

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the Coat of Arms of the City of Edinburgh. The crest includes a crown with four thistles, a shield divided into four quarters (top-left: a saltire, top-right: a stag's head, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: a bird), and a motto scroll at the bottom with the text 'A'NE FOR A'.

## **Agenda Item 5**

**Town Centre and Council  
HQ/Arts Centre - update**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Town Centre and Council HQ/Arts Centre - update  
**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 12 March 2019  
**Submitted By:** Director of Development Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the progress of work relating to the regeneration of Falkirk town centre and delivery of the Council's civic headquarters (HQ) and Arts Centre replacement projects.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

**2.1. It is recommended that the Executive:-**

- 1) agrees to progress the formation of a Falkirk Town Centre Partnership to take forward work to revitalise the town centre**
- 2) agrees that the terms of reference and representation of this group be the subject of a further report to Executive**
- 3) agrees to assist in delivery of a town centre action plan, being established by the Partnership**
- 4) agrees the approach to procurement of the Council's civic headquarters and arts centre projects set out in section 4 of this report.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1. In August 2018, the Executive agreed to pursue an initiative to revitalise Falkirk town centre and that the Council's civic headquarters and arts centre project should play a role in this initiative. A town centre working group met regularly during 2018 and convened two workshops, involving a wider range of stakeholders, to agree a new vision and establish an action plan for the town centre. The working group aims to bring forward projects that will transform the prospects for the town centre following closures of retail stores in the centre, helping to attract investment and generate new activities.
- 3.2. Meantime, work has been progressing on the commissioning of the Council's civic and office headquarters/arts centre project, required as an outcome of the Council's Strategic Property Review with the intention that this project can act as a catalyst for much needed investment in the town centre.

## 4. Considerations

### ***Revitalising Falkirk - Town Centre Partnership***

- 4.1. The Council has participated in a working group involving representatives of Falkirk BID, local retailers, landowners and other town centre stakeholders. A series of workshops has taken place involving each of these stakeholders facilitated by representatives from Scottish Futures Trust and Architecture & Design Scotland. Arising from the workshops, the working group now proposes that a new vision and action plan to help revitalise the town centre be established. The vision accords with the ambitions for the town centre identified by the Council in the report to Executive in August 2018. It suggests that a revitalised town centre should:

- be a strong and distinctive place to live, work and rest
- create a vibrant place for interaction
- be the centre of an economic powerhouse (TIF/Investment Zone)
- accommodate a diverse range of uses with culture at its heart
- attract people and business back
- exploit the benefits of heritage
- have a strong community 'ownership' – a place where 'inclusion is non-negotiable'

- 4.2 Underpinning this vision, the working group proposes an action plan (Appendix 1), with a series of projects to be taken forward by the partners to help realise the vision. The key elements of the action plan are as follows:

- Strong governance model – partnership for delivery
- Communication – build the brand, visibility and celebration
- Creating Hubs
- Reinvigorate retail
- Residential opportunity
- Enhance infrastructure

The action plan identifies responsibilities and a timeline for anticipated delivery of the various actions.

- 4.3 To assist delivery of the action plan, a governance model (Appendix 2) is proposed, bringing together the various partners with interests in progressing the revitalisation of the town centre. It suggests the formation of:

