>930K</b>
<b>CUMULATIVE TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>1,495k</b>
<b>REQUIRED SAVINGS</b>	<b>1,200k</b>
<b>PROVISION FOR SEVERANCE COSTS</b>	<b>+295k</b>

3.4 It is anticipated that Council may have some issues with some of the Trust's savings proposals, notably those relating to facility withdrawal. This is likely to be compounded when it is realised that, from a Council perspective, with the potential loss of the rates relief (available as a result of the Trust, as a charity, having leases of the facilities and using them), the true savings may be substantially diminished. If the benefit of rates relief is removed, the potential effects for the Council's budget (not including any operating or maintenance related costs) is set out in the following table:-

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Savings £'000</b>	<b>Rate Relief Loss £'000</b>	<b>Adjusted Saving to Council £'000</b>
Hallglen Sports Centre	108	43	65
Denny Football Centre	46	29	17
Grangemouth Town Hall	47	21	26
Woodlands Games Hall	17	28	(11)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>97</b>

- 3.5 The Trust's proposals coincide with options for asset review being considered in relation to elements of the Council's own asset portfolio, e.g. in relation to community halls, and as such prompts a need for a more strategic review. There are a wide range of operational factors to be considered in these proposals and the effect of uncertainties over the future pattern of provision on revenue income must be taken into account. The Trust has provided information on the properties concerned and this is set out in Annex A. Additional information is provided below. It is worth pointing out for Members that these facilities are presently leased to the Trust by the Council under leases with a rental of £1 per annum, if asked for. In accordance with requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator on the treatment of charitable funds, the Council is responsible for any significant repair and maintenance at the properties. If the Council were to take back these properties it would require to look at matters such as the potential for alternative use by the Council, mothballing, demolition and disposal. Each approach has its own costs, benefits and limitations. Practical, financial and operational issues would need to be looked at in detail as well as the regulatory frameworks such as planning.

#### 3.5.1 Hallglen Sports Centre

This building is in need of substantial repair works to maintain operations. An agreement is currently in place with the Church of Scotland enabling them to use part of the premises and this would need to be reflected in any consideration of alternative proposals for the building/site. In the interim, costs would be incurred by the Council in keeping the building secure and in carrying out any essential maintenance from a community safety perspective.

#### 3.5.2 Denny Football Centre

It is understood that there may be interest within the local community in terms of taking on responsibility for the management and operation of the facility. Any such arrangement would require a lease of the property to be entered into on appropriate terms with a formally constituted community body who would thereafter ensure access was available to the wider community. This would include the group making provision to meet the running costs of the facility within their business plan.

#### 3.5.3 Grangemouth Town Hall

This property is common good property which places restrictions on what can be done with it e.g. on disposal. Subject to obtaining any necessary court authority for the granting of a lease in light of its common good status, an option similarly as for Denny Football Centre, would be to consider the granting of a lease to a community body. Management and operation of this property is however likely to prove a significant undertaking for a voluntary group given the running costs of the facility.

#### 3.5.4 Woodlands Games Hall

This facility, including the adjacent football pitches, is currently utilised by Comely Park Primary School and it will therefore be necessary to ensure continuity of provision. This will have implications for Childrens' Services revenue budget which will require to meet the rates and running costs on the basis of the property continuing to be made available for use by the school.

#### 3.5.5 The Steeple

It is noted that the draft Business Plan proposes withdrawal of the box office from the Steeple. The Steeple is due for refurbishment next year via the Falkirk Townscape Heritage Initiative. The Trust have advised that they may not necessarily look to end their lease and use of the Steeple and future discussion would require to take place. If the Steeple were to revert to the Council, the rates implication would be £5,400 per annum.

- 3.6 As noted at paragraph 1.3 above, the Funding Agreement provides for the identification of issues in relation to the draft Business Plans. There is room for discussion and counter proposals leading to an agreed position. In the event that this is not achieved by the commencement of the new financial year, then the funding in the previous financial year would be provided to the Trust, until such time as agreement is reached at which point there would be a reconciliation of funding.
- 3.7 It is important for Members to recognise that the Trust savings proposals have gone through due corporate governance process leading to their Board approving these proposals, as the best options from their perspective. Moreover, it may be helpful for Members to appreciate that alternative savings proposals that the Council may seek, are likely to come back as other facility withdrawals. It may then reasonably be questioned as to whether a satisfactory agreement could be reached in time for the Council's Budget meeting in February.
- 3.8 Given this scenario there is scope to consider a pragmatic and value-adding way forward in the following terms. Firstly, and most importantly, rather than dealing with potential facility withdrawal in isolation and a piecemeal manner, a strategic and holistic assessment of appropriate service delivery and the location from which that should take place should be pursued. This would helpfully build on the review currently being undertaken by the Council's Policy Development Panel. Members may wish to consider if the Policy Development Panel is requested to co-ordinate such an assessment is parallel to its ongoing work, mindful that significant input by and liaison with the Trust would be required as well as with a range of Council Officers. The Policy Development Panel would report to the Executive but it would require to be recognised that budget matters ultimately rest with Council. It is anticipated that this strategic review would be completed by August 2016 for consideration by Members and feed into the 2017/18 Budget process. Moreover, as noted at paragraph 3.5, there would be an interface with the review of the Council's own asset portfolio.
- 3.9 Secondly, the proposed £218k savings from the proposed facility withdrawal, as set out in paragraph 3.4, would be deferred until 2017/18 and be considered as an integral element of the proposed strategic review. There is precedence for this in so far as flexibility between years has been allowed to the Trust relative to their 3 year £700k p.a. target [16/17 was exceptional with an extra £500k requested]. For the avoidance of doubt, if such an approach was to be requested by Members, and the Trust amended its draft Business Plans accordingly, the facility withdrawals proposed in the Trust's draft Business Plan would not take effect and all properties would be included in the proposed strategic review.

- 3.10 The Trust has carried out Equality & Poverty Impact Assessments (EPIAs) on their budget proposals as noted at paragraph 7 of Annex A. It is expected that further information on detailed EPIAs will be required from the Trust for consideration by Members prior to final decision making taking place on the draft Business Plans. Such further detailed EPIAs can be provided by the Trust consistent with the considerations of Members.

#### **4. HELIX**

- 4.1 The Trust's draft Helix Business Plan 2016/17 contrasts the very successful first year trading, which attracted circa 1,000,000 visitors, with the reduction in the subsequent year, largely attributable to weather. The latter year saw the opening of the visitor centre.
- 4.2 The Trust's key themes for 2016/17 will be income generation and cost management. Critical to the success of the operation will be:-
- Continued high quality maintenance of site
  - Excellent customer service
  - Events and animation
  - Community engagement
  - Marketing

#### **5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 The Trust's Audit and Performance Sub-Group considered capital project bids for 2016/17 and their proposals are set out at paragraph 9.5 of Annex A. These relate to their anticipated funding of £550k. The Council will not know its capital grant until 16 December 2016 when the Scottish Government Budget is announced. It will be noted that there were supplementary bids, notably to address backlog "maintenance". These will, however, inevitably be constrained by the limited capital resources available.
- 5.2 Members will be aware that within the leases and property licence granted to the Trust by the Council there is a clear division of responsibility for the maintenance of properties between the Council and the Trust. The proposals detailed above that relate to building works will be the responsibility of the Council to carry out directly, as landlord, under the terms of the leases and property licence. It is suggested that the strategic review of facilities referred to at paragraph 3.8 above should include consideration of future capital investment requirements.
- 5.3 Another dimension is the status of the Falkirk Town Hall which is clearly linked to the Council's HQ project. Work on a business case for a replacement Town Hall/Arts Centre on the new Forth Valley College campus is currently being undertaken.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The Trust has timeously submitted their draft Business Plans, consistent with the Funding Agreement, and these set out their savings proposals for Council consideration. Proposals for capital investment have also been submitted. In line with paragraph 1.3 above, it is for Council now to consider these and determine if further information should be requested or if alternative proposals should be communicated to the Trust for their consideration. This process will ultimately lead to the Trust's budget and draft Business Plans being considered along with that of the Council at the Budget meeting on 17 February 2016.
- 6.2 This report has suggested that Council may find some of the savings proposals problematic notably with respect to facility withdrawal. A strategic and holistic review of the Trust's service delivery portfolio has been suggested as a way forward. Were this to be agreed, it is further suggested that the related savings of £218k, per paragraph 3.4, be deducted from the Trust's 16/17 proposals and be deferred for consideration in 17/18 following the strategic review.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Members are invited to:-**

- 7.1 **Consider the Trust's draft Business Plans and related papers appended to this report and identify any additional information they would wish to receive from the Trust and/or any proposed amendments they would wish made to the draft Business Plans (having particular regard to the terms of paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 regarding a strategic review of assets and paragraph 3.10 regarding EPIAs) with a view to the Trust being requested to consider these and, as appropriate, adjust its draft Business Plans in advance of the February 2016 budget meeting of Council; and**
- 7.2 **Determine whether the Council's Spend to Save reserve may be applied to assist the Trust in terms of paragraph 3.2.**

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Date: 3 December 2015**

**Ref: AAA161215 – Falkirk Community Trust – Business Plans 2016/17**

**Contact Officer: Bryan Smail/Iain Henderson**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Funding Agreement between Falkirk Council and the Trust.
2. Falkirk Community Business Plan Strategy 2014-2019.
3. "Inspiring Active Lives" 10 year strategy.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506300/506103 and ask for Bryan Smail/Iain Henderson.

## Briefing Note Falkirk Community Trust

**Subject:** Briefing Note for Council Report 16 December 2015  
**To:** Falkirk Council  
**From:** Maureen Campbell, Chief Executive  
**Date:** 8 December 2015

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Trust's Funding Agreement with the Council requires the Trust to submit its annual Business Plan for 2016/17 in November 2015 as a prerequisite for funding approval for the financial year 2016/17. The Trust prepares an annual Action Plan to deliver its five-year Business Strategy and the Draft Action Plan for 2016-2017 is attached at Appendix 1. The Helix Business Plan is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 This Briefing Paper outlines the provisions planned by the Trust to accommodate a reduction of £1.2m in the Council's funding payment for 2016/17.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Trust has successfully achieved the required savings in each year of its operation since inception, whilst meeting the principles described below:
  - Focussing on income generation instead of expenditure reduction;
  - Having the least impact on the number of existing customers;
  - Not impacting specifically on those in the community with the greatest needs.
- 2.2 The Council has advised the Trust of their intention to reduce annual funding by a total of £2.6m over the three year period 2015/16 to 2017/18. The Trust therefore requires to make savings of £1.2m in the next financial year 2016/17, whilst expecting further savings of £700,000 the following year in 2017/18.
- 2.3 The ability to generate additional income of such an amount is very difficult to achieve given the following factors:
  - continued deterioration of the condition of our facilities which attract income;
  - increased levels of competition from some commercial operators in the area;
  - the general economic climate;
  - the unpredictability of the weather for our outdoor activities;
  - the ever increasing levels of expectation of a quality experience from our customers.
- 2.4 The scale of the forthcoming reductions to the Trust's budget will therefore have a significant impact on our staff and on our ability to deliver services to the community.
- 2.5 The Board considered this financial position at their meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August and at a subsequent planning meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. Decisions were taken at their meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November which considered a course of specific actions believed to be the best actions to be implemented to ensure the long term viability of the Trust.



### 3. Budget Review Process 2016/17

- 3.1 Given the scale of the funding reductions, an assessment of all our services and facility operations was undertaken, which took into account the following factors:
- Condition of building, plant and associated equipment
  - Total usage of each facility and service
  - Total net cost of each facility and service
  - Geographical location and possible areas of duplication
  - Potential areas for growth in income and usage
  - Legal obligations
  - Uniqueness of facility or service
  - Historical significance of the facility
  - Local community need in areas of social deprivation
- 3.2 From this review a number of proposals were identified that would achieve at least the total savings figure of £1.2m. The Savings Plan proposals identifies a total of £1,495k of savings made up of the following:
- Income generation and growth plans - £56k
  - Efficiency savings - £509k
  - Service reductions - £930k
- 3.3 The 2015/16 income projections currently show an underachievement of approximately £250k. Any additional income from the increase of prices and further growth in the Mariner income in 2016/17 will be retained as targets, to help close the potential gap at the 2015/16 year end. However, given the uncertainties around their achievement, these targets will not be included in the 2016/17 savings proposals. Income targets in 2015/16 are proving challenging to achieve and overreliance on income generation is seen as an unacceptable risk to the Business Plan.
- 3.4 A review of fees and charges is undertaken each year. The general economic climate and increased levels of competition in the area are having an impact on Trust services. The review of charges for 2016/17 has focused on the following items with the intention of attracting additional income of approximately £100k:
- Inflationary increases being applied to charges
  - Health and Fitness charges
  - Membership opportunities
  - Expansion of Go Card Scheme categories
  - Town Hall Charges
  - Library Overdue Charges
  - Public Sector Information on Copying Charges
  - Monthly Activity Passes
  - Helix Car Park Charges
  - Community Access to Schools Charges
- 3.5 Details of the fees and charges are outlined in Appendix 3.

#### 4. Savings Proposals 2016/17

4.1 The specific savings proposals are shown in the table below:

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>16/17 (£)</b>
<b>Income Generation &amp; Growth</b>	
1 Reduce net subsidy to Helix – Increased income from car park charges	50k
2 Stenhousemuir gym income – additional surpluses	6k
<b>Sub-Total Income</b>	<b>56K</b>
<b>Efficiency Savings</b>	
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<b>Service Reductions</b>	
12 Withdraw support for Football Development Officer post	18k
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<b>Sub-Total Service Reductions</b>	<b>930K</b>
<b>CUMULATIVE TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>1,495k</b>
<b>REQUIRED SAVINGS</b>	<b>1,200k</b>
<b>PROVISION FOR SEVERANCE COSTS</b>	<b>+295k</b>

4.2 A brief description of these proposals is outlined in the following paragraphs.

4.3 Reduce net subsidy to Helix – The Helix will likely achieve its 2015/16 target, mainly through the introduction of car park charges to its Kelpies car park area. Additional income is expected to be generated as a result of the review of the car parking charges and increased visitors during the winter months due to the opening of the Visitor Centre.

