



# News Release

**Third Sector Hub**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

Stirling Council

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A city centre hub for Stirling's third sector organisations is to be established thanks to a unique partnership between Stirling Council and The Robertson Trust, Scotland's largest independent Trust.

The hub – an integral part of the City Deal ambition to deliver inclusive growth across the Council area - will be sited within the existing Barracks complex on Forthside and will house a number of organisations.

One of those has been confirmed as PLUS, a local charity which aims to provide a better quality of life for children and young people with disabilities and their families across the Forth Valley. Among other things, the space will enable PLUS to develop a new social enterprise – an inclusive soft play provision and café space, accessible to all children and young people across the Stirling area and beyond, regardless of their support needs.

Another organisation that has confirmed its interest is Dyslexia Scotland, a national charity which enables people with dyslexia, regardless of age and abilities, to reach their full potential.

Stirling Council leader Johanna Boyd said: "I am both delighted and proud that we have been able to bring together a range of partners and organisations to deliver something that can make a real and significant difference to the lives of many individuals and families. Bringing this development to Stirling is a very clear demonstration of the Council's commitment to our transformative City Deal.

"Growing the third sector is very important to us. An enterprising third sector is a key partner for us as we tackle poverty and disadvantage, promote early intervention and support vulnerable families, and encourage the growth of social enterprises.

"Third Sector Hubs are increasingly becoming centres of excellence for charitable organisations and social enterprises. They enable organisations to share space, learning and creativity, while maximising financial efficiency and

encouraging collaborative practice and social innovation. I am delighted that PLUS has already committed to the site and a demand study has indicated significant interest from other third sector organisations to move their operation to the facility.

“More people can only add vibrancy to the harbour area and boost retail activity in the city centre and, over the coming weeks and months, residents and visitors will witness the rebirth of this particular part of Stirling.

“We are absolutely committed to working with the third sector to provide better social, environmental and economic opportunities for those who live, work and study here.”

Kenneth Ferguson, Director of The Robertson Trust, said: “Through Robertson House, our existing charity hub in the heart of Glasgow, we have seen first-hand the benefits of creating a high quality space for Scotland’s charities and social enterprises to work and grow together.

“As Scotland’s largest independent funder, we are very excited to be working in partnership with Stirling Council on this innovative project and our investment of £3.6 million reflects our commitment to supporting the country’s third sector in ways that extend beyond traditional grant-making.

“We have every confidence that, like Robertson House, the hub will foster an environment of creativity, partnership working and idea sharing that, in turn, plays a significant role in improving the quality of life and realising the potential of people and communities in Scotland.

“This is a real opportunity to create a hub of national significance in the city and we look forward to the future with great optimism.”

Susan Fullerton from PLUS said: “PLUS is delighted about the future potential that this site offers children and young people with disabilities and their families. Being able to realise our ambitions of providing a high quality, inclusive environment for the families we support, and the wider community, in a central location will be challenging for us as a small organisation.

“On completion of satisfactory negotiations, we would welcome support from the community in developing our Capital Fundraising Campaign.”

Cathy Magee from Dyslexia Scotland said: “We are very excited at the prospect of being one of the first tenants in this innovative new hub in Stirling. We believe it is an ideal opportunity for Dyslexia Scotland to build on our existing services and offer more to help people with dyslexia and those who support them.

“We are very much looking forward to the networks and partnerships that will develop through working in this Third Sector Hub.”

Natalie Masterton, Chief Executive of Stirling Voluntary Enterprise said:

“The third sector hub is a tremendous opportunity for the various charities, community/ voluntary groups and social enterprises in Stirling to develop and grow in a shared space. The hub will be so much more than just an office space; it will be a place for the third sector to work together, share ideas and resources and ultimately tackle the big issues that affect our society.

“I look forward to supporting the third sector to work together with Stirling Council and the Robertson Trust to develop and design these buildings as the heart of voluntary action in Stirling.”

**ENDS**

**Notes to News Editors**

Establishing the Hub has been possible by Stirling Council securing four of the five Barrack buildings on Forthside and through a deal with The Robertson Trust to redevelop three of the four buildings. The Trust is investing £3.6 million to refurbish the buildings, offering high quality office and meeting space, business support and incubation, and shared back office costs, to third sector organisations operating in the Stirling area.

Stirling Council is investing £1.5 million in the hub, with The Robertson Trust investing £3.6 million.

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact: Siân Lower, Communications Officer, 01786 233033 [lowers@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:lowers@stirling.gov.uk) .**