

## **FC62. Falkirk Town Hall – Statutory Consultation under The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for disposal of Common Good Land**

Council considered a report from the Director of Place Services which provided information on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed acceleration of demolition for Falkirk Town Hall (FTH) under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

The legislation governing the Consultation Process on whether the Council could accelerate the demolition of FTH required an 8 week consultation process. This commenced on 3 November 2022 and ran until 29 December 2022. Details of the Consultation Notice were included as an appendix to the report.

The Consultation sought views on one specific question and allowed respondents to also leave a comment if they desired. The question was - Do you agree that Falkirk Council should accelerate the demolition of Falkirk Town Hall and the remainder of the Municipal Buildings and shared plant facilities, to commence on closure of the Town Hall?

369 (366 online and 3 paper) responses were received from individuals and organisations, with 248 providing additional comments. Of the 369 responses received:-

- 173 (47%) agreed to the acceleration of the demolition
- 192 (52%) disagreed to the acceleration of the demolition.
- There were also 4 (1%) unanswered responses.

Of the 192 replies which disagreed with the acceleration of the demolition, 41 specifically responded on the basis that the Town Hall should not close at all, and 40 mentioned that it should remain open until a new facility was developed. These represented approximately 42% of those who disagreed with the accelerated demolition. Whilst these views had been recorded it should be recognised that the actual closure of the Town Hall did not form part of the consultation question. If these responses were excluded then the percentage disagreeing to the proposed acceleration of demolition would be 30% (111 of 369 returns).

An analysis of the additional comments relating to those “Agreeing” had also been summarised, and comments related to the followings issues:-

- Agree that Town Hall is old and in poor condition.
- Save time and money by accelerating the demolition.
- Do not want an additional derelict building.
- Inefficient and unattractive building.
- Quick decision required for a replacement.
- Want a definitive plan for a replacement facility.
- Existing FTH is not comfortable or user friendly.
- An alternative location for a new facility may attract more users.
- The building should not have been allowed to deteriorate in the first place.

Of those “Disagreeing”, an analysis of comments was also undertaken, and could be summarised around the following issues:-

- Not to demolish the Town hall until a suitable replacement is provided.
- Negative impact on local business and tourism.
- Local arts groups will suffer as a result of no alternative large venues for performing shows.
- Lack of confidence that a replacement will actually happen once FTH was demolished.
- The Council doesn't care about affected groups.
- There will be a loss of a vital and valued community resource.
- Town Hall to remain and for the Council to undertake repairs.
- Frustration around political indecision on demolition and new FTH

Council was asked to approve responses to the comments. Thereafter, the full anonymised consultation and the detailed Council replies to each respondent would be published on the Council Website.

## **Decision**

### **Council:-**

- (1) noted the consultation responses received and the responses to the consultation comments as outlined at appendix 2 to the report, and**
- (2) agreed in relation to Question 1 of the Consultation document, to proceed with the demolition of the Falkirk Town Hall as soon as practicable after its closure.**