Response to Representations

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to submit representations regarding the future of Rainbow Muslim Women's Group SCIO (RMWG)'s Community Asset Transfer application for Thornhill Community Centre. We recognise that the Centre is an important community asset and acknowledge the commitment, passion and concerns expressed by local residents, users and organisations. It is clear that all parties share a common interest in ensuring the Centre continues to serve the wider community.

While we respect the views submitted, we believe several of the principal assertions made by Falkirk Thornhill Community Hall SCIO (FTCH) do not accurately reflect the history of this process or the evidence considered by Council officers.

1. Collaboration and Partnership Working

FTCH's representations suggest that RMWG has been unwilling to collaborate. This does not reflect the extensive efforts made throughout the Community Asset Transfer process. The Council facilitated discussions, mediation and various proposals intended to secure a shared way forward. Despite significant time and effort invested by all parties, no mutually acceptable arrangement could be reached. The inability to reach agreement cannot reasonably be attributed to one organisation alone.

2. Assessment of the Applications

The purpose of this review is not to reconsider personal preferences between applicants but to assess the applications against the Community Asset Transfer criteria. Following a detailed evaluation, Council officers scored RMWG's bid higher than FTCH's and recommended that the asset be transferred to RMWG. That recommendation was based on assessment of the proposals, governance arrangements, financial plans and community benefits offered by each applicant. No substantive new evidence has been presented that demonstrates why the original assessment should now be disregarded.

3. Community Access and Inclusion

Concerns have been raised that community groups may lose access to the Centre. RMWG has consistently stated that the Centre is intended to remain a community facility open to the wider public and local organisations. The objective of the transfer is to secure the long-term sustainability of the building and expand community benefit, not to restrict access. We recognise the importance of existing user groups and remain committed to ensuring that the Centre continues to serve the wider Thornhill community.

4. Operation of the Centre

Some representations refer to concerns regarding RMWG's management of the Centre during the licence period. It is important to note that individual allegations and disagreements should be considered carefully and objectively. The Committee's role is to determine which applicant is best placed to deliver long-term community benefit through

ownership of the asset. The independent assessment undertaken by Council officers concluded that RMWG was capable of doing so and recommended approval of our application.

Conclusion

RMWG respects the contributions of FTCH and all other community stakeholders. However, the review should ultimately be guided by the evidence gathered throughout the Community Asset Transfer process and the merits of the applications themselves. The officer assessment concluded that RMWG presented the stronger proposal and recommended transfer of the asset accordingly. We respectfully submit that there is no material new information within the representations received that would justify departing from that recommendation. We therefore ask the Review Committee to uphold the original officer recommendation and approve the transfer of Thornhill Community Centre to Rainbow Muslim Women's Group SCIO (RMWG).

Rainbow Muslim Women’s Group