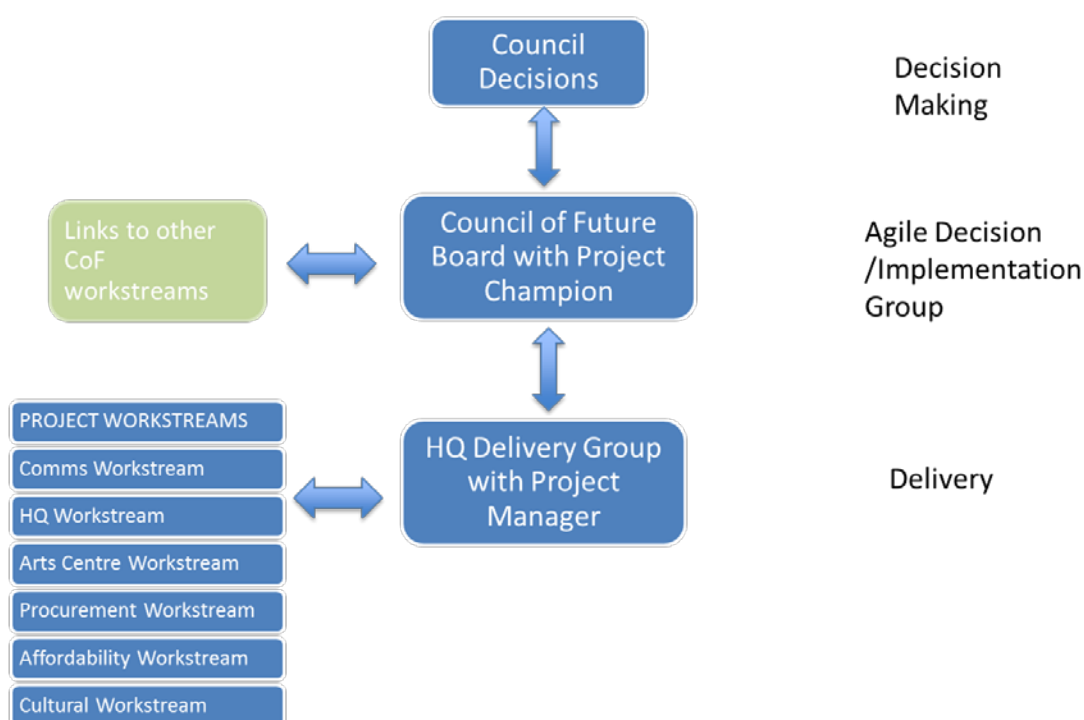
- ***Revitalising Falkirk, a Town Centre Partnership***, bringing together representatives of the Council, Scottish Futures Trust, Falkirk Business Improvement District and Healthy High Streets to drive forward the work identified in the action plan.
- A ***Town Centre Forum***, involving a range of town centre interests, including the Council, retailers, property owners and residents. The

Forum would act as a sounding board for the measures proposed by the Partnership and receive reports on progress.

Draft terms of reference, details of representation and working arrangements for these entities are being finalised at the present. It is suggested that the Council should welcome this proposed model and agree to participate in its work, with this approach being referred to the next meeting of the Town Centre Working Group for consideration. Thereafter its recommendations will be presented for consideration at a future meeting of the Executive.

### ***HQ/Arts Centre Procurement***

- 4.4 It is intended that delivery of the Council's civic HQ and arts project be wholly aligned with the work taking place on the town centre. The HQ and Arts Centre project has the potential to be a catalyst for investment by private sector and other partners and a key element in revitalising the town centre.
- 4.5 Following approval of the approach to procurement at the meeting of the Executive in October 2018, work has been taking place to commission the project. Advice on procurement has been supplied by external legal advisors confirming the arrangements for initiation of procurement via a competitive dialogue procedure.
- 4.6 This advice has reinforced the need for clear governance arrangements for the project and, to this end it is proposed that the governance of the project be conducted through the Council of the Future Board, supported by a project team and a range of sub-groups involving services across the Council as set out below:



4.7 The Council of the Future Board will have a responsibility to oversee the process to:

- assess Bidders to participate in the competitive dialogue stage, then
- assess Bids (through dialogue) to recommend the preferred bidder/scheme

A scoring matrix developed using the assessment criteria identified in the report to the October Executive will be agreed by the Board and referred to the Executive for decision. It will then be applied by the team of assessors in the delivery group to enable a recommendation to be made by the Board. This recommendation on the preferred bidder and scheme will be referred on to Members for decision.

