

**DRAFT**

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER 2014 at 9.30 AM.**

**COUNCILLORS:**

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

**OFFICERS:**

Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services  
Caroline Binnie, Communications and Participation Manager  
Caroline Brown, Business Advisor  
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement  
Elaine Costello, Integration Support Manager  
Matthew Davies, Service Manager  
Douglas Duff, Head of Economic Development and Environmental Services  
Andrew Facherty, Additional Support for Learning Manager  
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer  
Elizabeth Hood, Neighbourhood and Access to Housing Manager  
Eileen Hutton, Childcare Provision Co-ordinator  
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer  
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager  
Linda Scott, Corporate Policy Officer  
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer  
Carron Smith, Principal Business Support Officer  
Celia Sweeney, Corporate Policy Officer (Equalities)  
Vivien Thomson, Service Manager  
Andrew Wilson, Policy and Community Planning Manager

**ALSO ATTENDING:**

Neil Brown, General Manager, Falkirk Community Trust  
Jane Clark, Business Development Manager, Falkirk Community Trust

**S30. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were intimated.

**S31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Black declared a non-financial interest in S34, as a director of a company which had utilised the Business Gateway service and S41, as a director of Falkirk Towns LTD and considered that this required her to recuse herself from consideration of the items having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct.

Provost Reid declared a non-financial interest in S33 as a director of Falkirk Community Trust but did not consider that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item, having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct and the relevant specific exclusion contained in the code.

## **S32. MINUTES**

- (a) The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 25 September 2014 was approved; and**
- (b) The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 26 September 2014 was noted.**

## **S33. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: FALKIRK COMMUNITY TRUST**

The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive presenting an update on the work of Falkirk Community Trust (the Trust) against key objectives for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, in line with Following the Public Pound (FPP) and Council procedure.

Neil Brown, General Manager, Falkirk Community Trust gave a presentation on the Trust's achievements, areas for development, improvement actions and future direction. He described a number of key successes: management of the Helix park; winning the Creative Scotland Creative Place Award for places under 100,000 residents; Callendar House securing VisitScotland's 5 star status; Falkirk Archives at Callendar House being awarded Archive Service Accreditation, and securing the Commonwealth Games running track for Grangemouth stadium. He then described areas for development: the creation of delivery plans for arts, libraries and sport; creation of masterplans for Kinneil and Callendar Estates; development of an asset management plan with the Council, and opening the Kelpie visitor centre. He provided details of a number of improvement actions: creation of a library development plan; investment at the Mariner centre and Grangemouth sports complex; ICT investment to improve customer services; development of management plans for Muiravonside and Callendar park, and reviewing the active schools programme. Neil Brown stated that the Trust faced specific challenges regarding: income growth; efficiencies, and rationalisation of services and facilities. The key objectives for the next three years were: meeting customer needs; organisational development; and financial sustainability.

Members asked if there had been initial difficulties in securing external funding. Neil Brown stated that the Trust faced issues similar to other new organisations but that the Trust's successes increased its access to funding. Members questioned the challenge of the £500,000 target for external funding when that amount had been achieved in the previous year. Neil Brown stated that attracting funding was a challenge and that some areas of funding would shortly expire whilst others had required seed funding from the Council.

The Committee asked about the future of library services. Neil Brown stated that libraries faced many issues and the library development plan had been brought one year forward to fundamentally review library services. The introduction of Universal Credit was one reason for increased library computer use as most people apply online and manage their claim through an online account. Software and hardware at Falkirk library had been refreshed. Investment in online magazine and books, for download had been a success. Analysis of why some customers stopped using libraries was ongoing.

The committee asked how the Trust would ensure that facilities were available throughout the Council area. Neil Brown stated that new facilities would be located where opportunities arose. Some customers would have to travel to access unique facilities such as the ski slope, whereas library provision was Council wide. The Trust was mindful of community needs and tried to meet them.

