



**Agenda Item 12**

**Falkirk Community Trust  
Recovery Plan Update**

Falkirk Council

**Title:** Falkirk Community Trust Recovery Plan Update  
**Meeting:** Emergency Executive  
**Date:** 17 September 2020  
**Submitted By:** Chief Executive

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work of Falkirk Community Trust (the Trust) on recovery planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and, in particular, the approach to reopening all of the culture and sport facilities managed by the Trust.

**2. Recommendations**

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

- (1) Endorses the proposed approach to the reopening of all culture and sport facilities and services managed by the Trust as soon as practicable and as outlined in the update report; and**
- (2) Notes the further information provided by the Trust in the update report and that further reports will be presented should any decision be required on funding for the Trust.**

**3. Background and Considerations**

- 3.1 A report was agreed by the Emergency Executive on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 which provided information on the Trust's approach to recovery planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Trust's initial reopening plan for the culture and sports facilities it manages was agreed.
- 3.2 It was noted in the report of 25<sup>th</sup> June that consideration of opening additional sites would be an ongoing exercise and the Council would be consulted and advised accordingly. The Trust has, therefore, provided a Recovery Plan Update (the update report) which is attached to this report at the Appendix.
- 3.3 The update report provides information on the successful openings that have already taken place as well as the work that is ongoing to open a number of the facilities covered by the initial reopening plan. It provides updates on the financial implications of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic as well as staffing implications. It also provides information on the NHS Forth Valley flu jab immunisation programme, adjustments

required to Grangemouth Sports Complex to allow use in line with government guidance and the decision, taken in line with current government guidelines and following consultation with the Trust's partners on the Safety Action Group including the emergency services, to cancel the annual fireworks display.

- 3.4 It is noted in the update report that the government guidelines now allow for most aspects of culture and sport provision to be available for use by our communities. As such, it proposes a programme of work to open all remaining Trust operated sites and facilities. Indicative dates are provided at Appendix 2 of the update report which dates are noted to be subject to completion of all necessary building checks by the Council.
- 3.5 The re-opening of buildings is critically dependent upon building system inspection checks due to the extended period of closure of the buildings. Cleaning, disinfection and testing of the water systems after such prolonged periods of closure was particularly essential, along with electrical and fire safety system checks and any required remedial works. These checks have been ongoing since mid July. They have been fully completed for a number of Trust buildings. Indicative dates for completion have been provided to the Trust for those sites where building checks are in progress. These indicative timescales have been reflected by the Trust in their programme of work. As the Trust has acknowledged in their update report, in order to meet national commitments for the re-opening of the school estate, checks on school buildings have required to be prioritised over other Council and Trust facilities.
- 3.6 The update report notes that the Trust was successful in applying to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Combining that with a number of smaller grants, continued funding from key partners and reduced expenditure, the anticipated shortfall has been reduced from £3.2m to £1.4m. The report comments that the deficit assumes very modest levels of customer income given the uncertainty around customer confidence to return to income generating services.

## **4. Implications**

### **Financial**

- 4.1 The projected deficit of £1.4m is significantly less than the level of deficit first anticipated. Close monitoring of the level of deficit will be undertaken and further reports will be presented should any decision require to be taken.

### **Resources**

- 4.2 Lessons learned and our recovery process will enable decision-making on how resources should be best used to deliver on agreed priorities.

### **Legal**

- 4.3 There are no legal implications.

**Risk**

- 4.4 If recovery plans are not considered against priorities, there is a risk that resource decisions will be made that will have a detrimental impact on our recovery progress.

**Equalities**

- 4.5 An Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

**Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

- 4.6 There are no sustainability issues arising from the report.

**5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The update report provides an update on the recovery plans of the Trust and sets out proposals for the reopening of all Trust managed culture and sports facilities.

