FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2015 at 9.30 AM.

CORE MEMBERS:	Rosie Murray Baillie Joan Paterson Depute Provost John Patrick
MEMBERS ATTENDING:	David Alexander Stephen Bird Jim Blackwood Gordon Hughes Brian McCabe Cecil Meiklejohn Alan Nimmo Provost Pat Reid
OFFICERS:	Alex Black, Quality Improvement Manager Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement Megan Farr, Policy Officer Paul Ferguson, Revenue Manager Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer Gary Greenhorn, Joint Acting Director of Education Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer Anne Pearson, Joint Acting Director of Education Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer
ALSO ATTENDING:	Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services (designate)

PP15. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 5 February 2015 was approved.

PP16. EDUCATION SERVICES SCRUTINY REPORT

The panel considered a report by the Joint Acting Director of Education Services setting out the performance for the service from April to December 2014. Anne Pearson gave an overview of the report.

The panel welcomed Robert Naylor as the newly appointed Director of Children's Services.

Members asked about the challenge of providing appropriate support to children with additional support needs. Anne Pearson stated that in relation to Oxgangs School there were no significant difficulties at the current time and that two new teachers had been appointed. An improvement plan was in place and the service was carrying out an on-going inclusion review. The vision from this had been agreed and adopted.

The panel sought information on how effectively and well used Glow had been since its re-launch. Anne Pearson stated that lots of work was being carried out using Glow, particularly around the issue of personal security on social media. The revised version of Glow was a good product and use throughout the service was being encouraged. Alex Black stated that there would be a long lead in time to see significantly increased usage as people tended to be driven to Glow by need. In terms of the use of social media in schools, Anne Pearson highlighted that Primary 5 and 6 pupils from Kinnaird Primary School had created a youtube video about palm oil. Education Scotland had contacted the service and asked to use the video as an example of good practice. The panel requested that a briefing session on Glow for all members, Gary Greenhorn advised that a briefing on Glow would take place. Members asked for their access to Glow to be restored, Anne Pearson confirmed that this would be done.

Members asked if there was mitigation in place to deal with the proposed reductions to the Community Learning and Development (CLD) service. Gary Greenhorn stated that there were 104 live activity agreements involving young people three months prior to leaving school and 63 for those aged 20 and over. CLD provided support directly in schools but support was also provided by third sector organisations such as Barnado's. The service was working on the reduction to CLD provision and highlighted that agreements key to the business of the service would be treated as a priority.

The panel asked if budget constraints around book selection would limit the impact of the literacy strategy. Anne Pearson advised that the service was working with the principal librarian to undertake a review of how to best organise provision in schools. She stated that a report would be provided to members following the review.

In response to a question on tensions between schools and communities about the use of outdoor learning, Anne Pearson stated that the service was aware of a particular issue and the head teacher of the school was engaging with the community around their concerns.

The panel asked how the service equipped young people to use social media and the internet safely. Anne Pearson advised that the service had worked hard on guidance for young people of all ages and had engaged parent councils.

In response to a question on the improved fluidity between school and adult literacy, Anne Pearson stated that improvements were made following increased contributions from CLD.

The panel asked for further information on the work to develop tracking and monitoring systems. Anne Pearson stated that two depute head teachers were working collaboratively on this for children from 3 to 18 years old. The work would improve the experiences of children and young people through school transitions.

Responding to a question on teacher number requirements, Gary Greenhorn advised that the service had been working toward the August intake since January. After talking to schools, which identified their requirements, the service had requested 85 probationer teachers for the coming year. The recruitment process would commence in late April or May in order to have the required number of teachers ready for the start of term in August. In terms of penalties for a drop in numbers, Gary Greenhorn stated that a tolerance had been included to ensure the required level was met.

The panel highlighted that attainment at Higher level had become static and that the target had remained more or less the same, asking how Falkirk compared nationally. Alex Black stated that there had been a gentle rise in the number of pupils achieving three or more Highers since 2007, from 26% to 38%. He advised that the Falkirk figures were a percentage point below the Scottish average but that the long term trend was positive. He stated that Falkirk was usually in line with or slightly better than the national average and comparator authorities. Members expressed that they wanted Falkirk to be better than average and asked what was being done to achieve this. Anne Pearson stated that annual school improvement meetings had been reviewed and were now held with head teachers more often. The service was tightening up its focus on attainment, particularly through the work on tracking and monitoring.

In response to a question on the uptake of free school meals by eligible pupils, Gary Greenhorn stated that the figures were positive with Falkirk having a higher uptake than other areas.

The panel asked for information on the looked after children scrutiny group. Alex Black advised that the group was led by David Mackay and currently held at Oxgang School. The group drilled down to a pupil level focus. The next steps for the group were to look beyond traditional measures to the wider process, especially the support provided to looked after children post exclusion. The group was multi-agency, including social work services and Barnado's Cluaran Service.

Members asked for information on the work done to build family capacity. Alex Black advised that the work included summer programmes and learning opportunities provided with CLD throughout the year. 230 families, who had been identified by social work services or the third sector, had attended events.

The panel asked about the provision of wi-fi in primary schools and any performance issues. Gary Greenhorn stated that he was not aware of any performance problems but that there had been a challenge to get infrastructure in place. There was also a challenge in using guest devices on the network due to security protocols.

Members expressed concern about the number of reported incidents of violence against school staff. Anne Pearson advised that recording processes had been revised and that the reporting method did not highlight where a single pupil was responsible for multiple incidents. She also advised that the range of incidents went from the minor to the very serious but that most incidents were minor. Gary Greenhorn stated that the service would review how to present the information to provide greater clarity in the future.

The panel asked for information on tracking and monitoring of vulnerable young people. The panel highlighted that the deadline for the work had been August 2014 and that although it was now done it had been behind the timescale. Anne Pearson stated that an update would be brought to a future meeting.

Members asked about the variance in offer of subject choice to children across the area. Gary Greenhorn stated that secondary school head teachers were looking at implementing standardised choice. Work was also being carried out with Forth Valley College and would involve the Director of Children's Services. Alex Black advised that upon entering the senior phase pupils were offered six subjects on average. The curriculum was structured to offer an equality of entitlement across high schools. He stated that pupils could take on an additional course in sixth year and that if the pupil was able to achieve five Highers in one sitting they would be given the opportunity.

The panel asked about early identification of children with additional support needs. Anne Pearson stated that identification could start pre-birth and was a collaborative process. There was a team focussed on under 3 year olds who worked with the NHS for pre or post birth. If issues arose later there was a team focussed on 3 to 8 year olds.

Members asked what was done in the case of a dispute between parent and school about whether a child had additional support needs and the level of provision necessary. Anne Pearson stated that requests for entry deferral would be considered by an appeals committee. If parents were unhappy with a decision then they could go to tribunal. However, the service worked to avoid such circumstances and used mediation to encourage discussion.

The panel asked how schools identified children with additional support needs. Anne Pearson advised that if a child was struggling in school and their behaviour showed that their needs were not being met then the school would act in an incremental fashion. Where necessary a team around the child was established and meetings would be held with the parents and named person to identify how to best meet the child's needs.

Members asked about the implementation of the customer first system across the service. Alex Black stated that customer first was being trialled in one area of the service. Megan Farr was the officer accountable for taking forward the roll out across the service. The system would be rolled out to schools in 2016. He stated that the implementation of customer first would improve reporting and that more robust data would be collected.

The panel asked for information on equality and poverty impact assessments (EPIA). Gary Greenhorn stated that EPIAs were an integral part of the budget process and that detailed corporate assessment was carried out where savings were proposed. Anne Pearson advised that further training would be given to staff across the service.

In response to a question on the use of e-learning packages around data protection, Anne Pearson stated that a reminder and guidance had been issued to staff on data protection and that there were three mandatory e-learning modules.

The panel asked for information on why there was a decrease to 84% of secondary school pupils who felt safe and well looked after/secure in school. Alex Black stated that the information was useful but that limited comparisons could be drawn to previous years as different cohorts of pupils were surveyed. He stated that the satisfaction level was lower than the service wanted. A focus group had been set up with senior secondary school pupils to feed in to the service plan.

Members asked for information on the Family Information Service. Alex Black stated that the service was soon to be launched which would include a helpline and website for further support.

The panel asked how the Council audited the accounts of community centres and school halls. Gary Greenhorn stated that parent councils submitted accounts to the service and they were then audited by Education, who referred any questions to Finance. CLD staff had been trained on financial governance. He advised that the accounts received by Education Services included the level of reserves held by a group.

Members asked about the percentage of looked after children achieving positive destinations. Alex Black stated that a breakdown could be provided after the meeting. Mary Pitcaithly advised that this area was to be subject to the work of a scrutiny panel, as part of the scrutiny plan considered by Council on 11 March 2015.

Decision

The panel noted the performance statement.

PP17. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE SCRUTINY REPORT

(i)   Chief Executive Office – Finance Performance

The panel considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer setting out the performance for the service from 1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015. Bryan Smail gave an overview of the report.

Members asked for an update on the work to ensure that existing collection policies mitigated the impact of welfare reform and complied with statute and best practice. Paul Ferguson stated that the collections policy had been rewritten twice in the previous six months but that implementation had been delayed by the absence of the Depute Chief Finance Officer. The draft policy had been submitted to Corporate and Neighbourhood Services for consultation and it would be provided to Councillors shortly thereafter.

The panel asked for further information on the service's work to improve customer service. Paul Ferguson stated that an improvement team had been set up. The team were looking at how to better plan resources based on identifying peaks of demand. Customer service training had been provided to staff and extra staff would be deployed to front counters during busy periods at Callander Square. Wait times were displayed on nine back office computers and a trigger was set if those waiting times reached ten minutes.

Members asked for further information on rent arrears and discretionary housing payment (DHP). Bryan Smail advised that the Council's full allocation of (DHP) would be spent. The service had worked to ensure that everyone who was entitled to the payment accessed it. He stated that the general economic climate and the pressure on family budgets had led to increased arrears. He highlighted the legacy issue of non-payment from the bedroom tax which had a ripple effect to rent collection. Paul Ferguson stated that rent arrears over the previous two to five months had been more positive. He highlighted the work of the Council's Tenancy Sustainment Officers who had been important to the prevention of serious debts. He stated that the building of new council houses created new tenants who needed support to develop the skill set to manage and pay all their bills. Tenancy Sustainment Officers had provided support through training and education.

The panel asked if the £800,000 towards proposed capital expenditure received from tax incremental financing was in line with what was expected. Bryan Smail advised that the received amount was in line with expectations and that what had been claimed for was approved.

Members asked about the work to implement e-procurement with all services. Bryan Smail stated that the implementation was being worked through with all services in smaller sections. There were challenges around the variation to current practice across services and time was required to map this. He stated that good progress was being made and that the electronic system would be rolled out service by service. Completion of this large scale project was expected to take between a year and a half and two years.

The panel asked if the DHP allocation was overspent if there would be an affect to the accounts. Bryan Smail stated that an accrual would be built into the accounts, if prudent. The Scottish Government had held back an element of DHP to assess the initial national picture. He stated that the use of DHP was positive in managing arrears. He advised that by the end of the year there was likely to be a £100,000 overspend.

Members asked for information on the impact of welfare reform on staff and workloads. Bryan Smail advised that over the previous few years there had been waves of pressure, including major system implementation which created backlogs in others areas which were now cleared. Welfare reform had created feelings of uncertainty especially as the timetable for implementation had slipped. The range of pilots was narrow and short of what full implementation would be. This led to uncertainty in planning staff resources and an increased use of temporary contracts. Paul Ferguson stated that in Revenues and Benefits there had been no increase in absence due to stress and that a change management course had been provided to staff.

The panel asked who was responsible for ensuring that annual general meetings were held for groups running community halls and that proper accounts were submitted. Bryan Smail stated that Education Services were responsible in that case. Mary Pitcaithly stated that the responsible service would take on the responsibility for all liaison and that in this case Education Services worked with Finance to ensure that proper financial information was presented. She advised that support was provided to community centre management teams by the organisation's monitoring officer.

Members asked if information on council tax and housing benefits could be sent to people in a single envelope rather than in separate mail runs. Paul Ferguson advised that would be the approach for this year. The service had received positive feedback on taking this approach.

The panel asked for further information on pursuing small council tax debts. Paul Ferguson advised that the Council had a statutory obligation to tell people of their outstanding council tax debts. The service did not pursue debts under £2.50.

Members asked for further information regarding topped up state pensions, where the gross figure was used for tax calculation. Bryan Smail stated that he would look into the matter further after the meeting.

The panel asked for information on the pilot of universal credit in Highland Council. Bryan Smail advised that there was a process to follow, including the elapse of time before meeting a trigger which meant that arrears built up. The timescale was that of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). There were concerns arising from the pilot that the DWP were slow to action requests sent once people met the trigger. He stated that the best approach to debt management was to intervene early but the timescales for universal credit delayed the initiation of intervention. Fiona Campbell stated that Falkirk was to be included in the second phase of the roll out, which was anticipated to be toward the end of May, and would impact on new clients.

Members asked if any information was available on the impact of universal credit regarding mental health and self harm. Bryan Smail stated that he did not have that information but that it was likely that the risk was real and higher than it otherwise would be.

The panel asked for information on the impact of universal credit on social care landlords and housing associations. Paul Ferguson highlighted that an Edinburgh based Registered Social Landlord had been given DWP support but had still suffered a loss of income. He advised that as universal credit was paid after an individual had built up other debts in order to keep their household running it was more unlikely that rent payments would be made. He stated that meetings were being held with the DWP to discuss how to mitigate the impact of the changes. Mary Pitcaithly stated that a report providing an update on welfare reform had been submitted to the Executive on 2 December 2014.

Decision

The panel noted the performance statement.

(ii)   Chief Executive Office – Governance

The panel considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer setting out the performance for the service for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015. Rose Mary Glackin gave an overview of the report.

