

## Forres Area Community Trust – Town Hall Proposal

### Overview:

**Forres Area Community Trust (FACT)**, On completion of transforming the Town Hall it will provide a high quality, environmentally sustainable and fully accessible mixed use facility, capable of responding to current and future community needs with strong regeneration outcomes. It will include performance / events space, heritage, community and visitor information, hot-desking facility for social enterprises / small businesses and employment and training opportunities for young people.

The total project cost is £5,188,396 with a request from RCGF of an estimated £3 million over 2 years and match funding from the Trust to be confirmed in due course.

The project went to stage II of RCGF 2022/2023 but were unsuccessful due to lack of evidence of need and delivery of additional services and resulting sustainable regeneration outcomes

### Background

Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) is a charity & registered as Company Limited by Guarantee. FACT began with the vision to make the Forres area a better place to live, work & / or visit. Since 2011, FACT has a well- established track record of identifying & responding to community needs through various initiatives including a Community Asset Transfer of the Town Hall.

### What this project will actually deliver

Forres Town Hall will be a catalyst for regeneration in the Forres area and provide opportunities for all to access facilities and services that will strengthen and connect individuals, organisations and agencies, to make transformative difference in the community. The project will be a key part of the wider plans which are being developed for the Forres area to create a dynamic and vibrant heritage quarter in the area. This plan will transform the High Street and town centre from an area that is in decline into a vibrant and attractive location that will encourage people to live, work and visit, and in doing so will contribute to social cohesion and community wellbeing.

Upon completion in 2025/2026 the Town Hall will provide:

- An increase in facilities provided from 3 public spaces to 9 public spaces which will result in an increase in capacity from 340 people to 560 people in total being able to be in the building
- An accessible, sustainable facility in the town centre that will offer a performance space for theatre shows, cinema, musical performances, conferences and events
- A co-working facility for social enterprises and small businesses
- Learning and training spaces for use by all the community
- An exhibition space for heritage, arts and commerce
- Heritage, community and visitor information
- Employment and training opportunities for young people
- Provide opportunities for volunteering and community engagement to reduce social isolation and increase community cohesion

### **Timescales, objectives, target groups, geographical coverage, partnership, community involvement.**

If the RCGF application is successful work would commence in April 2024 with anticipated completion date by no later than March 2026.

The objectives are:

- To develop a high quality, environmentally sustainable and fully accessible mixed use facility capable of responding to current and future community needs
- To act as a catalyst for further investment in Forres town centre by developing a heritage quarter
- To meet the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2045 using renewable technology to reduce their carbon footprint
- To provide inspirational and welcoming spaces for the whole community including young people, the elderly, social enterprises and organisations where new opportunities can be created and implemented the development and sharing of skills, experience and information
- To create 480m2 of social enterprise, office and event space

The project will connect local people with opportunities for volunteering, employment and skills development. This will include older people, families, those seeking employment, young people and those wishing to volunteer and build their skills. The venue will provide opportunities for a diverse range of activities and FACT will continue on building the success of community involvement and wide partnership working.

FACT regularly undertake a programme of community engagement activities focussing on building networks, understanding the needs of the community and increasing their resilience.

### **Economic, social and physical regeneration outcomes**

On completion of the physical works the Town Hall will be transformed into a building fit for purpose. At times the building is at capacity due to the current limitations of the premises. The regeneration of the building will enable FACT to reach more individuals and groups from the area and from this increase their impact and reduce disadvantage.

The project will bring additional investment to the area preserving existing jobs, creating opportunities for new employment and increasing opportunities for young people in training and employment in the social enterprise sector. 6 FTE posts will be preserved through the time of construction with an additional 5 posts being created post construction. It is also envisaged that the project will support the creation of two apprenticeship posts within the construction industry.

By improving and diversifying what the area has to offer FACT will collaborate with others to regenerate the Town Hall and provide accessible and flexible spaces that are sustainable and avoid dereliction and the deterioration of the town centre further.

### **Demonstrate consideration and contribution towards achieving the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045.**

The regeneration of the Town Hall aims to be a practical demonstration of how to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption in older buildings. FACT have commissioned an energy efficiency survey from Zero Waste Scotland (September 2020) and this report has indicated that carbon emissions could be reduced by 53% if the recommendations were carried out.

### **Total cost**

£5,188,396 with a request from RCGF of an estimated £3 million and match funding to be confirmed in due course

| <b>Key Project Tasks/ Milestones</b> | <b>Date Expected</b>               |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Planning in Place                    | October 2020                       |
| Design Team Appointed                | October 2020 by competitive tender |
| Building Warrant applied for         | August 2022                        |

## Appendix VII

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| Business Plan v 3 completed                                 | December 2022   |
| Secure funding from NLHF/ HES and others                    | November 2023   |
| Start of the procurement process                            | 01/02 2024 (assuming January 2024 RCGF Award)         |
| Major contract works awarded to principle contractor        | 1/5/2024  |
| Pre start meeting with architects and contractors           | 9/05/2024   |
| Mobilisation and construction planning                      | 26/5/2024   |
| Site possession and start                                   | 5/06/2024   |
| Construction: QS works, valuations and Interim Certificates | 4 weekly through-out following advice from architects |
| Building Completion and handover                            | 31/09/2025  |