- 4.4 Stenhousemuir Gym income - The agreed 40% split of the annual surpluses to the Trust for the new facility has been based on 80% of its total membership in year 1 of its operation, 90% of its total membership in year 2 of its operation and 100% of its total membership in year 3 of its operation. The sum of £56k has already been accounted for in the 2015/16 savings package, so the additional sum of £6k can be identified in 2016/17.
- 4.5 Reduction in pension strain fund (libraries staff) - The current budget has an annual provision for £42k per annum which was established to offset the costs of implementing the previous libraries staffing review. These costs have now come to an end allowing this item to be identified as a new saving in 2016/17.
- 4.6 Box off/Sports Administration review & withdrawal from Steeple - The Trust now manages its activity booking processes in a more co-ordinated and efficient manner by operating a single bookings team from the Trust's main office in the Falkirk Stadium. A box office function is still present within the Steeple. By relocating this remaining function from the Steeple to the Stadium offices, there would be a resultant saving of £14k in 2016/17. The Steeple is expected to close for a period of time in the future in any case to enable the Townscape Heritage Initiative renovation works to be undertaken.
- 4.7 Reduce level of Callendar Park supervisory staff - The opportunity has been taken to delete one of the two existing Supervisory posts given that it is a planned vacancy. However a new Modern Apprentice post will be created to ensure no loss of productivity. This would result in a net saving of £9k in 2016/17.
- 4.8 Staffing review at Trust main office – This item is dependent upon the outcome of current ongoing discussions for the potential to subsume Falkirk Community Stadium Company Ltd, into the Trust.
- 4.9 Review of staff first aid allowances - A review of the process by which 'first aid' payments are made to some staff is being undertaken. This involves a review of this additional responsibility payment in accordance with previous changes to staff terms and conditions under the 'single status' provisions. It is expected that savings of approximately £14k would be achieved in 2016/17.
- 4.10 Introduce revised opening times at Bo'ness Recreation Centre - A review of the current programme of activities and times of opening has been undertaken and by changing the existing opening times it is hoped to improve access times to periods of potentially higher demand from customers. A saving of approximately £60k will be achieved in 2016/17.
- 4.11 Marketing - Whilst the marketing of Trust services is considered vital in support of the achievement of income generation and attendance targets, the continued move from printed material to social media outlets will help reduce expenditure levels and in this respect a reduction of £25k is considered appropriate in 2016/17.
- 4.12 Staff terms and conditions - It is the Council's intention to revise its staff terms and conditions and at this time the Trust tends to mirror these terms and conditions. This could include matters such as reducing the working week and removing previous protected payments which arose as an outcome of Single Status negotiations in 2006.
- 4.13 Management Review – The implementation of the Savings Plan for 2016/17 will impact on the Trust's management structure. We will consider the need to review this structure to ensure it reflects the impact of the Savings Plan, reflects the need for overall savings whilst remaining fit for purpose.

- 4.14 Withdraw support for Football Development Officer post - There exists a three year partnership agreement, with the Scottish Football Association, (SFA), to jointly develop football and increase participation levels. It is proposed to withdraw support for the Football Development Officer post which would result in savings of £18k.
- 4.15 Reduce Book Fund in libraries - The book fund has already been reduced by £61k in 2015/16 with little impact on customers' experience. It is believed that a further reduction of 39k in 2016/17 will also be able to be achieved.
- 4.16 Restructure and reduce libraries staffing - The Libraries section has been operating over the last year with a significant number of vacancies. This has resulted in senior libraries staff undertaking front line duties, which is unsustainable. However savings of over £100k have been achieved. A fundamental review is being undertaken to determine how best to staff the libraries in the future with significant reductions in staffing levels and consideration of staff duties. This would obviously impact on the customers' experience however it is believed that a saving of approximately £300k could be achieved.
- 4.17 Restructure and reduce Culture and Callendar House associated staffing - A fundamental review of Culture and Callendar House associated staff is being undertaken with significant changes proposed to the operation and opening times of Callendar House to the extent that the 2016/17 proposal is to reduce its current financial allocation by £252k. This would involve reductions in the level of service in areas such as the Georgian Kitchen, Park Gallery and Archives and a rationalisation of arts and heritage and development services. The new structure will also impact on facilities and venues staff teams.
- 4.18 Reduced opening hours of crèche at Grangemouth Sports Complex - A review has been undertaken of the opening hours and the opening times of the crèche within Grangemouth Sports Complex. The lowest period of use is in the afternoons. It is acknowledged that the provision of a crèche supports the participation by parents in the activities within the Complex, however it is believed that the withdrawal of the crèche service in the afternoons would not have a detrimental impact on the income levels of the associated activities.
- 4.19 Closure of Hallglen Sports Centre - Hallglen S.C. has had insufficient heating to its sports hall for over a year now, which led to the need for a more general review of the condition of the facility, specifically in relation to its energy supply and associated heating plant. A recent report has shown that the estimated costs to upgrade the plant is £537k, £444k of which is needed urgently. The long term future of the facility is therefore already in question and with no likelihood of additional capital funding from the Council in the years ahead, the facility would be unable to operate in the longer term.
- 4.20 Withdrawal of Mobile Library - The Trust's mobile library is only just over four years old, however its condition has deteriorated rapidly. The vehicle travels approximately 12,000 miles per year and in the past twelve months, has been off the road for over twelve weeks for necessary repair work. It is anticipated that these maintenance issues will recur more frequently, resulting in expected increased costs and disruption to customers. The Council's Fleet Services has asked us to explore options for the replacement of the vehicle sooner than we had planned.
- 4.21 Closure of Denny Football Centre - Denny Football Centre is the old sports hall of the previous Denny High School and is currently in a poor condition and located in the middle of a poorly maintained area of land. The Trust introduced an indoor synthetic surface to its sports hall, which had previously been of a composite wood material. This work was completed as part of the insurance funded repair work, undertaken after a period of storm damage. The Trust's aim was to attract the local football community, given the previous proposals to also have a 3G outdoor synthetic pitch provision at that site. However, the Council's support for a 3G synthetic pitch at the Dunipace Juniors F.C football ground, may better serve the needs of the local football community. It is therefore proposed that the Denny Football Centre be closed, given its poor condition and as it is likely to become surplus to requirements in future years.

- 4.22 Closure of Grangemouth Town Hall - Of the three town hall sites that were considered, a Business Plan is already being prepared for the Council to consider the replacement of the Falkirk Town Hall as part of a joint approach with the Council and Forth Valley College. Of the other two Town Halls in Bo'ness and Grangemouth, the facility in Bo'ness is a listed building. Were the Trust to withdraw from these facilities there would be implications for the Council in how to protect and secure the buildings, with the Bo'ness facility requiring specific attention given its 'listed' status. In terms of performance, Grangemouth Town Hall attracted a total of 20,785 visitors in 2014/15 and Bo'ness Town Hall attracted a total of 13,338 visitors in 2014/15. However, the performance of both Town Halls in the first six months of this financial year is now comparable, with each attracting approximately 8,500 up until the end of September this year. Grangemouth has incurred a 25% reduction in its usage in the first six months of this year when compared with the previous year. Bo'ness Town Hall however has shown significant increases, having attracted an increase of 23% from the same period in the previous year. It is therefore considered appropriate to close Grangemouth Town Hall.
- 4.23 Withdrawal from Woodlands Games Hall - This facility is currently used by the adjacent Comely Park Primary School for their P.E. activities, during school hours and also provides an office base for the Council's Internal Audit section. The external synthetic pitch surface is in such a condition that the Trust no longer attracts income from this area and it currently acts as the primary school's play area, although the area is in need of attention. The Trust could withdraw from this facility and pass its operation and associated costs to the Council's Children's Services.

## **5 Human Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Given the nature of our services, any reduction in service or withdrawal from a facility would significantly impact on our staffing levels. Staffing costs account for the majority of our total expenditure and so it is inevitable that to achieve the savings required, staffing levels would have to be reduced.
- 5.2 However, any reduction in staffing levels would result in potential redundancy/severance costs, which at this time are unable to be calculated as such costs are dependent upon each individual member of staff's length of service, age and whether they are in the Falkirk Pension Fund or not. It would also be our intention to attempt to redeploy any staff member who may be at risk of redundancy. However the number of potential staff at risk is such that it may not be possible to redeploy the majority of those affected.
- 5.3 The Trust would need to meet the costs of any redundancy/severance payments. We have no existing fund set aside to enable this to occur, so to meet such costs would either result in the depletion of the Company reserves and/or the closure of an additional facility to simply meet the redundancy costs.
- 5.4 The Trust therefore needs to exceed its savings plan targets by withdrawing from services or facilities simply to generate sufficient revenue to pay the anticipated redundancy costs. The Savings Plan assumes a level of saving at £1,495k, which is £295k in excess of the savings target, to help fund potential redundancy/severance costs. Given that the Trust and the Council are both keen to minimise the impact on the community, discussions have begun with Council colleagues to consider how these costs could be alternatively funded other than by withdrawing from additional services and facilities.

## 6. Community Implications

- 6.1 The impact for local communities will be significant. There are likely to be many clubs, groups and regular casual customers who will be affected by the implementation of our Savings Plan in 2016/17. We will do everything we can to relocate clubs and groups who may have regular lets within some of the facilities to alternative venues, however these may not prove suitable for their members if for example such relocations result in increased travel, less suitable equipment and potentially increased costs at other sites.
- 6.2 We will communicate with all our affected user groups in an attempt to reduce the impact of the proposed service efficiencies and reductions.

## 7. Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Each of the savings outlined in section 4 have been assessed to determine their impact level. This is an iterative process and for some budget savings the full impact may not be currently understood until it is informed for example by employee consultation. In such cases the impact rating will be reviewed downwards as the process is worked through.
- 7.2 Currently the impact assessment is summarised as follows:
- Those with no impact represent £112k of the Trust's overall saving of £1,495k
  - Those with low impact represent £340k of the Trust's overall saving of £1,495k; a low impact rating requires minimal mitigating actions
  - Those with medium impact represent £732k of the Trust's overall savings of £1,495k; a medium rating identified mitigating actions which will further inform the proposal and potentially reduce the level of impact
  - Those with high impact represent £311k of the Trust's overall savings of £1,495k; a high impact rating identified mitigating actions however acknowledgement that these may not be sufficient to reduce the overall impact.

## 8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 A consideration of risk and a review of the Trusts Risk Register is a component of preparing the Business Plan and will continue over the coming months. In light of the Council's funding position, risks associated with both revenue and capital funding for the Trust have been revised upwards to the highest level red risks, reflecting the increased certainty of continued funding reductions.
- 8.2 Risks that are particularly pertinent to the Business Plan are outlined below:

Risk Level	Risk Description	Mitigation
High	Funding is not available to maintain buildings or the Council has pressing need for investment elsewhere in its portfolio.	This is a universal risk shared with the Council and the Trust is working with the Council to implement an Asset Management Plan.
High	Funding from the Council to the Trust is reduced due to other Council priorities and budget constraints.	The Trust has been pursuing a strategy to shift reliance on Council funding in the medium term and seeking new growth opportunities. The speed of reduction in core funding is moving at a pace that is outstripping ability to grow income.



High	Over reliance on out of date IT systems and network which is not focussed on Trust's business does not provide adequate service to customers or business information.	Capital funds have been secured to help improve IT. The scale and complexity of the problem remains challenging to resolve. Online booking and customer point of sales experience is identified as a priority.
Medium	Failure to meet income targets with potential for the Trust not to be financially viable.	Mitigation through increased focus on monitoring and review of customer income, cautious approach to charges and development of new growth opportunities.
Medium	Uncertainty of cost of implementing savings proposals which may require further savings to be found, and may deflect staff time input away from core business.	Contingency sum built in to the savings plan and dedicated support sought from HR and Finance advisors.

## 9. Annual Action Plan 2016/17

- 9.1 The opening of the new Stenhousemuir Gym in late September and the Visitor Centre at the Helix in late October of this year offer opportunities to grow our business and attract additional income, although these planned amounts are now simply being used to offset the reduction in our core funding from the Council. However, following the approval of the Trust's increased borrowing limit to £1m in February of this year, income generating business groups have been established to work up ideas to grow the business along more creative lines, especially in relation to how best we should maximise our use of existing assets. An initial business idea has already been considered by the Board and a full Business Case will be submitted to the Board in the early part of 2016.
- 9.2 The Council's capital programme supported the refurbishment of the wave machine and associated children's water play equipment at the Mariner Leisure Centre and the planned refurbishment of the flumes at Grangemouth Sports Centre will help support our attempts to revitalise the swimming market, especially after the Council's decision to withdraw school swimming lessons for its primary school pupils last year.
- 9.3 The successful attraction of external funding continues, with the recent announcement of a £350k award to support the replacement indoor athletics track at Grangemouth Athletics Stadium and associated improvements to its reception and changing areas are expected to be delivered in 2016/17.
- 9.4 We remain concerned about the scale of the backlog of maintenance items associated with the Asset Management Plan. This is a critical issue for our Business Plan going forward as our ability to simply retain the facilities in an operational condition is becoming difficult in key areas of our operation, which obviously impacts on our user numbers and income levels. There seems to be no expected respite from the Council in this situation and as time goes by, further facility failures will occur.
- 9.5 The Council's capital programme allocation for funding the Trusts capital projects in 2016/7 is £550,000. The Trust recommends the following projects taking account that the Council advised that only bids of "inescapable high priority" would be considered:
- Denny Library fit out - £120k
  - Bo'ness Town Hall fire alarm upgrade - £15k
  - Museum Store replacement heating system - £60k
  - Grangemouth Sports Complex refurbishment of ladies dry changing area - £100k
  - Dollar Park tennis court refurbishment - £50k
  - Callendar Park emergency refurbishment - £20k
  - Callendar park staff welfare facility roof refurbishment - £37k

- Callendar house replacement/ refurbishment lift - £50k
- Grangemouth Sports Complex provision of a fitness spinning studio - £60k
- Provision of signage to promote Community Access to Schools - £38k

- 9.6 Our Business Plan also includes the implementation of the Physical Activity and Health Delivery Plan, the Library Development Plan and the Arts Delivery Plan that will respond to the themes within 'Inspiring Active Lives' and provide a focus for service improvement.
- 9.7 We have the opportunity to work in partnership with the Council and Forth Valley College in the potential provision of a new performing arts venue at the College's Middlefield site as a replacement for Falkirk Town Hall. The preparation of a Business Plan will be completed shortly to enable the Council to consider its support for this project.
- 9.8 The performance of the Trust's Trading Company in 2015/16 is set to improve as a result of the opening of the visitor centre at the Helix in late October. It is hoped that its early success will continue into 2016/17.

