

### **SE30. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND REPORT: FALKIRK ENVIRONMENT TRUST / FALKIRK TOWNS LTD**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding, in part, from Development Services and who fall within the Following the Public Pound (FPP) reporting and monitoring arrangements. Rhona Geisler provided an overview of the report.

Councillor McLuckie declared a non-financial interest in SE30 as a director of Falkirk Environment Trust during the reporting period and stated that he considered that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct. In accordance with his declaration of interest Councillor McLuckie left the meeting at this point.

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

#### **(a) Falkirk Environment Trust**

Richard Broadley provided an overview of the report, advising that Falkirk Environment Trust received a direct grant of £27,450 in the period.

Members asked about future issues facing the organisation. Richard Broadley stated that the Service was happy with performance in the period reported. The board would consider the impact of the small reduction to their allocation as a result of reduced receipts from Landfill tax credits. He advised that the maximum grant had been reduced from £50,000 to £30,000.

The committee asked when the criteria used for granting funding was last reviewed. Richard Broadley stated that the grant eligibility was informed by the national categories and the organisation makes its recommendations in line with that.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by Falkirk Environment Trust in meeting Council priorities.**

Prior to consideration of the following item of business Councillor McLuckie re-joined the meeting.

#### **(b) Town Centre Management**

Pete Reid provided an overview of the report, advising that Town Centre Management had received £188,890 of Council funding in the reporting period.

Members commented on the number of people using out of town retail locations and the cost of car parking in the town centre. Pete Reid advised that it was a BiD priority action to promote the town centre and night time economy. New retailers had recently been brought into the centre and this should attract increased footfall. However, he stated that it was a difficult retail landscape with vacant units and the rise of online retail. Reference was made to the Free After Three car parking initiative and it was stated that business owners had felt this had been successful.

The committee asked how Falkirk compared to other similar town centres nationally. Pete Reid stated that Falkirk had been 15<sup>th</sup> in Scotland out of well over a hundred as rated in the KACI measure. He stated that comparable town centres were Stirling, Dunfermline, and Livingstone. Members requested further information on KACI performance.

Members discussed the role of social media in promoting the town centre, Pete Reid confirmed that the organisation used social media actively as a tool for promotion activities.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by Town Centre Management in meeting Council priorities.**