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Chief Executive

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Date: 10 September 2020

**List of Background Papers:**

No papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

**Appendix: 1**

Falkirk Community Trust Recovery Plan Update

## Falkirk Community Trust

**Subject:** Falkirk Community Trust Recovery Plan Update  
**Meeting:** Falkirk Council Emergency Executive  
**Date:** 17 September 2020  
**From:** Chief Executive, Falkirk Community Trust

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the approach to reopening culture and sport facilities for Trust managed facilities, in accordance with the Scottish Government Route Map to recovery in response to the COVID -19 Pandemic.
- 1.2 The Government has set out a route map that shows when certain types of activity can restart. This is currently in Phase 3 and allows for the majority of Trust operated sites to be operational subject to compliance with Government guidelines.
- 1.3 This report summarises our planned openings and seeks Council agreement to continue taking a phased approach to opening the remaining sites when the Council has confirmed that the required building checks have been satisfactorily completed and it is safe for staff and customers to return.

### 2. Current Position

- 2.1 The parks at Callendar Park, Kinneil Estate, Muiravonside Country Park and Helix have been open since lockdown began. The parks are now fully operational including access to play areas, car parks and toilets, (with some exceptions). Indoor facilities such as the Visitor Centre at the Helix and Muiravonside Country Park are still closed pending Council approval to open. Toilets at the Helix (Plaza Café and car park area) and Callendar Park (at weekend periods) were opened at the beginning of September and are being operated in line with published Government guidance.
- 2.2 Grangemouth Golf Course opened on 29 May with support from Grangemouth Golf Club. The modified management arrangements are working well and feedback from customers is positive. The tennis courts at Dollar Park and Zetland Park are open.
- 2.3 We have connected with customers through various digital channels to support their physical and mental well-being as well as for fun and enjoyment. This been very well received and a number of new customers have signed up to services as a result.
- 2.4 In the previous report presented to Members on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, a cautious phased approach was agreed in line with the following principles:
  - The health and safety of customers and staff to be at the forefront of any service delivery
  - The general health and fitness of the community to be supported
  - The financial costs of a reduced service provision should be assessed and a funding source agreed
  - The capacity to generate some income should be assessed
  - One centrally located heritage facility to be operational
  - A modified library service to be delivered from existing facilities
  - The capacity to offer an appropriate takeaway food and beverage offering
  - One sport and recreational facility to be operational within each of the three localities

- 2.5 The following facilities were selected for re-opening when the Government's route map permitted:
- Callendar House (excluding the Tea Room)
  - All existing Libraries (modified service)
  - Helix Visitor Centre and Plaza Café
  - Grangemouth Stadium
  - Mariner Leisure Centre's Health & Fitness facility
  - Stenhousemuir Gym
- 2.6 Unfortunately there have been considerable delays associated with ensuring that the buildings were safe for staff to return. A prioritised list of sites in line with the recommendations of the 25 June report was provided to the Council on 16 June 2020 so that sites would be ready for use when the Government indicated it was safe to do so, subject to the necessary checks being carried out. On 19 June 2020, the Council instructed the Trust not to open any facility without its prior written consent. This was to allow the programme of essential building checks to be completed. The Council, understandably, prioritised the preparation of the school estate for works leading to the Trust managed venues not being able to open as soon as Government guidelines allowed. Approval to allow staff to return to 11 of the above buildings was given on 28 August 2020. Three are still subject to outstanding testing or remedial works being satisfactorily completed.
- 2.7 An amended programme of indicative dates for opening has been prepared as outlined in Appendix 1. It is hoped that the majority of these sites will have confirmed opening dates by the time the Committee meets with the possible exception of Meadowbank Library which has been affected by internal water damage caused by the recent storm.
- 2.8 A huge amount of work has been completed to prepare return to work guidance and training for staff who have been furloughed over the last 5 months. 139 staff have returned to work with over 75% of Trust staff still furloughed. Changes to layouts, operational capacity and programmes have been made to ensure staff and customer safety, compliance with Government and industry guidance on social distancing, enhanced cleaning regimes, customer trace and protect arrangements in addition to the normal safe operating practices and emergency procedures have all been put in place.

### **3. Future Programme**

- 3.1 The Government guidelines allow for most aspects of culture and sport provision to be available for community use. It is therefore proposed that a programme of work is agreed to open all remaining Trust operated sites. Appendix 2 sets out an indicative programme subject to the Council being able to complete building checks and provide written confirmation of authorisation in sufficient time for staff to return to work in advance of the opening dates and the welcoming of customers to buildings.
- 3.2 As a result of a review of our services to ensure compliance with the guidelines around the safe use of sports facilities, we have identified a particular issue at Grangemouth Sports Complex Gym. The current layout, spread across two former squash courts is very constrained. It is not possible to implement safe layouts that are likely to provide a positive experience that will appeal to customers and provide adequate social distancing. We will therefore relocate the gym equipment to one of the two large sports halls (Hall 1) on a temporary basis. This will offer a safer and more customer friendly environment for over 2,000 members which we hope will protect a key income stream.