## **10. Board Decisions**

- 10.1 The Board considered the full Business Plan at their meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November and took a number of decisions, including their approval of the various initiatives outlined in section 4 of this paper to tackle the reduction in funding in 2016/17.
- 10.2 The Board authorised me to make the submission to the Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November and noted that further savings may be required if the Council settlement is changed or the Council alters its expectation on savings derived from funding to the Trust.

## **11. Conclusions**

- 11.1 Having already incurred reductions of approximately £2.5m to our core funding since the Trust was established in July 2011, a further reduction of £2.6m over a three year period 2015/18 is such that significant reductions in services are required to ensure the Trust remains viable in the following two-year period.
- 11.2 Attempts have been made in previous years to meet budget reductions which:
- Focussed on income generation instead of expenditure reduction
  - Had the least impact on the number of existing customers
  - Did not impact specifically on those in the community with the greatest need
- 11.3 However, meeting each of these three principles is no longer possible. We are unable to meet the scale of the reductions through our income generating abilities in such a short timescale, given the condition of the facilities, increased levels of competition and the current economic climate. The savings plan for 2016/17 has had to focus on reducing the level of services currently available to the community, as previously advised to the Council.
- 11.4 The proposals will also impact significantly on our staffing complement, with reductions expected in many areas of our business. Apart from the human cost of such actions, we require to fund any redundancy/severance costs. The savings plan exceeds its target amount by £295k, to help fund such costs.
- 11.5 The savings plan shown in Section 4 outlines proposals that will achieve savings of approximately £1,495k in 2016/17.
- 11.6 Whilst appreciating that the Council will not decide upon their final funding allocation to the Trust until February 2016, we are unable to wait until that point in time as actions need to be progressed and implemented by the end of March 2016, so that we are able to achieve the planned savings.



11.7 Previous discussions with the Council have acknowledged that the ongoing funding reductions to the Trust, together with the lack of significant planned investment into the facilities owned by the Council, would ultimately have implications on the number of facilities able to be operated by the Trust. The Trust Board are most disappointed that they have had to take decisions which reduce services to the community, impact on staff and result in their withdrawal from community facilities, for the financial viability of the Trust, but request that a strategic perspective is taken of all Council owned facilities in the future to help minimise the loss of services to the wider Falkirk community in the forthcoming years.

**Maureen Campbell**  
**Chief Executive**



Falkirk Community Trust

# Annual Action Plan

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2016-2017

## INTRODUCTION

**Maureen Campbell, Chief Executive  
Falkirk Community Trust**

This Action Plan is the third of our Plans to deliver our 5 year Business Strategy which sets a direction of travel for the Trust through to 2019.

In our 2015 - 2016 Plan we focused on venues and developing a more entrepreneurial approach with new ideas for business activity. We opened a new gym in Stenhousemuir shopping centre, innovatively taking fitness services out into a community setting and quickly exceeded our target for attracting new members. Early in the year the launch of the new waves at the Mariner Centre had an immediate impact on our visitor numbers and income, which has been sustained over the period. Capitalising on the new Grangemouth Stadium track, secured last year, we attracted funding from **sportscotland** to upgrade the indoor centre and athletes facilities. With the Council we opened a new high quality Visitor Centre for the Helix providing both essential visitor services and playing a part in encouraging people to explore the many other attractions in the area.

We continued to embed planning within our organisational development and moved forward a Library Development Plan, an Arts Plan and management plans for Callendar Park and Muiravonside Country Park. Business growth was a key theme and feasibility studies for four opportunities will be progressed further in 2016 -17. An opportunity to revitalise the Mariner Centre as a family destination for central Scotland will be a key focus for business growth. This is important as reductions to our core budget are beginning to have significant consequences on our operations. We

were asked to increase our savings target by £0.5m, effectively doubling the savings to be made in 2016 -17. Customer income is plateauing and can no longer be relied upon as the primary response to meeting savings. A decline in the number of people paying to use some of our services and of course the ongoing impact of the recession is biting. We have therefore had to grapple with some difficult decisions around reducing the services we deliver. Without increasingly urgent investment in venues, our ability to provide quality services and secure the necessary income stream for future viability will inevitably reduce.

One of the questions being asked of us is about the future of Libraries in these uncertain times with severe financial constraints. What will the public attitude to Libraries be when considered within the whole spectrum of public services? The Library Development Plan began to consider this question – finding libraries are highly valued by those who use them but those who use them are declining in number.

Clearly we need to communicate what we are doing and continue to grow relationships across all sectors of society to attract advocates to help us build the case for investing in culture and sport. The relationships we have with the National Agencies are particularly vital for securing investment, as the benefits to Grangemouth Stadium have demonstrated. Going forward ambitious plans for a replacement Arts venue for the area will be a catalyst to revitalising arts programming and beginning what we hope will be a fruitful dialogue with Creative Scotland. The Trust firmly believes that all of Culture and Sport can offer such a lot to creating a vibrant place, improving health and wellbeing and growing citizenship.

## THE SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This is a high level plan for enhancing and protecting services and so does not encompass regular operational activity to deliver our core services. It is guided by our Business Strategy and *Inspiring Active Lives* – the 10 Year Strategy for Culture & Sport in the Falkirk Area. Unit Action Plans for all our business functions as well as project plans for developing key initiatives ensure delivery of the Action Plan throughout the organisation.

## FIVE-YEAR BUSINESS STRATEGY

### Aim

We have created a 5 year strategy for business improvement. Our aim is that by 2019:

*Falkirk Community Trust will be operating from venues that people want to use, with a more responsive programme offering better quality for our customers. We will be a trusted and valued organisation, secure in our role as a leader for culture and sport and with diminishing reliance on Council funding; we will be more flexible, entrepreneurial and commercially minded. We will have created champions for culture and sport and have loyal volunteers and a workforce who motivate a huge cross section of the community to take part in culture and sport that improves their lives.*

### Objectives

Three strategic objectives provide the focus for our work:

- Meeting customer needs
- Organisational development
- Financial sustainability.

### Strategic priorities

Five strategic priorities are of significant importance and are a focus for our Action Plans over the next 5 years:

- Marketing
- Information & Communications Technology
- Venues and Programmes
- People and the Organisation
- Planning Together.

## ASSETS and RESOURCES

As at September 2015 we have 490 contracted employees (214 full-time and 276 part-time) and manage over 80 sites across the Falkirk Council area. Managing and caring for buildings, natural resources, equipment and collections in a well-planned and sustainable way is the bedrock for delivering our services. Our Asset Management Plan 2013 – 2019 sets out our approach to managing and maintaining these assets on behalf of Falkirk Council. Responsibility for capital investment rests with Falkirk Council as owners of the assets and the Trust is able to bid to the Council's capital programme for capital project funding.

## FINANCIAL PLAN

Robust financial management is critical to our success and integral to our forward planning. We are planning for a £1.9m reduction in our revenue funding from Falkirk Council over the next two years. This is on top of a reduction in 2015/16 of £620,000.

We propose to offset the reduction in funding from the Council in 2016/17 as summarised below, with the balance of £700,000 being secured in 2017/18:

- Income generation & growth plans: £56,000
- Securing efficiency savings: £509,000
- Service reductions: £930,000

We are working to a reduction in our core funding of £1.2m in 2016/17. It should be noted that the savings summarised above amount to nearly £1.5m, which allows contingency for any possible employee related costs associated with implementing savings.

## BUDGET

We currently (October 2015) envisage budget movement between 2015-16 and 2016-17 as outlined in Table 1 below. 2016/17 accounts for the new Stenhousemuir gym and full Helix operations.

Table 1: Budget

Budget Heading	2015-16 £'000	2016-17 £'000
Employee Expenses	12,213	12,040
Property Expenses	2,393	2,461
Transport Expenses	252	282
Supplies & Services	3,511	3,820
Third Party Payments	28	343
Support Services	806	806
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>19,203</b>	<b>19,753</b>
Service Payment	12,660	11,774
Other Income	6,543	7,979
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>19,203</b>	<b>19,753</b>

## SAVINGS PLAN

The scale of reduction to core funding in this Plan (£1.2m) will have a significant impact. We have been working with a reducing budget year on year since the Trust was established. However this year is the first where securing savings from reductions to services have had to become the primary route to delivering the savings plan. The scope to rely on income growth instead of reducing services has diminished and over reliance on customer income is now a growing risk for the Trust.

There will therefore be visible consequences in 2016/17 arising from the savings plan that will impact on service delivery to our customers.

## **FEES and CHARGES**

The Trust is a charitable company and it is important that we are able to continue to fully meet our charitable purposes. 3 principle is to ensure delivery of affordable and discounted prices that support those least able to pay. The 'Go Card' concessionary scheme has proved successful and going forward we propose to expand the eligibility categories and are keen to explore how the 'Go Card' could be utilised to help deliver the National Self-Directed Support scheme.

An inflationary increase of approximately 5% was implemented in 2015/16. Recent performance in some areas of sport in particular, suggests that some charges are now at a level that may be impacting on attendances. Inflation currently sits at 1% (Consumer Price index and Retail Price index, May 2015) so we plan to increase the general charges in 2016/17 by 1%. The application of a 1% increase may result in some charges increasing to a point slightly greater than 1%.

Health & Fitness charges have largely been frozen over the past four years with financial performance being driven through growth in volume of business. We believe we are able to sustain an increase in membership prices in 2016/17 and plan to introduce these from April 2016.

We introduced a new membership scheme for swimming lessons in 2015/16 which did not fully meet expectations and a review is expected to recommend improvements to the benefits that the scheme offers. Our shift towards membership driven programmes will continue however and we plan to consider further opportunities.

The underlying principle of providing good value activity remains and we will monitor implementation across all fees and charges throughout the year to ensure all our key principles are met.

## ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan 2016-2017 is the third of 5 annual plans for delivering our 5 year Business Strategy and is structured under each of our 3 strategic objectives. It sets out actions that follow on from our previous two Action Plans to meet the objectives, address our priorities and respond to opportunities. The Action Plan does not include regular operational activity to deliver our core services.

Table 2: Annual Action Plan 2016-2017

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – Meeting Customer Needs</b>			
<i>People are at the heart of everything we do, be they customers or potential customers.</i>			
1.1	Deliver a heritage engagement programme including end use options for the Steeple	<p>Older People/intergenerational activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative, led by Falkirk Council, which has attracted national investment from HLF and Historic Scotland worth £5m over 5 years to 2018;</li> <li>Delivered in partnership with Falkirk Local History Society and Falkirk Council the engagement programme is to improve understanding of the heritage value of the town centre as well as provide opportunities for debating/imagining its future use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A design group identifies end use options for the Steeple.</li> <li>Year 3 community engagement programme delivered.</li> </ul>
1.2	Promote the John Muir Way and how it connects to Trust venues	<p>Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The John Muir Way is a Central Scotland wide route, which runs from Dunbar to Helensburgh and passes through Trust sites such as Kinneil Estate and Callendar Park;</li> <li>We seek to raise the profile of the route and this areas contribution to the visitor experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information integrated into our venue promotion.</li> </ul>
1.3	Deliver activity to build an Active Scotland	<p>Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to work with a wide range of local and national partners to celebrate the commonwealth and the sport and culture opportunities in the area, following the enthusiasm generated since Glasgow 2014;</li> <li>The new track at Grangemouth Stadium secured as a legacy from the Games led to a successful funding bid to <b>sportscotland</b> for upgrading the Indoor Athletics Centre. Already recognised by the Athletics Governing Bodies as a high performance venue, improvements to the Indoor Centre and athlete services, such as changing facilities, help secure the longer term future of the Stadium which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary schools supported to create a legacy plan to build on success and grow participation in sport.</li> <li>Grangemouth Stadium 50<sup>th</sup> birthday programme generates new activity.</li> <li>Partnership with Scottish and</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
			UK Athletics drives high performance usage.
1.4	Develop a new Arts Centre	<p>Customer needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement of FTH with a new Arts Centre venue in partnership with Forth Valley College as part of their new campus is being explored through feasibility studies, business plans and consultation with key stakeholder groups with a decision expected to be taken by Falkirk Council in December 2015 on whether to proceed. If approved the new facility is expected to complete in 2019.</li> <li>There is an opportunity to review and refresh arts programming, working across the local arts sector and with national arts agencies to ensure that the cultural offer in Falkirk fully contributes to creating a vibrant place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A business plan and programming strategy for the Arts Centre are fully developed.</li> <li>A transition plan to exit FTH is developed.</li> </ul>
1.5	Deliver a four year programme - Memorial, Reflection, Restoration - commemorating WW1	<p>Older People/intergenerational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commemoration programme running from July 2014, 100 years after the start of WW1, to November 2018;</li> <li>Working with community interest groups and co-ordinating activity, we believe there is great opportunity to engage older people and promote intergenerational activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A programme of exhibitions, workshops and screenings that raises awareness.</li> </ul>
1.6	Deliver the year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016 and plan for the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology in 2017	<p>Brand Awareness and Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want to ensure a link between local and national promotional priorities (2015-18) and make the connection with the key achievements in the area's industrial past and present;</li> <li>The second of the post-Winning Years, Focus Years promoted by Event Scotland is the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design in 2016, 2017 presents an opportunity to highlight the Antonine Wall, the area's premier archaeological feature;</li> <li>We have identified an opportunity to showcase the Helix and Kelpies and deliver an event / events growing on the success and learning from Helix Day and Home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A year long programme celebrating the Year of Innovation Architecture and Design in 2016.</li> <li>A year long programme celebrating the area's History, Heritage and Archaeology in 2017.</li> <li>A future major event on the Helix.</li> </ul>
1.7	Make a greater contribution to area visitor and tourism development	<p>Brand Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want to strengthen partnerships to achieve greater collective value to raise the profile of Falkirk as a destination, contribute to destination marketing and increase understanding of national trends;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in visits from outwith the area to key venues.</li> </ul>



