

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2016 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

David Alexander	Adrian Mahoney
Jim Blackwood	Craig Martin (Convener)
Tom Coleman	Dr Craig R Martin
Dennis Goldie	Alan Nimmo
Linda Gow	

OFFICERS:

Carron Smith, Principal Business Support Officer
Colin Frame, Principal Surveyor (Strategic Projects)
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

EX88. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors G Goldie and Spears.

EX89. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mahoney declared a non-financial interest in item EX92 as his business has received support from Business Gateway and stated that he would take no part in the discussion or decision making on this item.

EX90. MINUTES

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 January 2016 and the special meeting of the Executive held on 5 February 2016 were approved.

EX91. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 FEBRUARY 2016

- **ROWANS SHORT BREAK SERVICE**
- **SOCIAL WORK CHILDREN & FAMILIES BUDGET UPDATE**

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services and Head of Social Work Adult Services presenting recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee considered, on 4 February 2015, reports on the Rowans short break service (ref SC37) and an update on the Social Work Children and Families budget (ref SC39) and made the following recommendations to the Executive:-

Rowans Short Break Service

- (1) where service redesign is undertaken in the future it is carried out using a model of co-production with service users; and
- (2) that there is greater clarity provided around decisions made in the budget process.

Social Work Children & Families Budget Update

- (3) action is taken to set a realistic budget for external fostering

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Councillor D Goldie, moved that the Executive:-

- (1) *requests a further report to include progress on the Community Empowerment Act and guidelines; and*
- (2) *notes that Children's Services recognises (as set out in paragraph 4.7 of the report) the opportunity to progress "transformation of current services in our approach to service delivery" and (at para 5.1) that they "will be reviewing working practices and seeking transformational change to address these issues" and that, accepting that this will take time and resource, the Service needs to demonstrate that it is on the front foot about this.*

The Executive then adjourned at 9.45a.m. to allow members of the Opposition to consider the motion and reconvened at 9.50a.m. with all members present as per the sederunt.

Councillor Meiklejohn, as convener of the scrutiny committee, provided an overview of the recommendations before the Executive.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

Councillor Gow joined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.

EX92. TENANT & CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2016-19

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting the Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy 2016 – 2019 and associated action plan for approval.

The Council has a duty, in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, to (a) consult tenants on any proposed increases in rent or other charges, (b) to publish a Tenant Participation Strategy, (c) to publish a list of registered Tenant Organisations and (d) to notify tenants about, and explain the likely effect of, any proposals that would significantly affect them. Additionally the Scottish Social Housing Charter defined the

Customer/Landlord relationship in terms of equalities, communication and participation.

The Tenant and Resident Participation Strategy 2013-2016 was developed in 2012. The report highlighted achievements and instances of external recognition in terms of the current Strategy and set out the consultations undertaken to develop the draft Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy 2016 – 2019. The aims of the strategy are to ensure the Council complies with its legal obligation and gives tenants and other residents a bigger say in how housing services are run. It includes a Housing Participation Action Plan based on the duties outlined in the preceding paragraph. The benefits of participation were highlighted.

In terms of the Act, the Strategy must incorporate the resources required to implement it. The costs (£190,000) will be met from current budgets.

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Councillor Blackwood, moved that *the Executive approves the Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy 2016-2019 and associated action plan.*

As an amendment, Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Coleman, moved that, in addition:

An annual postal survey of all tenants is undertaken each year at the same time as information is provided about any proposed rent increase.

On a division, 7 members voted for the motion and 2 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (7) – Councillors Blackwood, D Goldie, Gow, Mahoney, C Martin, C R Martin and Nimmo.

For the amendment (2) – Councillors Alexander and Coleman.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

EX93. CAPITAL PROGRAMMES UPDATE REPORT

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing an update on the 2015/16 Housing and General Services Capital Programmes.

The projected outturn for the 2015/16 Housing Capital programme is £26.9m representing a £3.5m underspend. The report detailed the spend across the various areas of the programme and the movement in forecast since the previous report in December 2015 (ref EX74).

