

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2013 at 10.30 AM.

COUNCILLORS:

Allyson Black
Charles MacDonald
John McLuckie
Baillie Joan Paterson
Provost Pat Reid (Convener)

OFFICERS:

Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement
Caird Forsyth, Corporate Policy Officer
Lesley MacArthur, Corporate Policy Officer
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Linda Scott, Corporate Policy Officer
Celia Sweeney, Corporate Policy Officer
Joanne Stewart, Senior Development Officer
Andrew Wilson, Community Planning Manager

S18. APOLOGY

An apology was intimated on behalf of Baillie Buchanan.

S19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Provost Reid and Baillie Paterson declared financial interests in item SC21 (8) as directors of the Falkirk Community Trust but did not consider that this required them to recuse themselves from consideration of this item, having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct and the relevant specific exclusion contained in the code.

Provost Reid declared a financial interest in item S21 (10) as a director of Central Scotland Regional Equality Council and indicated that he would take no part in the discussion or decision making on this item of business.

S20. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting held on 8 August 2013 was approved.

S21. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND (FPP): PROGRESS REPORT

Council had previously agreed that the scrutiny of those organisations which receive full or part funding by Falkirk Council would be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee. The committee had agreed a reporting schedule based around the service which provides the financial support.

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting individual reports on ten organisations which receive funding from Corporate and Neighbourhood Services. Each report set out the service provided, the agreed outcomes/objectives, performance information and the financial support from Corporate and Neighbourhood Services.

In terms of the Following the Public Pound framework a monitoring officer had been appointed by the funding service to each of the external organisations.

The monitoring officers were in attendance and were invited to give an overview of the role of their organisation, its funding arrangements together with performance and risks.

Members of the committee then asked questions of the monitoring officer with regard to the performance of the organisation. Committee was invited, for each organisation to (1) approve the report and acknowledge the progress made by the organisation; (2) request further information on specific aspects of the organisation; or (3) request action with follow up at a future meeting of the Committee.

A summary of the discussion and outcome for each organisation is given below:-

- (1) Veterans Support, Denny & Dunipace Citizens Advice Bureaux**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £20,000
Monitoring Officer – Caird Forsyth

Members discussed the role of the project in supporting veterans and commended the officers for raising the initial profile within the local community.

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged its progress in meeting Council objectives.

- (2) Care Support Funding, CVS Falkirk and District**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £113,748
Monitoring Officer – Andrew Wilson

Members discussed the role of CVS Falkirk and the impact of recent management changes within the organisation on its workplan. The Committee sought clarification in particular on the number of objectives and whether there was clarity within the organisation on its role.

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged its progress in meeting Council objectives.

- (3) Domestic Abuse Support Services, Falkirk and District Womens Aid**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £244,170
Monitoring Officer – Joanne Stewart

The Committee sought information on the funding of the project.

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged its progress in meeting Council objectives.

- (4) Soup Kitchen, Salvation Army**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £10,745
Monitoring Officer – Joanne Stewart

The Committee sought information on the operation of the soup kitchen and on the up take of its services.

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged its progress in meeting Council objectives.

- (5) Smartmove, Linkliving**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £14,114
Monitoring Officer – Joanne Stewart

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made in meeting council objectives.

- (6) Forth Valley Family Support Service, Forth Valley Alcohol and Drug Partnerships**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £20,000
Monitoring Officer – Caird Forsyth

The members of the Committee sought clarification on the status of the project and in particular in the transition from the pilot project to the full project.

Members also questioned the nature of the support offered by the project.

- (7) Real Jobs Falkirk, The Action Group**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £90,000
Monitoring Officer – Linda Scott

The Committee sought approved the report and acknowledged the progress made in meeting Council objectives.

- (8) Sport 4 Youth, Falkirk Community Trust**
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £38,637
Monitoring Officer – Linda Scott

Members sought clarity on arrangements for the letting of sports facilities and the role of headteachers in this process.

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged its progress in meeting council objectives.

Provost Reid then rejoined the meeting.

- (9) Forth Valley, MacMillan Money Matters Project, Partnership with NHS Forth Valley and MacMillan Cancer Support
Total support provided by Falkirk Council - £50,000
Monitoring Officer – Linda Scott**

The Committee approved the report.

In accordance with his declaration, Provost Reid left the meeting at this point. Baillie Paterson took the chair for this item.

- (10) Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
Total support provided by Falkirk Council £15,200
Monitoring Officer – Celia Sweeney**

The Committee discussed the organisational change within CSREC and the impact on the service provision. Members also discussed the value for money provided by CSREC.

The Committee requested a report, within 6 months, on the progress of CSREC in meeting its objectives and outcomes.

Provost Reid then rejoined the meeting.

During discussion on the reports members requested that in future reports provide information each of the extended organisations total support with the Council's funding expressed as a proportion of this total.

Decision

The Committee:-

- 1) approved the reports on Falkirk Armed Services Advice Project; Care Support funding; Domestic Abuse Support Services; Soup Kitchen; Smartmove; Real Jobs Falkirk; Sports 4 Youth and Forth Valley Macmillan Money Matters project and acknowledged the progress made by each organisation in meeting Council objectives;**
- 2) requested a further report on the implementation of the Forth Valley Alcohol and Drug Partnership contract for addictions, support and counselling following the conclusion of the initial, pilot project;**
- 3) request a report, within 6 months, on the progress of Central Scotland Regional Equality Council in regard to meeting Council objectives and outcomes;**
- 4) approved the format of the reports, subject to the inclusion in each report of the Council's funding expressed as a proportion of each organisation's total funding.**

S22. ANNUAL SCRUTINY PLAN

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer on the annual scrutiny plan.

In terms of the Council's decision making structure the Scrutiny Committee was required to prepare a scrutiny plan for Council's approval. The report set out those areas for scrutiny which had been identified at the scrutiny workshop in May, and in discussion with the convener outwith the committee discussions.

In considering the potential areas for scrutiny, members were mindful of the experience of the pilot scrutiny panel in regard to officer and member commitment, and took the view that no more than one plan should operate at a time, but that there should be scope to add further panels, to a maximum of two operating at a given time, should members' availability increase.

The committee also considered the value of the inclusion, within the scrutiny plan, of a vacant slot. This vacant area for scrutiny should be of the committee's choosing with preference given to a suggestion from the opposition members of the committee.

Decision

The committee agreed to recommend to Council:-

- 1) that no more than one scrutiny panel will operate at any one time subject to the proviso that the maximum operating at anyone time can be increased to two at the discretion of the Scrutiny Committee;**
- 2) the following areas for scrutiny as part of the annual scrutiny plan:-**
 - (i) the appointment of elected members to outside organisations and the process for reporting to Council,**
 - (ii) the adequacy of consultation with the public and community engagement more generally, and**
- 3) that the Scrutiny Committee should agree a third area for scrutiny with preference given to a subject suggested by opposition members in the event that they participate in the scrutiny process.**