	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Visitor Centre at the Helix is a focus for visitors particularly those from outwith the area and international visitors, and is a key opportunity to connect visitors to the wider Falkirk area.</li> </ul>	- Improvement in Trading Company performance.
1.8	Implement the Customer Consultation and Engagement Strategy	<p>Customer Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We engage and consult with customers at a number of levels, from a 4 yearly high level survey to capturing verbal comments on the front line;</li> <li>We developed a strategy to improve our planning and consistency of process across the organisation to help us anticipate customer needs and respond to customer demands. This strategy is being implemented across the Trust.</li> </ul>	- A range of consultation activity generates feedback from customers and monitors customer perceptions of Trust performance.
1.9	Plan high level Customer and Non Customer Survey	<p>Customer Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We undertook a first survey in Spring 2012 across our main facilities and off site with non-customers, which we found very helpful in preparing the Culture and Sport Strategy and it gave us a baseline measure of our customer service performance and a better understanding of the barriers to participation;</li> <li>Research is fundamental for helping evidence based decision making, informing strategy development and improving knowledge of our customer as well as non-customer profiles which will help us to meet their needs.</li> </ul>	- Survey completed by end of June 2016.
1.10	Implement Web and Social Media Development Strategy	<p>Customer knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to develop the website, online facilities and social media presence to be effective in both business to audience marketing as well as peer-to-peer marketing and grow reputation with stakeholders. Activity will support a digital engagement of customers for consultation purposes;</li> <li>This must also be in tandem with ICT plans as we require adequate infrastructure and capacity to support the ease we are aiming for e.g. online booking and systems identifying cross-service users.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing increased engagement through social media platforms.</li> <li>- Increased web traffic.</li> <li>- Build new customer bases.</li> <li>- Implementation of new systems which are fit for purpose digitally.</li> </ul>
1.11	Focus business growth activity on key customer groups	<p>Customer knowledge: Families: Older People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We undertook a thematic cross Trust approach to developing business, generating customer focussed information as well promoting collaborative working across teams. A primary focus</li> </ul>	- Integrated marketing of programme for families

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
		<p>was to identify potential for business growth and income generation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We reviewed our performance in delivering services for families and older people and developed action plans. We deliver an array of activity of appeal to the family audience that could be better co-ordinated with clearly integrated marketing aimed at a local audience and those within a 30-45 minute drive time. There is potential to grow activity for the active retired market and we will pilot ideas in 2016.</li> </ul>	<p>through 'Family Friendly Falkirk' initiative implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideas for service provision for older people tested and monitoring framework established.</li> </ul>
1.12	Implement a volunteer development policy with partners	<p>Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trust and partners engage with many volunteers in various areas of activity and there are many processes and procedures used across the organisation. We want to ensure that volunteering is valued and loyal volunteers are rewarded through effective training;</li> <li>Our policy is to create a common approach when working with volunteers ensuring that there are a standard set of measures and checks in place and that we are able to develop effective volunteers who can get the most out of the opportunities offered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy operating across the Trust and monitoring framework established.</li> <li>Increased numbers of volunteers year on year.</li> <li>Local clubs and associations strengthened by the development of good quality volunteers.</li> </ul>
1.13	Develop the Helix volunteering programme	<p>Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteering as part of the Helix project has generated a great deal of interest, volunteers have grown and developed through the capital phase of the project and are enthusiastic and motivated champions;</li> <li>Working with partners we want to ensure volunteering opportunity continues to develop and utilising the experience of the Helix champions we will implement a number of volunteer programmes; a priority is to secure funding for a volunteer co-ordinator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers re-engaged.</li> <li>Volunteer champions leading new strands of work.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2 – Organisational Development</b> <i>Growing up, getting stronger and maturing is critical if we are to live up to stakeholders' expectations.</i>			
2.1	Monitor the Culture and Sport Strategy	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Inspiring Active Lives</i> is an overarching 10 year Strategy being delivered through a series of sector specific partnership Delivery Plans;</li> <li>We need to ensure that we have appropriate monitoring and evaluation in place and that output contributes to the areas Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership progress is reported to stakeholders in March 2017</li> <li>Positive contribution to SOA</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
			indicators.
2.2	Implement, with partners, an Arts Delivery Plan and prepare a Public Art Plan for the area (2016-21)	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We led the development of an Arts Plan that took learning from the Creative Place project to build on and develop further collaborative work;</li> <li>• Art in public spaces is a key element of our approach to engaging communities, it is proposed that a separate Public Art Plan follows on from and is directed by the Arts Plan, but also responds to public spaces and built heritage plans and strategies;</li> <li>• An example of good practice in integrating public art with wider regeneration plans is happening at Denny.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 1 action initiated and an arts network is established.</li> <li>- Draft Public Art Plan created by August 2016 for consultation.</li> </ul>
2.3	Implement a Libraries Development Plan for the area	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library usage is falling in Falkirk but rising in some other places; there are powerful national lobbies and arguments in favour of libraries;</li> <li>• This new Plan considers how to make our libraries more relevant, more connected, more animated and how to address the 'value gap';</li> <li>• Year 1 action will include exploring moves towards the creation of community hubs and identifying opportunity to combine with arts or other facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 1 action initiated and a move is made towards Community Hubs.</li> </ul>
2.4	Implement Kinneil Estate Masterplan	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Estate's built and natural heritage mixed offer requires an integrated approach to planning and projects will be developed and appropriately packaged to attract potential external funding;</li> <li>• A feasibility study for the development of Kinneil House provided a sound concept for creating this as the critical project around which to build significant phase 1 funding packages for wider development of the Estate;</li> <li>• A strong local community of interest exists and contributed to the Masterplan development and continues through the Advisory Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory Group oversees priority projects.</li> <li>- Phase 1 funding bids explored for agreed projects.</li> <li>- Funding Strategy for Kinneil House, critical project, agreed by key players.</li> </ul>
2.5	Implement the Heritage Delivery Plan 2015-18 with partners	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This plan supports general wellbeing and a sense of identity and encourages active contributions to stewarding the future;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WW1 programme.</li> <li>- Year of Innovation</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution from the local voluntary sector is actively sought and priority actions all offer voluntary sector opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Architecture and Design 2016 programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year of History, Heritage &amp; Architecture 2017 programme.</li> <li>- Kinneil Estate projects.</li> </ul>
2.6	Develop and implement an Events Strategy	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCT supports a diverse programme of events. The events may be at community, local or national level and some are of international significance;</li> <li>We need to maximise our capacity to attract, host and benefit from events and bring clearer focus to our events approach and help prioritise investment and work going forward.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategy implemented and partners engaged in delivery.</li> <li>- New partners engaged.</li> </ul>
2.7	Implement Marketing Strategy	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have begun to embed a sound well planned marketing approach across the Trust and identify areas where niche activity could be developed, as well as geographic areas where market penetration is low;</li> <li>This allows more calculated targeting, robust and systematic planning and supports the development of exciting new product.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketing plans developed across the Trust ensure planning is the basis of all activity.</li> <li>- Increased new customer participation and spread of users across the area.</li> <li>- Increased focus on thematic and targeted marketing campaigns.</li> </ul>
2.8	Develop, with partners, a Sports Delivery Plan for the area	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are a large number of sporting groups and interests in the area as well as ourselves – many regional and local clubs, national governing bodies and sportscotland;</li> <li>This Plan seeks to address the priorities of all these interests and consider how collectively we minimise duplication of effort, work together to develop our skill base and increase participation in sport at all levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft Sports Delivery Plan approved for consultation by March 2017.</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
2.9	Implement a management and forward development plan for Callendar Park in conjunction with relevant partners	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visitor destination, the Park is a heritage asset both in its own right and as the surrounding to Callendar House;</li> <li>• This plan ensures that management and forward development of the green space is sympathetic to the heritage, integrated with the House, addresses the infrastructure needs of a strategic destination and meets the needs of local people and visitors alike. It promotes sustainable management and will support strategic masterplanning across the entire asset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritised projects scoped and matched with potential funding bids.</li> <li>- Project to upgrade Castle Callendar Play area progressed by 17/18.</li> </ul>
2.10	Implement a management and forward development plan for Muiravonside Country Park with partners as appropriate	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular with families and for walking this large rural site is in need of investment to ensure it continues to be attractive for people to be more active and engaged in planning park improvements, outdoor activities and environmental learning ;</li> <li>• This plan guides maintenance and management going forward and will build on the externally funded projects to re-open the Visitor Centre, improve signage and create a sculpture trail in 2015.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 2 action plan implemented.</li> <li>- Prioritised projects and funding bids identified.</li> </ul>
2.11	Seek approval of Sports Pitch Strategy	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We commissioned a Sports Pitch Strategy for the area which identifies the need for provision of a network of up to six 3G synthetic pitches across the area to minimise pressures on deteriorating and unsustainable grass pitches;</li> <li>• The Council's Executive Committee took a decision in July 2014 to refocus their approach and encourage clubs to be involved in the development of 3G provision through bidding for funds from the Council. The Trust in its advisory role will support this process in collaboration with clubs, <b>sportscotland</b> and the SFA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports Pitch Strategy approved by Board and subsequently Falkirk Council</li> <li>- Guidance provided to Council working group.</li> </ul>
2.12	Deliver, with partners, a Physical Activity Plan for the area	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Plan aims to increase levels of participation in entry level physical activity and wellbeing programmes, with a particular focus on those who do not currently participate and those for whom the health benefits of participation will be greatest;</li> <li>• The Plan ensures there is a cohesive link to the development of the Forth Valley Physical Activity Plan ensuring health services have an integrated approach;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 2016 action plan implemented with partners and a monitoring framework established.</li> <li>- Increase in participation in all specific areas of activity.</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Plan has a key contribution to the Single Outcome Agreement, and aims to ensure effective use of resources and support funding applications.</li> </ul>	
2.13	Prepare, with partners, a forward development plan for the Helix	<p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are a number of opportunities, some already identified, for future phases of the development and we have commenced forward planning with the project partners, initially some enhancement works have been implemented through the TIF scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope of work and activity required to continue forward development agreed.</li> </ul>
2.14	Monitor and report on performance of the 5 year Business Plan Strategy	<p>Sound Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to ensure implementation is managed, progress is reported to our stakeholders and planning for delivery is integrated throughout the organisation;</li> <li>All annual action plans include performance targets which are reviewed regularly by our Board and reported to Falkirk Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance reported to the Trust's Audit &amp; Performance Group quarterly.</li> <li>Following the Public Pound reported to Falkirk Council in November 2016.</li> <li>Business Plan and Unit Action Plans regularly and systematically reviewed.</li> </ul>
2.15	Review Board Director Recruitment plans	<p>Sound Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trust requires to consider how best to manage director turnover to avoid significant loss of knowledge skills;</li> <li>At each opportunity for refresh the Board will consider the appropriate mix of skills and experience that it considers to be necessary for the next phase of the company's development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board continues at full complement with an appropriate mix of skills and expertise.</li> </ul>
2.16	Ensure support services are delivered effectively, meet our needs and provide a 'value for money' service	<p>Sound Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 SLAs currently exist to provide our support services by the Council which are due to end in June 2016;</li> <li>The Trust has an on-going need to ensure best value and demonstrate its independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance of short and longer term agreements are monitored and reviewed.</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
2.17	Further develop and implement Stakeholder Engagement Plan.	<p>Organisational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders, such as Falkirk Council, are vital to our work. Effective communication ensures that we optimise the potential to maximise the contribution we make to each other's work;</li> <li>Our stakeholders' engagement plan aims to ensure that all stakeholders are appropriately engaged. We will listen to their feedback in future programme developments or improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder Communications work well.</li> <li>A stakeholder plan is activated.</li> </ul>
2.18	Improve Employee Communications	<p>Organisational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our own employees are one of our most important resources – in terms of the vital work they carry out on a day-to-day basis but also as ambassadors for the work of the Trust within the community. As such, their understanding of and ability to communicate the Trust's key messaging is an excellent way of spreading information by word of mouth and via passionate, enthusiastic voices;</li> <li>We aim to build staff knowledge of other services and indeed as our own best customers; enabling greater knowledge between teams of the Trust about overall product/offering is vital.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More engaging and informative e-newsletter with increased open and click rates</li> <li>Staff encouraged to visit other Trust sites.</li> </ul>
2.19	Conduct Employee Survey	<p>Employee Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our second employee survey was undertaken in 2014 to ensure our employees are engaged, feel valued and to provide an indication of employee satisfaction, the next survey will be in 2016;</li> <li>The results are shared across the Trust and an action plan is developed and agreed through consultation with teams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee survey conducted by autumn 2016.</li> <li>Results reported early 2017.</li> <li>Action plan developed by April 2017.</li> </ul>
2.20	Implement an Employee Development Plan	<p>Employee Development/Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our achievement and Personal Development Scheme is well embedded within the majority of the organisation. We want to maintain this momentum through the implementation of the Employee Development Plan;</li> <li>We are considering skills to develop and grow the business as the next focus for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training sessions held for key staff groups to build Customer Care skills and entrepreneurial awareness.</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
		<p>development;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The customer experience is critical to our future growth. Employees have a key role in contributing to that experience and therefore we want to support everyone to increase their awareness and understanding accordingly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focussed Training for senior managers in relationship to management and leadership.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 3 – Financial Sustainability</b> <i>Being efficient and effective and operating within our means.</i>			
3.1	Deliver a thematic community engagement programme to support Kinneil Museum development	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Kinneil Masterplan, we will continue engagement to animate the Museum and encourage community activity;</li> <li>Critical to community engagement are the Friends of Kinneil who are a valuable partner and capable of opening up engagement opportunities within the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Museum based activity.</li> <li>Increased volunteering from the Bo'ness Community.</li> </ul>
3.2	Review development plans for Callendar House and Stables Block	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our application to HLF in 2013 was unsuccessful and we need to revisit the concept and plan with Falkirk Council and HLF;</li> <li>Emergency works to the Stables Block have been undertaken and we now need to consider works to further buildings within this complex, within the wider Asset Management Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incremental 5 -10 year change plan is developed for Callendar House.</li> <li>Engagement with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties explores end use opportunities for the Stables Block.</li> </ul>
3.3	Implement the Asset Management Development Plan 16/17 actions	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our Asset Management Plan to optimise the use of our venues is being developed through a number of actions undertaken in conjunction with Falkirk Council to inform long term decision making and enable investment planning through a costed plan;</li> <li>Condition surveys completed for 23 key sites (October 2014) identify the need for £5.3m spend and the Sports Pitch Strategy identified need for £3.5m spend both by March 2018. Achievement will be subject to identifying capital investment and/or a rationalisation plan;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forward investment decisions made by March 2017.</li> <li>Improved performance of the repairs and maintenance service.</li> </ul>