Members asked about visitor number recording. Neil Brown advised that Kinneil Museum's figures no longer included visits to only use the conveniences, which gave increased accuracy. Recording at Callendar House was complex due to the number of attractions there. In six months over 600,000 visitors had been counted at the Helix park.

The committee expressed concern at missed revenue opportunities at the Helix park and that a gift shop should have been provided. Neil Brown advised there was a focus on income generation and work was ongoing. The committee asked why the visitor centre at the Helix park had not been completed given the high number of visitors. Fiona Campbell stated that she would provide members with information on the visitor centre project.

Members questioned the performance indicator for admissions to the Hippodrome being rated a tick with the 19% decrease. Neil Brown stated the figures were reported to the Trust's audit performance group as a tick if within 5% of target but work to improve admissions was ongoing.

The committee asked if, with a decrease of 8,000 visitors to Park Gallery, security cameras would better use resources. Neil Brown stated that staff presence was an insurance requirement of many artists and visual arts assistants were vital in explaining artworks, without which many visitors would not engage as well with the art.

The committee asked for financial information and reinvestment. Neil Brown stated that the Trust was not run for profit and its £18.2m income had been used. Reinvestment opportunities were limited as expenditure was outpacing income.

Members asked if commercial sponsorship had been considered for Trust properties. Neil Brown stated that cultivation events had been held to encourage sponsorship, but that it was challenging to attract sponsorship for pre-existing sites.

The committee sought an update on Stenhousemuir gym. Neil Brown advised that £1m of funding had been secured and that the Trust was on target to open in June 2015.

Members asked about investment in swimming pools and fitness facilities. Neil Brown stated that sustainability was the driver for investment. The Trust sought to address the decreased use of swimming pools by children and young people.

Members asked about the Trust's borrowing powers. Neil Brown advised that the Trust sought an increase to the funding agreement from £200,000 to £1m, to allow investment and generate further income.

The committee discussed ICT investment. Neil Brown stated that investment was required to deliver services which meet customer expectations, such as online booking. Box office opening hours were under review as they were not customer friendly.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress Falkirk Community Trust has made in delivering on its core commitments for the Council.**

In accordance with her declaration of interest, Councillor Black left the meeting at this point.

## **S34. BENEFITS OF BRINGING BUSINESS GATEWAY IN HOUSE**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting an update on the benefits of bringing the Business Gateway service in house. The report had been requested by the Committee on 14 August 2014 (ref S22).

The report provided information on the activities and outputs of Business Gateway in the operational year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Direct comparisons for activity previously delivered externally were given and details of other activities for which there were not direct comparisons available were provided. The report gave examples of the benefits to businesses since the service moved in house.

Douglas Duff provided an overview of the report and stated that external European funding had been secured. The service had worked with Scottish Enterprise in developing support to businesses. To encourage local entrepreneurship assistance was provided to new businesses as well as after care support. Douglas Duff highlighted a case study where Business Gateway had reacted quickly, relocating and safeguarding jobs.

Members asked for information in regard to redundancies. Carron Smith stated that Partnership Action for Continuing Employment, the Scottish Government's initiative dedicated to helping individuals and employers with advice and support when faced with redundancy are the lead organisation. Planned redundancies are notified to the Scottish Government and then the Council. Intervention processes are initiated and officers work with employers to look at options. Support to aid transition is provided, such as to claim benefits or become self employed.

The committee asked if there was an annual cap on the number of loans approved from the BP Business Loan Fund. Carron Smith advised that a budget of £150,000 is held and applicants must demonstrate that they meet the criteria. She stated that the BP Business Loan Fund panel were often more sympathetic than mainstream lenders.

Members asked about the support and financial help offered by Business Gateway. Carron Smith stated that the start up loan fund offered up to £10,000 and could be used in conjunction with the BP Business Loan Fund.

The committee asked how many customers had been surveyed to give the 100% satisfaction rating in the report. Carron Smith stated that the figures reported were part of external quality assurance which provided periodic snapshots. In the reported figures 9 or 10 clients had responded.