The panel asked for clarification about recording the percentage of Council and Joint Board agendas issued within set timescales. Rose May Glackin stated that where the calling notice was issued five clear days prior to the meeting it was recorded as meeting the target. However, if the calling notice was issued within five clear days of the meeting it would be recorded as being issued late. She advised that where a report was marked as 'to follow' this did not breach the performance indicator if the calling notice was issued in time with available papers.

Members asked about the projection that Printworks would not achieve its targeted surplus. Mary Pitcaithly advised that all budgets were prepared using anticipated spend and income. Rose Mary Glackin stated that a business analysis of Printworks was being taken forward. The service aimed to achieve value for money wherever possible. She highlighted that in line with the corporate print policy all services should use Printworks for their volume print needs. The policy was supported throughout the Council by service champions.

The panel asked why the percentage of licensing applications acknowledged within five working days was below target. Rose Mary Glackin advised that management action had been taken and that improvements would be seen in future reporting periods.

Members asked why standing orders and the scheme of delegation were kept under review. Rose Mary Glackin advised that they were kept under review so that where decisions taken by members necessitated a change to the standing orders or scheme of delegation this could be done.

The panel asked if after updating guidance on data protection it was given to the Information Commissioner for feedback. Rose Mary Glackin stated that there were two parts to the regulation of information and data protection. The Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) was responsible for enforcing and promoting Scotland's freedom of information laws, as well as being responsible for approving the Council's publication scheme. She advised that the Information Commissioner's role was to uphold information rights in respect to the Data Protection Act 1998. The Council complied with the good practice guidance issued by both Commissioners. Updates to Council guidance were not referred to the Commissioners but the SIC reviewed all Scottish Councils' adherence to freedom of information laws.

Members asked when a policy framework for public processions would be implemented. Rose Mary Glackin advised that a policy development panel had been undertaken to develop the policy.

The panel expressed concern that consultants had been engaged to review the Printworks business before engaging with elected members. Mary Pitcaithly stated that Business Gateway were not external consultants in the sense of the question, Business Gateway was a part of Development Services. Rose Mary Glackin advised that the service sought to identify how to best support Printworks.

Members asked what the overheads for Printworks were, as the service drew in a substantial income. Rose Mary Glackin stated that the projected income for 2014/15 was approximately £780,000 to £790,000, while Printworks had expenditure of around £820,000. She provided members with information on the changes in usage of Printworks by services and highlighted that materials associated with the changes to the refuse collection cycle had been a source of increased revenue.

The panel discussed electoral registration and noted their thanks to the election team for their work during the Scottish Independence Referendum. Members discussed an issue where people had registered before the deadline but were not on the electoral roll on the day. Mary Pitcaithly advised that the electoral roll was the responsibility of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). She stated that she would pass on members' concerns to the ERO.

The panel asked if the register for the General Election in May 2015 would revert to that held before the referendum. Mary Pitcaithly stated that work was being carried out to compile a new register and that assurance had been given from the Government that no one would lose their vote if previously registered. However, postal and proxy vote applications needed to be made again for the May election. Rose Mary Glackin advised that the ERO had issued letters to all households and that these would advise if action needed to be taken to be included on the roll. Mary Pitcaithly advised that she would ask the Falkirk Herald to run an article on this to publicise the issue.

Members asked for clarification around whether or not people who had been involved in a campaign group during the Referendum on Scottish Independence could be employed as election staff for the General Election in May. Mary Pitcaithly stated that individuals who had been active in a campaign or were counting agents would not be able to be employed. Rose Mary Glackin advised that there was a legal requirement for the referendum that an individual could not be employed if they had been directly involved in a campaign.

Decision

The panel noted the performance statement.

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FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 2 APRIL 2015 at 11.15 AM.

COUNCILLORS: Allyson Black
                                Baillie William Buchanan
                                Charles MacDonald
                                Baillie Joan Paterson
                                Provost Pat Reid (Convener)

OFFICERS: Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and
                                Improvement
                                Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
                                Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
                                Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

ALSO ATTENDING: Neil Brown, General Manager, Falkirk Community Trust
                                Jane Clark, Business Development Manager, Falkirk
                                Community Trust

S1.   APOLOGIES

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor McLuckie.

S2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Provost Reid and Baillie Buchanan declared a non-financial interest in S4 as directors of Falkirk Community Trust but did not consider that this required them to recuse themselves from consideration of the item, having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct and the relevant specific exclusion contained in the code.

S3.   MINUTES

(a)   The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 5 February 2015 was noted, and

(b)   The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 19 February 2015 was approved.

Baillie Paterson entered the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

S4. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: FALKIRK COMMUNITY TRUST

The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive presenting an update on the performance of Falkirk Community Trust (the Trust) against key objectives for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014, in line with Following the Public Pound and Council procedures.

The report provided information on the Trust's objectives and performance, key achievements and financial performance. Neil Brown, General Manager, Falkirk Community Trust gave an overview of the report.

The committee highlighted the Trust's success in securing the Commonwealth Games running track for Grangemouth Stadium and asked for further information on funding opportunities arising from that. Neil Brown stated that an application had been made for a grant of £500,000 from sportscotland. Meetings had been held with sportscotland prior to securing the replacement track for Grangemouth Stadium. The work to get the track had convinced sportscotland that the Trust was committed to the future of the facility. If funding was awarded by sportscotland it would be used to refurbish the indoor running track, reception and changing rooms.

Members asked about the opportunities for income generation at Callendar House, particularly around Christmas events. Neil Brown stated that due to the layout of the site it was challenging to create a traditional visitor pathway ending in the gift shop. The gift shop had been refreshed and a review carried out of staffing and the layout. The number of products had been reduced and the products stocked were carefully selected by doing so the circulation space for visitors had been increased. He stated that while the portacabin site for souvenir sales at Helix Park had been well used as a temporary solution, it would not be suitable to use at Callendar House as it would detract from the site's aesthetic. He stated that the Trust was aware of the need to improve the tea room at Callendar House and that work was ongoing.

The committee stated that income generation at Helix Park could be improved and asked what plans were in place. Neil Brown stated that the park had been designed to be free for all and that visitor numbers had nearly doubled predictions. The Trust had inherited the site and was adapting its approach in order to maximise income. The visitor centre would open in October 2015. The Trust had run coaching sessions for children but these had not been well enough attended to sustain. There had been demand for pedalos, kayaks and canoes at the lagoon which had been procured and were available. He advised that the cost of a tour of the Kelpies had increased from £4.95 to £6.95. A familiarisation event had been held with coach tour companies to encourage them to stop at the Kelpies. The Trust had engaged nine franchisees who offered varied catering throughout the park. He stated that car park charges at the visitors centre had been introduced from 1 April 2015.

Members stressed the importance of making the most of the opportunity for income generation at Helix Park and asked if any events were planned. Neil Brown stated that no major events would be held until the appropriate infrastructure was in place. The retail product range had been developed and was, in his opinion, the best range since opening. He highlighted the opportunity to have live music and kids' clubs on site to attract footfall. Jane Clark stated that there would be events in 2016 around the year of innovation, architecture and design. Neil Brown advised that the emergency services event which had been held in 2014 was a success and would be held again in 2015. Neil Brown stated that

Visit Falkirk had worked with a local bus operator to brand and market a route between five key tourist sites including the Falkirk Wheel and Helix Park.

In response to a question on the new software invested in for libraries, Neil Brown stated that a better service was now available for customers and that the new system had been necessary as the old one was not fit for purpose.

Members asked for an update on the gym facility at Stenhousemuir. Neil Brown stated that following a procurement process the contract had been awarded and that the facility was on target to open around late August 2015.

The committee stated that they had hoped to see a more balanced winter programme at the Hippodrome to meet both populist and avant-garde tastes. Neil Brown stated that the committee's comments had been taken on board and were reflected in the most recent programme for the Hippodrome.

Members asked for information on the marketing resources of the Trust. Neil Brown stated that the Trust had a marketing team of six people which included one officer who was solely dedicated to marketing Helix Park. There had been an impact on the operation of the team due to long term sickness absence but the team had reprioritised its focus to ensure that key areas were delivered effectively.

The committee asked how performance measures and targets were set. Neil Brown advised that targets were set by team leaders and staff and then reviewed by the senior management team before submission to the Trust's board as part of the business plan. Jane Clark advised that the performance indicators were developed from statutory reportable indicators. Neil Brown stated that the Trust was a member of Sporta – the national association of leisure and cultural trusts. Most trusts were only responsible for sport and leisure so direct benchmarking and comparisons were not made but informal evaluation and best practice sharing occurred.

In response to discussion about following the public pound and ensuring best value, Neil Brown referred to the performance trends since the establishment of the Trust. He stated that the amount of income generated had increased by 22% for the period of the Trust's operation and that the annual report showed real progress in participation, improvements to assets and finances.

Members asked about the Festival of Silent Cinema and income generated. Neil Brown advised that the financial outcome of the event was currently unknown as it had only concluded on 22 March 2015.

The committee asked for an update on work to the flumes at Grangemouth swimming pool. Neil Brown stated that the refurbished flumes would be operational before the school summer holidays at the end of June.

In response to a question on how the Trust got feedback from customers, Neil Brown stated that a survey had been carried out with customers two years ago and would be carried out again in 2016.

Members sought further information on the availability of family swim tickets at the Mariner Centre. Neil Brown advised that family tickets were available for all of the Trust's swimming pools and that there was also discount available to customers who purchased monthly passes.

The committee asked if issues arising from the introduction of charges to school lets had been resolved. Neil Brown advised that following discussions organisations who had been resistant to the changes had accepted the reasoning for the policy and that it resulted in the better utilisation of assets. He confirmed that where voluntary organisations booked multiple areas they were only charged for the use of one part of the facility.

Members raised concern about the heating system in Falkirk Town Hall. Neil Brown stated that significant investment was required in the heating system to address the issue.

The committee asked if the Trust was looking at ways to increase the usage of the Hippodrome for corporate events. Neil Brown stated that a report had been considered by the board's sub-group and that reduced charges had been agreed. He stated that there were a number of issues including; lack of daytime demand, no backstage facility and little circulation space.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress Falkirk Community Trust has made in delivering on its core commitments for the Council.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject:	**FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND (FPP): ADVICE SERVICES**
Meeting:	**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
Date:	**14 MAY 2015**
Author:	**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work of the external organisations who receive funding, in whole or in part, who provide debt and money advice services, and who fall within the 'Following the Public Pound' (FPP) reporting and monitoring arrangements. The reporting period is April 2014 to March 2015.

1.2 External organisations are often voluntary or charitable organisations and generally, will be able to provide a better range or quality of service, or to provide services that would not otherwise be provided. The common purpose is usually to offer a wider range of services, often in conjunction with other public organisations and to provide joined-up services.

2. ADVICE SERVICES: FALKIRK'S STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 Falkirk Council and Community Planning Partners have given a commitment to delivering services that support the most vulnerable individuals across the area. The Single Outcome Agreement and Towards a Fairer Falkirk set out principles, key themes and groups; Advice services are highlighted as critical in terms of crisis intervention, early intervention and prevention.

Single Outcome Agreement
2.2 The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) describes how the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership will progress whilst facing many critical challenges and competing demands. The SOA complements the Strategic Community Plan 2010 – 2015 and sets out the following key principles:

- Focus our key activity on tackling the most significant inequalities in our area and providing everyone with hope and opportunity;
- Take action where appropriate that cross organisational and structural boundaries in order to recognise that many of the challenges and inequalities we face are inter connected.
- Pursue a preventative and early intervention approach which we know will be more effective at tackling the root causes of inequality;
- Ensure that we deploy our collective effort and resources in securing local outcomes;
- Be both transparent and accountable to local people and communities, giving them a say and a meaningful role and contribution in realising our vision; and
- Be both innovative and creative in the solutions we develop and the way in which we change services to meet the demands of the modern world.

2.3   In order to realise our desired outcomes we have focused our attention and activity on tackling the area's greatest challenges i.e.

- Economic recovery, growth and employment;
- Early years and children;
- Safer, Stronger Communities and reducing re-offending;
- Health outcomes and Physical Activity;
- Older people; and
- Poverty and welfare reform.

2.4   A critical component in our ability to achieve our SOA outcomes is that people have access to services and advice which will empower them to make informed decisions relating to the options available to them. The advice services that are currently in place within the Falkirk Council area contribute towards this.

Towards a Fairer Falkirk

2.5   A report presented to the Executive in December, which provided Members with an update on Welfare Reform and on progress which has been made against the Poverty Strategy, Towards a Fairer Falkirk.

2.6   The review of the existing poverty strategy is on-going but it is anticipated that the key aims of existing strategy will remain unchanged. We are currently reviewing the impact of poverty and therefore the revised strategy will update who is particularly vulnerable regarding the effects of poverty and increasingly the impact of changes in benefits.

2.7   We have made some good progress on our poverty strategy aims and objectives around helping to mitigate the impact of poverty in our area and against the outcomes in our single outcome agreement. Successful initiatives include:

- Making a significant financial difference to many of our citizens by helping them claim the full amount of benefits they were entitled to and through renegotiating high levels of debt;
- Enhanced support for vulnerable people provided by the Falkirk Area Welfare Benefits Advice and Support Unit (FAWBASU), a partnership between Citizens Advice Bureaux and Falkirk Council; and
- Developing a partnership project with Falkirk's Mental Health Association, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Citizen's Advice Bureaux (FAWBASU project) aimed at raising staff awareness of mental health issues and improving our frontline assessment and support for customers with complex/multiple needs.

2.8   Since approving the Poverty Strategy in 2011, the context within which the strategy will be delivered has changed with a number of Welfare Reform changes implemented or planned between now and 2017 including the roll-out of Universal Credit – from May 2015 for Falkirk Council residents and the transfer of all remaining Disability Living Allowance to the Personal Independent Payment, due to conclude by October 2015.

