

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS,
FALKIRK on TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2013 at 9.30 a.m.**

COUNCILLORS: Jim Blackwood
Dennis Goldie
Gerry Goldie
Linda Gow
Adrian Mahoney
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Alan Nimmo

OFFICERS: Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and
Improvement
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate & Neighbourhood
Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

EX54. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

EX55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

EX56. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 6 August 2013 was approved.

EX57. ADOPTION ALLOWANCES CRITERIA

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Social Work Services presenting an Adoption Allowance Scheme.

The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Adoption and Support (Scotland) Regulations 2009 widened the definition of adoption allowances to cover areas such as set up and legal costs and established a clearer link between allowances and additional financial costs. An Adoption Allowances Scheme was presented for approval. It was proposed that eligibility, with the exception of set up and legal costs, should be means tested, with a suggested threshold of a gross income (excluding benefits) equivalent to Band K on the Council's salary scale (currently £40,160).

It was also proposed to use the same means test for the purpose of charging prospective adopters for the actual costs of assessments for inter country adoptions and the provision of residence payments.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- 1) the Adoption Allowances Scheme, and its application to inter country adoption and residence allowances;**
- 2) the charging policy for inter country adoption, and**
- 3) to note developments in relation to a shared adoption and fostering service and request the Director of Social Work Services to update members as the work progresses.**

EX58. CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORT POLICY AND PROPOSED CHANGES

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Social Work Services on the introduction of a Social Work Transport Policy.

Proposals had been developed which would assist the Service in determining whether to provide transport assistance to service users. It was proposed that need would be determined using eligibility criteria and that, where transport is provided, charges should be levied when it is reasonable to do so. The proposals had been subject to a preliminary equality and poverty impact assessment. A wide ranging consultation with stakeholders, such as service users, would be undertaken and a draft policy submitted for approval thereafter.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- 1) undertake a wide consultation, as described in paragraph 6.1 of the report, and**
- 2) request that final proposals are submitted following the consultation process.**

EX59. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services proposing the introduction of a Social Enterprise Strategy .

It was proposed that the Council, CVS Falkirk & District and local social enterprises collaborate to develop a Social Enterprise Strategy for the area. The benefits of such a strategy would include: improved co-ordination of Council and voluntary sector resources, the development of sustainable social enterprises which fill gaps in the market and a reduction on grant dependency. A detailed project proposal was set out for approval.

Decision

The Executive agreed the terms of the proposal to establish a Social Enterprise Strategy as set out in the appendix to the report.

EX60. BIG LOTTERY FUNDING – SUPPORTING WELFARE REFORM

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services recommending utilisation of £15,000 from the Fairer Falkirk Fund to meet a shortfall in funding for a project to support welfare reform.

Funding, had been secured from the Big Lottery fund to support a project to allow the local Citizens Advice Bureaux to provide a quick response approach to people who have been directly impacted by welfare reform and who need advice and guidance. The project cost was £349,489.75 and funding of £334,489.75 had been secured. A shortfall of £15,000 remained.

Decision

The Executive agreed to allocate £15,000 from the Fairer Falkirk Fund to meet the funding shortfall set out in the report.

EX61. FINANCIAL CAPABILITY AND INCLUSION

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services on Glasgow City Council's approach to the provision of credit union facilities for every school pupil and detailing the credit union provision within the Falkirk Council area.

Council had agreed in June 2013 to request detail on an initiative by Glasgow City Council to provide Credit Union account facilities for all secondary school pupils. The report set out Glasgow City Council's broader approach to pay day loans within the context of changing behaviour; regulation and constraint; promotion and prevention and influence and evidence, concluding that the Credit Union initiative for secondary school pupils should be viewed within Glasgow's broader approach to dealing with non standard lending.

It was recognised that for the credit unions in the Falkirk area to provide a wider range of services and support, the Falkirk and District Credit Union would have to grow, in terms of savers and borrowers, and that this would take time and require to be managed properly.

The Council was currently seeking to appoint a Credit Union and Financial Inclusion development worker who would work with the credit unions within the area with the aim of developing their business models and support their growth. The officer would take forward the outcomes from a study into demand for low cost credit including increasing the provision of other financial services so that a range of alternatives to non traditional lending is on offer within the area. Additionally the Council has agreed to appoint a financial capability development worker who will work to develop services that will assist citizens to make appropriate decisions in regard to finances.

It was intended that a detailed report on the Council's approach would be submitted in due course.

Decision

The Executive requested a further report on financial inclusion initiatives in due course.

EX62. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS OVER £350,000 IN VALUE: CONTRACT FOR UPGRADING WORKS TO 90 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, SLAMANNAN (FAL-7275)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services advising of her decision to accept a tender for upgrading works to 90 residential properties in Slamannan.

The Executive had delegated authority to the Director of Development Services to award a contract for upgrading the works in Slamannan. One tender had been received and assessed as representing best value.

Decision

The Executive noted the award of the contract for upgrading works to 90 properties at various locations in Slamannan to Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, The Forum, Callendar Business Park at a cost of £1,342,496.17.