Members asked for more information on the Association of Town and City Management award for Developing the Evening and Night-Time Economy, which was awarded to Falkirk. Douglas Duff stated that the business development division had worked to promote Falkirk Delivers and the Best Bar None awards. The use of taxi marshalling reinforced night time safety in the town centre.

### **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of whether the subject matter of the report is suitable for inclusion in the Council's scrutiny plan to the next meeting to allow consideration of all the reports requested on 14 August 2014.**

Councillor Black re-entered the meeting at conclusion of the previous item of business.

## **S35. COUNCIL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting information requested by the committee on 14 August 2014 (ref S22) in regard to the Council's handling of complaints.

The report provided information on the Council's complaints handling procedure (CHP) and its implementation. The CHP was based on a two stage process, front line resolution and investigation. Only issues not resolved at the first stage or that are complex, serious or 'high risk' move to stage two. The report provided information on performance at frontline resolution and investigation and examples of services learning from complaints.

Caroline Binnie provided an overview of the report highlighting the response timescales for frontline resolution and investigation, five and twenty days respectively. Before implementing the CHP, staff had been trained by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) training unit. All staff have access to online complaints training.

The committee asked if complaint numbers were compared against previous levels. Caroline Binnie stated that the numbers were fairly consistent. Subsequent to issuing the report the SPSO had supplied figures for the number of complaints referred to them regarding the Council. The number of referrals and the areas in which the complaints were made were in line with national figures.

Members asked about the reporting of complaints information. Caroline Binnie advised that the information is reported to the Performance Panel at service level, although corporate figures could be provided.

The committee asked for the results of national benchmarking. Caroline Binnie stated that benchmarking was in progress and she would ask for an indicative timetable.

Members asked if comparison against other Councils was available. Caroline Binnie stated that the Council compared well against information published by other Councils.

The committee asked if some complainants go direct to the SPSO rather than through the CHP. Caroline Binnie stated that there can be a lack of understanding of process but the SPSO will not consider a complaint if the Council's process has not been completed.

### **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of whether the subject matter of the report is suitable for inclusion in the Council's scrutiny plan to the next meeting to allow consideration of all the reports requested on 14 August 2014.**

## **S36. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002**

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer which provided information requested by the committee on 14 August 2014 (ref S22) in regard to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR).

The report provided statistical information for 2012, 2013 and the first two quarters of 2014 and information on charges and time spent on Freedom of Information (FOI) and EIR requests. An update on the work of the Scottish Information Commissioner, the Council's publication scheme and training and development were also provided.

Colin Moodie provided an overview of the report highlighting the increasing numbers of requests and compliance with timescales. Rarely were requests refused on the grounds of cost or fees notices served. In 2013 fees notices were issued in less than 1% of all cases.

Summarising the report, Colin Moodie suggested that there were four points for action and consideration to be taken from the report:-

1. that efforts continue to ensure a high rate of compliance with the response timescales for information requests;
2. work should continue to try to give better information on the source of requests;
3. consideration should be given to more active publication; and
4. better systems and processes should be developed to improve organisational learning from information requests.

The committee asked how many requests were made by politicians. Colin Moodie advised that some information was available for the current year and that requests from elected representatives were 3% of the total.

## **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of whether the subject matter of the report is suitable for inclusion in the Council's scrutiny plan to the next meeting to allow consideration of all the reports requested on 14 August 2014.**

Baillie Buchanan left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

### **S37. OPTIONS APPRAISAL – ARE YOU GETTING IT RIGHT? – NATIONAL AUDIT REPORT**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services which provided a summary of the Audit Scotland 'Options appraisal: are you getting it right?' report.

The report outlined the key messages contained in the Audit Scotland report and the Council's current practice in regard to options appraisal. Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the report and highlighted the 'Questions for councillors' document contained at appendix two to the Audit Scotland report.

The committee asked if all members would be provided with the Audit Scotland report. Fiona Campbell confirmed that all members would get a copy of the report.