4.8 In relation to the Arts Centre, a feasibility study is presently being commissioned by Falkirk Community Trust in their capacity as the Council's cultural advisor and current operator of the town hall. The brief issued proposes to examine:-

- market demand/context & Falkirk's ambition
- operational characteristic, specification & design
- associated facilities and co-location possibilities
- financial viability, funding and outline business plan

It is intended to appoint a consultant to undertake this work in March 2019. The initial commission concludes in June 2019, to feed into overall HQ procurement exercise at that point.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1. A programme of consultation on the town centre action plan and the projects it contains will be initiated by the Town Centre Partnership. Consultation will also be conducted on the HQ/arts centre proposals once more details on the preferred scheme have been supplied by prospective developers.

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial**

6.1 The financial implications of the town centre action plan will be assessed as the action plan is finalised.

It is noted that the Scottish Government recently announced that a fund of £50m will be established for the representation of town centres. Further details of this format are awaited and any submission made to the fund will be aligned with the action plan.

The financial implications for the HQ & Arts Centre project will be assessed as part of the business case being prepared for this development. A request for capital resources is contained in the General Services Capital Programme (being considered by the Council on 27 February).

### **Resources**

- 6.2 Appropriate legal, financial, procurement and technical resources will be identified and responsibilities defined across the Council to support this project.

### **Legal**

- 6.3 The Council will require to comply with the European procurement rules and any agreement will be subject to conclusion of contract documentation in appropriate terms.

### **Risk**

- 6.4 Risk matrices will be maintained for the town centre and HQ & Arts Centre projects.

### **Equalities**

- 6.5 An equality and poverty impact assessment will be completed at the appropriate stage for these developments.

### **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

- 6.6 None at this stage.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The work to revitalise Falkirk town centre is a priority of the Council. The formation of the Revitalising Falkirk, Town Centre Partnership is an important step in taking this work forward. It will enable a programme of work to be put underway to help deliver the vision for a transformed town centre.
- 7.2 The Council's HQ and arts centre project will play an important role as a catalyst for a revitalised town centre. The governance model and approach to commissioning of this project will be an important step in securing its delivery.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – draft Town Centre Action Plan

Appendix 2 – draft Town Centre Governance Framework

## **List of Background Papers:**

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

- None

# FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE: ACTION PLAN

Appendix 1

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	WORKSTREAMS	PARTICIPANTS	TIMESCALES		
				SHORT TERM (Years 1 & 2)	MEDIUM TERM (Years 3-5)	LONG TERM (Years 6-10)