	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are operating maintenance on an essential repairs only basis and with Falkirk Council we are monitoring effectiveness and costs.</li> </ul>	
3.4	Implement 2016/17 Council capital funded projects and plan 2017/18 investment proposals	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have identified 10 critical areas of spend for the capital allocation of £550,000 to meet the Council's criteria of considering bids of 'inescapable high priority' and support our 5 year Business Strategy;</li> <li>We want to make best possible use of the 17/18 allocation of £550,000 and develop proposals that support our Asset Management Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 capital projects delivered at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Denny Library</li> <li>o Bo'ness Town Hall</li> <li>o Museum Store</li> <li>o Grangemouth Sports Complex (2)</li> <li>o CATS Schools</li> <li>o Dollar Park</li> <li>o Callendar Park (2)</li> <li>o Callendar House</li> </ul> </li> <li>- 17/18 proposals identified by June 2016.</li> </ul>
3.5	Improve CATS Schools performance	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CATS schools are modern venues spread across the area and provide community facilities for sport and a range of leisure pursuits accessible during out of school hours. The quality of these venues is considerably higher than the Neighbourhood Sports Centres which are similarly spread across the area. We will focus on driving activity to the CATS schools whilst considering any consequential impact on the Neighbourhood Centres and their longer term viability;</li> <li>The CATS schools are underutilised and for a number of reasons are not performing as well as they might and could be more accessible, better promoted and offer more engaging programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement Plan implemented.</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
3.6	Commence implementing an ICT Improvement Plan	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Systems are out of date, incompatible with each other, do not meet the basic needs of customers and constrain evidence based decision making and marketing. Many procedures and processes are paper based, bureaucratic by nature and limited by the current infrastructure;</li> <li>- It will be costly to update, however we have secured a capital contribution of £280,000 from Falkirk Council to begin to implement a planned and structured approach to improvement to take advantage of up to date technology that ensures the most effective information support systems are identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 1 actions completed.</li> <li>- Website improvement project completed.</li> <li>- Opportunities for mobile and flexible working explored.</li> </ul>
3.7	Implement a Business Case for a new soft play centre	<p>Investment / Income Generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on the investment in the wave machine, we propose to further redevelop the Mariner Centre and fully re-establish it as a premier family destination;</li> <li>• Soft play is a growth market and we have developed a compelling outline business case for investment in soft play within the games hall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Case fully developed with funding in place.</li> </ul>
3.8	Develop a Health & Fitness Plan	<p>Income Generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the opening of a new Gym at Stenhousemuir we now require to shift our focus to planning forward development of all our gym operations. Health and Fitness development needs to be competitive to attract paid members and generate income and be balanced with ensuring health and wellbeing programmes, particularly aimed at those most in need, are delivering community health benefits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft Health &amp; Fitness Plan created by March 2017.</li> </ul>
3.9	Maintain improvement in Trading Company performance	<p>Income Generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trading Company has continued to improve its overall financial performance. The integration of Helix activity has significantly boosted results as a consequence of better than expected performance in the 2014 summer season. An improvement in purchasing has reduced the cost of sales which in turn has improved the gross margin.</li> <li>• The focus for 2016/17 will be to maximise the performance of the Helix Visitor Centre, to make decisions about the level of service offered at the outdoor venues and efficiencies of Callendar House catering and conferencing will also be explored.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Trading Company makes a net profit that can be passed on to the main charity, or reinvested in trading activity.</li> </ul>

	Actions	Context /Detail	Milestone/Output
3.10	Implement Fundraising Strategy	<p>Income Generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want to support our work by generating income from a range of funders, sponsors and donors and have been growing our capacity to do so over the past 3 years which is reflected in our Strategy for 2016-19;</li> <li>Although external funding continues to be competitive we have uplifted our targets for growth although availability of match funding, capacity and time to develop bids can be challenging. A priority project at Kinneil Estate has reached a point where it may begin to attract significant levels of funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £1.75m of external funds awarded in 2016/19.</li> <li>- Including a high value one-off award of between £500,000 and £1m in 2016/19.</li> <li>- Level of donations increased.</li> </ul>
3.11	Maintain focus on income generating activity	<p>Income Generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A competitive marketplace, the impact of variable and unseasonal weather patterns, and the continuing recession are all taking a toll on our ability to meet income targets.</li> <li>The new income generating venues at the Helix and Stenhousemuir are expected to boost income however we must ensure that that all our income targets are secured. This requires us to have robust monitoring systems in place and the ability to be adaptable with programme and marketing interventions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Income monitoring processes are robust and targets are met.</li> </ul>
3.12	Develop a Procurement Strategy	<p>Efficiencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements have been made in our procurement processes. There is a better understanding of the scope to improve our approach to procurement and a review of our approach will drive this area of work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better procurement realises cashable savings.</li> </ul>
3.13	Secure Energy Management Savings	<p>Efficiencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are a high energy user particularly on many of our large sites. Work to date with the Council on improving our plant and equipment, modernising lighting and pool covers for example has delivered tangible savings. We will continue this work which is becoming more critical as energy costs rise and budgets reduce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement projects identified to reduce energy consumption.</li> </ul>
3.14	Manage the consequences of core funding reductions	<p>Efficiencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to approval, budget savings are likely to have an impact resulting in facility closure. The Trust will work through due process including employee and stakeholder consultation to implement an action plan to secure the savings targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget savings are secured.</li> </ul>

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION****Performance Management**

We measure and evaluate our performance in two ways:

- Numerical performance measures routinely collected over a period of time
- Customer, employee and stakeholder perceptions - on-going and through planned survey work.

Table 3: Numerical Performance Measures

Strategic Objective	Performance measure	Performance context (at end-Q2 15/16)	Performance 12/13	Performance 13/14	Performance 14/15	Performance 15/16 (Q1+Q2)	Target 15/16
Meeting Customer Needs	1. Number of concessionary admissions across all Trust services	The 'Go Card' concessionary scheme was launched at the start of 14/15; performance saw a small increase during 15/16 and we expect to see an <b>increase</b> in uptake in 16/17.	92,273	120,779	114,540	59,906	125,000
	2. Number of admissions by young people across all our venues and programmes	A priority in our marketing strategy is Families; performance has increased and we expect to see a further <b>increase</b> in uptake in 16/17 following a family friendly priority in our marketing strategy.	717,826	789,750	762,617	339,324	810,000
	3. Number of programmes and activity sessions for older people across all Trust services	A priority in our marketing strategy is Older People; a new baseline will be set in 16/17.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Work in progress
	4. Number of adult admission to all sport and leisure venues	Performance has increased during 15/16 following investment in facilities; we expect an <b>increase</b> in performance in 16/17.	627,536 <sup>1</sup>	745,357	638,638	387,928	730,000

Strategic Objective	Performance measure	Performance context (at end-Q2 15/16)	Performance 12/13	Performance 13/14	Performance 14/15	Performance 15/16 (Q1+Q2)	Target 15/16
	5. Number of juvenile admissions to all sport and leisure venues	Following recent declines in performance, admissions saw a small increase in 15/16 following investment in facilities. We expect a further <b>increase</b> in performance in 16/17.	591,306 <sup>1</sup>	536,969	496,094	242,088	550,000
	6. Number of concession admissions to all sport and leisure venues	The 'Go Card' concessionary scheme was launched at the start of 14/15; after an unexpected decrease in 14/15 uptake increased in 15/16; we expect to continue to <b>increase</b> in 16/17.	80,793 <sup>1</sup>	81,902	76,789	40,875	85,000
	7. Attendance at sport and recreation development programmes	Performance has been rising; we expect a <b>slight reduction</b> in 16/17 following refocused national priorities for Active Schools.	125,951 <sup>2</sup>	201,672 <sup>2</sup>	213,860	59,764	200,000
	8. Number of visits to libraries	Visits have been decreasing for some time and at best we expect to <b>maintain</b> performance in 16/17 while we implement improvement action.	619,063	630,110	563,912	267,055	580,000
	9. Number of active borrowers from libraries	The number of active borrowers was static during 15/16 but no increase is evident as yet; at best we expect to <b>maintain</b> the number of active borrowers in 16/17.	25,976	25,718	27,560 <sup>4</sup>	27,275	27,000
	10. Number of issues including digital material	The rate of decline is slowing but no increase evident as yet; we expect a <b>small reduction</b> and to continue to slow the rate of decline during 16/17.	927,074	893,354	836,218	400,504	840,000
	11. Number of admissions	Performance has increased during 15/16; we expect an <b>increase</b> in	119,287	101,861	97,400	55,183	105,000

Strategic Objective	Performance measure	Performance context (at end-Q2 15/16)	Performance 12/13	Performance 13/14	Performance 14/15	Performance 15/16 (Q1+Q2)	Target 15/16
	to arts venues	performance in 16/17.					
	12. Attendance at arts development programmes	This measure was revised from 14/15 and reset totals going forward. Performance increased during 15/16 and we expect further <b>increase</b> in 16/17 subject to agreement on YMI.	63,258	60,005	156,649	75,509	140,000
	13. Number of visits to heritage venues	Performance has been rising for some time. An <b>increase</b> is expected in 16/17.	36,769	38,343	38,382	33,462	45,500
	14. Attendance at heritage development programmes	Performance in 15/16 decreased back to previous levels after a strong 14/15; we expect an <b>increase</b> in uptake with delivery of a heritage engagement programme during 16/17.	9,507	9,870	13,451	3,408	9,750
	15. Number of complaints received	The number of complaints gathered increased in 15/16 following a revised recording system; we hope to <b>maintain</b> the level during 16/17.	94	118	81	65	Maintain
	16. Number of volunteers engaged	Performance increased in 15/16. We expect performance to <b>increase</b> further in 16/17 with appointment of a volunteer co-ordinator.	500 est	855	1,027	n/a	Increase
	17. Number of clubs and organisations worked with	Performance in 15/16 tbc; we expect an <b>increase</b> in 16/17 with engagement work with partner clubs and organisations.	100 est	Work in progress	193	n/a	Increase
	18. Sickness Absence - % days lost	The sickness absence rate reduced slightly in 15/16. The aim is to <b>reduce</b> to below 4%	4.03%	4.13%	4.72%	4.07%	4% or less
	19. Staff Turnover - % turnover	Aim to <b>reduce</b> staff turnover.	8.60%	10.60%	10.30%	5.85% <sup>5</sup>	Reduce

Strategic Objective	Performance measure	Performance context (at end-Q2 15/16)	Performance 12/13	Performance 13/14	Performance 14/15	Performance 15/16 (Q1+Q2)	Target 15/16
Financial Sustainability	20. Customer income raised	Aim to <b>increase</b> income.	£4,540,000	£5,380,000	£5,214,000	£3,317,000	£5,832,000
	21. Grant income secured <sup>3</sup>	Aim to <b>increase</b> income.	£941,000	£703,000	£1,070,000	£393,000	Increase
	22. Funds awarded from competitive grants and donor sectors	Funding is competitive and 15/16 proved very successful; we aim to <b>maintain</b> position during 16/17.	£144,053	£664,186	£541,180	£623,207	£500,000

<sup>1</sup> Excluding figures for Polmonthill Ski Centre, Grangemouth Golf Course and Callendar Park Par 3 – breakdown into adult/juvenile/concession unknown for these periods.

<sup>2</sup> Excluding Community Recreation and Ranger Service activities – included from 14/15.

<sup>3</sup> Includes grant income secured from partners (e.g. Youth Music Initiative (YMI), Active Schools, Fairer Scotland Fund, National Governing Body contributions) plus competitive grants secured.

<sup>4</sup> Revised calculation following new Library Management System during 14/15.

<sup>5</sup> Figures are as of end-August 2015 for 5-month period only (data not available for 6-month position at time of publishing).

## RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trust has a Strategic Risk Management Policy and we review and update our Risk register as part of the business planning process. Currently in October 2015 there are circa 50 risk descriptions in the register. This includes a new risk in relation to implementing the proposed savings plan. Significant and new risks associated with this Plan are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Risk Summary

Risk Level	Risk Description	Mitigation/ Comment
High (increased risk)	Funding is not available to maintain buildings or the Council has pressing need for investment elsewhere in its portfolio.	This is a universal risk shared with the Council and the Trust is working with the Council to implement an Asset Management Plan. The high levels of investment required are unlikely to be met from the Council's capital programme. This risk has been increased to a maximum score due to consequential impact on attracting new customers to facilities and income generation.
High (increased risk)	Funding from the Council to the Trust is reduced due to other Council priorities and budget constraints impacting on the quality and range of services delivered.	The Trust has been pursuing a strategy of income growth to shift reliance on Council funding in the medium term. The speed of reduction in core funding is moving at a pace that is outstripping our ability to grow income. Mitigation is being pursued through new growth opportunities to stimulate increased business. This risk has been increased to a maximum score owing to savings proposals for 16/17 reducing the quality and range of services delivered.
High	Over reliance on out of date IT systems and network which is not focussed on Trust's business does not provide adequate service to customers or business information.	Whilst capital funds have been secured to help improve ICT, the scale and complexity of the problem remains challenging to resolve. Online booking and point of sales experience has been identified as a priority.
Medium (increased risk)	Failure to meet income targets with potential for the Trust not to continue to be financially viable.	Income targets in 15 /16 are proving challenging to achieve. Market pressures, the vagaries of the weather and the continuing impact of the recession are contributing factors. Mitigation through increased focus on monitoring and review of customer income, and cautious approach to charges as well as development of new growth opportunities.
Medium (new risk)	Uncertainty of cost of implementing savings proposals which may require further savings to be found in order to pay any redundancy costs arising with potential for delay, and staff time input deflecting from core business.	Contingency sum has been built into the savings plan and dedicated support is to be sought from HR and Finance advisors to support implementation.



## OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

### The 10 year area wide Strategy

#### **“Inspiring Active Lives” A Culture and Sport Strategy for Falkirk**

*A plan with four key themes for action across all culture and sport sectors that will be implemented through a series of partnership **Delivery Plans** led by the Trust*

Participation	Motivation	Venues	Partnership
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### Our 5 year Business Strategy

Our aim is that by 2019:

*Falkirk Community Trust will be operating from venues that people want to use, with a more responsive programme offering better quality for our customers. We will be a trusted and valued organisation, secure in our role as a leader for culture and sport and with diminishing reliance on Council funding; we will be more flexible, entrepreneurial and commercially minded. We will have created champions for culture and sport and have loyal volunteers and a workforce who motivate a huge cross section of the community to take part in culture and sport that improves their lives.*

### Our Objectives for 5 years

#### **Meeting Customer Needs**

*People are at the heart of everything we do, be they customers or potential customers*

#### **Organisational Development**

*Growing up, getting stronger and maturing is critical if we are to live up to stakeholders' expectations*

#### **Financial Sustainability**

*Being efficient and effective and operating with our means*

### Our Priorities for 5 years

Marketing	ICT	Venues & Programmes	People & Organisation	Planning Together
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### Our 5 Annual Business Action Plans

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
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### Our Unit Action Plans and Business Strategies

*A suite of plans for individual business operating areas and cross cutting plans for Trading, Programmes & Events, Marketing and Helix are guided by the Business Strategy, Annual Business Action Plans, Marketing Strategy and Fundraising Strategy*

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## OUR PURPOSE

### Our Vision

**Falkirk's Communities are the most creative and active they can be**

### Our Mission

**To lead culture and sport to enrich people's lives in the Falkirk area**

### Our Values

**Valuing** the positive  
difference people  
make

Acting with  
**integrity**

Placing **people's  
needs** at the heart  
of everything we do

Being **proud** of  
what we can achieve  
together

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DRAFT

Falkirk Community Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of Falkirk Council



# **Helix Business Plan 2016/17**

## BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY

### *Purpose of the Plan*

This document, the third Helix Business Plan, takes the learning of the past two years and sets out our plan for the management of the Helix from April 2016 to March 2017. It also outlines the forward intent for the subsequent two years from 2018 to 2019.

