

FC100. WELFARE REFORM – UPDATE

With reference to the minute of meeting held on 26 September 2012 (Paragraph FC48 refers), there was submitted report (circulated) by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services (a) providing an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on workstreams across the Council; (b) highlighting measures to mitigate the impact of reform on the citizens of the area including the implementation of the Scottish Welfare Fund; (c) presenting a draft revised Discretionary Housing Payment scheme which would allow officers to better target those affected by current and planned changes in benefits, and (d) detailing proposals to utilise the Fairer Falkirk Fund to target those most in need.

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Councillor Black, moved that Council:-

- (1) allocates £35,000 from the Fairer Falkirk Fund to increase the budget provision for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2012/13, and
- (2) apart from the allocation referred to in the preceding paragraph, continues consideration of the report to a special meeting of Council, to be held before 31 March 2013, to allow members to attend a briefing on welfare reform.

Councillor Meiklejohn proposed the following in addition to the motion:

- (1) invites the Scottish Secretary, Michael Moore MP and David Mundell MP to a meeting in Falkirk with group leaders and representatives of the community to hear first hand the misery being caused by the UK Government's policies.

Councillor D Goldie then proposed a further addition to the motion, namely that Council asks the Scottish Government to make up to £50m available to alleviate the impact of the bedroom tax in the first year as requested by Shelter.

Council adjourned at 2.30 pm for 10 minutes to allow members to discuss the motion and the proposed additions thereto.

On reconvening, Councillor Martin confirmed that, with the consent of the Provost and Councillor Black, as his seconder, he would adjust his motion to read:-

- (1) to allocate £35k from the Fairer Falkirk Fund to increase the budget provision for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2012/13;
- (2) apart from the allocation referred to in the preceding paragraph, to continue consideration of the report to the special meeting of Council to be held before 31 March 2013 to allow members to attend a briefing on welfare reform;
- (3) to invite the Scottish Secretary, Michael Moore MP; and David Mundell MP; together with all MPs and MSPs representing the Falkirk Council area to meet in Falkirk with group leaders and representatives of the community to hear first hand the misery being caused by the UK Government's policies, and
- (4) to ask the Scottish Government to make up to £50m available to alleviate the impact of the bedroom tax in the first year as requested by Shelter.

By way of an amendment, Councillor Meiklejohn seconded by Councillor Alexander moved paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the motion.

In terms of Standing Order 21.4(1) a vote was taken by roll call, there being 30 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (17) - Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Councillors Black, Blackwood, Buchanan, D Goldie, G Goldie, Gow, MacDonald, McLuckie, Mahoney, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Murray, Nicol, Nimmo and Paterson.

For the amendment (13) – Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Carleschi, Chalmers, Coleman, Hughes, Jackson, McCabe, Meiklejohn, Oliver, Ritchie, Spears and Turner.
Accordingly, **AGREED:-**

- (1) to allocate £35k from the Fairer Falkirk Fund to increase the budget provision for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2012/13;
- (2) apart from the allocation referred to in the preceding paragraph, to continue consideration of the report to the special meeting of Council to be held before 31 March 2013 to allow members to attend a briefing on welfare reform;
- (3) to invite the Scottish Secretary, Michael Moore MP; and David Mundell MP; together with all MPs and MSPs representing the Falkirk Council area to meet in Falkirk with group leaders and representatives of the community to hear first hand the misery being caused by the UK Government's policies, and
- (4) to ask the Scottish Government to make up to £50m available to alleviate the impact of the bedroom tax in the first year as requested by Shelter.