2.9 Although we have taken a number of actions aimed at mitigating the impact of welfare reform, our communities have yet to experience the full impact of reform given the delay in the introduction of universal credit, with its multiple impacts. It is increasingly likely that the revised strategy will highlight the need to extend the focus of our action against poverty to people on low pay and in receipt of in-work benefits.

2.10 A Scottish Government Report estimates that once all the changes are implemented, the impact across Scotland will be a reduction of £1.6b in benefits per year. The estimated impact at a Falkirk Council level is £46m per year, or £450 per working age adult. This will have an on-going impact on our citizens and will require us to continue to provide advice and deliver services aimed at supporting the most vulnerable people living in our communities. Our Poverty Strategy and related strategies and plans will help us to do this. It is important that while we focus on those most vulnerable and disadvantaged including those impacted on by Welfare Reform, we need to continue to understand the impact of poverty on all of our communities including those in work, children, and people with a disability including mental health problems, etc.

2.11 The revised poverty strategy, which will be overseen and agreed by a newly established Poverty Partnership. It is anticipated that our review of the strategy will be presented to Members by the end of 2015.

3. OVERVIEW OF FUNDED ORGANISATIONS: ADVICE SERVICES

3.1 The table below shows the 5 external organisations that received Council support during 2013/2014, either via 'in kind' support or by direct financial support.

App.	Organisation	Funding Purpose	Total Support Received 14/15
1	Macmillan Money Advice	Forth Valley Money Advice Project	£50,000
2	Falkirk Credit Union	Project	£56,000
3	Falkirk Citizens Advice Bureau	Core	£196,319
3	Grangemouth & Bo'ness Citizens Advice Bureau	Core	£118,611
3	Denny & Dunipace Citizens Advice Bureau	Core	£112,462
4	Denny & Dunipace CAB on behalf of CABx	Veterans Support	£20,000
	Total Funding		£553,392

4. ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ORGANISATIONS PERFORMANCE

4.1 Individual reports are attached for all of the external organisations shown above at appendices one to four. Each report provides an overview of the service provided, the agreed objectives or outcomes, performance information during the reporting period and a financial overview. It should be noted that audited accounts for 2014/2015 have not yet been prepared for any of the organisations.

4.2   As part of the support allocation assessment process, external organisations are allocated a risk rating based on governance arrangements, financial management and past performance. The ratings are low, medium or high and provide Monitoring Officers with an indication of the minimum level of monitoring and support which should be established. External organisations deemed as low risk, are monitored at least annually, medium risk external organisations should be monitored at least quarterly and high risk, at least monthly. Monitoring is recommended to take the form of regular reports, which measure performance against outcomes and/or objectives and provide financial monitoring information. Monitoring Officers are also required to hold meetings with the external organisation throughout the year.

5.   **CONCLUSION**

5.1   As set out within the report to this Committee on 13 June 2013, 'Following the Public Pound: Scrutiny Committee Role and Reporting Schedule', Members are invited to consider each organisation's report and select from the following options for each external organisation:

   A. Approve report and acknowledge progress by the external organisation in meeting Council priorities;
   B. Request further information on specific aspects of the service provided; or
   C. Request action with follow-up for subsequent Scrutiny Committee consideration.

6.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

        Members are asked to:

6.1   **Consider individual reports for external organisations and select an option from those presented in 5.1.**

....……………………………….
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 2 April 2015
Ref: ABC140515LM – FFP
Contact Name: Lesley MacArthur

                    LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
1.   Falkirk Council's Poverty Strategy.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506004 and ask for Fiona Campbell.

	FALKIRK COUNCIL CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2014/15

Organisation Name	Partnership between Stirling, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire Councils, NHS Forth Valley and Macmillan Cancer Support.
Project	Forth Valley Macmillan Money Matters Project
Agreement Dates	1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015
Name of Lead Officer	Linda Scott

A   OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

To offer easily accessible information and advice on money matters and financial wellbeing to cancer patients, their carers and families living in the Forth Valley area and to increase income available to these client groups.

List of Agreed Outcomes

Increase the income of cancer sufferers and their families living in the Forth Valley area by providing debt management and benefit advice. This enhances the lives of those affected by ensuring that their financial wellbeing is secured at a time of a diagnosis of cancer and that individuals remain financially included.

Why Service/Project is Funded Externally Rather than by the Council

The project advisors understand the experiences and needs of cancer patients and their families and are trained to give expert advice to people experiencing these difficult circumstances and can ensure that the person has easy access to other Macmillan services. The project also has direct links with health professionals, which means they get referred at the point of diagnosis and are seen quickly. The project receives referrals for specialist advice to cancer sufferers and their families from Falkirk Council's Advice Service. Money Matters Advisers identify other important issues for patients, their carers and families and make referrals to a number of partner organisations including the Macmillan Helpline and Macmillan Financial Guidance Team; the Local Authority Money and Debt Advice Teams; the DWP Visiting Service; and local Carer Organisations to further support clients.

B   ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES

Summary of Key Achievements

For the financial year 2014-2015, the project helped support 979 clients living in the Forth Valley area. The project was successful in generating additional income of £2,639,520 for these clients. In the Falkirk Council area, 519 clients were assisted and £1,443,363 of additional income secured.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

At times keeping up with the demand for services has presented real challenges to the workforce. The project comfortably exceeded its targets for 2014-15 but to ease the pressure of its workload, it intends to review the management of incoming referrals in 2015-16.

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

The project has contributed to the following Council's Poverty Action Outcome of providing support to some of our most vulnerable citizens and improving their financial security by maximising the income of those households and improving benefit uptake and debt management. Client also received assistance in a wide range of other, related, areas. Customer satisfaction results and user feedback is excellent.

This project enhances the lives of its service users by ensuring that their financial wellbeing is secured at a time of a diagnosis of cancer. By ensuring that individuals remain financially included, the project's intervention ensures that benefit income continues to be claimed from central government and utilised within local communities.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

None

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

Six monthly.

C   FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Total Support Provided (Financial & In- Kind Contributions)

£50,000 from Falkirk Council

The project also received £32,000 from NHS Forth Valley and £100,000 from Stirling, which includes management support and funding in kind (office space, HR support, IT support, equipment, pool car vehicles). Clackmannanshire Council provided £16,000 of funding for 2014-15, giving a total funding package amount of £198,000. The pattern of work activity for the year continued to represent an approximate 50/30/20% split across Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire respectively.

MacMillan previously funded the MMT project but this year provided financial support in kind in the form of advice and support to staff and clients, training and guidance for the team and access to the other Macmillan cancer support services.

As an organisation, Macmillan Cancer Support raised £186.9 million in 2013 (latest published figures). Most of this money came from legacies, direct marketing, fundraising events| and support from Macmillan's corporate partners. For the same year, after expenditure, Macmillan spent £121.7 million on services for people affected by cancer in the areas of: healthcare; financial, practical and emotional support; information and awareness raising; learning and development and inclusion.

Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts	
n/a – finances are managed by Stirling Council	

Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation

Funding from Falkirk, Stirling and NHS Forth Valley will be crucial to the delivery of the project. Funding has been agreed at the same rates for 2015-16 from NHS Forth Valley and Stirling Council. Falkirk Council has reduced its funding to £40k. Clackmannanshire has advised that it is unable to make a funding contribution for 2015-16. This issue will be formally considered by the steering group in relation to the funding and delivery of the service.

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Low

D	**CONCLUSIONS**

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

The project has ensured that the needs of citizens are met and all targeted outcomes have been achieved.

E	**COMPLETED BY**
Name	Linda Scott
Designation	Policy Officer
Date	14 April 2015

FALKIRK COUNCIL CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2014/15	

Organisation Name	Falkirk and District Credit Union
Project	n/a
Agreement Dates	1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015
Name of Lead Officer	Linda Scott

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

Falkirk and District Credit Union's (FDCU) is the largest that we work with in the Falkirk Council area. Its main aims are to promote savings and offer reasonable credit to its members and to help members to manage their money.

List of Agreed Outcomes

Increase the number of new credit union members.
Increase the amount of savings.
Increase the number and value of member loans.
Increase the number of collection points in the Falkirk Council area.
Increase the number of volunteers and the amount of volunteer training.

Why Service/Project is Funded Externally Rather than by the Council

It is not within the Council's statutory remit to provide the products and services offered by credit unions.

B ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES

Summary of Key Achievements

During the financial year 2014-15, membership numbers had increased by 327 adult members and 291 junior savers bringing total membership at the end of 2015 to 2,045 adults and 708 juniors. Savings had increased by 42% and loans by 38%. Five new collection points were opened. 21 new volunteers were recruited and a substantial amount of training was delivered for all volunteers. A significant number of promotional events and joint working initiatives have taken place over the last year to help secure these increases.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

FDCU is run largely by a board of voluntary members assisted by one part-time admin officer. Fairer Falkirk funding for the year provided an additional part-time admin officer along with a proportion of our Financial Inclusion Development Officer resource. The organisation would struggle to cope with the needs of the business without these additional resources. The organisation needs to continue to grow and we will continue to work closely with it over the coming year to develop a sustainable business plan and growth strategy.

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

FDCU contributes to the Council's poverty outcomes in the area of financial security by:
- Ensuring our citizens have increased choices when it comes to financial products and services;
- Increasing people's understanding of the consequences of the choices they make with regards to their finances;
- Maximising the income of households that rely on benefits; and
- Reducing levels of personal debt.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

We continue to work closely with FDCU to ensure a professional standard of governance is achieved. We are currently working in partnership with the Board to develop a revised business plan to help demonstrate the organisation's growth capability and to ensure that it has an up to date suite of policies across its key business areas.

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

Our staff work very closely with FDCU on a weekly basis and attend most monthly Board meetings. Formal review meetings are normally held on a six monthly basis but this has been far more frequent during 2014-15, largely because of our additional investment of financial resources for the new online banking system and staffing resources in the form of the development officer and the need to seek assurance that these resources are being used to the best effect.

C   FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Total Support Provided (Financial & In- Kind Contributions)

£46,000 from Falkirk Council in the form of development officer and admin officer salaries and expenses.

The credit union received income from loans to members, membership fees and donations but did not receive any other funding for 2014-15.

Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts

Year ending 30 September 2014.

Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation

The organisation is largely dependent on continued funding and involvement from its voluntary board members and other volunteers.

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Medium. Quarterly monitoring arrangements are in place including information on performance outcomes and financial statements. This is strengthened by attendance at monthly board meetings.

D	CONCLUSIONS

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

The funding provided to FDCU has ensured that the needs of citizens are met and all targeted outcomes have been achieved.

E	COMPLETED BY

Name	Linda Scott
Designation	Policy Officer
Date	14 April 2015

**FALKIRK COUNCIL CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT
2013/2014**

Organisation Name	Falkirk Citizens Advice Bureaux
Project	Core Funding
Agreement Dates	1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015
Name of Lead Officer	Lesley MacArthur

A   OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) are the largest independent voluntary sector providers of information and advice services in the Falkirk Council area. The CABx have a strong ethos to provide advice which is free of charge, confidential, impartial and independent. The information and advice is generalist but, in some areas such as debt advice, a specialist service is also provided. Advice provided includes welfare benefits (43%), money and debt advice (28%), employment (7%), housing (4%), Legal (4%), Relationships (3%), Financial Products (3%), utilities and communication (2%), and consumer issues (2%)

The CABx in the Falkirk Council area run as three independent bodies, each with their own Board of Management. The CABx collectively, have a staff resource of around 20, employed on a full and part time basis. The main focus for staff is to manage the service, provide specialist and complex advice and also to recruit, train and support volunteers. The CABx also work with between 60 - 80 volunteers at any given time.

Although there are 3 independent bureau with separate management committees and structures, the organisations work closely together on a range of issues for example volunteer recruitment, funding, marketing. Joint working is managed via a Joint Action Group, which has an appointed Chair and is attended by the Managers of each bureau, a member of each bureau board, CAS Advisor and Council Officer, as required. A Joint Strategic Plan has been developed (recently updated to 2014-2017) and incorporates the actions following recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel process undertaken in 2013.

It should be noted that although the CABx receive funds from Corporate & Neighbourhood and Social Work Services, the funds are used collectively by each bureau to achieve outcomes. Additional funds for the ASAP project are reported separately.

List of Agreed Outcomes

Although the Bureaux receive a number of strands of funding from the Council, they currently operate to a single key outcome, which is:

Every Citizen in the Falkirk Council area will have access to advice services which are adaptable to suit national reform and local interpretation, and ensures that no individual 'falls through the gaps'

The single outcome relates directly to the Falkirk Council Poverty Strategy, Towards a Fairer Falkirk. We expect the bureaux to consider the target groups and areas identified in the strategy and all the work that they do.

In achieving the overarching outcome, the CABx provide:

- A wide range of general and specialist advice from appropriately trained and qualified staff and volunteers.
- Outreach and community based services and activities are established and delivered in line with emerging need.
- Work collaboratively to ensure access to service across the area and to make best use of limited resource, including via external sources of funding.

Why Service/Project is Funded Externally Rather than by the Council

The CABx provide a wide range of generalist and specialist services over and above the scope of current Council provision. In addition, the CABx offer individuals with choice by providing a means of advice which is independent from Council services, which is where for example, the housing or debt problem may be.