### *Operational Summary*

The first year of trading 2014/15 for the Helix was exceptional. A forecast of 330,000 visitors was surpassed two fold, with over one million visitors welcomed in the first 13 months.

The Kelpies captured the imagination of the general public, national marketing organisations, local, national and worldwide media.

This coupled with a glorious summer, the Helix Park and Kelpies exceeded all expectation.

Local communities embraced the Park, supported the events, enjoyed and relaxed in this new modern vibrant open space.

Visitor numbers out stripped all projections, bringing management challenges and unforeseen pressures on infrastructure and services.

By recruiting the right team, coupled with excellent training, and strong leadership ensured the quality customer service experience was maintained and kept a clear focus on day-to-day delivery while planning for improving services for the future.

Early 2015 saw a change of leadership at the Helix, with little change in the drive and focus on customer experience, team development and future planning.

The most notable changes for 2015/16 have been the weather, the opening of the Visitor Centre and the extension to the play area.

The weather over the summer has been inconsistent and has been predominately cold and wet.

This has produced a 25% reduction in visitor numbers over a like for like period April to September, 2014 against 2015, however the year end projection for 2015 is a 23% reduction.

The key theme for 2016/17 will be income generation and cost management. With two years of operational experience but two very different trading years, the business's understanding of the operational needs of the customer and the site are greatly enhanced.

Critical to the success of the business will be:

- ❖ Continued high quality maintenance of site
- ❖ Excellent customer service
- ❖ Events and animation
- ❖ Community engagement
- ❖ Marketing

Summary of FCT Helix Operations		
Area		Response
Kelpies Tours	The tours have continued to be very successful, with sustained positive feedback from visitors. The tour numbers are down by 7,000 to the end of September, on last year, mainly due to the adverse weather.	Continue to develop the tour to ensure we attract target audiences, and continue to improve our visitor experience.
Parking	The revised traffic and parking management plan was implemented at the end of 2014 and made a very positive impact for 2015. Due to the heavy wear there are some on-going maintenance issues.	Further review of signage, charges and maintenance is required.

Adventure Zone	The Adventure Zone continues to draw locals and families within a 90-minute drive time. The further extension, with its focus on 'accessibility' will only enhance the Parks appeal and reputation. This will bring additional pressure on the services within the locality.	Additional facilities will be required throughout the main season, mainly toilets and catering units.		of the instructor led activities was poor. Although the overall operation has made a loss.	will create a joined up service between the Parks team and the lagoon activities. Driving the customer experience, standards, health and safety and improved resources to manage the lagoon area. It will also allow the team to focus on income generation, costs and the staff resource management.
Income Generation	The use of external catering providers eased the pressure on the Plaza café and filled a gap prior to the Visitor Centre coming online. Car parking charges have been accepted well by the visiting public.	Tour admission pricing is being held for the 2016/17 season. The Visitor Centre opened with café and retail areas late October 2015; providing a key income generating activity for FCT on the site. Car park fees are currently under review.	Antisocial behaviour	There was a dramatic reduction in unauthorised swimming in the lagoon and the canal during 2015, however this was predominately due to the poor weather. Unfortunately, there has been an emergence of vandalism across the site.	FCT, Scottish Canals and the Police continue to work together to drive the message of the dangers of unauthorised swimming. New pavement signage will be placed at the 'hotspots' to increase awareness. Part of the Volunteer Coordinators role will be to galvanise local groups to be the eyes and ears and responders on the ground.
Signage including brown tourism signage	Working with and supported by Falkirk Council, vastly improved brown signage has been put up in the vicinity of the Park. Once coupled with the motorway signage this will greatly improve the journey experience for the visitor.	Transport for Scotland have been slow to erect the motorway signage at junctions 5 & 6, however they are in progress. Further motorway signage maybe required at on the M9 - M80 - M80 - M876 - M9 intersections.	Marketing	The Kelpies image continues to be utilised by the national marketing agencies, local, national and international press. There is strong brand recognition in Scotland and throughout the UK, FCT now needs to use that recognition to drive	Actions for next year include more detailed segmentation of our audiences across the UK. Continue to grow brand recognition in the travel trade market and also internationally. Establish strong relationships with local
Lagoon Activities	Walk up hire of the pedalos and canoes was good. Once again take up	The Helix will bring the operation of the walk-up hires within the team. This			

	<p>footfall to other Trust assets. Social media has continued to gain followers, this now needs to move towards a more sales orientated function. There has been some success in building key local relationships, this must continue.</p>	<p>businesses (i.e. accommodation providers) and other attractions in the area in order to provide a complete visitor experience in the Falkirk area. The development of a 'sales funnel' to ensure there is a 'call to action' for our social media visitors. Our media should not just be information but have a compelling reason to engage with us. The Helix needs to take ownership of the 'brand' and develop a more cohesive social media strategy.</p>
Defects	<p>The Park and the Kelpies continue to suffer from a legacy of defects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Splash Play and Mist Jets</li> <li>• Great Lawn Lighting</li> <li>• Heather Beds</li> <li>• Kelpie Lighting</li> <li>• Substrate &amp; grass quality</li> </ul>	<p>FCT are currently taking the criticism for the on-going issues. Primary concern is the splash play, with no real impetus from the supplier or the contractor to resolve the issue. These issues not only impact our visitors and our staff, they potentially perpetuate the view that the Park is not cared for, which in turn encourages antisocial behaviour. The Helix team and all FCT staff take a huge amount of pride in maintaining the</p>

		<p>Park, its ethos and aims; however there is growing frustration that integral aspects of the Park are still not to the expected standard.</p>
Helix Park	<p>Increased footfall has impacted on the maintenance regimes and asset management plan. Increased costs have been incurred on waste, staffing, visitor management and maintenance.</p>	<p>There is still a huge amount of learning taking place within the asset management plan and the maintenance of the site. With the three-fold increase in anticipated footfall in year 1, a more realistic year 2, the management team are still understanding the mechanics and dynamics of the whole site.</p>
Helix North & South	<p>The original intention was for FCT to manage, maintain and oversee North &amp; South as part of the Helix Project. Due to the complexity of landownership and other issues it has now been agreed that FC will oversee the management of these areas.</p>	<p>There are budget implications for the Helix. A reduction of £64k will be made to the Helix budget in subsequent years. £32k per North and South Helix.</p>

## Priorities

Our annual priorities for the Helix are as follows:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise the opportunities of the Kelpies Visitor Centre with the objective of supporting income generation</li> <li>• Fulfil the ambition to animate the site and continue to grow the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> party and in-house commissioned events</li> <li>• Amend and refresh the Helix Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• To support the Helix team through training, continual personal development, and embed quality standards throughout the site</li> <li>• Development of a sales function and sales funnel to drive income</li> <li>• Ensure continued focused marketing to grow visitor numbers and revenue</li> <li>• Develop industry networks and relationships to grow footfall</li> <li>• To establish the Helix volunteering programme within the wider Falkirk and Grangemouth area</li> <li>• Review business planning process to reflect the evolving nature of the business</li> </ul> |
| 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to enhance the events programme, raising the profile and attracting new audiences to the Park and area</li> <li>• To develop new activities and interpretation on the site that encourage visitors to explore the wider Helix</li> <li>• To grow relationships with commercial operators to develop income generating opportunities</li> <li>• To support Helix Phase 2 developments</li> </ul>   |
| 2018/19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To seek additional opportunities to ensure the long term sustainability of the Helix</li> <li>• Implement phase two projects on the Helix Park and at the Kelpies</li> </ul>   |

## 2016 - 18 forward intent

2016/17 is concerned with evaluating and modifying the Helix operational activities following the first 2 years of operations. This aims to ensure that high quality standards are maintained throughout all FCT activities on the site. 2017/18 will focus on encouraging repeat visits through the events programme, increasing dwell time, and moving our visitors around the site.

Resolve the on-going defects within the Park, by either repair, removal or change of asset management regime.

By the end of 2016 we will have re-activated the Helix volunteers to be an integral part of our activities.

## Key Projections

As of the end of April 2015, 1 million visitors have visited Helix Park and the Kelpies Plaza. The table below details the projected numbers for the next three-year period, however the weather will continue to have a huge influence on visitor numbers. The business still has limited data to project meaningful trends.

Year	Projections	Actual Helix Visitor Numbers	Projected Kelpies Visitor Centre
2014/15	330,000	952,508	n/a
2015/16	730,000	509,815(toSept)	48,000
2016/17	800,000		140,000
2017/18	850,000		148,400

The high level of visitors still visiting the Park (judged against initial business projections 330,000) even in a poor weather season indicates some bucking of usual trends. (The standard visitor pattern of a new visitor attraction is to achieve high figures in year one and two and then to see a drop off in subsequent years.) However, with



the addition of the Visitor Centre and extension to the play area, numbers are likely to increase. Thus projections are that numbers will increase for 2016/17 supported by the opening of the Visitor Centre, then in 2017/18 a slight increase due to significant events with a more marked drop in year 18/19, unless additional phases can be developed. However, this will be influenced by external factors particularly weather, standard of maintenance across the Park and quality of events

### ***The Visitor Centre @ The Helix***

Delays in the construction of the Visitor Centre have meant that it opened to the public at the end of October 2015.

The quality of the build and the fit-out reflects the quality in the rest of the Park and its prominent position at the Kelpies Hub.

The Café has 80 covers and a further 30 will be positioned outside at peak periods.

An events programme will be tailored to the Centre to maximise the asset and revenue.

The initial start-up menu will be refined and tailored to reflect seasonal changes and customer demographics.

### ***Key Priorities 2016***

The main objectives for this year are to empower the operational team, to set and maintain quality standards, manage costs and to increase the income generated across the site. The following activities are planned for the 2016 season:

#### ***Income Generation***

- The Visitor Centre @ The Helix – The opening of the Visitor Centre has provided an unrivalled asset to be maximised, its location and vista open up revenue opportunities for the Helix and the wider Trust. The business will trial a number of different trading hours and service models to maximise revenue

opportunities, over the coming year to find the right blend of engagement and profit opportunities.

- Car Parking Charges – Building on one of FCT's key objectives with regard to the Helix, income generation to support operating costs; the introduction of charging for the larger Kelpies car park has been received well. The charge is administered by an attendant, who welcomes and directs visitors. The charges will be reviewed for 2016. It is proposed to look at staggered charging for length of stay at the Kelpies car park, £2 for 3 hours and £4 for all day.

With the re-surfacing of the free Stadium car park, there are now in excess of 900 car parking places in and around the Helix Park.

- Kelpies Tour Income – With the move to the Visitor Centre the tours have been tailored to suit the new location. However, it will be essential that there is clear signage and promotional material is available to ensure visitors are aware of the tours. The current ticket price will remain for the 2016/17 but will be reviewed for 2017/18 & 2018/19 depending on market conditions.
- Cost Management – Having now had two years of trading experience all teams need to ensure they are more commercially aware. Focusing on income generation as well as managing all costs within their teams.

- ***Programme and Visitor Experience Enhancement***

To ensure the Park continues to be a vibrant, living space it is essential we continue to develop the animation and activities across all areas of the Park.

The interactions, movement and engagement with our visitors will enable us to differentiate ourselves from other attractions.

- Visitor Transport – Through Falkirk Council the 'Pink Bus' provided services to, the Stadium, the Kelpies, the train stations and Falkirk Wheel. This service has had an excellent response and reinforced the ethos of 'leave the car at home'!

- The Visitor Centre @ The Helix, the importance of this site as a revenue generator for the Trust has been stated but the site is also essential for the provision of information. VisitScotland, over the past five years have reviewed their provision of 'Tourist Information Centres'. As part of that review they are keen to work with the industry to facilitate a partnership approach to their engagement with the public. Although space is limited within the building for leaflet racking, the Kelpies guides have proved themselves as excellent ambassadors for the wider tourism offering. With additional training and support from VisitScotland, the Visitor Centre will become a worthy addition to the network of industry lead information points.
- Events programme – For 2016/17, the emphasis for events has not changed for the Park, however we did not meet our aspiration for a sustained animating programme throughout the Park during 2015. The appointment of a new Senior Events Co-ordinator has strengthened the events team, allowing the team to be more proactive while also developing a strategic plan for the coming years. The development of a strong animation and events programme will be a key strand to ensuring we maintain and grow our visitor numbers. The aspiration is that the visitor will always have confidence that when they go to the Park at weekends and peak periods, there will always be some form of activity for them to engage with. An increase in the Events budget has been anticipated for 2016/17 due to number of 3<sup>rd</sup> party opportunities.
- Toilet provision – Due to the high footfall across the whole site, services continue to be stretched. During the peak period of 2015 additional toilet provision was made by Scottish Canals at the canal hub, FCT at the main car park and at the Plaza Café. The Visitor Centre toilet provision will suffice for its own needs however, FCT are investigating the provision of a permanent toilet facility in the main car park. It is likely there will be need for

the temporary facilities to be retained at the Plaza Café in future years too.

- The access audit carried in the winter of 2014 identified a number of opportunities for improvement across the Park. These opportunities will continue to be worked through as budget allows.
- To ensure the high standards of customer service and standards continue to be met by all teams within the Helix, a number of half and full day training sessions will take place over the year for all the Helix teams and key internal and external partners. We shall also hold a half-day session where the whole team can come together to ensure an understanding of the big picture.

#### ***Asset Management and Maintenance***

The detailed Asset Management Plan (AMP) for the management and maintenance of the site was implemented and enabled the grounds staff to work to a clear schedule of operations. The AMP for the Helix is based on:

- The design specification for the Park
- Information from the contractors who had been maintaining various areas of the site
- Feedback from FCT staff operating the site on the ground during the handover period
- Legal obligations and best practice guidance
- Supportive information from partner, and potential partner, organisations.