The projected outturn for the General Services Capital programme for 2015/16 is £28.02m (compared to the December 2015 figure of £29.15m). The report set out the main areas of spend for 2015/16 and projected an underspend of £1.68m.

The Executive noted:-

- (1) the budget and forecast position for the General Fund & Housing Capital Programmes for 2015/16; and
- (2) the Prudential Indicators as set out at appendix 3 to the report.

EX94. DENNY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION: PHASE TWO DEVELOPMENT

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting options for delivery of phase 2 of the Denny Town Centre Regeneration project.

The Executive had requested, on 9 June 2015 (ref EX21), further detail on a proposal from County Properties (Northern) Ltd. for development of the phase 2 site. As the preferred bidder County Properties had been asked to review its submission to better fit the requirements of the brief and to seek a commitment from a store operator. County Properties had engaged in negotiations with B&M Retail Ltd for a 15,000sq ft single story retail unit within the site. As the store size was smaller than the original 23,500sq ft planned size the offer of £433,227 was less than the original offer of £650,000. The report set out 2 options together with an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each. These were:-

- option 1 – accept the offer by County Properties; or
- option 2 – reject the offer and remarket the site on completion of phase 1 of the project.

Councillor D Goldie, seconded by Councillor C Martin, moved that *the Executive agrees to accept the offer by County Properties (Northern) Ltd. as detailed in the report.*

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) note the report; and
- (2) accept the offer by County Properties (Northern) Ltd. as detailed in the report.

Councillor D Goldie left the meeting following consideration of this item.

In accordance with his declaration Councillor Mahoney withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the discussion and decision making on the following item.

EX95. BUSINESS GATEWAY & BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on the Council's business support activity from April 2014 to September 2015, proposing participation in Business Loans Scotland and seeking approval for the implementation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Business Gateway programme for 2015-20.

The report provided an overview of business support services for the period April 2014 to September 2015 highlighting:-

- support type;
- growth businesses;
- customer satisfaction feedback; and
- the creation of, and Council's participation in, the Longannet Task Force.

European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) funding of £293,000 had been secured in June 2013 to provide additional support to services to enhance business support in the area. A programme for 2015 to 2020 aimed at encouraging business to grow and create jobs had been developed and submitted to the Scottish Government for approval. If successful this would create two posts – Business Advisor and part-time Economic Development Officer to manage all ERDF claims. Both posts would be funded from the ERDF funding.

The report provided an overview of financial support available to businesses through the Small Business Loans Grants Scheme; Falkirk Business Loan Fund (formerly the BP Business Loan Fund), East of Scotland Investment Fund (ESIF) and Business Loans Scotland. The latter is a pan Scotland fund which will replace ESIF funding. It was proposed that Falkirk Council joins the initiative, transferring the balance of ESIF funding in Falkirk to the new body.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) **note the performance of Business Gateway and related business support activities since April 2014;**
- (2) **note the changes to the BP Loan fund as set out in para 6.3 of the report and the use of an exception to competition under paragraph 5.8 of contract standing orders;**
- (3) **note the conclusion of the East of Scotland Investment Fund;**
- (4) **participate in the formation of Business Loans Scotland, transferring the ESIF balance of £172,123 over to the new fund;**
- (5) **implement the ERDF Business Gateway Programme for the period 2015-20 when approved including recruitment of two additional members of staff as set out in para 8.2 of the report; and**
- (6) **note the progress of the Longannet Task Force.**

EX96. SITE DISPOSAL, MURNIN ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BONNYBRIDGE

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services seeking approval to declare surplus and dispose of a 0.18 acre site at Murnin Road Industrial Estate, Bonnybridge to Storage UK Ltd.

The report set out a proposal by Storage UK Ltd to expand its current storage space by building a new 15,000 sq ft facility at a cost of C.£750,000. The company had identified

the site at Murnin Road Industrial Estate for the development. The Council owned site had been valued by the District Valuers at £14,400.

Decision

The Executive agreed-

- (1) to declare the site extending to 0.18 acres at Murnin Road Industrial Estate, Bonnybridge surplus to operational requirement; and**
- (2) to dispose of the site to Storage UK Ltd for a sum of £14,400.**