

EX18. SCRUTINY PANEL CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS: FALKIRK COUNCIL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations following a scrutiny panel review of the implementation of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy, 'Have Your Say'.

As part of its annual workplan the Scrutiny Committee had established a scrutiny panel to review the implementation of the Community Involvement Strategy and to make recommendations. The panel reported its conclusions and recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee on 14 May 2015 (ref S10) and the Committee had agreed to refer the recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

Councillor Black, chair of the Scrutiny Panel, presented the recommendations.

Decision

The Executive agreed the following recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) to review the role, remit and membership of the Corporate Participation Group. This group has a central role in ensuring that there is a consistent approach to participation and engagement across the Council and promoting a best practice approach within Services;
- (b) to develop a robust process for local community planning which sets out a defined process for the production of plans. This would include consideration of using 'place shaping' tools such as "Planning for Real" in a consistent manner;
- (c) to develop a defined reporting framework for local community plans to ensure that reports on them are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee and then the Executive prior to submission to the Community Planning Leadership Board;
- (d) to promote Have Your Say, the Plan for Local Involvement, and the principles set out within it more effectively, internally to Members and officers, and externally to communities and partner organisations. This would include producing a concise summary of the plan;
- (e) to ensure appropriate training is put in place for officers to enable them to implement the principles set out in the plan, for example Plain English training, training in survey design etc;
- (f) to record all consultation activity in a corporate database of consultation activities, drawing on Service Plans, Community Planning, to avoid duplication of consultation/engagement. The effectiveness and accessibility of the current data base will also be reviewed;
- (g) to provide information to the public/specific stakeholders prior to and after they have informed, consulted or engaged with communities, including feedback. There should also be a clear process for advising

Members about consultations that are taking place and feeding the results back to them;

- (h) to provide more information on consultations, community engagement and Local Community Planning in the consultation section of the Council's website;
- (i) to explore different digital means of engaging with local and thematic communities. This could include the potential for using a bespoke online consultation platform such as Citizen Space. It would also include a review of how the Council's use of social media platforms could be expanded to support its engagement activities;
- (j) to provide guidance and training to Members and officers on the use of social media to ensure this is being used more actively but appropriately;
- (k) to ensure that appropriate methods are used to effectively consult and/or engage with hard-to-reach groups and consideration will be given to specific training on consulting and/or engaging hard-to-reach groups;
- (l) to consider the impact of the Community Empowerment Bill and the Council's response to this in August 2015;
- (m) to consider different ways of consulting on the budget employed by other Councils by August 2015 to inform the process going forward and include Councillors in this process; and
- (n) to ask Officers to report back to the Scrutiny Committee periodically on progress on the above