- 3.3 Where possible existing users of Hall 1 will be accommodated in Hall 2 and at other sports halls in the area. There may need to be some reprogramming at venues to accommodate as many customers as possible.
- 3.4 NHSFV are planning an immunisation programme for all adults over 50 to be offered a flu jab this winter. This will be a significant undertaking and requires additional facilities beyond those available in the local GP practices currently. We are in discussion with NHSFV about their potential use of Falkirk Town Hall, Grangemouth Town Hall and Bo'ness Town Hall for this purpose between the end of September and mid-December this year. Some adjustments to existing bookings may be required to support this important service.
- 3.5 In preparation for the annual fireworks display, held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November in Callendar Park, consultation took place with our partners on the Safety Action Group, (SAG), on the potential implications of such an event being held. Each of the emergency services acknowledged the support this annual event provides the community in the avoidance and mitigation of accidents that could be caused as the result of inappropriate or accidental use of fireworks. However each service acknowledged that the risks in holding such an event at this particular time would present a much greater health risk to the wider community than that posed by firework related accidents. Similarly, the event could not proceed anyway within the current Government guidelines and these are not expected to change anytime soon. On this basis all of the emergency services were supportive of the view that the fireworks event should be cancelled and added that they would take the necessary operational steps within their own service area to prepare and plan accordingly. The decision to cancel this year's annual fireworks display has therefore been taken.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 When the June report was prepared there was a high level of uncertainty about the financial support that might be available to organisations like the Trust. Fortunately after a considerable amount of work by CLUK, the industry body for Trusts, the UK Government confirmed eligibility for the Coronavirus Job Retention Fund Scheme. This along with a number of smaller grants, continued funding from key partners and reduced expenditure has reduced the anticipated shortfall for 2019/20 from £3.2m to £1.4m.
- 4.2 There remains a high degree of uncertainty around customer confidence to return to income generating services and the deficit above assumes very modest levels of customer income as a result.
- 4.3 The Council has expressed support for the Trust to ensure that it has been able to continue to trade as a going concern. A letter has been sent to the Council asking that the support be formalised and confirmation provided that deficit funding will be available at an estimate of £1.4m for the year.

#### **5. Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 As the Council is aware, over 90% of staff were furloughed at the end of March. It is anticipated that the Coronavirus Job Retention Fund Scheme will have provided £2.5m in the course of the year to assist in offsetting staff costs.
- 5.2 Staff are gradually returning to work as the facility they work from is cleared for reopening. As at 4 September 139 staff have dates to return to work. The staff based in the facilities outlined in Appendix 2 are mostly furloughed at present and are eager to return to work. With the changes in the furlough scheme in September and the end of

the scheme in October, it is appropriate that they return to work in some capacity as some facilities will remain closed the FTH for the purposes of entertainment

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Council agreed a phased and cautious approach to reopening facilities at its meeting on 25 June 2020. The Council decided to undertake a programme of remedial works prior to opening sites and in the prioritisation of the work across its whole estate, Trust-operated sites were delayed to give priority to the school estate. It was not envisaged that the building checks process would be so time consuming and complicated requiring remedial works to be undertaken before staff and customers could return to Trust-operated facilities. Once the go-ahead to use buildings was given we acted swiftly to have staff return to prepare buildings and services for customers.
- 6.2 A programme of building checks require to be completed on the remaining buildings. It is recommended that they all open as soon as practical, ideally in the timeframes set out in Appendix 2.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 The Council is asked to agree that all Trust venues be reopened as soon as is practical.**

Maureen Campbell OBE  
Chief Executive

## Appendix 1

Falkirk Community Trust: reopening framework (updated 3 September 2020)

Table 1: Phase 1 Facilities to be reopened (agreed with Falkirk Council 25 June 2020)				Possible Reopening Date (Scottish Government Roadmap)
Actual Reopening Date	Buildings   Sites	Trading Outlets	Restrictions	
29 May  Date tbc	Golf course Tennis courts (Zetland and Dollar Parks)  Golf Course Locker Rooms		No toilets No changing facilities	29 May
29 June	Play parks (Helix, Callendar Park, Muiravonside)  Helix Car Park			29 June
13 July	Pitches		No access to pavilions	13 July
16 July	Newparks Farm			15 July
5 Sep  Dates tbc	<b>Toilets:</b> Plaza Café; Callendar Park; ( <i>weekends only</i> ) Helix car park;  Muiravonside Visitor Centre  Newparks Farm	Plaza Café (take-away)		15 July
w/c 7 September ----- dates tbc	<b>Priority Pavilions</b> Zetland ----- Sunnyside, Inchyra,			
Date tbc		Helix Visitor Centre  Callendar Park kiosk ( <i>confirmed ready to open on 28<sup>th</sup> August but will not open until spring 2021 as it was due to close for the winter period</i> )		15 July
9 Sep	<b>Libraries:</b> Home Library Service commences from Falkirk			15 July

Table 1: Phase 1 Facilities to be reopened (agreed with Falkirk Council 25 June 2020)				Possible Reopening Date (Scottish Government Roadmap)
Actual Reopening Date	Buildings   Sites	Trading Outlets	Restrictions	
10 Sep	Click and Collect available at Falkirk, Larbert, Bo'ness		No access for browsing nor access to the PCs permitted	
17 Sep	Click and Collect available at Denny, Grangemouth, Bonnybridge and Slamannan			
24 Sep	Click and Collect available at Meadowbank ( <i>to allow the building/stock to fully dry out following flooding</i> )			
Early October	Browsing and PC access at all libraries			
7 September	<b>Grangemouth Stadium</b> outdoor		Changing rooms and toilets not available	
10 September	<b>Callendar House</b> (no Tearoom)		No access west of Archives area until water tests complete	15 July
14 September	<b>Gyms/sports halls/pools:</b> Grangemouth Stadium indoor  Stenhousemuir Gym  Mariner Centre (gym and , pool)		Excludes sauna and café areas  Soft Play not to open before 5 October	31 August  5 October at earliest

Table 2: Proposed Phase 2 Reopening Schedule				Possible Reopening Date (Scottish Government Roadmap)
28 Sep-19 Dec	FTH, Bo'ness Town Hall, Grangemouth Town Hall		As immunisation centres for NHSFV 7am-7pm Mon-Fri. It may be possible to use the Studio for rehearsals.	Remain closed to the public but rehearsal, recording/broadcasting of performances possible in upstairs areas
28 Sep	Grangemouth Sports Complex		Dependent on building check results (due 14 September)	
Date tbc	Bo'ness Recreation Centre		Building checks to be programmed w/c 7 Sep however needs to be co-ordinated with planned installation of Changing Places facility in the wet side changing area.	
28 September	Carron Gymnastics Centre		EICR check overdue and water checks still to be programmed	31 August
28 September	Victoria Buildings (Outdoor Activities base)			
Date tbc	Polmont Sports Centre Denny Sports Centre		Water testing to be programmed; Denny SC EICR is overdue.	31 August
Date tbc	Class 98 and NPDO schools  Community access  Curriculum access		Dependent on Children's Services permitting access (no building checks required as these are undertaken by the Facilities Management companies)	
Date tbc	Football Changing Pavilions		Phased programme planned	
Date tbc	Polmonthill Snow Sports Centre	Callendar House Teashop;	EICR check due. Specific work required to replace the floodlights being investigated	
12 October	Kinneil Museum		EICR check due	

Table 3: Proposed Phase 3 Reopening Target Dates				Possible Reopening Date (Scottish Government Roadmap)
End October	Denny Football Centre Bankier Sports Centre			31 August
End October	The Keep Museum Store			N/A not public buildings
1 December	Hippodrome	Catering Pod		15 July
Date tbc	FCT HQ (Falkirk Stadium)			
1 April 2021	FTH Theatre	FTH café-bar		No date yet for resuming live performances in theatres, concert halls