B	ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES

Summary of Key Achievements

CLIENTS	Denny & Dunipace		Falkirk		Grangemouth & Bo'ness	
	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15
Contacts Core (Excl.CAD & Non- Core)	3080	2674	5305	5691	4659	3638
Contacts (CAD)	848	1239	N/A	N/A	995	1320
Issues Core (Excl. CAD & Non-Core)	13111	11,058	17037	17,508	12681	11,821
Issues (CAD)	942	1536	N/A	N/A	989	1595
New/Unique Clients	606	531	2113	1886	1143	1185
New Benefit Enquiries	2097	1933	3599	2698	2468	2594
CLIENT GAINS	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15
Bureau – Benefit gains	£751,334	603,955	£925,408	1,253,215	£1,813,047	1,500,689
Bureau – other gains	£169,562	77,386	£163,715	262,444	£87,316	71,658
Bankruptcy/Trust Deeds	£298,357	175,635	£1,338,652	1,769,310	£292,374	83,158
Number of Bankruptcy/Trust Deed	9	5	57	55	13	3
WELFARE BENEFITS	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15
Welfare Benefit Appointments	136	104	337	408	212	193
Home Visits	7	7	35	36	6	10
Benefit Checks	244	293	420	326	557	613
Mandatory Reconsiderations	-	18	-	43	-	40
Appeals Representation	-	11	-	40	-	41
Won	-	3	-	21	-	19
Lost	-	5	-	13	-	16
Adjourned during tribunal	-	3	-	6	-	6

Number of Hours Outreach Sessions and New Contacts **April 14 – March 15**	Hours	New Contacts	Hours	New Contacts	Hours	New Contacts
	455	109	966	423	768	1,043

Referrals **April 14 – March 15**						
To External Agencies		11		124		48
Confirmed Take-ups		11		116		36
To Food Bank		62		68		104
Confirmed Take-ups		62		68		104

VOLUNTEERS	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15	13/14	14/15
No. of New Volunteers	8	7	2	6	13	15
No. Active Volunteers	27	24	24	20	15	11
No. of Volunteers commencing training	7	6	0	5	13	15
No. of Volunteers completing training	2	2	8	8	5	9
No. of Volunteers leaving	9	10	11	3	9	13
Training Provided	-	194	-	64	-	52

Case Study (Denny & Dunipace)

Client is a 50 year old British man who lives alone in a 2 bedroom local authority house. He has an alcohol addiction and some mental health problems. He had worked in summer 2014 in a seasonal job but had this ended in late October 2014. He then claimed Jobseekers Allowance. He missed an appointment at the Jobcentre and he was sanctioned. He could not give me any definite dates for this. He thinks his JSA started again in January 2015. He had been told by Falkirk Council he had rent arrears and someone at the Jobcentre had told him this is because he had completed the wrong form. He was unsure if he has been awarded Housing Benefit and was worried about this. Client wanted us to help him find out the current situation with his rent.

We phoned Falkirk Council and were told client had claimed Housing Benefit from end of October 2014 but this had stopped for 2 weeks in December as his JSA had stopped. There was then a 2 week rent free period and then Housing Benefit was re-instated from 12/1/15. This is reduced by 14% due to under occupancy. The only arrears the client had were for the period his JSA had stopped and therefore his Housing Benefit had stopped. The amount of arrears was £81.32.

We explained the reason JSA had stopped was because client had been sanctioned by DWP. Falkirk Council said they were unaware of this, they only knew his JSA had stopped. They said client would need to appeal this decision that Housing Benefit had stopped. I asked if client could fill in a change of circumstances form now for period of sanction. I was eventually told that client should write a letter explaining he had been sanctioned and provide evidence of this and also evidence that he had no other income during this period. This would then be considered by Falkirk Council but there was no assurance that this would change their decision that client was not entitled to Housing Benefit.

Client became quite stressed by this situation. His addiction had been under control when he was working but now that he was unemployed he had started drinking again and he said he felt his life was chaotic and he was struggling to cope. We suggested the Bureau could write the letter to Falkirk Council on his behalf but we would need to evidence had had received a sanction and that he had no other income. Unfortunately the client felt that all this was beyond his capabilities at the moment and could not be persuaded to let us write a letter to Falkirk Council. Client said he would prefer to pay off his rent arrears at £10 per fortnight.

We completed a Discretionary Housing Payment form with client and requested that this be awarded from 28/10/14 – the date of his JSA claim. Prior to client being employed during 2014 he had been on JSA and the Bureau had completed a DHP with him previously and this had been awarded. It is unclear why Falkirk Council did not help the client with this when he again became entitled to Housing Benefit at the end of October 2014. Client is to let us know outcome of this claim, which if awarded will mean he will not have to pay under occupancy charge of £415 per year.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

To maintain, as a minimum, existing levels of service at a time of increasing demands and complexity of cases. This trend is certain to accelerate with the introduction of further austerity measures over the next two years.

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

Within the context of the Council Poverty Strategy, CABx enhanced the provision of advice relating to debt and income maximisation for areas and groups at risk of poverty in the Falkirk Council area. This contributes towards the goals of Falkirk Council's Corporate Plan by:

- Further developing a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy;
- Continuing to improve the health, safety and well being of our citizens and communities; and
- Increasing our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination.

CABx use the stability of core funding from Falkirk Council to seek additional grants for specific Projects, many of which are also focusing on Council Priorities. Examples in 2014/15 include services targeting: Fuel Poverty, individuals with mental health issues, council residents affected by Welfare Reform via FAWBASU. It should be noted that an additional £140,643 has recently been secured from the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund, to continue FAWBASU for a further year until March 2016.

CABx also bring in additional money to Falkirk Council residents. The client financial gains for 2014/15 were £5,646,495. This represents value for money in that for every £1 of core grant funding given to CABx, they generated £10.20.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

There have been no areas of shortfall in performance. It should however be noted that the bureaux ability to deal with the high demand on the service, coupled with the complex nature of cases is an ongoing challenge. Client contact numbers have slightly reduced as a result of the time taken to support individual cases.

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

The CABx provide quarterly monitoring returns. In addition the monitoring officer attend Board meetings, when possible and is a members of the Joint Action group, which meets quarterly. There is also regular ah-hoc communication between the CABx and other Council Officers.

C   FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Total Support Provided (Financial & In- Kind Contributions)

In 2013/2014, financial support provided to the CABx from Falkirk Council was £457,396 and in-kind support was £11,000. This comprises:

CAB	Denny & Dunipace	Falkirk	Grangemouth & Bo'ness
Core	£62,097	£105,213	£68,246
Income Maximisation	£9,624	£9,624	£9,624
Fairer Falkirk Fund	£40,742	£81,484	£40,742
ASAP – Falkirk	£20,000		
Peppercorn rent			£11,000
Total Council	**£132,463**	**£196,321**	**£129,612**
Other sources of funding 13/14			
CAS	£31,590	£9,174	£16,773
Lottery	£2,173	£211,560	£51,411
Charitable Trusts		£8,000	£20,000
Patient Advice Support Service	£3,500	£4,500	£2,500
Other		£12,852	
Public Donations			
Total other	**£37,263**	**£246,086**	**£90,684**

Proportion of Falkirk Council Funding against total income was approximately 45%.

Audited accounts for 2014/2015 have not yet been prepared. The most recent audited accounts submitted are 2013/2014. No issues were identified. Information relating to income and expenditure is provided quarterly. No issues have been identified during 2014/2015, over and above stability and sustainability of external funding sources.

Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation

Operational risk/challenges
- Emerging impact of Welfare Reform on vulnerable clients.
- Ongoing training and support for staff and volunteers.
- Ability to work with effectively with partners, due to the global reduction in capacity due to budgetary constraint.
- Falkirk CAB has now identified new premises in Meeks Road, Falkirk. An extensive refurbishment of the premises is required, with a completion date of February 2016. In February 2015, Executive approved that Falkirk Council provide a capped contribution towards the fit out costs at £130.943. In addition, Falkirk CAB secured £50,000 from CAS Development Fund and will contribute £30,000 from reserves. The project is being managed by Falkirk Council.

Financial risk/challenges
- Secure external sources of funding to augment core provision.
- Maintaining core service with standstill budget during 2014/2015 resulted in bureaux having to make use of an element of reserves. With a reduction in funding for 2015/2016, is services are to remain at the current level, bureaux will have to consider the sustainability of this strategy and further augment service delivery through external sources of fudning.

Structural
- The CABx continue to operate as 3 independent organisations. The ongoing work of the Joint Action Group ensures that a consistent service is provided across the Falkirk Council area and efficiencies are achieved by joint initiatives regarding joint marketing and campaigning, recruitment and training of volunteers, sourcing external funds.

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Medium

D   CONCLUSIONS

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

Despite the challenges of increasing demand on service, the CABx have worked consistently well during 2014/2015.
The CABx have developed strong partnership links with Council services and other local service providers, which has enhanced overall provision across the area.

E COMPLETED BY	
Name	Lesley MacArthur
Designation	Corporate Policy Officer
Date	

-FALKIRK COUNCIL CORPORATE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT 2014/15	

Organisation Name	Falkirk Armed Services Advice Project – Falkirk CABx
Project	Falkirk Armed Services Advice Project
Agreement Dates	1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015
Name of Lead Officer	Caird Forsyth

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

- Appoint Armed Services Advice Project, Project Officer
- Market availability of the service to services/organisations and community
- Raise awareness amongst generic CAB advisers about particular needs of armed services/veterans community
- Build relationship with local veteran support services

List of Agreed Outcomes

- Appointment of Armed Services Advice Project, Project Officer
- Preparation of marketing material
- Contact services in Falkirk Council area and advise of project and confirm referral process
- Promotion of project – giving presentations / providing information stands as required in the Falkirk Council area
- Meet with clients referred / self referred providing advice / assistance as required

Why Service/Project is Funded Externally Rather than by the Council

Provides bespoke advice service for veterans resident in the Falkirk Council area assisting them to access services provided by the council or charitable services provided by veterans charities who operate throughout Scotland. The project is staffed by ex forces personnel and is part of a network that operates throughout Scotland. Those presenting to the service often have complex needs relating to their service within the forces which the adviser can relate to. The service is viewed by clients as understanding their particular needs.

B ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES

Summary of Key Achievements

- Ongoing marketing activities of the service across the Falkirk Council area
- Accepting referral and self referral of / from veterans seeking help who are resident in the Falkirk Council area.
- Providing a range of advice to 180 veterans between 01/04/2014 and 31/03/2015 The top issues cited are benefits, debt and employment, however clients also present with a

wider range of issues, including, housing, legal, education, relationship, war disability pension and AFPS 75 Pension/AFPS 05 Compensation Scheme.

During the period of review benefits enquiries have risen by 23% with Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credits, Jobseeker's Allowance enquiries seeing the biggest increase while enquiries relating to ESA, DLA and Attendance Allowance have decreased.

An example of the type of support provided is outlined below:

Case Outline
The client is 45 year old former soldier who served from 1991 – 1994. The client had been homeless as a result of leaving the family home after a marital breakdown but had just moved into a council flat. Client was in receipt of Job Seekers allowance, housing benefit and council tax reduction. The client had applied and received some funding from the Scottish Welfare Fund to partly furnish his property but it was still very basic. The client was not originally from Scotland and had moved to Falkirk with his wife and children from South England. Client had no family or friends and was feeling lonely isolated and depressed. Client believed that he was suffering from PTSD as a result of his experiences on operations and was not sure whether he would be eligible for a War Disability Pension. Client did have access to his children but they could not stay with him overnight because of the lack of furniture, beds and carpets in his property. Client was concerned that his lack of access to his children and the increasing feeling of loneliness were having a detrimental impact on his mental health and general wellbeing.

Assistance Given
The Support Officer referred the client to SSAFA to see what other funding could be made available to him.

In order to combat his feeling of isolation the ASAP Support Officer referred the client to the Legion Scotland Regional Wellbeing Coordinator for support.

The ASAP Support Officer encouraged the client to engage properly with his GP regarding his mental health and make him aware that he was a veteran and that NHS hospitals should give priority to all veterans whose injuries or ill-health are suspected of being due to their service.

The client was signposted to FDAMH drop in centre where he could meet other veterans in his situation and access any support available.

The Support Officer referred client to Combat Stress to try to deal with his PTSD.

The client was referred to Poppy Scotland to see if the client was eligible for a family break which would allow him quality time at one of their holiday centres with his children.

The client was advised that as he served post 2005 he would not be eligible to claim for a War Disability Pension for injuries caused in service however he might be considered for the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. The client was advised that a referral could be made to the Veterans Welfare Service which gives advice, guidance and practical help to those wishing to claim compensation.

Positive outcomes
Client received financial assistance from SSAFA to furnish his flat properly and allow his children to stay with him at weekends.

Client has been informed that he is eligible for family Break in the Spring/Summer of 2015 and is looking forward to this with his children.

The client is now being supported by the Legion Scotland Well Being Coordinator and will be allocated a mentor to assist him adjust to life after his relationship breakdown.

The client is fully engaged with his GP and is receiving treatment for his anxiety and depression from his GP who is aware of his veteran status.

The client has deferred the referrals to combat stress and the Veterans Welfare Service.

The ASAP Support Officer continues to keep in contact with the client and will liaise and coordinate with the other organisations involved with the client and look at other ways to assist him further in 2015.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

Service continues to provide a sought after service to people with veteran status and their dependants who reside within the Falkirk Council area and reaches a client group who may previously have travelled for advice or attempted to deal with problems on their own and possibly not reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

Service needs to continually market availability and extend availability of the service by raising awareness of issues for veterans with generic CAB workers and other agencies including local authority.

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

SOA – Health Inequalities and Physical Activity – Reduced health inequalities and equitable access to health care and support

Falkirk Councils commitment to Armed Services Community Covenant – provision of help for veterans within our community experiencing difficulty with a range of issues including Health, Debt and Housing.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

None found / recorded

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

ASAP Project Officer and Manager of Denny CAB attend quarterly meetings of Falkirk Armed Services Community Covenant Group and with the Lead Officer and Falkirk Council Veterans Champion (Depute Provost Cllr John Patrick) on a quarterly basis.

C   FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Total Support Provided (Financial & In- Kind Contributions)

£20,000 from Falkirk Council

£10,000 from Poppy Scotland during the period alleviating financial support previously provided by CABx.

Project also has access to national support (Training, Conferences/Seminars and Peer Group Meetings) that is provided for ASAP by Poppy Scotland.

Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts

The audited accounts for the period 2014/2015 have not been developed.

CAB provide quarterly income and expenditure reports and report no current issues.

Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation

Continuation of the service dependant on funding with the challenge of ensuring that generic advisers are trained/briefed. Funding for period 2015/2016 has been reduced to £18,000 with no anticipated detriment to service provided.