Members commented that 'Questions for councillors' was a useful tool and asked why equality impact assessment was not included. Fiona Campbell stated that for any change of policy an equality impact assessment would be carried out.

## **Decision**

**The committee:**

- (i) noted the national report on options appraisals;**
- (ii) requested that guidance on service reviews is reviewed to ensure it reflects best practice as set out in the report;**
- (iii) requested that a copy of the checklist is provided to all members; and**
- (iv) requested that guidance provided to scrutiny panels and policy development panels is reviewed to ensure it incorporates relevant elements of the checklists and guidance.**

### **S38. AUDIT REPORT – AN OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND 2014**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services which provided a summary of the Audit Scotland 'An Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2014' report.

The report outlined the key messages and key recommendations in the Audit Scotland report. The report highlighted that Falkirk Community Planning had undergone an audit of its work, published in May 2014, and that the Council was to be the subject of a best value audit on performance management and scrutiny.

Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the report and highlighted the checklist contained at appendix two to the Audit Scotland report.

### **Decision**

#### **The committee noted the report.**

The committee agreed to an adjournment for lunch. The committee adjourned at 12.45 p.m. and reconvened at 1.35 p.m. with all members present as per the sederunt with the exception of Baillie Buchanan.

### **S39. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: SERVICES TO EARLY YEARS CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE (FPP) - 2013/2014 MONITORING REPORT**

The committee considered a joint report by the by the Director of Social Work Services and Acting Joint Director of Education Services which provided an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding which provided services to early years, children and young people, and which fall within the FPP reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The report provided information on factors which impact service demand including national and local policy context and demographic change. An individual report was appended for each of the fourteen organisations which received funding. Each report set out the service provided, the agreed outcomes/objectives and performance information.

The committee heard from officers in relation to the individual reports.

#### **(a) Aberlour Childcare Trust – Early Years Outreach**

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £315,162 of Council funding. The service worked with children 0 – 4 years.

The committee expressed concern that the report did not contain enough detail for the level of funding. Members stated that more information was needed in order to ensure that the level of funding was justified. Elaine Costello advised that more information could be provided.

Members asked about the secondment of the manager of the service. Elaine Costello stated that the manager had been in post until March 2014 and that the post had been backfilled internally.

The committee stated that figures needed to be reported transparently and that it would be beneficial to receive fuller reports at a future meeting of the committee.



## **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of Aberlour Childcare Trust - Early Years Outreach to a future meeting to be provided with a more detailed report.**

(b) Aberlour Childcare Trust – Family Support Centre – Langlees

The committee expressed concern that the report did not contain enough detail and information for the amount of funding provided.

## **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of Aberlour Childcare Trust – Family Support Centre - Langlees to a future meeting to be provided with a more detailed report.**

(c) Barnado's – AXIS Service

Matthew Davies provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £110,952 of Council funding. The service provided support to young people experiencing difficulties related to alcohol or substance misuse. The service aimed to provide support to 15 to 18 young people at any one time through Early Doors and 10 to 12 young people at any one time through the Core Service.

The committee asked for information in regard to the challenge of legal highs. Matthew Davies stated that this issue was part of a national focus and that while substances are legal they are not all safe. The service had carried out awareness raising with parents and would monitor the situation as it was a new and increasing area.

Members asked if stores selling legal highs were part of national chains. Matthew Davies stated that locally stores were not part of a larger network and operate separately. Fiona Campbell advised that trading standards and environmental health work closely with Police Scotland in this regard.

The committee sought further information on early intervention. Matthew Davies highlighted the work of the Early Doors programme. He stated that there was no set formula and that the programme was effective in engaging with groups of young people. Paid counsellors currently undertake the work, although the use of volunteers was being looked at in providing aftercare to avoid slippage by clients after leaving the programme.

The committee asked what the average age of a service user was. Matthew Davies stated that the Early Doors programme had a younger client base than the Core Service and that the peak age was around 14/15 years.

Members commented that employability outcomes were not relevant to all service users. Matthew Davies stated that outcomes were targeted to each clients needs as appropriate.

