

FC50. COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Falkirk Council held on 5 December 2007 (Paragraph FC59 refers), there was submitted Report (circulated) dated 23 June 2008 by the Chief Executive summarising the discussions which had taken place at the Working Group reviewing Service and Committee Structures.

Councillor Gow, seconded by Councillor C MacDonald moved as follows:

“This Council agrees that more investigative work be undertaken by the Structures Working Group into the disparities of workloads of the committees. Standing Orders to be revised to allow Scrutiny Committees to respond directly to consultation papers etc within their remit to take decisions on issues that do not change or materially alter Council policy or involve additional resources or changes to the establishment . Council agrees to establish a separate Audit Committee a report to be brought to Council on the role, remit and constitution of this Committee. Council to retain the current Best Value and Audit Committee to scrutinise service performance etc.

Council agrees that Scrutiny Committees continue with 12 elected members but that they start at 9.30 am. Council also agrees that Committees utilise Standing Orders to invite representatives from other organisations to attend Committee as they think appropriate to answer questions and offer expert opinion.

Council agrees that the interim arrangements for Housing Services and Roads have been successful therefore Housing Services be permanently moved to Corporate and Commercial Services and the contractor part of the Roads function be permanently moved to Development Services. In addition the job descriptions of the relevant Directors be re-designed.

Council to receive a further report on the implementation of these changes together with any other Service structure or associated issues to be brought back to a future meeting of Council .

Council agrees to provide a commitment to the Trade Unions on all employee relation issues as detailed in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.17 to the Chief Executive’s report.”

By way of an amendment, Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Coleman moved:-

Committees

“Restructure our scrutiny committees from five to four based, as closely as possible on the remits of the department.

These would be:-

1. Education Committee (dealing only with Educational matters)
2. Community Committee (dealing with such as Economic Development & Tourism and Leisure)
3. Housing, Health and Social Services
4. The Strategic Committee dealing with the remainder of Community Health and Safety and Environment and Heritage Committee.

(These are suggestions in terms of names and responsibilities and therefore subject to amendment following consultation with officers or alternative suggestions on such as names by members)

Committees be encouraged to include within their membership appointed outside representatives in order to take forward the community planning agenda.

Council also agrees that all Committees and Council meetings should generally commence at the same time to avoid confusion and agrees to start all meetings at 10 am thus allowing those from outlying areas an opportunity to arrive using public transport if required.

Scrutiny Committees be given delegated powers to approve consultation responses unless there is a division in which case the matter can be called into full Council. The Best Value and Audit Forum be restructured to separate Best Value and Audit. The Best Value Forum continue to meet in private to discuss the intricate Best Value agenda. The audit section become a sub committee of Policy and Resources mirroring the membership of the Policy and Resources Committee and meeting twice or three times per year as required.

Council agrees that scrutiny committees must have access to all information pertaining to their Services and agrees that included within this process must be scrutiny of the relevant Performance Indicators and Service Plans.

Structures

The current temporary structures for the Housing Department are not providing the results members had hoped for. Council agrees that these have to change and proposes that a dedicated and qualified Head of Service be appointed as part of the Corporate and Commercial Services' department and calls for this post to be reactivated and advertised."

On a division 16 Members voted for the Motion and 14 for the Amendment.

Accordingly **RESOLVED** in terms of the Motion.

In terms of the newly approved Standing Order 31.2 and with the meeting having continued beyond 5 pm, the Provost advised that the remaining reports on the agenda would be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 31.2.2 and that there would be no discussion on the individual items.

Councillors Alexander, Carleschi, Coleman, H Constable, J Constable, Hughes, Jackson, Kenna, A MacDonald, McNally, Meiklejohn, Oliver, Spears and Thomson left the meeting at this point.