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Medium

D   CONCLUSIONS

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

The service continues to provide support to veterans in the area either as a direct result of contact (self referral) with CABx or through contact with local authority and other services seeking help with life circumstances.

E   COMPLETED BY

Name	Caird Forsyth
Designation	Policy Officer Substance Misuse
Date	01 April 2015

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject:	**SCRUTINY PANEL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: FALKIRK COUNCIL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY**
Meeting:	**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
Date:	**14 May 2015**
Author:	**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel established to review the Council's participation strategy – Have Your Say. The panel was established as part of the Scrutiny Committee's annual scrutiny plan and was established following the conclusion of the review of participation on external bodies.

1.2 The scope of this Panel was to examine the implementation of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy, 'Have Your Say', and make recommendations on changes in the strategy and practice where relevant. This report provides Members with information regarding the scrutiny process. The evidence provided at each of the scheduled meetings and the resultant conclusion and recommendations are provided within the appended report.

1.3 The Panel, chaired by Councillor Black and with other members being Councillor Murray and Provost Reid, agreed the scope of this scrutiny exercise, which was defined as: *'To examine the implementation of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy and make recommendations for changes to the strategy and current practice where required'.*

2. SCRUTINY PROCESS

2.1 The Scrutiny process comprised a series of meetings which were planned to allow Members to gather evidence through presentations and discussion with a range of stakeholders.

2.2 To plan the process, Members of the Panel met to agree a scoping document, programme of work and meetings required to allow an effective scrutiny process to be undertaken. The schedule was:

	Purpose of Meeting	Date	Meeting Format
1	**Scoping Meeting** The detailed scope of the scrutiny was established and agreed.	6 November 2014	Private

2	**Background and Context** Caroline Binnie (Communications and Participation Manager) and Jonny Pickering (Stakeholder Engagement Officer) presented an overview of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy, approaches to informing, consulting, engaging and co-producing and barriers to consultation/engagement	26 November 2014	Public
3	*Scrutiny Committee* *Report scope of the Panel to Committee*	*1 December 2014*	*Public*
4	**Service and Good Practice Overviews** i. Alan Christie (Community Engagement Co-ordinator, Housing Services) and David Love (Senior Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, Housing Services) presented on the consultation on tenant participation; ii. Ross Fenwick (Waste Strategy Officer, Development Services) presented on community engagement around changes to the household refuse collection service in Falkirk; iii. Richard Teed (Senior Forward Planning Officer, Education Planning and Resources) presented on engagement carried out around the proposed change to the schools admission policy; iv. Leni Rademacher (Training Manager, Children and Families) presented on engagement activities with looked after children to encourage participation in the Referendum on Scottish Independence.	15 January 2015	Public
5	**Presentation from Community Learning & Development/Public Session** Session A: Mark Meechan (Community Learning and Development Manager, Education Services), Kate Kane and Frank McChord (Local Community Planning Officers, Education Services) presented on Local Community Planning and CLD achievements to date. Session B: Members of the public engaged in roundtable workshops to review the Community Involvement Strategy and their experiences of consultation and engagement.	17 February 2015	Public
6	**External Good Practice** i. Jenny Kane (Team Manager, Children and Families) presented an overview of various pieces of consultation/engagement carried out with Social Work clients from different age ranges; ii. David Stokoe (Service Manager, Communities, Cultural and Community Services)presented an overview of Perth and Kinross Council's approach to community engagement; iii. Lorraine Gillies (Community Planning Manager), presented an overview of West Lothian Council's approach to community engagement via the Community Planning Partnership.	26 February 2015	Public

7	**Review meeting** The Panel considered evidence presented to date and suggested recommendations for the final report.	26 February 2015	Private
8	**Engaging Members** i. The Communications and Participation Manager and Stakeholder Engagement Officer presented an overview of the Panel process ii. Members took part in a roundtable workshop with the Panel and supporting officers, focusing on the principles and practice of the Community Involvement Strategy.	16 March 2015	Private
9	**Draft Report followed by summing up on findings** Final meeting for Members to consider and amend the draft report.	21 April 2015	Private
10	**Final Report to Scrutiny Committee**	*14 May 2015*	*Public*
11	**Report to Executive**	*TBC*	*Public*

2.3 During the initial scoping meeting, Members agreed a range of particular issues to be addressed over the course of the Panel. These were:

- Principles of community involvement;
- Approaches to informing, consulting and engaging communities;
- Methods of consulting and engaging communities;
- Provision of feedback;
- Barriers to community involvement; and
- Engaging hard-to-reach groups.

2.4 Panel Members were initially provided with an information pack containing a range of background information, including:

- Report on Your Community, Your Place (30/01/14);
- Your Community, Your Place Workshop Feedback;
- Local Community Planning Update (17/06/14);
- Summary of Customer Satisfaction Survey 2014;
- Summary of Findings from the Community Participation Strategy Consultation;
- Have Your Say: A Plan for Local Involvement;
- Citizens' Panel Questionnaire 10;
- Citizens' Panel Questionnaire 11;
- Best Value Toolkit on Community Engagement; and
- Consultation Practices with Scottish Local Authorities and Community Planning Partnerships.

3.   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1   The process of scrutiny undertaken was in line with procedural guidelines and allowed a full and transparent analysis of the scope set by the Scrutiny Panel, which was *'To examine the implementation of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy and make recommendations for changes to the strategy and current practice where required'.*

3.2   The evidence the panel considered is summarised in appendix one along with the recommendations arising from the review. The main findings of the panel are:

3.3   The principles upon which the existing strategy is based are sound and should be used more rigorously to guide the Council's approach to engagement and participation. They provide a firm foundation which if applied appropriately and systematically would ensure that the Council's approach to participation guides effective outcomes. However, it was also identified that if there is not integrity to approaching engagement and participation and a 'tick box' approach is employed, then the outcomes of the work can be questioned. It may be that if engagement is undertake poorly i.e. without clarity of purpose or thought about the methods, outcomes etc. then more resources have to be deployed to recover community goodwill.

3.4   It is important that even when undertaking statutory consultation that the principles within the strategy are applied and that engagement with communities happens prior to a formal statutory exercise. This again might be a better and more productive use of resources.

3.5   The principles are:

- **PURPOSE**: We will be clear whether we are informing, consulting or engaging with people. We will not consult when decisions have already been taken
- **INVOLVEMENT**: We will try to identify anyone who might be interested in any consultation or engagement and encourage them to be involved.
- **METHODS**: We will use the right methods of engagement in each situation.
- **INFORMATION**: We will share the information needed for people to participate and make it available in clear, accessible language.
- **WORKING TOGETHER**: We will treat all participants with respect. We may require people and organisations that represent their communities to show us how they collected the views of their community.
- **FEEDBACK**: We will always explain how people will receive feedback before they participate. We will always try to show how people's views have influenced the outcome.
- **IMPROVEMENT**: We will monitor and evaluate our approaches to community participation so that we can improve over time.

3.6   The panel heard from a number of Services and a number of examples of good practice were highlighted. However it was clear that Services could learn from each other of the work being undertaken across the Council. While there was an acknowledgement that there was a process for co-ordinating the Council's approach to engagement, services needed to participate in this more actively.

3.7   It was also noted that a range of consultation methods should be considered by services, depending on the issue, including surveys and focus groups and face-to-face meetings with community groups. Response times for consultations should be set to give the public sufficient time to respond and should take into account special considerations such as the time of year.

3.8   In addition the work being undertaken as part of the local community planning process needed to be more integrated into the strategic community planning process and also within the work of the Council. This, linked with the need to have a greater focus on 'place shaping' while developing a response to requirements of the Community Empowerment Bill, meant a greater emphasis having a robust process for local community planning.

3.9   To achieve the above, there is a need to develop a clear action plan underpinned by relevant training and co-ordinating. This would include further work being undertaken on the Council / services use of social media and further information on other Councils approaches to the budget consultation.

3.10 Recommendations arising from the work of the panel once considered by the Scrutiny Committee will be presented to the Executive. The Panel recommends that the Council:

1.   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;

2.   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;

3.   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;

4.   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;

5.   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;

6.   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 database will also be reviewed;

7.   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;

8.   provide more information on consultations, community engagement and Local Community Planning in the consultation section of the Council's website;

9.   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;

10. provide guidance and training to Members and officers on the use of social media to ensure this is being used more actively but appropriately;

11. 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;

12. consider the impact of the Community Empowerment Bill and the Council's response to this in August 2015;

13. consider different ways of consulting on the budget employed by other Councils by August 2015 to inform the process going forward; and

14. ask Officers to report back to the Executive on progress on the above before the end of the year.

4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 **It is recommended that the scrutiny committee:**

4.2 **note the work and findings of the Panel, and**

4.3 **consider the panel's conclusions and recommendations and make recommendations to the Executive accordingly.**

....…………………………….
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
Date: 21/04/15
Ref: ABC0515FC – Have your say.
Contact Name: Fiona Campbell ext 6004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1.   Nil

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506004 and ask for Fiona Campbell.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PANEL
HAVE YOUR SAY – A PLAN FOR LOCAL INVOLEMENT

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the evidence gathered during scrutiny of Falkirk Council's 'Have Your Say: A Plan for Local Involvement', and to present the resulting conclusions and recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel.

1.2   The Panel established and agreed the scope of the review as: 'To examine the implementation of the Council's Plan for Local Involvement and make recommendations for changes to the strategy and current practice where required'.

1.3   The members of the Scrutiny Panel were Councillor Allyson Black (Panel Chair), Councillor Rosie Murray and Provost Pat Reid.

2.   **EVIDENCE GATHERED: 1 December 2014**

Background and Context: Overview of 'Have Your Say'

2.1   To set the background and context for the scrutiny exercise, an initial presentation was made to the Panel on the principles[1] and general approach contained within "Have Your Say" the Council's Plan for Local Involvement. The presentation set out the Council's agreed standards for carrying out engagement activities and covered the mechanics of informing, consulting and engaging communities. Members were also provided with a comprehensive information pack, including the "Have Your Say" strategy and briefing notes on recent activities by Services.

2.2   During the presentation Members had the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions. This discussion is captured fully within the minutes, however the text below summarises some of the issues raised.

2.3   The Panel asked about external ratings for Council websites. It was noted that the Council website's SocITM rating had increased from a one star to a three star rating after its recent redevelopment, one of only five redesigned sites in the UK to go up by two stars. All web content has been rewritten in plain English and the new website is mobile responsive.

2.4   They also asked about how consultation activity is evaluated by Services to ensure that any lessons are learned. It was noted that consultation reviews are part of the Plan for Local Involvement but were perhaps not carried out as systematically as they could be.

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[1] A summary of the principles of community involvement can be found in Appendix 1. alongside the National Standards of Community Engagement, National Principles of Community Engagement, Social Work's Participation and Engagement Strategy and NHS Participation Standard.

This is an improvement area that could be looked at, including scope for utilising review templates for services.

2.5   The Panel discussed the importance of language when carrying out engagement exercises and how to reach large numbers of people. Plain English is one of the principles of "Have Your Say" and a training programme has now been delivered to over 100 staff by a specialist trainer. It was noted that Plain English had been critical to the high rating of the new Council website.

2.6   The Citizens Panel was discussed. The panel was established in 2010 and is used to consult the public on a wide range of issues, from bereavement services to parks to community safety. The panel currently has approximately 1,500 members and is in the process of being refreshed with new members. Members asked if area-specific questions could be asked through the Citizens Panel. It was noted that although this is possible, there may be more effective ways of getting localised data, such as door-to-door surveys, depending on the time available to do consultation or engagement.

2.7   Members asked what work was ongoing to ensure that the Citizens Panel was as representative as possible. It was noted that stratified random sampling[2] could be used to make the Citizens Panel membership more representative of the Council area population as a whole.

2.8   The Panel discussed the role of Community Councils in consultation and highlighted the challenges where no Community Council was active as well as the potential issue for engagement to be with the same people, rather than a wider cross-section of the community. It was noted that the implementation of Participation Requests in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill would give communities the opportunity to ask to be engaged in the development of local services. Further information will be prepared for Members once the Bill has been passed.

2.9   Members highlighted that where communities had provided comments it was important to give feedback afterwards, so that they knew what had been or had not been done and why.

2.10   The Panel asked how the voices of hard-to-reach groups could be included in consultations. It was noted that research had recently been carried out looking at the best ways of informing and engaging with hard-to-reach groups in relation to Welfare Reform advice services. This had been carried out by Jump Research, a specialist consultancy, and will be used to inform future consultations.

2.11   The Panel asked about the software used to analyse qualitative data. It was noted that qualitative data analysis software is available but is relatively expensive. Qualitative data collected, e.g. via discussion groups, is usually transcribed and then coded to identify key themes. Qualitative data is usually collected with relatively smaller numbers of people through interviews or focus groups, with surveys used mainly for quantitative data. The Council would generally use surveys to consult with larger numbers and from the results targeted drilling-down could then take place via focus groups. Ideally a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods would be used but this depends on the time available and the skill-sets of staff involved.

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[2] This is a sample in which units are randomly sampled from a population that has been divided into categories, for example, age, geography, socioeconomic background and so on.

2.12   The Panel asked about the Council's use of social media and whether this could be increased to improve and support public engagement. It was noted that the Council makes extensive use of Twitter to highlight service changes, consultation events and public meetings and to signpost people to the website, and that around 12,400 people are now following the Council's corporate account on Twitter. The majority of schools are on Twitter and there are Council-run Facebook accounts on specific themes, e.g. tourism. Members discussed the benefits of engaging through social media as the views of younger people were more likely to be captured. As well as social media, the Scottish Government and other local authorities are using new online platforms such as Mynewsdesk and Citizen Space to consult with stakeholders[3] and further research will be carried out into the costs and benefits of these.