The committee asked about the number of young people who refused contact with the Early Doors programme. Matthew Davies stated that it is a challenge to engage young people and there were high levels of drop off. The service was looking at utilising referrals from police custody and accident and emergency.

Members expressed concern that two thirds of service users disengage with the service. Matthew Davies stated that the service shared members concerns and that improving engagement was an ongoing issue.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Barnado's – AXIS Service in meeting Council priorities.**

(d) Home Start

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £29,488 of Council funding. This was used to fund core staff and office facilities. 35 families had been provided with support and practical assistance. Eileen Hutton stated that the support and practical assistance provided included helping people look after their home well, cooking nutritious meals and keeping appointments.

Members asked how people come to the attention of the project. Eileen Hutton stated that referrals come from health visitors, doctors and social workers. There had been an increase in referrals of ethnic minority families and the project was working to combat the isolation some families faced.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Home Start in meeting Council priorities.**

(e) One Parent Families Scotland – Braes Children and Family Centre

### **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of One Parent Families Scotland – Braes Children and Family Centre to a future meeting to be provided with a more detailed report.**

(f) Barnado's – Cluaran Service

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £628,819 of Council funding.

The committee asked for information on how many young people remained in the community. Matthew Davies stated that of those who completed the programme 88% remained in the community, with the majority staying with their families. In some cases it was not in the best interest of the individual to remain in the community.

The committee discussed that having young people remain in the community is cost effective and that this area may be suitable for a Spend to Save project.

Members asked for information about the wider situation in Falkirk in regard to vulnerable children. Margaret Anderson stated that there was sufficient demand in the area to justify another unit and that a business case was being looked at. The committee further discussed the possibility of a Spend to Save project.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Barnado's – Cluaran Service in meeting Council priorities.**

(g) CAMHS, NHS Forth Valley – Clinical Psychologist, Looked After Children

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £73,264 of Council funding. Margaret Anderson stated that the funding ensured that looked after children were getting the right care. The service was seen to pay for itself as it reduced the potential of children and young people entering residential care.

Members stated that the service was essential but that the NHS had a role in providing mental health care to children and adults and that the work of the service fit better with the remit of the NHS which the funding should reflect. Margaret Anderson stated that she would request a 50 – 50 share with the NHS for funding liability.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by CAMHS, NHS Forth Valley – Clinical Psychologist, Look After Children in meeting Council priorities.**

(h) Barnado's – New Beginnings

### **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of Barnado's – New Beginnings to a future meeting to be provided with a more detailed report.**

The Committee agreed to conjoin the following two items of business.

(i) Quarriers Scotland – Quarriers Falkirk Children's Rights

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £86,200 of Council funding. The service had assisted the Council in developing its response to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The committee asked why services were provided by both Quarriers and Who Cares? Scotland. Margaret Anderson stated that Who Cares? Scotland is the main national organisation in supporting looked after children and care leavers, bringing access to specialist knowledge. However, Quarriers provide for wider children's rights work.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Quarriers Scotland – Quarriers Falkirk Children’s Rights in meeting Council priorities.**

(j) Who Cares? Scotland – Children’s Rights Service

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £27,970 of Council funding.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Who Cares? Scotland – Children’s Rights Service in meeting Council priorities.**

(k) SACRO – SACRO Restorative Justice Service

### **Decision**

**The committee continued consideration of SACRO – SACRO Restorative Justice Service to a future meeting to be provided with a more detailed report.**

(l) Signpost Recovery – Time 4 Us

Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the report, advising that more information had been provided as previously requested. Matthew Davies stated that the project received £30,000 of Council funding and had secured five year funding worth almost £230,000 from the Big Lottery Fund.

The committee asked about demonstration of the agreed outcomes. Matthew Davies stated that demonstration of outcomes would be improved and that it was a challenge as the work linked in with other services. The annual audited accounts had been received. The committee requested that the accounts were submitted to a future meeting.

