

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL****MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of FALKIRK COUNCIL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2008 at 7.00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Provost Reid; Depute Provost Black; Councillors Alexander, Blackwood, Buchanan, Carleschi, Coleman, H Constable, J Constable, Fry, Goldie, Gow, Hughes, Jackson, Kenna, Lemetti, A MacDonald, C MacDonald, Mahoney, C Martin, C R Martin, McLuckie, McNally, McNeill, Meiklejohn, Nicol, Oliver, Patrick, Spears, Thomson and Waddell.

CONVENER: Provost Reid

APOLOGIES: Councillor Nimmo.

ATTENDING: Chief Executive; Directors of Community Services, of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services and of Finance; Acting Director of Law and Administration; Head of Accountancy; Acting Head of Planning and Transportation and Democratic Services Manager.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor Patrick declared a non-financial interest in relation to item (FC59(d)) – Falkirk Rugby Club as a non-playing member of the club but did not consider that his interest would influence his role as a Councillor. Councillor Patrick, therefore, participated in the discussion and decision.

FC59. MOTIONS**(a) Tourism Events**

Councillor A MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Coleman moved that:-

Council notes with disappointment the failure of the current Labour/Tory Administration to bid for a share of the special £5m fund set up by the SNP Government and administered by Events Scotland to assist local authorities organise tourism events for the Year of the Homecoming in 2009.

Council notes that under the previous SNP/Independent Administration income from Tourism rose by over 6% a year due in the main to the development of the My Future's in Falkirk economic development strategy and the ability to develop major projects such as the Helix and the MOD.

Council therefore calls for:

1. A commitment from the Administration that it will in the future seek to take advantage of opportunities that come the way of local government such as the Events Scotland fund.
2. Will bring forward to the relevant scrutiny committee a strategy paper for the maximisation of tourism potential around the national Year of the Homecoming strategy by no later than the next cycle of committee meetings.

By way of an amendment Councillor Mahoney seconded by Councillor C R Martin moved that:-

Council welcomes the recent growth in visitor numbers to a number of key tourist sites across Falkirk district. We reaffirm our commitment – highlighted within our corporate plan – to work with partners to grow tourism further by ensuring:

- the promotion of the area's unique heritage and culture;
- maintaining and developing high profile national events;
- developing high-quality visitor attractions;
- and engaging with our communities in their local heritage and culture.

We also reaffirm our commitment to build on our success attracting external and government funding to support these initiatives, where appropriate.

On a division 14 Members voted for the Motion and 16 for the Amendment.

Accordingly, **RESOLVED** in terms of the Amendment.

Councillor Fry entered the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item of business.

Councillor Goldie entered the meeting at the conclusion of the foregoing item of business.

(b) Discontinued Bus Services

Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Hughes moved that:-

In order to meet the terms of the authority's Equal Opportunities policies to say nothing of our stated goals and values Council agrees to the following.

1. To bring forward a detailed financial report committing the Council to the re-instatement of all bus services discontinued where the bus passenger criteria was not met but where the usage was greater or equal to the usage of the recently reinstated last bus to Slamannan.

By way of an Amendment Councillor Mahoney seconded by Councillor McLuckie moved that:-

Council reaffirms its commitment to work with communities across Falkirk district to improve services for local people, within the financial constraints placed on it by the SNP Government.

On a division 14 Members voted for the Motion and 17 for the Amendment.

Accordingly, **RESOLVED** in terms of the Amendment.

(c) Office Accommodation

Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Alexander moved that:-

The Johnston Press have become synonymous with Falkirk and as such are a key employer within the town.

Council notes with disappointment the snubbing of the company at the Falkirk Stadium and believes that positive action is required to keep the company HQ in the Falkirk area.

Council also notes the shortage of modern office accommodation within the Falkirk area and therefore believes that the dithering by the current Labour/Tory/Independent coalition before finally implementing the terms of the Strategic Property Review concluded by the previous SNP/Independent Administration was a grave error of judgement.

Council also notes the delay in bringing forward details of the Henry Boot proposals for Westfield which, we believe, contains proposals for office space within the first phase as another contributing factor in the failure of the Administration to find alternative accommodation for the Johnston Press HQ.

Council therefore instructs the appropriate Community Service staff to bring forward a report to the first available Economic Development Committee outlining the steps taken to date to assist Johnston Press relocate and the options open to Falkirk Council to assist and avenues currently being investigated.

By way of an amendment Councillor C Martin seconded by Councillor Lemetti moved that:-

Council applauds the tremendous work being done by the Economic Development section within Falkirk Council in continuing to attract new jobs to the area working in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and the Private Sector. Council confirms its good links with Johnston Press, meeting regularly with its staff and engaging on joint projects such as the business awards.

Council dismisses the SNP motion for its short sightedness and lack of knowledge on the matter of Johnston Press relocation.

Council fully supports the recent implementation of the Business Property Strategy that will be more flexible in order to take account of market conditions and their effects on the council.

On a division 14 Members voted for the Motion and 17 for the Amendment.

Accordingly, **RESOLVED** in terms of the Amendment.

(d) Falkirk Rugby Club

Councillor Thomson, seconded by Councillor Alexander moved that:-

Falkirk Council congratulates Falkirk Rugby Club for their achievements on and off the pitch over the past few years.

In particular Falkirk Council welcomes the club's youth development work with youngsters which often sees over 150 local kids taking part in club sessions during the week.

The Council also welcomes the recent award of £200,000 from the SportsScotland for the upgrade of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities at Sunnyside.

We view this as an opportunity to establish a mutually beneficial partnership with the club similar to those established with Stenhousemuir and Falkirk Football Clubs.

Council therefore agrees to open up discussions between the club and authority with a view to a Council contribution to the programme and report back to the appropriate committee in due course.

By way of an Amendment Councillor Waddell seconded by Councillor C Martin moved that:-

Falkirk Council congratulates Falkirk Rugby Club for their achievements on and off the pitch over the past few years.

In particular Falkirk Council welcomes the club's youth development work with youngsters which often sees over 150 local kids taking part in club sessions during the week.

The Council also welcomes the recent award of £200,00 from the Sport Scotland for the upgrade of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities at Sunnyside.

Council dismisses part of the SNP motion in particular paragraphs 4 and 5 as being out of date, given that the contents of the motion are already being implemented.

Council applauds the tremendous work being undertaken by the Community Services within Falkirk Council in their ongoing partnerships with various sporting organisations including SRU, Falkirk and Grangemouth Rugby Clubs.

Council confirms its continued links with SRU, in particular the work of the Sports Development Officers specific to Rugby and the two Modern Apprentices who assist in delivering coaching programmes around the district. Council also notes the proposals from SRU to appoint a further 2 Modern Apprentices to the Rugby Programme.

Following discussion, Councillor Gow seconded by Depute Provost Black moved that “the question be now put”.

On a division 18 Members voted for the Motion with 13 against following which the mover of the original motion exercised her right of reply.

Members then voted on the motion and amendment with 13 Members voting for the Motion and 18 for the Amendment.

Accordingly **RESOLVED** in terms of the Amendment.