With two seasons of operation now complete and the Park maturing, it is timely to review the AMP and this will take place during 2016. However as importantly, the Plan requires some interpretation on the ground for the visitor. An explanation as to why we are carrying out some works the way we are. This interpretation should not be intrusive but subtle and discrete.

During 2015/16 there has been much discussion with regard to Helix North and South and who will/should maintain these areas.

These discussions have now concluded, and Falkirk Council shall maintain both areas, however clear communication will be required to the local communities as to who is managing what areas and to what standard. As noted previously, there will be an annual budget reduction of £64,000 to reflect this.

### **AMP Financial 2016/17**

The table details the expenditure for asset management activities.

Our intention, as in 2015, is to focus our resource as laid out below.

Routine maintenance	£239,904	Tasks which we know will need to be carried out regularly to maintain quality standards, such as grass cutting, litter removal and regular safety checks.
Pre-planned maintenance	£89,694	Tasks such as replacement and repairs which experience dictates will be required but for which an exact frequency and cost is harder to predict.
Reactive work (Primarily one off project costs)	£6,000	Minor changes to the design of the site and or operating procedure which will require investment to implement such as improving the surface of the grassy hill behind the Kelpies Visitors Centre and installing informal paths and seating for the public.
Reduction	(£64,000)	Management of Helix North & South
<b>Total</b>	<b>£335,599</b>	

We therefore have in place a robust plan to ensure that the high quality standards for the site are set and maintained to ensure that it is an exemplar for both Scotland and the UK.

### **Trading Activity**

Retail has performed very well again this year. Catering objectives for 2016/17 continue to support the philosophy of the Helix with the emphasis on fresh wholesome food and where possible a range of food that is locally sourced. Our offer will focus on being able to provide a friendly and efficient service for customers looking for drinks, snacks and light meals. As we gather more trading history the ability for the business to forecast and respond to market changes will increase, enabling us to manage margins and costs.

### **Retail**

The retail sales within the temporary Tour Base beat all expectations, even with the very limited range. The iconic images provide a strong basis from which to provide a range of products that appeal to all ages and pricing points. This theme has been expanded upon within the range available in the Visitor Centre. There will be a split between a bespoke and bought in range with emphasis on Scottish working horses, canals, wildlife and relevant publications. Where possible and commercially viable, we will seek to use Scottish and UK suppliers.

A merchandising agreement has been agreed with Andy Scott Merchandising (ASM) and this is in place until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. The range is a combination of licensed products from Star Edition and Barbara Davidson. The range is a combination of logo and photography based products on stationary, ceramics, textiles and prints. We anticipate that further work will be in development with ASM to create a design-led approach to retail.

External resource was bought in to develop the Visitor Centre retail strategy, product categories and buying recommendations. This knowledge is being developed within the Trust but is not currently well developed enough to fully take on the responsibilities to drive the retail growth that is required.

With the limited trading history from the temporary Tour Base our projections are conservative and will be reviewed continually.

### ***Retail Objectives 2016/17***

- To achieve an average GP of 40% across the range
- To achieve an average transaction value per visitor of £1.03
- To achieve income of £276,750
- To monitor and review GP, staffing and 'cost of sales'

### **Visitor Centre Catering**

As a new operation we will be monitoring GP and staffing levels to ensure we meet our projections.

### **Visitor Centre Catering Objectives 2016/17**

The Visitor Centre café and income per person are based on industry standards. As our knowledge grows the budget will be refined, throughout the year and it is anticipated that this is currently understated.

- To achieve an average GP of 55% across all sales
- To achieve an average transaction value of £2.40
- To achieve income of £332,150
- To monitor and review GP, staffing and 'cost of sales'

### **Plaza Café**

During 2015/16 we achieved a GP of 58%, for 2016/17 we are looking to achieve a GP of 69%, this will be achieved by supplying produce from the Visitor Centre rather than buying in from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, with consequently better cost and quality control.

### **Objectives 2016/17**

- To achieve an average GP of 69% across all sales
- To achieve an average transaction value of £2.20
- To achieve a 10% increase in visitor through-put

### **External Catering**

External caterers have filled a necessary gap, however with the poor weather this year, the return from external caterers has impacted on our turnover and margins.

For 2016/17 we shall review the positioning of external units, the offer and the number of units per day.

We shall also review payment terms, moving to a guaranteed pitch fee with a % commission on top.

### **Objectives 2016/17**

- To achieve income of £45,000
- Review of infrastructure (water & power provision)
- Maintain good relations with the quality local providers

### **Events Strategy**

An Events Strategy for the Helix has been produced as part of the business planning process. This details the objectives for events on the site as follows:

1. To raise the profile of the Falkirk area through the Helix events programme
2. To develop an events programme that encourages creativity and physical activity
3. To attract audiences from a 90 minute drive time of Falkirk
4. To encourage community participation through the delivery and engagement with events
5. To attract our target audiences to the Helix and encourage repeat visitors to the site
6. To use events to increase dwell time on the site and in the wider Falkirk area thus ensuring a positive economic impact for the area
7. To encourage visitors to explore the entire Helix site and encourage them to discover unexplored areas
8. To undertake commercial activity that delivers income for the Helix through events

The Strategy also identified the resource requirements for the events programme from 2016/17 onwards. The outline programme for the period will include the following;

- Pop-Up Events, running from May 2016 throughout the summer period. These will be 'added value' interventions on the site
- Sporting events such as Du-Athlon and Open Water swimming activities
- To develop the Helix site as a location for local community and charity events
- We will look to work with 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations to deliver a major future event that may tie in with the Themed Years promoted by EventScotland
- The Strategy aims to deliver a major national event on a bi-annual basis which is currently envisaged from 2017

### **Outdoor Programme**

#### *Lagoon Activities*

The Lagoon is a resource to act as an introduction platform to water based activities. We will work with Outdoor Activities and 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations to develop instructor led programs to help promote wider Trust activities. This resource has been underutilised and we wish to maximise this opportunity by identifying key market segments, school groups and holiday programs, etc.

The weather did not help walk up sales, but an increased emphasis needs to be placed on a more proactive approach from the team on the ground. To better integrate the wider visitor experience, walk-up hires will be brought directly in to the Helix team operations.

The learning from past operations indicate that a more family friendly walk up hire option on the site would allow us to capitalise on the large number of visitors in the Plaza Café/Adventure Zone locations.

#### *Other Activities*

We will continue to deliver the following activities;

- Nordic Walking
- Photography Safaris
- Biodiversity Walks
- Ranger Natural Habitat Activities
- Heritage and Natural Heritage Walking Tours

#### **Volunteering**

There has been a delay to this program however it will be instigated for 2016. To revitalise the volunteering activities at the Helix we are planning to employ a Volunteer Co-ordinator to deliver a Volunteer Action Plan. The objective of this will be to re-engage the volunteers that have been integral to the project in its development phase. There is a wide array of potential volunteer activities from supporting the delivery of the asset management plan through to the further development of the walking tours that are already being delivered.

### **Marketing**

Marketing activity for the 2016/17 period will focus on the following objectives:

- Establish the Helix and Kelpies as one of the must see destination's in Scotland. VisitScotland have identified the Kelpies as one of the key 23 sites
- To support the commercialisation of the Visitor Centre @ the Helix
- To deliver marketing activity that's primary focus is to support income generation for FCT in all relevant areas of the Helix
- To capitalise on the interest and activity related to the Kelpies that has been successfully achieved during the past two years
- To work in partnership with relevant bodies, including VisitScotland to target visitors within a 90-minute drive time as well as seeking a UK and international audience
- To implement a Travel Trade engagement plan that delivers a sustainable group travel market to the site.
- To develop a clear sales plan to attract, nurture and convert existing and new customers to make the Helix a destination of choice.

### **Management and Staffing**

We have received very positive feedback, regarding staff, from visitors. In the second year of operation all the teams across the park have identified their strengths and development needs.

We must continue to build on the team skills and knowledge base, nurture them and empower them to develop with clear goals and objectives for their areas of responsibility.

Flexibility of the staffing resources is required to take into account the seasonal visitation levels to the site. This will allow us to

manage budgets more prudently, while in turn offering the staff a more varied and interesting work environment. With the added benefit of giving the visitor a more rounded and over all better experience.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Our monitoring and evaluation tools allow us to build on the data already gathered.

Key finding from the Helix Perception Survey 2014

#### The Helix is valued by the public

- 100% of respondents agreed with the statement, "The Helix site is a significant asset to the area".
- 84% responded that they are either very proud or fairly proud of the Helix, with only 2% saying they are not proud of the Helix.
- 98% of those surveyed said that the Helix has transformed the landscape into a place of delight, with diverse habitats and rich in wildlife.
- 89% of onsite respondents agreed with the statement, "The Helix site has been transformed into a world class attraction", although this drops to 78% for offsite respondents.

#### High levels of customer satisfaction

- Almost all respondents (100% onsite; 97% offsite) rated their most recent visit to Helix Park as very enjoyable or fairly enjoyable.
- 86% of respondents agree with the statement, "People enjoy coming to the Helix, which has become a major visitor destination whilst continuing to meet local recreational needs".
- 99% of those surveyed would recommend a visit to the Helix.

#### Good levels of usage

- Of the 500 offsite respondents surveyed, 75% had visited the Helix since it opened in September 2013.

- Just under half (48%) of those surveyed were repeat visits, indicating both good levels of repeat visits and that the Helix continues to attract new visitors.
- Almost all (99%) of people plan to visit the Helix again in future.

#### Frequency of visit

- In general, onsite respondents visit the Helix more frequently than the offsite respondents surveyed.
- 98% of onsite respondents reported they visit the Helix at least 2 to 3 times a year compared to only 81% of offsite respondents.
- 40% of onsite visitors visit once a month compared to only 23% of offsite respondents.
- The exception is that a greater number (36% vs 25%) of offsite respondents visit the Helix at least twice a month, with twice as many (18% vs 9%) offsite respondents visit the Helix at least once or twice a week.

The new EPOS system at the visitor centre will aid our data capture, reporting and eventually forecasting abilities.

#### *Visitor Numbers*

The table below details the visitor numbers from April to September 2015.

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
194,924	61,676	56,840	80,718	88,166	57,492	509,815

We will continue to monitor the following areas as part of our management reporting processes:

- A new Electronic Point of Sales system has been installed in the Visitor Centre, this will allow us to track 'best sellers' inventory and margins a lot more effectively.

- The 'public WIFI' within the Visitor Centre requires users email addresses, which we can then direct information to at a later date.
- Number and type of events held and corresponding attendees during these activities.
- VisitScotland has carried out number of different surveys across the site and we will continue to work with them and other agencies to encourage this. (currently awaiting feedback).
- Volunteer engagement and activities.
- Community engagement with the site via events and other activities.
- We shall conduct evaluation surveys during and after events and activities.

## Risk

We have seen two very different trading years; we lack robust data to allow the setting of any firm projections on. We therefore can't assume that we will continue achieve any like-for-like revenue or footfall figures. We must continue to develop a comprehensive and focused marketing and events programme, a commitment to building meaningful relationships and a phased development and improvements programme across the Park. The Business Plan has been prepared on the basis of an uplift in income levels and maintaining visitor numbers.

Significant risks are summarised in the table below

Risk	Mitigation
Reduced visitor numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong marketing</li> <li>• Quality events</li> <li>• Animation</li> <li>• Quality reputation</li> </ul>
Reduction in Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage costs</li> <li>• Achieve GP targets</li> </ul>
Infrastructure integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-date and refine AMP</li> <li>• Resolve defects</li> <li>• Manage antisocial behaviour</li> </ul>
Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good weather brings higher footfall but also increased anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Poor weather impacts on revenue projections due to the lack of covered areas</li> </ul>

## Finance

The budget for each of the next 3 years is set out in the Plan and detailed income and expenditure for all areas has been forecasted.

We are planning for a reduction to the Helix funding from Falkirk Council over the next two years as follows; £50k in 2016/17 and £40k in 2017/18. It is expected that we will meet the reduction by generating additional income by the various actions detailed earlier in this Summary.

Grouping	Sum of 16/17 Estimate	Sum of 17/18 Estimate	Sum of 18/19 Estimate
Employee Costs	950,580	956,440	974,220
Property Costs	155,540	134,100	137,430
Transport Costs	15,900	16,590	17,320
Supplies & Services	616,180	556,470	524,290
Third Party Costs	51,510	48,390	49,070
Depreciation	13,690	13,690	13,690
Income	(967,400)	(929,680)	(920,020)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>900,000</b>	<b>860,000</b>	<b>860,000</b>
Transfer to Council for Helix North/South	(64,000)	(64,000)	(64,000)
<b>Net Subsidy</b>	<b>836,000</b>	<b>796,000</b>	<b>796,000</b>



The following assumptions have informed the financial projections for 2016/17

- The projected visitors numbers being achieved as per the key projections section
- Tour income is based on the tours achieving the same number of visitors as projected for 2015
- Average admission price on the tours of £5.66 per visitor
- Kelpies Visitor Centre income per transaction of £3.43
- Plaza Café income per person of £2.20

### **Development Costs 2016/17**

We are also planning to utilise any unallocated expenditure in project to ensure the site operates effectively and meets the high quality standards we will establish. This will be informed by the Helix issues log that is being prioritised in conjunction with the Capital team. This deals with design and site issues that have been identified in the first two years of the site operations. This may include infrastructure and car parking improvements, Helix wide interpretation of the natural environment, as well as assessing how we increase our volunteer programme and supporting Helix Phase 2 planning. This will ensure that we are meeting the objectives of the Helix project as well as that of the BIG Lottery outputs.

### **2016/17 Budget**

The budget shows a projected breakeven, however with no contingency.

Key to the success of the business is revenue generation, margins and cost management.

We are confident we have the necessary resources to focus in on those key success traits.

## **Fees and Charges Proposals – 2016/17**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work that has been undertaken in preparation for the implementation of the Trust's fees and charges for 2016/17 and follows the Audit and Performance Sub-Group's consideration of early proposals at their meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 A review of charges is undertaken each year and takes into account consultation with relevant groups of staff, reference to customer feedback and any relevant information from other comparable services. Such a review has as its focus the generation of additional income, however it is important that customers perceive the services being delivered as representing good 'value for money'.
- 2.2 The charges proposed attempt to adhere to the 'key principles' adopted by the Board in November 2012 as shown below:
- FCT 'charges' should not be seen by potential customers as a 'barrier to their participation'.
  - Concessionary charges should ensure that those who can least afford to pay for our services are supported the most.
  - FCT charges should be easily accessible and simple to understand.
  - The timing of the introduction of any revised charge should consider the impact this will have on customers.
  - Charges can be flexible with the ability to offer promotional discounts at appropriate times to actively promote new services or boost falling attendances.
  - Charges will be levied which fully considers local competitors and neighbouring Trusts and Local Authorities' charges.
  - Charges will enable improved levels of income generation, where market rates and the ability of our customers to pay, allow.

