

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2014 at 9.30 AM.**

**CORE MEMBERS:** Depute Provost Patrick  
Baillie Paterson  
Rosie Murray

**MEMBERS**

**ATTENDING:** Stephen Bird  
Tom Coleman  
Cecil Meiklejohn

**OFFICERS:** Danny Cairney, Acting Depute Chief Finance Officer/Accountancy Services Manager  
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement  
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services  
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer  
Alex Finlay, Business Development Manager, Development Services  
Nigel Fletcher, Joint Acting Director of Education  
Gary Greenhorn, Joint Acting Director of Education  
Susan Mathers, Depute Chief Finance Officer  
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer  
Philip Morgan-Klein, Service Manager, Social Work Services  
Kathy McCarroll, Head of Service, Families and Criminal Justice, Social Work Services  
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive  
Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer

**PP4. MINUTE**

**Decision**

**The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 29 May 2014 was approved.**

**PP5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE PLANS 2014/17**

The panel considered a report by the Chief Executive setting out the Service Performance Plans for each service from April 2014 to March 2017 as part of the Council's requirements under the Strategic Planning and Management System (SPMS).

SPMS set a framework which linked the activities to the strategic priorities and key service delivery objectives.

Fiona Campbell gave an overview of the report and the new reporting format for Service Performance Plans.

Members, whilst welcoming the value and comprehensive nature of the information presented within the reports, raised some concern at the limited time available to fully consider and reflect on the issues contained within the reports. They also requested that a unified traffic light system be used in future within the reports.

#### **(i) Chief Executive – Finance Services**

The panel considered the Service Performance Plans for the Finance section of the Service from April 2014 to March 2017.

Members, in recognition of the significant pressures on Services emanating from the UK Government's Welfare Reforms, sought clarification on the measures in place to address the implications. The Chief Executive, in response, confirmed that comprehensive priority work was being undertaken for all Services and updates would be provided to members on an ongoing basis.

In relation to the operation of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), clarification was sought on additional funding from the Scottish Government as mitigation for the impact of the size criteria and the effect on vulnerable tenants. Ms Mathers indicated that the Scottish Government had announced funding to mitigate the impact of the size criteria in the financial year 2014/2015. There had been no announcement to cover the year 2013/2014.

Members sought information on the developments from changes to the Local Government Local Government Pension Scheme with effect from 1 April 2015 and the outcome of the triennial valuation at March 2014. The Depute Provost confirmed that in terms of governance arrangements, no agreement had been reached within the Council and discussions were ongoing with employers and Trades Unions. Mr Cairney advised that the findings of the triennial valuation would be taken forward by the Fund Actuary to determine the up to date funding position and employers contributions.

Members sought information on the measures in place to assess corporate risk. The Chief Executive referred to the operation of the Corporate Risk Management Group chaired by the Director of Development Services. The Group assessed the envisaged risks and put in place appropriate mitigation measures. Reference was made to the use of IT in identifying risk.

#### **Decision**

**The panel noted the Service plan.**

## **(ii) Chief Executive – Governance**

The panel considered the Service Performance Plans for the Governance section of the Service from April 2014 to March 2017.

Members sought information on the process by which the Service reviewed the Council's Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation. Ms Glackin advised that monitoring was undertaken by officers within the Governance section of the Service on an ongoing basis in support of the Council's decision making process. In response to a question, Ms Glackin also outlined her role as Monitoring Officer under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Members requested information on the level of increase in applications under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. Mr Moodie confirmed that the number of applications was increasing, albeit gradually, in line with demographic changes and an aging population.

Members requested clarification on the number of elected member FOI enquiries and the financial cost incurred. Ms Glackin advised that there was an increase in the trend year on year in the number of information requests made generally.

Members welcomed the scanning of corporate records to reduce storage space sought information on the proposals to roll this out throughout the Council. In response, Ms Glackin confirmed that measures were in place to progress the scanning of all Council documents and the increased impetus due to the potential transfer to a new Council building. It was therefore imperative to operate a more appropriate and cost effective document storage and retrieval system.

In relation to the performance measure for 2013/2014 for responses to members' enquiries, clarification was sought on members' access to the CRM system. Ms Campbell advised that work was underway to establish a bespoke system for recording and tracking members' enquiries and information on the next stage of the process would be provided to members in due course.

Concern was expressed at the decrease in commercial leases within 15 days of receipt of full instruction from 93.7% in 2012/2013 to 85% in 2013/2014. Ms Glackin clarified that this still met the target. The reduction in performance had been due to staff absence but systems had since been reviewed to mitigate future reductions arising from absences.

Members requested clarification on progress in marketing the commercial attractiveness of the Council's printworks and the associated business analysis. Ms Glackin advised that opportunities to attract new business were currently being examined and this included instigating detailed discussions with NHS Forth Valley. It was hoped that the NHS would enter into a contractual arrangement with the printworks and these discussions were ongoing. Work was progressing on the preparation of a Corporate Print Strategy and a report would be presented to Committee in the near future and would comprise a comprehensive business analysis.

Members requested an update on the progress for meeting members' training needs. Ms Glackin indicated that a survey of members training needs had been undertaken to ensure that training was reflective of members' requirements but acknowledged that future work was required to progress this.

### **Decision**

**The panel noted the Service plan.**

### **(iii) Corporate and Neighbourhood Services**

The panel considered the Service Performance Plans for the Service from April 2014 to March 2017.

