

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 6 AUGUST 2013
Author: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise of the forthcoming Community Council Elections, to seek approval of a model code of conduct for Community Councillors and to propose a way forward for dealing with the review of the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils and associated support as agreed by Council on 7 January 2013.

2. COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2013

- 2.1 The Council's current Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils makes provision for the quadrennial election of Community Councils. The last elections were held in September 2009 and consequently there is a requirement to undertake elections this year. A draft timetable is attached for members' information (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 The current Scheme provides for Community Councils which are made up of elected representatives of the community and representatives of local organisations who are appointed by the Community Council. The Scheme states that each Community Council will consist of no fewer than 9 and no more than 18 members and, of these, no fewer than 6 and no more than 12 should be elected.
- 2.3 There are currently 23 Community Councils in the Falkirk Council area, although 6 of them are not active. Appendix 2 shows the previously agreed composition of each Community Council split between elected members and those persons who are representative of local organisations and who are appointed by the community councils themselves in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme.
- 2.4 The forthcoming elections will deal only with the members elected to each Council. Once established, the councils will take forward the appointment of additional representatives.
- 2.5 A notice setting out the election arrangements and seeking nominations will be placed in the press in September 2013. In addition, a variety of media will be used to maximise public awareness and participation in the election process. This will include press features, poster distribution, the use of the Council's web site and, for the first time, use of Twitter.

3. REVIEW OF THE SCHEME OF ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT

- 3.1 The Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils provides a framework governing the creation and operation of Community Councils in the area. Each Local Authority is required under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to set a Scheme for its area and the process for reviewing Schemes is prescribed within the Act. In January 2013, Falkirk Council agreed that officers should conduct a full review of the current Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils and also of the support (financial and other) currently given to Community Councils.
- 3.2 Given that Council has now adopted its new decision making process and that this allows member led reviews through Policy Development Panels and Scrutiny Panels it is proposed that the review of Community Councils could be taken forward by a Policy Development Panel. This would allow the Panel to consult with the newly established Community Councils on the Scheme and their needs in terms of support.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

- 4.1 At present there is no code of conduct which applies to Community Councillors. Following a review of Community Councils in 2009, the Scottish Government developed a model code of conduct largely based on the code of conduct for Elected Members which would apply to Community Councillors. It is recommended that the Executive endorses the code of conduct, attached as Appendix 3, and that each new Community Council be advised that it will be required to adopt the code. The Panel may wish to develop the code further as part of its review.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is estimated that the cost of the Community Council elections 2013 will be in the region of £20,000. The costs can be met from the current budget provision.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is invited to:-

- 6.1 note the timetable and arrangements for the forthcoming Community Council Elections,
- 6.2 establish a Policy Development Panel for the purpose of reviewing the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils and associated support,
- 6.3 appoint members to the Panel, and
- 6.4 endorse the code of conduct for Community Councillors for adoption by each Community Council.

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Chief Executive

Date: 26 July 2013

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – draft timetable for Community Council Elections

Appendix 2 – composition of Community Councils 2013

Appendix 3 – Code of Conduct for Community Councillors

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE