

#### **FC48. FTH Closure: Voluntary Arts Support**

Council considered a report by the Director of Place Services which provided an update on progress made to date in relocating hall hires for Falkirk Town Hall (FTH) from 8 February 2023 – 31 December 2023. The report was linked to the Council Plan strategic enabler of Financial Sustainability and had a secondary link to the strategic priority of Supporting Stronger and Healthier Communities.

A range of voluntary sector, Council, and commercial hires were previously held at Falkirk Town Hall and made up approximately 40% of its annual programme. The venue also hosted regular visits by the Scottish Blood Transfusion Service. Following the decision to close the Town Hall the Service had been working through all bookings at FTH with a priority focus on January - June 2023 to ensure that, where possible, alternative locations for all bookings were identified along with any cost implications. Work would continue to relocate lets in the latter part of the year.

Where possible lessees had been relocated to Falkirk Council venues, principally, Grangemouth and Bo'ness Town Halls and Larbert High School. Other non-Council venues which had offered availability included the Beancross, Trinity Church and the Dobbie Hall.

There was no other purpose-built performing arts venue in the Falkirk Council area and the nearest theatres in Central Scotland were Lanternhouse in Cumbernauld and the MacRobert Arts Centre in Stirling. As a result, it was anticipated that some lessees would have to compromise on both the scale and complexity of the technical aspects of their shows.

A budget of £10k was proposed to be allocated to assist Voluntary Sector companies with unanticipated costs due to the relocation. As financial information relating to each relocation was still emerging it was recommended that the allocation was increased in line with reasonable demand (with a consequent reduction from the allocation for external match funding bids). It was recommended that discretion on the use of the funds would be passed to the Council's Culture and Helix Manager. There should be no additional financial impacts on the Council.

#### **Decision**

**Council agreed to delegate authority to the Council's Culture and Helix Services Manager to increase the £10k voluntary sector fund to support local groups as required on a value for money basis from the £50k external match funding pot agreed at Council in September 2022.**