Town Centre Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong and distinctive place to live, work and rest</li> <li>Vibrant place for interaction</li> <li>Economic powerhouse (TFI/Investment Zone)</li> <li>Diverse range of uses with culture at its heart</li> <li>Attract people and business back</li> <li>Exploit benefits of heritage</li> <li>Community 'ownership'</li> </ul>	<p>Communicate the vision via co-ordinated strategy for the project to help us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>express the vision,</li> <li>engage effectively with stakeholders,</li> <li>demonstrate the success of our work,</li> <li>ensure people understand our ambitions,</li> <li>change behaviour and perceptions where possible,</li> <li>provide a 'go to' place with current, reliable information.</li> <li>establish new branding reflecting our aspirations for Falkirk</li> </ul>	All	✓	✓	✓
Key Themes: Governance	<p>Town Centre Partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and agree partners/stakeholders</li> <li>Agree Terms of Reference – adoption of Place Principle</li> <li>Decision making/responsibilities</li> <li>More flexibility, less bureaucracy</li> <li>More joined up working</li> <li>Supportive planning policy</li> <li>Agree spending on town centre</li> <li>Project plan</li> </ul> <p>Employment Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for hospitality, manufacturing, emerging industries, soft skills development</li> <li>College/SDA/Employment and Training visibility</li> <li>Linkage to Investment Zone</li> </ul>	<p>Align to national and local policy inc. Place Principle. Work towards realising the Vision and deliver the Town Centre Action Plan through engagement process.</p> <p>Establish a Town Centre Partnership linking to Economic Partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate vision and strategy</li> <li>Progress actions</li> </ul> <p>Establish a Town Centre Forum (annual?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage wider TC stakeholders</li> <li>Confirm actions</li> <li>Feedback on progress</li> </ul> <p>Define role of each partner</p> <p>Determine commitment from partners, including FC Services – planning, roads etc</p>	TC Partnership	✓		
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destination research and metrics</li> <li>Build branding to sell a story</li> <li>Promote Falkirk and town centre as a destination</li> </ul> <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share the vision</li> <li>What has been done</li> <li>What is happening</li> <li>Ambassadors – taxis/shops/etc</li> <li>Build momentum</li> </ul> <p>Visibility and Celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wifi</li> <li>Signage</li> <li>Festivals and events</li> <li>Social Media and newsletters</li> <li>Local press</li> <li>Business engagement - ezines/websites/publications</li> <li>Investment Zone</li> </ul>	<p>Establish and Implement Programme of Consultation</p> <p>Establish and implement a Project Delivery Plan for the town centre.</p> <p>Establish and implement a Communications Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controlled project updates</li> <li>'Go to' place for reliable information</li> <li>Engagement tool</li> </ul> <p>Establish a fresh, forward thinking 'brand' for national and local audiences</p> <p>Review town centre signage including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Way-finding to and between town centre attractions including names/distances/times.</li> <li>Explore digital signage opportunities</li> <li>Car parking signage</li> <li>Orientation signage for visitors</li> <li>Welcome signage</li> </ul> <p>Introduce digital connectivity with speed and reliability of broadband for businesses, residents and visitors:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make industrial/cultural heritage more accessible</li> <li>Opportunities to develop health and wellbeing digital hubs</li> <li>Innovation and business</li> <li>Commercial opportunities - analytics</li> <li>Links to CCTV and other bodies</li> <li>Integral to Communications Strategy</li> </ul>	TC Forum Partners Owners Industry Experts FC Comms Team Businesses FC Roads	✓		