Members sought information on the progress in the engagement of the private housing sector and progress in working with the NHT and in involvement by the Falkirk Pension Fund. In response, Ms Campbell confirmed that engagement work was progressing with the private sector and undertook to update members with the up to date position as appropriate. The Chief Executive confirmed that the involvement by the Pension Fund was at an early stage having been approved in recent months at the Pensions Committee and Panel.

Members congratulated the Service in achieving in 2013 the award of 'Procurement Team of the Year'.

### **Decision**

**The panel noted the Service plan.**

### **(iv) Development Services**

The panel considered the Service Performance Plans for the Service from April 2014 to March 2017.

Members raised concern that the Service was below target during 2013/2014 for the number of people engaged in employment and training. Ms Geisler, in clarification, indicated that target had from the outset been set at an ambitious level and its achievement was beset by a number of factors. These included many trainees staying on longer with employers than envisaged and that less new trainees were being hired. The Council was ultimately dependant on the employers agreeing to take people on. The Service was continuing its dialogue with employers through a range of strategies. The Council had also been successful in gaining additional funding from the European Community. This would allow enhanced work with employers and financial incentives and an increase in the number of young people engaged in a range of training posts in addition to modern apprentices.

Members requested sought information on the Service's continuing dialogue and participation in capital projects involving operational property. In response, Ms Geisler advised that the Service was actively working on the replacement of the

Municipal Buildings in Falkirk and was working with the Hub Co East Central Board and the Scottish Futures Trust on other capital projects. The first phase of the Tax Incremental Funding (TIF) at Junction 6 was complete and phase 2 would focus on Junction 6 and the roundabout at Falkirk Stadium. Work would go out to tender in the near future.

Members sought information on progress in the procurement of additional noise monitoring equipment for use within and outwith domestic properties. Ms Geisler advised that procurement of this equipment was underway and members would be provided with further detail.

Questions were asked in relation to the various Safe Routes to School within the Council area and the measures in place, in collaboration with Education Services, to encourage children to walk or cycle to school as an alternative to their parents driving them to school. Ms Geisler advised that this information would be provided to members.

Members welcomed the development of a Tourism Action Plan and the wideranging benefits to the Falkirk Council area.

## **Decision**

**The panel noted the Service plan.**

### **(v) Education Services**

The panel considered the Service Performance Plans for the Service from April 2014 to March 2017.

Members raised concern that the staff satisfaction levels with Professional Review and Development Arrangements and the quality of leadership were slightly below target during 2013/2014 as compared to 2012/2013. Mr Fletcher, in clarification, indicated that Community Partnership and Development Forums had been established to gauge staff satisfaction with the Professional Review and Development Arrangements. The Forums however still required to be fully developed to provide valuable information. In terms of staff satisfaction with the arrangements for the quality of leadership and management demonstrated by the Headteacher and the Senior Management Team, Mr Fletcher highlighted that in this instance the surveys had been undertaken with different staff as different classes were surveyed each year. They did not therefore compare 'like with like'. The merit of the exercise and the methodologies used would therefore be reviewed.

A question was asked whether measures were in place to refresh the arrangements for behaviour management and bullying within schools. In response, Mr Fletcher advised the unacceptability of all levels of misbehaviour would be progressed within schools as a priority.

Members sought information on the detail of the Falkirk Community Trust Deep Learning Programme. Mr Fletcher advised that this programme used a Community Learning and Development (CLD) approach by training teachers on effective teaching methods for 'deep learning' amongst pupils rather than a system of 'rote and

retention' traditionally used in the past. This method provided a meaningful use of knowledge through education.

Members requested information on what would be involved in the pilot of a staged intervention approach to low attainment in literacy in the upper primary. Mr Fletcher clarified that the programmes were multi faceted and involved a wide range of interventions to addresses issues including the high levels of deprivation within the Falkirk school cluster. The programme would cover all schools as part of the Literacy Strategy.

Members also requested information on the reduction in the number of people in CLD activities achieving an accredited award or qualification. Mr Fletcher undertook provide members with information under this category as requested.

Members raised concern at the number of current 'Acting' posts within the Service and in the Council more widely and the resultant pressure on staff. The Chief Executive advised that a report be made to a future meeting of the Council.

### **Decision**

**The panel noted the Service plan.**

#### **(vi) Social Work Services**

The panel considered the Service Performance Plans for the Service from April 2014 to March 2017.

Members highlighted the importance of the Service's good work being publicised covering a wide and comprehensive range of services. Ms McCarroll, in response, confirmed the significant work being undertaken to collate information on the range of compliments received. She would in future include this information within reports. In addition, issues requiring promotion including the need for foster carers would be examined to ascertain whether enhanced publicity measures were necessary.

A question followed requesting information on the methods currently being considered for electronic information sharing particularly in relation to the Single Shared Assessment. Mr Morgan Klein, in response, advised that funding had been received to assist the information sharing process between agencies across Forth Valley. Work was currently underway to recruit an analyst to work across the area to focus on areas where information sharing was appropriate. Following a comprehensive mapping exercise of the agencies' separate IT systems, an updated IT system would be identified to link the various systems together.

At a member's request Ms McCarroll undertook to include within future reports, information on the complaints received within the Service and the mitigation measures to address the issues raised as well highlighting the lessons learned.

Members, in recognition of the community benefits resulting from the range of community payback schemes, requested that the Service examine methods of promoting the various community payback opportunities available. Ms McCarroll

thereafter confirmed that Community Councils would be provided with this information which could be established within local areas and to seek promotion within communities.

### **Decision**

**The panel noted the Service plan.**