2.13   The Panel asked about the involvement of young people, particularly following the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence which has citizenship as a key theme. Fiona Campbell discussed the participation of young people in communities and Pupil Councils and Members felt that high school pupils were more engaged than ever before.

3.   **EVIDENCE GATHERED- SERVICE PRESENTATIONS -15 January 2015**

3.1   Four presentations were delivered by services of specific interest to the Panel: Development Services, Housing Services, Education Services and Social Work Services.

       Housing services: Consultation on tenant participation – Corporate and Neighbourhood Services (Alan Christie, Community Engagement Co-ordinator, and David Love, Senior Neighbourhood Co-ordinator)

3.2   The consultation on tenant participation was carried out in 2014 by Research Resource. 1034 tenants took part in a telephone survey to find out if they were satisfied with their opportunities to participate. As a result Housing has gained an insight into tenants' preferred means of participation.

3.3   Members asked which other Councils scored above the national average for tenant satisfaction and if they were doing anything different which could be learned from. It was noted that Aberdeenshire, North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Councils were above the national average, however methods depended on local community needs. Falkirk Council officers regularly meet with officers from Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils as well as Paragon Housing Association and Link Housing (the largest Housing Associations in the Council area) to compare best practice.

3.4   The Panel asked if phone surveys were too labour intensive to carry out in-house despite their higher response rate. It was noted that phone surveys were occasionally used in-house, particularly where postal surveys achieved low response rates and follow-up work is carried out by telephone. There is, however, a need to balance resource use with results, which is why external providers had been used for the tenant participation survey.

3.5   Members asked for information on the cost of using an external supplier to carry out the telephone survey. It was noted that this was approximately £9,000 but that this included

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[3] For further information, please see: http://blogs.scotland.gov.uk/digitalengagement/2015/04/02/citizen-space-the-scottish-governments-new-consultation-platform/.

pre-survey meetings, formatting questions, carrying out the survey, analysing results, writing up a final report and delivering presentations. It was highlighted that an additional benefit of using an external supplier was that the data collection process was transparent and unbiased.

3.6   Members asked about the sampling of the survey. The sample was random and due to its size was fairly representative. Research Resource, the external contractor, had worked to ensure that responses were captured from across the geographical area and different housing types.

3.7   The Panel asked about the engagement of the private housing sector and were advised that the rent levels and service charges survey was carried out annually, but the response was not as large as the tenant participation survey.

3.8   Members asked what was done in the event of unpopular outcomes following consultations and were advised that the spirit of the Scottish Social Housing Charter was to ensure understanding, such as where rent increases were necessary to facilitate improvements. Housing Services worked to effectively communicate with communities, even where the work that was to be implemented was unpopular. It was noted that MORI IPOS research has found that the level of understanding of a service directly related to satisfaction ratings. Therefore, providing clarity about what work was being done was key. One of the principles of "Have Your Say" is that people should not be consulted about things which could not reasonably be done and the experience has been that people are much more understanding of delays, such as to housing repairs, when the issue causing the delay was explained to them.

Community Engagement around changes to the household collection service – Development Services (Ross Fenwick, Waste Strategy Officer)

3.9   This information/consultation exercise was carried out between December 2013 and May 2014. The aim was to inform and better understand communities' views of current and future refuse collection services. A combination of focus groups, letters, events and leaflets were used. The process identified effective ways of providing key messages to communities, whilst there were increases in food and general waste.

3.10   The Panel asked when door-to-door awareness raising work had been carried out. and were advised that the work was tailored so that the frequency was increased around the time that the change was to be implemented. This was done at weekends and weekdays between 5pm and 6pm, when working households were more likely to be inhabited.

3.11   Members asked if there were changes to the levels of waste during the Christmas period and increased use of the recycling centres. There was an increase, particularly as people had clear outs of old belongings, which had been replaced by new gifts. The service had run an article in *Falkirk Council News* emphasising that almost all Christmas material was recyclable.

3.12   The Panel asked about the level of interest in the service and issues around collection of nappies. Officers had visited people to increase awareness and in some extreme cases carried out more in-depth reviews.

3.13   Members asked about issues with rear-door collections. The service aims to have no missed collections. Each week a list of missed collections is compiled and officers worked with the contractor to eliminate issues.

3.14   The Panel asked if consultation had been carried out with other organisations and highlighted that Social Work staff could have helped to educate their service users about the changes. It was confirmed that the service had consulted with Housing Services on the changes.

Schools Admission Policy – Education Services (Richard Teed, Senior Forward Planning Officer)

3.15   This was a statutory consultation on a proposed change to the admissions policy of St Mungo's High School. Statutory consultees were invited by email or letter to respond in writing or by pro forma. Three public meetings were held in Denny, Bo'ness and Falkirk. These were attended by 25 parents, with 114 written responses. The consultation commenced in April 2014 with a report produced in October that year. The majority of respondents were in favour of the proposal.

3.16   The Panel discussed the statutory requirements for consultation upon Education Services. The Panel asked if mass mailing information was the best consultation method. They were advised that discussions had been held with Legal Services to identify the minimum statutory requirement. In the case of the previous change to admissions for St Mungo's High School all primary six and sevens and all high schools were deemed to be affected and therefore needed to be consulted with. This is the best way to ensure that the statutory duty was complied with.

3.17   Members asked how much notice was given for public meetings, stating that their constituents had raised concerns that not enough notice was provided for shared Head Teacher meetings. It was confirmed that at least three weeks notice was provided. Notice was given in the local press, with consultation documents sent out in the first week. In regard to shared head teacher meetings, the public meetings were not required by statute so there was no set timetable to be followed.

3.18   Members asked about the input from school pupils as consultees in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It was confirmed that the opinions of pupils were valued as they often came from unique perspectives and created ownership where changes affected the pupils directly. Education Services does not judge responses based on who submitted them and all responses are included, however, there are lessons to be learned regarding how to best engage high school pupils and alternative methods are being considered.

3.19   Members asked how to ensure that the opinions of all in attendance were aired at public meetings. The best way is to ensure that meetings are chaired effectively to make sure that all who wanted to speak were heard and not just the most vocal few. Further, people who do not want to speak at a public meeting could submit questions with at least two days notice prior to public meetings. The minutes of public meetings are not edited and fairly reflect the opinions of all.

Engagement of looked after children in the referendum on Scottish independence – Social Work Services (Leni Rademacher, Training Manager)

3.20   This community engagement work aimed to fulfil the Council's responsibility to ensure that all eligible looked after young people and care leavers were assisted in the process of registering to vote and to provide access to relevant information. This was done in partnership between SWS and CLD. Leaflets and letters were sent to all 160 young people, with 19 subsequently attending two events (including presentations by members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, mock debates and a mock vote). 10 of those young people registered to vote.

3.21   The Panel asked if Social Work Services had expected a higher turn out for the events. More attendees had been hoped for, but this was outwith the Service's control. For example, one residential unit were on holiday during the period of the events so none of those young people were able to attend. However, it was noted that those who did attend took a lot from the events.

3.22   Members asked if an evaluation of the events had been carried out. Leni Rademacher advised that comments from the young people had been recorded on video or left on post-it notes as evaluation forms were not appropriate to the group.

3.23   The Panel discussed engagement with hard-to-reach groups and requested that Social Work Services provide further information on other consultations carried out.

4.   EVIDENCE GATHERED: LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING -17 February 2015

4.1   This session was split into two parts; with a presentation on Local Community Planning, followed by roundtable workshops with invited members of the public.

Local Community Planning and the CLD Approach – Community Learning and Development (Mark Meechan, Community Learning and Development Manager; Kate Kane and Frank McChord, Local Community Planning Officers)

4.2   The presentation focused on the aims, means and outcomes of Local Community Planning. Community Action Plans were developed in seven areas through a mix of tools, including events, focus groups, surveys and Participatory Budgeting. Outcomes include, for example, the capacity building of 60 community groups, 10,000 young people either informed or consulted and over £800,000 attracted into the Council area for local communities.

4.3   Members asked how large Community Planning Partnership areas were and it was stated that communities could be viewed as large areas, such as Falkirk wide, or broken down to smaller neighbourhoods and thematic groups within. CLD involved communities within Local Community Planning and services were required to be flexible, due to different sets of expectations and aspirations.

4.4   The Panel asked if CLD had taken learning from the Audit Scotland report on the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership. It was confirmed that the service had taken on board learning from the report and were aware of the challenges faced going forward

4.5 Over the past year CLD had assisted the delivery of 36,000 learning opportunities and the participation of 10,000 young people in events. Members asked for more information on the events young people were participating in. Youth fairs had been run in the local high schools and youth MSPs, for example, had been invited. There had also been open space events, the work with Social Work Services to engage with looked after children in the referendum, and many night-time community events.

4.6 The Panel asked if it was better to engage young people within their local communities rather than inviting them to an event outside their locality and were advised that going to local communities is more productive and that involving the youth MSPs, for example, had been successful.

4.7 Key partners which CLD engages with include Falkirk Community Trust, the Environment Trust, SUSTRAN, Police Scotland's Community Safety Team and Council Services, depending on the issue.

4.8 The Panel asked how CLD engaged with migrant workers and were advised that there could be challenges in engaging with migrant communities with strong existing cultures. CLD engaged with Forth Valley Migrant Support Network. A community worker is involved with supporting people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

4.9 Members asked about the representation of the gypsy/traveller community at the holocaust memorial event. This had been triggered through dialogue with gypsy/travellers families and a subsequent Small Grants Scheme application.

4.10 The Panel asked about the University of the Third Age. There are over 100 local Members who came from a various socio-economic backgrounds.

5. PUBLIC FOCUS GROUP SESSION – 17 FEBRURY 2015

5.1 The 18 attendees formed three discussion groups and the Elected Members, assisted by an officer, rotated around the groups to facilitate discussion on three topics.

Principles of Community Involvement

5.2 Many participants had not seen the principles prior to the session. However, they generally agreed with the content of the principles. Some people stated that community groups would be interested in some principles more than others based on the group's purpose, personal interests and mix of skills. For example, 'treat all participants with respect' and 'we will not consult when decisions have already been made' were cited and these arguably are of particular concern to equalities-themed community groups or representatives bodies, respectively.

5.3 The first principle – 'We will be clear whether we are informing, consulting or engaging with people. Well will not consult when decisions have already been taken' – was queried by participants across discussion groups as they felt that sometimes consultations took place when decisions had already been made within the Council. Some therefore questioned whether or not consultations were worthwhile. The recent budget consultation was used as an example of this in all discussion groups.

5.4   It was suggested that the revised community involvement policy could have a more concise, easy-read, perhaps more visual, version that specifically covered the principles with a link to the more substantive strategy document. It was also requested that the strategic document have an executive summary.

5.5   It was emphasised that local people should be consulted if local impacts would result from Council decisions. Similarly, service-users should be consulted or engaged on service-specific issues or proposals. The emphasis here is clearly on engaging the right people at the right time, thus linking specifically with our second and third principles.

5.6   The Council was perceived to be inconsistent at delivering feedback and specific instances were cited from housing consultations or local community planning, for example. It was argued that feedback should be delivered back within a prescribed timeframe and, where possible, delivered in person to participants.

5.7   The need for effective evaluation was highlighted in discussions. Participants felt that 'We Asked, You Said, We Did' was not necessarily evidenced and they asked how we measured 'success' in particular. It was suggested that any evaluation we do should focus on key learning points as well as outcomes. That is, collecting and analysing qualitative as well as quantitative data.

5.8   People emphasised that the end-product of community engagement should be an increased quality of life for our communities. This was articulated variably as local areas being good and safe places to live, people helping one another, family values being promoted or churches thriving.

5.9   It was asked how Local Community Planning fitted with the Council's decision making process. It was emphasised that the 'community vision' should be reflected in the Council's (and Trust's) plans.

Methods of Community Involvement

5.10   It was noted by a number of participants that the Council is generally better at involving communities than Falkirk Community Trust.

5.11   Most popular information sources on Council activities included *Falkirk Council News* in particular and also local media, social media, the website, One Stop Shops and word of mouth. Tenant Talk, the Council magazine for tenants, was also mentioned.

5.12   Several participants emphasised that meaningful participation requires adequate information to be given in advance of engagement or consultation. Also, specific information on other community groups seems to be required, so that they could work in partnership at a local level. Participants suggested that readily accessible information on local community groups would connect people to their local communities.

5.13   Several participants did not read the Falkirk Herald and thus suggested placing information in other local press, such as the Bo'ness Journal and Gazette. Falkirk Council News was again identified as a good source of information.

5.14   Participants in two discussion groups mentioned increased use of noticeboards and plasma screens in Council offices as a means of disseminating information. Whilst

noticeboards are located in many (Council, Trust and NHS) premises, they are often overcrowded with information. Some participants stated they had been actively engaged in refreshing the information displayed within Council offices, suggesting a degree of co-design by some of our services with the public. It was however noted that leaflets were not the best means of communication due to information going out of date.

5.15   It was noted that community groups had disseminated Council information to members who did not have access to or could not use a computer. That said, many participants said they used social media to get information from the Council. It was suggested in two discussion groups that either Registered Tenants Organisations or Community Councils could act effectively as a focal point for informing local communities.

5.16   Several participants had been involved in various consultations or community engagement processes. Examples included the biomass plant proposal, Zetland Park usage, changes to Kinneil Kerse landfill site, local Community Action Plans and the John Muir Way.

5.17   Encouraging civic pride or place attachment was put forward in two discussion groups as a way of getting and keeping people involved. It was suggested that passion about key issues or 'problems' that required a solution were also motivations for participation.

Barriers to Community Involvement

5.18   A reasonable length of time for responses to be submitted is necessary for consultation or community engagement to be meaningful. For example, the budget consultation was mentioned as taking place over too brief a period of time, particularly given the time of year.

5.19   It was emphasised in all discussion groups that many members of the public find it difficult to attend events during the day due to work commitments. (Two people who wished to attend had given their apologies to the Scrutiny Panel for this very reason.)