### **Decision**

**The committee requested that further information on the annual audited accounts of Signpost Recovery – Time 4 Us be provided to a future meeting.**

(m) NHS Forth Valley – Speech and Language Therapy

Andrew Facherty provided an overview of the report, advising that the project received £515,040 of Council funding.

Members asked what funding contribution the NHS made. Andrew Facherty stated that seven Speech and Language Therapists were funded by the NHS and that they were supplemented by Council funding.

Members asked for further information on NHS funding and work allocation. Andrew Facherty stated that there were twelve Speech and Language Therapists in the area and that two solely focused on the NHS. Benefits of the existing arrangements were that the Council utilised specialist knowledge in clinical supervision, continuing professional development and team management.

Members asked what the service provided. Andrew Facherty advised that some benefits are difficult to measure. Therapists meet with children, provide guidance and advice and follow up with children.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by NHS Forth Valley – Speech and Language Therapy in meeting Council priorities.**

The committee agreed to a short adjournment. The committee adjourned at 3.05 p.m. and reconvened at 3.15 p.m. with all members present as per the sederunt with the exception of Baillie Buchanan.

Councillor McLuckie left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

## **S40. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND (FPP): MARGINALISED GROUPS**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services which provided an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding which provided services with a focus on marginalised groups, and which fall within the FPP reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The report provided information on the funding agreements Corporate and Neighbourhood Services had with external organisations during the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014. An individual report was appended for each of the 5 organisations which received funding. Each report set out the service provided, the agreed outcomes/objectives and performance information.

The committee heard from officers in relation to the individual reports.

### **(a) The Action Group – Real Jobs Falkirk**

Linda Scott provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £90,000 of Council funding. 60 young people were engaged with the organisation. The organisation faced challenges in securing sustainable employment for service users.

The committee asked how the work of the project aligned with that of the employment training unit (ETU). Linda Scott stated that the ETU did not currently target disability. The ETU did not have as much capacity to deliver support to young people with a range of disabilities in the way that the project did. The Action Group works alongside school support workers to assist the transition for young people leaving Carrongrange school.

The committee asked how funding provided by the Council was spent. Linda Scott stated that the funding was used to secure employment support workers who were dedicated to the project.

Members asked if upon completion of placements service users were being retained in employment. Linda Scott stated that the project had secured successful outcomes for young people in smaller organisations, where relationships and trust were built up. She stated that the ETU was better placed to work with larger organisations and national chains.

The committee discussed the future challenges and risks facing the organisation and highlighted that Big Lottery Funding had expired in August 2014.

### **Decision**

**The committee requested that a further report on The Action Group - Real Jobs Falkirk is submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.**

(b) LinkLiving – Smartliving

Elizabeth Hood provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £14,114 of Council funding. The project utilised peer education to engage high school pupils to prevent homelessness. Scottish Government 'People and Communities' funding was due to expire in March 2015.

The committee asked if the project represented best value or if alternative methods of service delivery were available. Elizabeth Hood stated that peer educators provided a powerful message to young people in raising awareness of homelessness and the support services available. The project had also developed online information resources.

Members acknowledged the work done by the project and requested that officers arrange for the committee to visit the project.

The committee asked how the project used its funding. The project used funding for a variety of purposes including purchase of materials, booklets and publicity.

Members discussed the Council's statutory requirement to provide accommodation to people in crisis. Elizabeth Hood stated that whilst there is a statutory requirement to provide accommodation the project ensured that young people had the skill set to support themselves and avoid becoming homeless at all.

The committee asked about future funding of the project. Elizabeth Hood advised that the project had applied widely for funding achieving some success.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by LinkLiving - Smartliving in meeting Council priorities.**

(c) Salvation Army – Drop in Service (Soup Kitchen)

Elizabeth Hood provided an overview of the report, stating that the project had experienced increased usage over the previous three years. The project relied on volunteers and was jointly funded by the Council and NHS Forth Valley, with additional funding from donations. The project received £10,475 of Council funding.