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whats on</li> <li>• Attraction of visitors</li> <li>• Appeal of 'modern town'</li> <li>• Mobile apps</li> </ul>				
Hubs	Attractions and research to visit the TC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HQ/Arts Centre</li> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Exploit Industrial heritage</li> <li>• Invest in health and well-being/primary care</li> <li>• Events – must support business</li> <li>• Heritage visitor centre</li> <li>• Civic space</li> <li>• Third sector</li> <li>• Business sector innovation</li> <li>• Business support</li> <li>• Investment Zone</li> </ul>	Support creative industries growth, evening economy. Support for the vulnerable – aged, dependent and lonely, consider technology and asset opportunities Build community pride in Falkirk – tours/taxis/ Develop Street Management Plan – tackle busking/begging/business waste/bins.  Explore opportunities for collaborative work with key service providers:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forth Valley College</li> <li>• NHS</li> <li>• Active Travel</li> <li>• Business Gateway</li> <li>• Police Scotland – must have a visible presence in the town centre</li> </ul> Promote a competition based programme engaging with the local community to give start up retail businesses the opportunity to test their offer in vacant spaces.  Business mentoring support to enhance potential for entrepreneurship in Falkirk TC and encourage innovative entrants to the retail/service mix.  Motivational and informative retail workshops targeted at existing offer in a bid to raise awareness of continuous improvement model and overcome apathy and complacency	TC Forum FVC NHS Active Travel Police Scotland Taxis BID FC – Roads and Grounds TEC programme	✓	✓	✓
Procurement – HQ/Arts Hub	Deliver ambitious HQ and Art Centre project in Falkirk town centre serving Council and other partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive dialogue process</li> <li>• Clarity of requirements and assessment criteria</li> <li>• Clear governance and decision making process</li> <li>• Realistic and well planned programme</li> <li>• Assessment of bidders and bids</li> <li>• Outline timescale for delivery</li> <li>• FCT lead as Council's cultural advisor/operator</li> <li>• Feasibility Study – Arts Centre</li> </ul>	Falkirk Council Falkirk Community Trust Private Other	✓	✓	
Reinvigorate Retail – independents and brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and support</li> <li>• Inspire new starts, create taster opps</li> <li>• Fill units, interims and pop-ups</li> <li>• Promote unique identity</li> <li>• More of right in right places</li> <li>• Introduce farmers organic markets</li> <li>• Attract brands</li> <li>• Support click and collect</li> <li>• Longer opening hours</li> <li>• Parking – improve, innovate, cashless</li> <li>• Welcome back for new</li> <li>• Communication between existing</li> </ul>	Develop a 'Good Landlord/Tenant' Charter – encouraging responsible approach to improving physical appearance of shops and residents  Develop a calendar of events/promotions that support local business and ensure wider community involvement and engagement  Welcome pack for all new businesses – detailing business support, contacts, details of meetings, maintenance, good tenant information.  Produce a plan to enhance vacant units that have become vacant/tired/unsightly  Work partners to unlock support and establish a co-ordinated Events Programme  Establish Street Champions in each area of town to encourage involvement and ownership of built environment and trading opportunities  Review of Car Parking for both on-street and car parks including options for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click and collect support</li> <li>• Cashless parking</li> <li>• 15/30 Minutes Free</li> <li>• Blue Badge Parking Configuration</li> <li>• Coach Parking</li> <li>• Park and Ride in Falkirk</li> </ul>	TC Forum BID Healthy High Street Businesses FC Street Cleansing Partner organisations Bench-marking – Perth Council	✓		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SMART parking</li></ul>				
Residential – Extending Town Centre Living  Linked to developers proposals	Framework to attract residential developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased offering</li><li>• Physical change that will create Quality of Place</li><li>• Provide flexibility of offers</li><li>• Populate town centre</li></ul> Offering more: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Townhouses – house and garden</li><li>• Apartments</li><li>• Student accommodation</li><li>• Affordable</li></ul>	Tackle declining population in Falkirk <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conversion of underused space for housing</li><li>• Target vacant space – clean-up</li><li>• Encourage further investment in town centre living space, student accommodation and other developments</li><li>• Explore opportunities for Technically Enabled Care facilities for vulnerable people</li></ul>	NHS FC Housing Landlords Developers Planning Health and Social Care Partnership	✓	✓	
Infrastructure  Detail main connections, intersections and linkages  Link to Investment Zone	Connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical and technological</li><li>• Transport hub</li><li>• Links to Helix, Falkirk Wheel, Callendar House etc</li><li>• Free bus/tour bus/discounts for attractions</li></ul> Liveable <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a liveable town</li><li>• Improve gardens, parks and open spaces</li><li>• Create a Town Square</li><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> floor business to ground floor</li><li>• Deal with anti-social behaviour</li><li>• More THI</li></ul>	Improve connectivity and deliver improved business, resident and tourism infrastructure by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bringing stakeholders together (building asset owners, train operator, bus operators, planning authority)</li><li>• examine scope for public transport interchange</li><li>• review pedestrianised areas.</li><li>• review parking provision</li><li>• Undertake feasibility and develop business case.</li></ul> Following recent public realm enhancements there exists an opportunity to further enhance the main town centre ‘hub’ to maximise the asset of the historic town centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explore opportunities for a CARS 2 Project – Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme</li></ul> Prepare and bid for Scottish Government 2019 Town Centre and Regeneration Capital Grant Fund – opportunities for High Street Streetscape project - Lint Riggs, Cow Wynd, central core.	Network Rail Abellio  Growth & Investment  Growth & Investment	✓		