5.20   It was suggested that some sections of the public in Falkirk have a relative lack of voice. Young people were cited as being not as well engaged as other, older age groups. Following on from that it was argued that young people do take part in community-life, just not necessarily with adults or older people.

5.21   Reaching out beyond the same people to a wider section of the public was seen to be difficult. Conflicting opinions within communities, apathy or a lack of encouragement were also suggested as barriers.

5.22   Social isolation was discussed, particularly in relation to ensuring that frail older people and people with disabilities were actively engaged within communities. It was put forward that older people have skills that can be utilised in community-led projects but there was nothing for them. This is something has been specifically targeted in recent times, with the formation of the Make It Happen Forum, University of the Third Age and a number of CLD-led local 50+ projects.

5.23   A lack of consistency in our approach to consultation, particularly with regards to the planning process, was put forward as a barrier. It was recognised though that we should

use different methods depending on the nature of the consultation. This relates to our third community involvement principle.

5.24   One participant, who was unemployed, stated that the possibility of sanctions precluded certain types of community involvement, including some volunteering opportunities. This was agreed by other members of the discussion. Transport costs were also suggested as a barrier for people on low incomes, either in work or not. In one discussion group, this was put forward as a rationale for decentralised Council premises such as One Stop Shops or community centres. For many people, these premises could be visited on foot. Knowledge of the location of Council offices was varied amongst attendees, with One Stop Shops apparently the most visible premises.

6.   EVIDENCE GATHERED: HARD TO REACH CLIENTS AND AN EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE - 26 February 2015

Consulting and Engaging Social Work Clients - Social Work Services (Jenny Kane, Team Manager)

6.1   Background information on various consultation or engagement work led by or involving Social Work including, for example, Tremanna participation day, focus groups with young people who attend Children's Panels, a peer mentoring programme for women offenders, 1940s tearoom in Oakbank, engaging MECS users and Self Directed Support (SDS) information events.

6.2   Participation is a particular challenge for Social Work as they deal with hard-to-reach groups. Although the numbers engaged by Social Work are relatively low, often groups are involved who do not normally get consulted or engaged with by the Council.

6.3   Staff at Tremanna had involved residents in planning the future direction of the service. This included involving young people in discussions about what they wanted from the service, what made a good member of staff and what would make Tremanna a good place to live. Actions were agreed and a person assigned to take each forward. The young people were responsible for some of the actions and were supported to carry them out. A residents group had been established and the young people communicated with each other to raise issues which would be taken to the staff team to address.

6.4   Young people aged six and over, had been given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggest improvements based on their experience of the Children's Hearing System. There were working together meetings scheduled for June 2015 where Panel Members, staff and foster carers would review the process.

6.5   Members asked how the experience of young people was included in preparatory training for Children's Panel. Social Work Services invited members of Children's Panels to residential homes, to see the Leaving Care Team and to shadow various Social Work Teams.

6.6   Participation work with children and young people with disabilities include Autism focus groups which helped to evidence need when submitting funding bids for support for children with autism. They also looked at how to best support the transition from school

and what the young people wanted to achieve. The focus groups involved the team manager, children's rights worker, children with autism and families.

6.7 Offenders were involved in decision making about the service they received and that this showed a marked shift in societal attitudes. Peer mentoring had proven successful, not least because offenders were more comfortable engaging with their peers than professionals. There were six fully trained peer mentors who had received skills-based training. This training had raised their confidence levels and employment aspirations.

6.8 It was highlighted that when working with hard-to-reach groups, progress was often slow due to initial resistance to engaging with formal authorities. Members asked what methods had been most successful in getting hard-to-reach groups to engage. Peer mentoring was a particularly good method as people were able to deal with individuals who had similar experiences to them and did not have to deal with formal professionals, which could be a barrier to engagement for people from hard to reach groups.

6.9 Viewpoint is an electronic tool which was used by looked-after-children to give their views to meetings. The system included games and allowed the user to stop and start as desired. There were two versions of the tool; one targeted at children and one for teenagers. The tool had been developed as the service recognised that looked-after-children and young people did not like formal forms. Also highlighted was the use of ipads for children without verbal communication and the use of a graffiti wall used by young people to express their views.

6.10 Members asked if the service could do better with engagement of hard-to-reach groups. Improvements had been made through focussing on evidencing engagement following the implementation of the participation and engagement strategy. The traditional view was that Social Work Services were 'done to' people but now the focus was on providing services 'with' people. The service was positive about participation and was improving the engagement of hard-to-reach groups.

Perth and Kinross Council's Community Engagement Approach (David Stokoe, Service Manager; Communities; Cultural and Community Services)

6.11 The presentation emphasised values of enabling a genuine voice for people, giving a reason for people to get involved and helping create a sense of responsibility for communities. Communities have a role in informing the priorities of the Community Plan, whilst engagement is joint resourced by the CPP. Participatory Budgeting, participatory research is being piloted in Perth and Kinross. Qualitative data is used to compliment statistics to develop 'stories of place' – what it is really like to live in an area.

6.12 Members asked who at Perth and Kinross Council was responsible for the delivery of the place-based scrutiny pilot mentioned in the presentation. David Stokoe stated that the community planning partnership (CPP) was responsible and that the remit sat within the Council's Education and Children's Service. The work had focussed on not being tokenistic in engagement, looking beyond the deficit model of CLD and instead taking an asset-based approach[4].

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[4] Asset-based approaches refer to a form of community development that focuses on (i) place, (ii) the building up or creation of assets and (iii) the improvement of quality of life. This way of working focuses on the potential of an area and thus differs from a traditional deficit-based approach, which focuses on a particular negative issue like poverty.

6.13   Following discussion on Participatory Budgeting[5], the Panel asked where there was good practice outside of the UK in alternative engagement methods. David Stokoe stated that Brazil was a leader in Participatory Budgeting and that good work was also present in Germany. There were strong examples of good citizens' Panel type work across Scandinavia as well as work on up-skilling communities. However, he stated that other questions needed addressed if utilising those methods of engagement such as what was the role of Elected Members and how to mobilise less engaged and active communities. It was noted that the Scottish Government was part-funding Participatory Training courses for local authorities.

6.14   The Panel asked about key learning points from community engagement in Perth and Kinross. It was suggested that where engagement had been successful there had not been overlong formal processes which could dissuade local communities from participating. It is important to build on existing assets, work with people in local communities and build on relationships. There should be a clear focus on place and recognition that people do not live thematically, issues almost always cut across thematic or service definitions.

6.15   The importance of addressing staff cultures was emphasised and this can be tackled through training for staff, using existing internal expertise.

6.16   Following discussion on Local Community Plans, it was stated that it was important not to start with a blank slate as not all expectations and community desires could be achieved and it was important to make that clear from the outset. It is also important to be clear about the parameters of what could be achieved.

Community Engagement and Community Planning in West Lothian (Lorraine Gillies, Community Planning Manager)

6.17   This described how the West Lothian Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) was developed (and is delivered in part) through an extensive community engagement programme. A community engagement toolkit and Community Practitioners Engagement Network were developed to enable CPP partners to engage more effectively with communities. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill and Health and Social Care Integration were described as key opportunities for further promoting effective community engagement.

6.18   The Panel asked how the Community Engagement Practitioners Network (CEPN) in West Lothian developed the Community Engagement Strategy. Lorraine Gillies advised that the CEPN included representatives from Community Councils, the Third Sector Interface, Police Scotland, NHS and management committees of community centres. The CEPN also included representatives for older and younger people and had reinvigorated the CPP's commitment to community engagement and its willingness to achieve change. The CEPN contains 25 practitioners, with an average attendance of 18 people. The mailing list of practitioners was larger than the membership of the group so information was provided to a wider audience.

6.19   The Panel discussed the importance of effective communication. West Lothian Council had joined up its approach to community engagement and operated a calendar of consultations so that where possible surveys, for example, were timed to make best use of

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[5] There are numerous approaches to Participatory Budgeting. The common theme is that communities have a direct say in how public expenditure is allocated. For example, through identifying key local themes and then subsequently voting on applications made within those themes.

people's time. West Lothian Council have commissioned Research Resource to run their Citizens Panel, at an annual cost of £22,000. Their Citizens Panel has 3,000 members, however there was still the challenge to ensure that the resource was utilised well.

6.20   Members asked about overcoming the challenge of a lack of coordination around community engagement. Increasing coordination had been the key task of the CEPN and was part of the reason for them having regular meetings. The calendar of consultations had been drawn together in order to achieve better coordination. Community engagement means different things to different people so it is important to communicate why consultation was being carried out and what the potential outcomes were.

6.21   The Panel asked about the use of evidence to drive the use of resources and how to engage about big issues. Work using Planning for Real as an engagement tool and the place-making approach was highlighted. Place-making was used to create a master plan for an area, identifying key resources and developing the story of place. It was noted that Planning for Real had previously been carried out in Bainsford and Langlees.

6.22   Members discussed Participatory Budgeting. CPP partners were being trained in Participatory Budgeting approaches. The training was provided by Participatory Budgeting Limited (PBL) and joint-funded by Scottish Government.

7.   **EVIDENCE GATHERED: MEMBER SEMINAR - 16 March 2015**

7.1   All Councillors were invited to a presentation and discussion group held on 16th March. The purpose of this was to allow Members to put forward their views on current practice and suggest areas for improvement, including how Members could be more involved. Following the session, Councillor Black, as Chair of the Scrutiny Panel, also wrote to all Members asking them to submit any views they might have for consideration by the panel. The response from Members was limited, however the views of all Members who contributed have been taken into account in this report.

7.2   Members asked for further information on Participatory Budgeting. Participatory Budgeting involved local people allocating pockets of money within their communities using at least voting mechanism. Typically, people identified key themes and then these were voted on to determine how funding would be allocated. Where Participatory Budgeting had been implemented in the UK it had tended to be with relatively small amounts of money.

7.3   Participatory Budgeting had been used in Bo'ness, Whitecross and was being used in Carronshore as part of the Local Community Planning process. This has come about with funding made available by the Coalfield Regeneration Trust, however there are other ways to implement participatory budgeting, such as having communities decide how to allocate resources to services e.g. by devolving the Small Grants Scheme to communities.

7.4   Members discussed that following the disbandment of Area Forums more emphasis should be placed on community councils and that to increase their representativeness more young people should be encouraged to join. It was noted that a review of Community Councils has been undertaken and it had been found that generally young people were not interested in joining Community Councils as they did not discuss issues which were of interest and importance to young people. It was suggested that it would be

more effective to actively go to young people to engage with and consult them rather than rely on them coming to the Council with their views.

7.5   Members discussed the role of social media as a tool for consultation and engagement and a place where people constantly shared their views. The discussion also highlighted that social media could be a negative forum leading to confrontational discussions and personal attacks. Members discussed that the use of social media could be restricted so that comments could not be posted. This would limit the risks while maximising the publicity gained. Posts on social media could direct people to the Council e-mail or website to submit their views. Members discussed that social media could be a good signposting tool.

7.6   Social media can be used for advertising as well as forum for debate. Work had recently been carried out by Communications on behalf of the Employment Training Unit (ETU). Targeted Facebook advertising had been used alongside adverts in the Falkirk Herald to attract applicants for training schemes. Through the use of trackers the service had found that the majority of applicants were Facebook referrals. It was felt that by using Facebook people who might not have ordinarily been reached were involved at a minimal cost.

7.7   It was discussed by the Panel that young people were currently engaged through modern studies and community groups and welcomed work which would increase the level of participation from young people. It was highlighted that as young people engaged on topics that were of interest to them, citing the examples Jenny Kane and Leni Rademacher had provided previously in the review.

7.8   Members were concerned that budget constraints would increase the workload of staff and it would thus be difficult for them to find time to carry out effective consultation. It was stressed that inadequate engagement often leads to more resource demanding responses being needed in the future and it is important to give staff appropriate skills and training to deal with engagement. Members also suggested that resources could be co-ordinated better, particularly in relation the timing of consultations.

7.9   The role of elected Members in consultation and engagement was discussed and Members noted that it was important that Council Officers remembered that Councillors have a community role. Consideration should be given to what information to give elected Members and the best way to provide it.

7.10   Members highlighted the importance of being honest and realistic in discussions with communities as to what can be achieved, so that expectations were not set unduly high, as well as being clear on the purpose of the consultation or engagement exercise.

7.11   Members stressed that communication and language were very important in getting the message across clearly and consistently. A range of methods were needed in order to carry out successful engagement and consultation and there should be a local focus to engagement exercises so that people knew what the impact was for them and to make it easier to get buy-in from communities. As well as this, with particular reference to younger people, services needed to be asking about things which people were interested in.

7.12   Members discussed the role of focus groups and highlighted that they provided in-depth feedback for analysis. One of the benefits of the Citizens Panel was that it provided a

pool of people who could be used to populate focus groups and go beyond the 'usual suspects'. For example, around 150 Citizens Panel members had volunteered to take part in focus groups with Bereavement Services on the topic of cemeteries and crematoriums.

7.13   It was emphasised by Members that consultation should not just be a tick-box exercise and it was recognised that the principles within "Have Your Say" were created in order to avoid that happening. Members stated that the principles should be kept to the forefront of staff's approach and that they needed to be implemented continuously.

8.   CONCLUSIONS

Have Your Say: A Plan for Local Involvement

8.1   The Panel is very clear that community involvement should not be tokenistic and should be carried out in a meaningful, respectful and participatory way, over an appropriate period of time. Investing time and resources in meaningful and appropriate community involvement is essential for transformational change within the Council, particularly within a period of diminishing resources, and the efficient and equitable provision of services over the long term.

8.2   The Panel is comfortable with the principles of community involvement outlined in 'Have Your Say', as are Elected Members and community representatives who gave their views during the review. However, the sessions identified a general lack of awareness of those principles and a lack of consistency in how they are applied across the Council.