### **3. Review of Charges – Key areas**

- 3.1 This review is set against the 2014/15 performance, which was not one of the Trust's better years in terms of usage and income generation, in some key income generating areas. Although many of our services can be affected by weather conditions, the Trust must take every action it can to offset such uncontrollable factors and plan for the future in the knowledge that the generation of income can be erratic and influenced by external factors.
- 3.2 Investment in the refurbishment of the Mariner wave machine and the planned improvement to the Grangemouth SC flumes is in response to falling trends in swimming in particular, especially in the encouragement of children and families to the pools following Children's Services withdrawal of the Primary School swimming lesson programme this year. Our continued investment in health and fitness services at Bo'ness RC and the new facility at Stenhousemuir attempts to improve on the quality of our service with the resultant increased membership and income levels.
- 3.3 The price point for Trust services has proved to be a vital part of our marketing strategy and the introduction of our Go Card scheme and monthly sports passes and family passes have proved attractive to regular and loyal customers that we must work hard to retain.
- 3.4 The general economic climate and increased levels of competition in the area are having an impact on Trust services and the temptation to respond by reducing our charges should be resisted in favour of improved promotion of the value of our services to the local community.

3.5 The focus on the review of charges for 2016/17 has therefore been on the following items:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Additional Income</u>
• Inflationary increase to general charges	£30k
• Health and Fitness charges	£36k
• Membership opportunities	£5k
• Expansion of Go Card Scheme categories	N/A
• Town Hall Charges	£10k
• Library Overdue Charges	£5k
• Public Sector Information on Copying Charges	N/A
• Monthly Activity Passes	£7k
• Car park charges at Helix	£50k
• Community Access to School Charges	<u>£7k</u>
	<b>Total £150k</b>

3.5 It is intended that the aforementioned changes will result in the generation of approximately £100k of income, assuming the participation levels remain at least at the same as those attracted in 2015/16. However, only the £50k of additional income from the above list for the car parking charges at the Helix will be included in the 2016/17 Savings Plan, given the Trust's need to close the existing gap between its budgeted income and actual income performance.

#### **4. General Proposals and Implications**

##### **Inflationary Increases**

- 4.1 An above inflationary increase of approximately 5% was implemented to the majority of general Trust charges in 2015/16. However, many specific actions were taken which either significantly reduced or increased specific charges where it was felt appropriate to do so given market rates, comparison with others and the need to increase income levels. Recent performance in some areas of sport in particular may suggest that some charges are now at a level that may be impacting on attendances given the current economic climate.
- 4.2 Inflation currently sits at 0.1%, (Consumer Price Index), or 1%, (Retail Pricing Index, RPI), therefore it is considered appropriate that the general increase to Trust charges in 2016/17 should be closer to the actual inflation rate as reflected by the RPI of 1%.
- 4.3 Such a small inflationary increase may have the actual impact of 'freezing' some Trust charges, as to increase some of our smaller charges by this amount will have little monetary effect. Once the inflationary increases are applied there will be a 'rounding-up' exercise undertaken to ensure the charges are easy to pay from a customers' perspective and apply from a staff's perspective. This may have the impact of increasing the charges to a 'real' price which sits above the 1% mark.

##### **Health and Fitness Charges**

- 4.4 Trust health and fitness membership charges in general have been frozen over the past four years. Despite this the Trust has significantly increased its income levels by actively promoting its services, improving the services and gym facilities and reviewing the health and fitness charging categories and methods of payment. This income growth strategy has been achieved by growing the volume of our business through improved service delivery. However, the increased level of competition in the Falkirk area has impacted on the overall Trust membership levels.

- 4.5 We continue to improve our products and services to our existing customers and members, highlighting our unique selling points (USPs) of free parking, staff in attendance and providing friendly instructional support, the additional benefits of our ancillary facilities such as free swims and saunas, together with the message that being a member of the Trust ensures support for the future provision of other front line community services. To this end the launch of the Trust's new gym in Stenhousemuir will provide an additional facility to existing members and a specifically designed, high quality product which is expected to become a very popular site for the local community in which it is located.
- 4.6 It is felt that the Health and Fitness charges, in general, are now able to sustain an increase to full and fitness class only membership prices, given the recent improvements and investments in our services.
- 4.7 Previous reviews of prices in health and fitness services have been introduced in January of each year, to help coincide with the annual January promotional campaigns. However, as this is so close to our pre-sales campaign for the Stenhousemuir gym, it is felt that the increased membership charges should now be delayed until April 2016, in line with the majority of the other Trust charges.
- 4.8 It is however proposed to freeze the key casual 'pay and play' sessions as these are considered to be at a price point that will continue to encourage casual customers' transition to monthly membership categories.
- 4.9 In 2015/16, The Trust introduced its 'Staff Access Scheme' which aimed to encourage Trust staff to improve their general health and well-being. It was also acknowledged that staff using Trust sites and services would better understand the customer experience, in terms of its quality and safety and thereafter actively promote Trust services to others. There are currently 321 Trust staff taking advantage of this new scheme which demonstrates its successful introduction and of course provides evidence of a 'captive audience' in relation to using such staff members as ambassadors for Trust services.
- 4.10 It has been shown in other Trusts that by offering the friends and families of existing members of staff, discounted access to health and fitness membership charges that increased levels of income can be generated from this particular group, who also tend to demonstrate higher levels of retention. The Trust currently provides Falkirk Council staff a 20% discount on its full health and fitness membership prices and corporate discounts of 10% to organisations. It is proposed to extend this benefit to the friends and families of Trust staff. Such a scheme will of course require to be tightly managed to avoid reducing current levels of income, so this will not be introduced until appropriate measures can be put into place, however this offer is considered to be a useful sales technique to grow membership levels and income levels.

### **Membership Opportunities**

- 4.11 Given the success of the health and fitness membership scheme, the Charges Working Group has considered introducing other categories of memberships to other areas throughout the Trust. The success of such schemes depends on a regular pattern of use by customers who also tend to have a specific relationship with a facility or service and therefore have developed a sense of loyalty to the service or activity. Such schemes are also very dependent upon the Trust's abilities to provide and effectively deliver an associated I.T. infrastructure, which is easily accessible to customers, reliable to the Trust, but more importantly trusted by customers. Consideration has been given to the introduction of a Trust wide membership scheme, however further detailed consideration of such a scheme is required in terms of the potential I.T. costs and its effectiveness in increasing participation levels and income levels.

- 4.12 The recently introduced swimming lesson membership scheme has not resulted in the projected levels of customer uptake. With less than 50% of the previous customers 'joining', the previously anticipated levels of income (£200k over a two year period), have not been realised. Whilst favourable feedback was received about the benefits to customers on its ease of use and in the spreading of the costs throughout the year, over 50% of our customer base were not enticed to join up. A review is currently being undertaken with the intention to improve the benefits of such a scheme to the customer and introduce the changes whenever possible and not wait until April 2016.
- 4.13 Discussions are currently on-going with Falkirk Council's Social Care & Health colleagues in relation to the National Self-Directed Support scheme. This scheme ensures that Local Authorities offer people more choice and control over how their support needs are met. The Trust has suggested using its existing Go Card concessionary scheme, to allow those in need of support to directly engage with the Trust, for a set monthly direct debit arrangement. This could be effectively monitored by Social Care & Health to ensure its correct application by those in need of support whilst enabling a wide choice of activities being available to this target group, in helping to meet their general health and well-being needs. It is hoped that a mutually agreeable arrangement will be able to be introduced as soon as possible.

### **Expansion of Go Card Scheme categories**

- 4.14 Throughout the past year, enquiries have been considered and opportunities explored on the potential to increase the number of categories to potential Go Card scheme members. The Go Card scheme was introduced in April 2014 and ensures discounted access to those customers who may be in need of financial support. The scheme has proved successful, having attracted increased participation levels by 3% and income by 12%.
- 4.15 The Trust has also already agreed to accept those on a 'widow's pension' and to accept 'young carers', in consultation with colleagues in Social Services.

### **Town Hall Venue Charges**

- 4.16 Last year the Trust introduced a new category of charge for 'class groups' across the FTH, Grangemouth and Bo'ness Town Halls, that was aimed at a level below the commercial rates, but above the community rate, to retain existing lets. The Trust also increased the hourly charges for one-off commercial event hires by approximately 25%, to maximise the potential to increase income levels from such events, which can be relatively lucrative for commercially driven organisations. The introduction of these new categories helped ensure a fairness of approach to customer groups, but did not significantly improve income levels.
- 4.17 These changes were introduced to help ensure that these facilities remained competitive in the market place, whilst remaining supportive of local culture and arts groups. However, existing charges still appear to be significantly lower than neighbouring authorities, at some time periods and in this respect a further review has been undertaken which seeks to increase Trust charges, whilst still remaining very competitively priced. The proposal is to consolidate some existing rates to 'Day' rates from 9.00am to 11.00pm, and 'Weekend' rates, which will result in an increased charge for day time use but no increase to evening use. Charges are expected to increase in the range of 10% to 37%, e.g. Weekday Main Hall price will increase by approximately 29%, i.e. £9.80 to £12.60 per hour and a similar Weekend charge will increase by approximately 34%, i.e. from £15.05 to £20.20 per hour. Smaller room charges may seem, in percentage terms, as a significant increase, but in monetary terms this is not expected to deter user groups, e.g. Glenarm Suite at Grangemouth Town Hall will increase by approximately 26%, from £7.30 to £9.20. These charges remain in line with Falkirk Council's Community Rate charges whilst remaining below neighbouring Local Authority charges for similar venues.

- 4.18 A request for a Hogmanay event last year highlighted the fact that the Trust did not charge a premium rate for any lets on public holidays, despite having to incur additional staffing costs for lets accepted at these times. Neighbouring authorities, e.g. North Lanarkshire and Stirling double their rates for lets on public holidays. It is therefore proposed that town hall let charges at Bo'ness and Grangemouth, but not Falkirk, are increased by 100% of the appropriate rate on dates that are recognised by the Trust as 'public holiday' periods. It is proposed to introduce these as soon as possible.

### **Library Overdue charges**

- 4.19 The Council increased the overdue charges by 200% just before the inception of the Trust, resulting in an increase of 40p to £1.20, if an adult customer was overdue by one week for one item borrowed. From being amongst the lowest charges in Scotland, the Trust's overdue charges are now currently the third highest in the country. Income generated from these charges had previously attracted approximately £40k per annum. Income projected from overdue charges for this year is only approximately £25k. Whilst it is believed that customers now bring their books back quicker to avoid the charges, which also helps in the distribution of books to waiting customers, there has been a reduction in the income generated. Obviously the reduced number of library visits and books issued has also impacted in this reduction in income however it is now proposed to reduce the library overdue charges, to help attract new customers and to avoid any further reduction in library overdue charges income. It is proposed to introduce significantly lower overdue charges to 10p per day for adult items whilst retaining the junior book fines at 5p per day.

### **Public Sector Information on Copying Charges**

- 4.20 The amended European Directive on the 'Reuse of public sector information', published in 2013, makes it compulsory for public bodies to allow the reuse of existing and generally accessible information that the Trust creates, collects or holds. This mainly impacts on the Archives service. From July of this year, the Trust were required to comply with this legislation and this had the effect of dropping existing charges for costs that we were applying to the press, income generated through sales of photographs and our flexibility to support local initiatives and commercial companies. This though will only result in a minor loss of income of less than £1,000 per year.

### **Monthly Activity Passes**

- 4.21 Last year the Trust ensured a consistent approach to its monthly activity passes and agreed that a monthly pass would be based on the casual charge, multiplied by a factor of 6. A customer who attended an activity more than 6 times each month would therefore benefit by purchasing a monthly activity pass for sports such as swimming, badminton and so on. Similarly, the family swim pass was reduced. These passes have proved popular with customers however it is believed that increases could be introduced, which are in excess of the 1% inflationary figure, but based on a formula of perhaps 7 casual visits per month. Work is underway to ascertain the implications of such a proposal, however the underlying principle will remain to ensure we continue to provide a good value monthly activity and family pass, that is cheaper than if they were to pay on a casual basis.

### **Car Park Charges at Helix**

- 4.22 The successful introduction of charges to the Kelpies car park has led to the conclusion that visitors readily accept the charge of £2 at such a visitor attraction. The local community however were still able to use the smaller Helix car park free of charge when visiting the Lagoon, Plaza café and Adventure Zone, which also worked well. To maximise income generation though it is now proposed to retain the £2 charge for the Kelpies car park, but limit visitors parking to a period of three hours, which is considered sufficient time to undertake a Kelpies tour, visit the Visitor Centre and generally enjoy the walk around that area. Similarly, if visitors wished to spend longer than this to more fully explore the park or

use this as a base for cycling trips for example, then a new charge of £4 would be levied which would provide car parking for the whole day.

### **Community Access to Schools**

- 4.23 In 2014/15 a new charge was introduced which saw the Trust's school let charges increase from £0 to £10 per session. This new rate though was considerably lower than the charges for similar activity areas within sports centres. This session charge was increased by 3% in 2015/16 and it is now proposed to increase the current charges above the aforementioned inflationary increases to approximately 3% in 2016/17.

### **4.9 Trading Company**

Any prices charged for retail and catering items are not reviewed by this annual process. Given the nature of the business there is a need to adjust the prices as and when required to ensure appropriate gross profit margins are maintained. The Trading Company Board regularly monitor the performance of retail and catering outlets.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report only highlights the significant changes or proposals to Trust prices in 2015/16, as there are many other relatively minor adjustments which will be made. Following acceptance of the recommendations shown below, a full list of the Trust's prices will be prepared and will be made available on request. This information will also be widely distributed to Trust sites and also shown on the Trust's web-site, following the approval of the Trust's Business Plan by the Council in February 2016.
- 5.2 There is a requirement to generate £150k of additional income in 2016/17, however £100k of this additional income will simply help to close the existing gap between the actual income performance and the budget targets. Therefore £100k of this additional income will not form part of the Savings Plan for 2016/17.
- 5.3 It is expected that the actions proposed in this annual review of fees and charges will deliver additional income of approximately £150k in 2016/17, assuming participation levels are retained at existing levels.



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