## Appendix 2

### Revitalising Falkirk – Town Centre Partnership

#### Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan and Governance Framework

##### Introduction

This paper sets out a proposed governance framework arising from the work that has taken place to prepare an action plan for Falkirk town centre. The Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan covers physical, social and economic projects borne out of recent 'Revitalising Falkirk Town Centre' workshops held after the closure of M&S and general decline of the town centre. At these workshops a new town centre vision was proposed, with the ambition to elevate the agenda of Place Making, delivering a change programme to revitalise the town centre, create a vibrant new hub for activity and raise the overall quality of design at the centre of the Falkirk community.

##### Town Centre Vision

The town centre workshops have helped to establish a strong coherent vision for the town centre which affirms our intention to create a centre which:

- is a strong and distinctive place to live, work and rest
- is a vibrant place for interaction
- lies at the centre of an economic powerhouse (TIF/Investment Zone)
- accommodates a diverse range of uses with culture at its heart
- attracts people and business back, using the centre throughout day and night
- exploits the benefits of its heritage
- has solid community 'ownership' - 'inclusion is non-negotiable'

##### Town Centre Action Plan

The Action Plan (draft attached) aims to deliver this vision. It aligns with national and local town centre policy and is organised into 6 themes covering:

- Governance
- Communication
- Creating Hubs
- Reinvigorating Retail
- Town Centre Living, and
- Infrastructure

Each theme has short (early wins), medium (& 'meanwhile' activities) and long term actions. It is the responsibility of the partners involved to deliver the action plan.

##### Governance Framework

A new governance framework for delivering the action is needed to revitalise Falkirk town centre. This framework must involve: the Council, retailers and other stakeholders in the town centre. It must support delivery of the Action Plan to ensure a coherent, whole-place approach, enabling the Council and its partners to revitalise the centre, deliver regeneration, increase economic vitality and raise aspirations around achieving better places and improving the design quality of the built environment in Falkirk.

With a number of key regeneration projects and development sites being promoted, the parties involved will play a key role in enabling development which will assist in creating better places, changing future perceptions and the economic fortunes of Falkirk town centre. The aim is to secure high quality development with rigorous, early and effective dialogue between all those involved in the development process. The framework must acknowledge that, as a separate process, the confidentiality and integrity of the procurement process in the formation of a new civic office headquarters and arts centre must be respected.

- a. Revitalising Falkirk – Town Centre Partnership – A cohesive, pro-active approach to revitalising Falkirk town centre is needed over the next 10 years. The ‘Revitalising Falkirk’ Town Centre Partnership aims to involve partners, stakeholders and the wider community in shaping the future of the town centre and deliver the projects and activities needed to revitalise its fortunes.

The Partnership should meet quarterly (more regularly at the outset) and will have responsibility to confirm the regeneration vision and content of the town centre action plan. It should act as a vehicle for discussion to ensure that all parties are working towards the same objectives. It should steer the delivery of the action plan and prioritise activities. It will assign responsibilities for actions and have oversight of progress in delivering the regeneration projects. It should comprise the key stakeholders responsible for delivery of the action plan, ensure interdependencies and competing priorities are resolved through dialogue. It should engage with and ensure progress is communicated with local communities, external agencies and delivery bodies for project developers.

It should consider the need for a sub-group of participants (a working group) to carry forward the Partnership’s actions, deliver the communication programme, engage with potential developers to assist in the design process to allow developments to contribute to a culture of quality and high standard of design excellence.

- b. Town Centre Forum – a wider group of town centre stakeholders (agencies, retailers, property owners, residents), meeting annually to influence the initial vision and content of the action plan. It will act as a sounding board for delivery of future actions and to receive reports on progress.

Links to:

It is important that a number of links are established between the Partnership and other bodies:

Economic Partnership – to ensure alignment of work relating to the town centre with the wider economic strategy and the delivery of the Investment Zone initiative, ensuring that Falkirk town centre plays a key role as a fulcrum of the area’s economy.

Community Planning Partnership – to engage other public and third sector bodies in the town centre’s prospect and align their plans with the place principles being applied for the town centre.

Falkirk Council - Links will be made to the Council’s:

Executive - the decision-making body for the Council’s commitments to the project. The Executive will decide upon (or recommend to Council?) the proposals for the Council’s input to the HQ and arts centre project.

Council of the Future Board - To progress the procurement process for the Council’s civic office headquarters and make recommendations to the Executive.

Falkirk Community Trust – to lead the process of engagement of arts and community sector interests in the development of the arts centre and advise the Council and other partners in this investment.