

Forres Area Community Trust

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 our 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.

Upon completion in 2024/2025 the Town Hall will provide:

- A facility in the town centre that will offer an accessible performance space for theatre shows, cinema, musical performances, conferences and events.
- A co-working and hot-desking facility for social enterprises and small businesses
- Learning and training spaces for use by all in the community
- An exhibition space for heritage, arts and commerce
- Heritage, community and visitor information
- Employment and training opportunities for young people in event management, marketing and facilities management
- 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 2023 with anticipated completion date by no later than March 2025.

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 as the heritage quarter will be developed
- To meet the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2045 using renewable technology and creative ways of reducing the 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, along with the development and sharing of skills, experience and information
- To create 480m² of social enterprise, office and event space

The target groups are connecting local people with opportunities for volunteering, employment & skills development, including a wide range of individuals, families, employment seekers, young people etc. FACT will continue on building the success of community involvement & wide partnership working.

Economic, social and physical regeneration outcomes

On completion of the physical works the Town Hall will be transformed into a building fit for purpose. 5 people will be employed to run the building and 1 to 2 trainees / apprentices in event and technical support. In addition a minimum of 6 people will be delivering outreach work through a series of projects and activities including the Forres Online digital inclusion project; the Cameron Project to reduce social isolation; the Forres Area Volunteer Pool and consultancy and support services for local social enterprises and third sector organisations. For social enterprises / small businesses it is envisaged that there will be space for up to 10 hot-desking spaces and the Town Hall can be the registered address for an unlimited number of organisations on the proviso that they meet FACT's social objectives and contribute to their overall aims.

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

The Town Hall regeneration will be a practical demonstration of how to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption in older buildings. It includes rainwater harvesting, PV and battery storage, extra insulation, thermal modelling and heat recovery systems.

Total cost: £3,738,348 with a request from RCGF of an estimated £3 million and match funding from the Trust to be confirmed in due course.