Members asked if, as the service accessed multiple funding streams, Council funding was essential to service provision. Elizabeth Hood stated that the level of service would be dependent on gaining additional funding from other sources and continued funding from NHS Forth Valley. The project faced increased overheads and in the reporting period had used the entirety of its funding. Elizabeth Hood stated that the project signposted other services and this can lead to reengaging people who were not engaged with other support services.

**Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Salvation Army – Drop in Service (Soup Kitchen) in meeting Council priorities.**

(d) Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)

Celia Sweeney provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £15,200 of Council funding. She stated that the organisation works well with Police Scotland and had success in anti-sectarian community work. However, as the focus of the organisation shifted to incorporate a wider equality agenda the board needed to address its skills and knowledge gap in some areas to provide effective leadership and governance. Further, external funding would expire in March 2015. Clackmannanshire Council had withdrawn its funding and Stirling Council was reviewing its position.

Members discussed the return on funding provided by CSREC projects. Members expressed concern in regard to the use of the £159,000 of public money the organisation had secured as external funding and stated that other organisations operate on significantly less resources. The committee questioned if CSREC tackled a sufficiently broad range of equality issues. Members felt that more information was required to determine if outcomes were being delivered and if the Council's funding of CSREC represented best value.

**Decision**

**The committee requested that a report providing information on outcomes achieved by Central Scotland Regional Equality Council and how the organisation would reprofile if other funding streams were withdrawn is submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.**

(e) Falkirk Community Trust – Sport 4 Youth

Linda Scott provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £38,637 of Council funding. The project encouraged young people to regularly participate in sport. Linda Scott stated that the project faced challenges in regard to staffing and a lack of attendance at some sessions. The project had reviewed its provision and only continued sessions with sufficient demand.

The committee asked how the Council funding was used. Linda Scott stated that two Sports Development Officers were funded through the project and delivered the service.

**Decision**

**The committee approved the report on Falkirk Community Trust - Sport 4 Youth and acknowledged the progress made in meeting Council priorities.**

In accordance with her declaration of interest, Councillor Black left the meeting at this point.

**S41. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND (FPP): COMMUNITY SAFETY**

In accordance with Standing Order 13, should at any time after a meeting has commenced, the number of members present fall below the quorum, the proceedings will be suspended. The meeting was declared to be inquorate and this item of business was accordingly continued to the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Black re-entered the meeting at conclusion of the previous item of business.

**S42. SCRUTINY PANEL – APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The committee had, on 25 September 2014 (ref S29), continued consideration of a report by the Chief Governance Officer which presented the scrutiny panel's recommendations in regard to elected member participation on outside organisations.

Brian Pirie provided the Committee with an overview of the report.

Members stated that some organisations contact members directly and that it is difficult to know the required commitment, benefits and pitfalls. Members stated that a checklist would be useful and protective. Brian Pirie stated that the Panel's scope was focussed on Council appointments but that support for members would be considered.

The committee discussed the process for reporting back members' participation on outside organisations, stating that reporting back was important. The committee felt reporting back should be through publication of the external organisations' minutes.



## Decision

The committee agreed to recommend to the Executive that:

- 1) the following principles be adopted in regard to the appointment of elected members to outside organisations:
  - i) where there is strategic benefit to the Council in appointing to a national or regional body (such as COSLA), it would be appropriate to consider making such an appointment. However, each request should be considered on a case by case basis;
  - ii) for those organisations which fall within the Following the Public Pound regime Council does not appoint an elected member to the organisation; and
  - iii) where the organisation does not operate at a strategic level and is not funded by the Council, Council should consider each request on a case by case basis to ensure that an appointment would benefit the Council.
- 2) based on these principles, the Executive considers the recommendations in respect of current appointments, set out in appendix 5 of the report;
- 3) when appointments are made training should be available – by the organisation and/or Council to ensure that the elected members are fully able to undertake the role of Council representative; and
- 4) reporting back should take place and should be done through the inclusion of outside organisations' minutes in the minute volume.