8.3   The Panel heard about a range of consultative and engagement work carried out by Services and other bodies as evidence during the review. Members noted good practice particularly when multiple methods of community involvement had been used. The Panel also recognised that not all Council staff currently had the skill sets or training required to partake in different forms of community involvement.

8.4   The Panel heard evidence about in how the Council informs and consults communities through the Council website and social media, including the improvements brought about by the redesign of the Council website. They identified that there is further scope for using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to engage with communities, but recognise that using these tools effectively is resource intensive in terms of officer time.

8.5   During Panel meetings the importance of engaging with hard-to-reach groups was regularly highlighted. Some practitioners, notably within Social Work, do this as a matter of course due to their service function. There is scope to go further beyond Council service users and engage with hard-to-reach groups who access partner organisations. This approach has been used locally on, for example, the recent budget consultation or Jump Research on Welfare Reform advice services.

8.6   The Panel heard of partnership working between services during several presentations. However, Members also note a degree of duplication in some previous consultations and recognise this duplication can be an inefficient use of resources and can create consultation fatigue on the part of the public.

8.7   The recommendations in this report seek to address the findings of the Scrutiny Panel, setting out practical actions that can be taken to improve current practice within the Council.

9.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

9.1   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.

9.2   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.

9.3   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.

9.4   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.

9.5   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.

9.6   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 database will also be reviewed.

9.7   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.

9.8   Provide more information on consultations, community engagement and Local Community Planning in the consultation section of the Council's website.

9.9   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.

9.10   Provide guidance and training to Members and officers on the use of social media to ensure this is being used more actively but appropriately.

9.11   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.

9.12   Consider the impact of the Community Empowerment Bill and the Councils response to this in August 2015.

9.13   Consider different ways of consulting on the budget employed by other Councils by August 2015 to inform the process going forward; and

9.14   In order to ensure that the above is achieved that Officers prepare an update on the issues noted above by the end of the year.

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CHAIR OF SCRUTINY PANEL: Cllr. Allyson Black

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Scrutiny Panel Background Paper
- Have Your Say: A Plan For Local Involvement
- Briefing Note 1:Working Together in Bo'ness
- Briefing Note 2:Working Together in Bo'ness
- Briefing Note 3:Working Together in Bo'ness
- Presentation by Caroline Binnie, Communications and Participation Manager, and Jonny Pickering, Stakeholder Engagement Officer
- Presentation by Alan Christie, Community Engagement Co-ordinator, and David Love, Senior Neighbourhood Co-ordinator
- Presentation by Ross Fenwick, Waste Strategy Officer
- Presentation by Richard Teed, Senior Forward Planning Officer
- Presentation by Leni Rademacher, Training Manager, Social Work
- Briefing Note provided by Housing Services
- Briefing Note provided by Development Services
- Briefing Note provided by Education Services
- Briefing Note provided by Social Work Services.
- Presentation by Mark Meechan, Kate Kane and Frank McChord
- Report on Public Session 17/02/15
- Briefing Note provided by Social Work Services
- Briefing Note provided by Self Directed Support Team
- Presentation by David Stokoe, Perth and Kinross Council
- Presentation by Lorraine Gillies, West Lothian Council
- Presentation by Communications and Participation Manager, and Jonny Pickering, Stakeholder Engagement Officer
- Report by Jump Research

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject:	**SCRUTINY PLAN**
Meeting:	**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
Date:	**14 MAY 2015**
Author:	**CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER**

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the committee to agree the topic of the next Scrutiny Panel and to appoint members to the panel.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The committee considered a report at its meeting of 14 August 2014 which summarised key issues identified and discussed at the Performance Panel, the report is attached at appendix 1. When previously determining topics for the 2014 scrutiny plan the committee considered reports on 13 June and 12 September 2013 which are attached at appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

2.2 The committee considered whether the issues identified and discussed at the Performance Panel, or any other issues identified by the committee, required further consideration as potential subjects for the annual scrutiny plan. The report highlighted nine areas as potential topics arising from Performance Panel discussions, which are set out at paragraph 2.2 of appendix 1.

2.3 Following discussion, the committee called for further reports on five of the areas highlighted in the report, which were:

- the effectiveness of the business gateway service following its transfer in-house;
- the impact of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act and, in particular, the volume of requests to the Council and the cost arising therefrom in addition to the Council's effectiveness in dealing with requests;
- head teacher recruitment, the secondment of head teachers from schools and the use of acting position in schools and Education Service management posts;
- the educational attainment of looked after children and other vulnerable groups, and
- the operation of the complaint system within the Council, in particular, the extent to which complaint outcomes are considered and lessons learned for the future.

2.4 Reports were submitted to the 31 October and 1 December 2014 meetings of the committee presenting more detailed information on each of the requested topics.

2.5   Having considered each of the reports the committee agreed at its meeting on 19 February 2015, to recommend that Council approve the following areas for scrutiny:-

- the operation of the complaint system within the Council, in particular, the extent to which complaint outcomes are considered and lessons learned for the future. The scope of the scrutiny panel would include customer feedback as well as formal complaints, and
- outcomes for looked after children.

2.6   The committee also recommended that a third "slot" be held vacant and that this area would be agreed by committee with preference given to a subject suggested by members of the Opposition, if those members participated in the scrutiny process. The recommendations were approved by Council on 11 March 2015.

2.7   At its meeting on 31 March 2015, Council agreed to establish two Scrutiny Committees and also agreed that the committees should recommend an amended scrutiny plan to Council.

3.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Committee is invited to:-

(i)   agree the subject of the next Scrutiny Panel, and

(ii)   appoint members to the Panel.

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CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

Date: 30 April 2015

Contact Officer: Jack Frawley, Committee Officer, Ext. 6116

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: **ISSUES CONSIDERED AT PERFORMANCE PANEL**
Meeting: **SCRUTINY**
Date: **14 AUGUST 2014**
Author: **CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its last meeting, the committee asked that a report be presented to this meeting summarising key issues identified and discussed at the Performance Panel. This was with a view to the committee considering whether the issues identified required further consideration as potential subjects for the next Scrutiny Plan.

2. ISSUES DISCUSSED AT THE PERFORMANCE PANEL

2.1 The minutes of the following meetings are appended:-

28th November 2013;
23rd January 2014;
20th March 2014; and
29th May 2014.

These have been considered in an attempt to identify areas where there has been in-depth discussion or discussion on more than one occasion or where the issue raised followed on from a recent policy development or initiative which would make the issue apt for consideration by a Scrutiny Panel.   The issues identified below are not intended to be an exhaustive list and it may well be that there will be others identified by members of the committee.

2.2 The following issues have been identified:-

(1)	The impact of welfare reform and the effectiveness of the arrangements put in place by the Council to mitigate its effects.
(2)	The physical quality of housing allocated to tenants and the impact of the impetus to reduce the length of void periods.
(3)	The effectiveness of the business gateway service following its transfer in-house.
(4)	The impact of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act and, in particular, the volume of requests to the Council and the cost arising therefrom in addition to the Council's effectiveness in dealing with requests.
(5)	Head Teacher recruitment, the secondment of head teachers from schools and the use of acting position in schools and Education Service management posts.
(6)	The educational attainment of looked after children and other vulnerable groups.
(7)	The effectiveness of the systems in place to assess community care needs, in particular, the prioritisation of assessments.
(8)	The provision of residential and nursing home places and the impact of delayed discharge from hospital.
(9)	The operation of the complaint system within the Council, in particular, the extent to which complaint outcomes are considered and lessons learned for the future.

2.3   It is open for the committee to call for a report on any of these issues (or any other issue identified by the committee) to allow it to consider whether this is a suitable subject for a Scrutiny Panel.

3.   RECOMMENDATION

3.1   The committee is invited to consider the issues identified from earlier meetings of the Performance Panel.

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Depute Chief Governance Officer

Date: 6 August 2014

Contact Officer: Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer ext. 6097

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject:	**FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY WORKSHOP**
Meeting:	**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
Date:	**13 JUNE 2013**
Author:	**CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its inaugural meeting on 16 May 2013, this Committee agreed that a workshop should be organised to allow all members the opportunity to discuss areas for future scrutiny and the manner in which scrutiny would be undertaken. The workshop took place on 31 May, 2013 and was attended by 10 members drawn from all of the political groups represented on the Council. This report provides feedback from the workshop to the Committee and, in particular, addresses some of the suggestions made by members during the course of the workshop.

2. ISSUES ADDRESSED AT THE WORKSHOP

2.1 The discussion at the workshop covered four areas:-

1. the place of the Scrutiny Committee within the broader decision-making structure;

2. the future role or replacement for the Best Value Forum;

3. the potential subject areas for scrutiny; and

4. the manner in which scrutiny would be carried out.

3. THE PLACE OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WITHIN THE DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

3.1 The effect of the Council's decisions on structures is to give the Scrutiny Committee three main roles. The first is to develop and implement the Council's annual Scrutiny Plan. The second is to receive reports on the effectiveness of financial support to external organisations provided under the Following the Public Pound arrangements, to receive performance reports from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and to receive performance reports from the Community Trust. The third role was to scrutinise any matter referred to the Committee by the Executive.

3.2   Members expressed some concern at the lack of flexibility in the remit of the Committee as described above. In particular, the question was raised of how an issue which came to light during the course of the year could be addressed by the Committee. A suggestion was made that there would be benefit in the Council leaving some flexibility within the Scrutiny Plan to allow the Committee itself the opportunity to determine at least one of the subject areas for detailed scrutiny. The question was also raised of the scope for flexibility to allow the Committee the opportunity to consider issues outwith the scope of the Scrutiny Plan.

3.3   The Scheme of Delegation agreed by Council already gives some scope for flexibility. It would be open for Council to take up the suggestion that the Scrutiny Committee is empowered to choose part of the content of the Scrutiny Plan. The issue of raising matters outwith the scope of the Plan is more problematic in the context of the current Scheme. Some degree of flexibility may be available where the Committee wished to consider an issue during the course of the year with a view to considering whether it would be a suitable subject for recommendation to Council for the following year's Plan.

4.   **THE BEST VALUE FORUM**

4.1   There was general agreement among Members that there were many positive aspects of the Best Value Forum which should be retained in any replacement. The positive aspects of the Forum identified by Members centred on two areas. The first of these was that it was open to all Members of the Council to contribute to. The second was that the fact that it did not take place in public allowed for a more free and open exchange of views between Members and for more open responses from Officers to points raised by Members.

4.2   It was noted that at the last meeting of Council a suggestion had been made in the Chief Executive's report that to avoid potential overlap and duplication between the Best Value Forum and the Scrutiny Committee, that there would be some benefit in considering a standing Scrutiny Panel to monitor service performance. Some concern was expressed at this suggestion in that it may exclude the wider membership of the Council from consideration of matters currently considered by the Best Value Forum.

4.3   There is scope for a replacement for the Best Value Forum to be established which reports to the Scrutiny Committee and which meets many of the requirements set out by Members at the workshop. A Standing Panel on performance could receive the same form of information on performance reporting currently considered by the Forum. As Council has already agreed that the Scrutiny Panels are not formally constituted as Sub-Committees, the Standing Panel could continue to meet in private allowing for the full and frank discussion valued by Members. The Scheme of Delegation to Committee agreed by Council limits the membership of a Scrutiny Panel to five. It would be possible, however, to form a "core" membership of five but to allow any Member to attend.

5. SUBJECTS FOR SCRUTINY

5.1 A short list of subjects for scrutiny was prepared by officers in advance of the workshop, purely as suggestions. The list is appended to this report. It is fair to say that the contents were not met with a spontaneous burst of enthusiasm. Additional suggestions brought forward by Members as potential scrutiny areas included:-

1. the process of procurement and contract monitoring;

2. the adequacy of consultation with the public and community engagement more generally;

3. schools capacities; and

4. the role of Community Councils.

5.2 All of the areas suggested would appear to offer good scope for scrutiny. The example of consultation with the public is a useful one. The Council adopted a Community Participation Strategy in 2011. A Scrutiny Panel examining the implementation of the Strategy would allow for the assessment of whether the expected outcomes had been achieved. It was acknowledged by Members at the workshop that a focus on outcomes within the work of the Scrutiny Panels would be important.

6. SCRUTINY GUIDELINES

6.1 The discussion at the workshop highlighted the difference between the scrutiny currently undertaken at scrutiny committees and the more detailed process which would require to be adopted by Scrutiny Panels under the new system. It was acknowledged that the length of each Scrutiny Panel was likely to vary depending on the subject being considered but it was recognised that each Panel would be likely to meet over a number of meetings. There was discussion on the balance in such meetings between public and private sessions and it was recognised that there was room for both. For instance, the meeting of the Panel at which the work of the Panel was scoped and planned might be private whereas sessions where evidence was sought could be open to the public. The Panel would be reporting to the Scrutiny Committee and it would need to be clear from its report what the reasons were for it making its recommendations. Members agreed that the value of a report from a Panel would depend on the recommendations being evidence based.

6.2 Further discussion took place on the best way to develop the plan and the guidelines on undertaking a scrutiny process. There was general agreement that there would be benefit in recommending to Council that a pilot scrutiny process was undertaken over the summer period on a subject to be recommended by the Committee to Council. This would assist in assessing the time and resources required to conduct a successful Scrutiny Panel. This in turn could help to inform the recommendations made to Council on the content of the draft Scrutiny Plan. As far as timescale was concerned, the aim would be to recommend the Scrutiny Plan to the Council by the September meeting in order to allow the Scrutiny Panels to start their work over the following Council session.

6.3   If the Committee is minded to suggest a pilot scrutiny topic to be dealt with over the recess, there would be benefit in considering also at this stage the make up of the Panel that would carry out that particular scrutiny process and the timescale within which the Panel would be expected to complete its work. This would enable work to start immediately following the Council decision and for a progress report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 8 August 2013.

7.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee agrees:-

(a)   to recommend to Council that a pilot Scrutiny Panel is formed in advance of the Scrutiny Plan being agreed; and

(b)   to determine and thereafter recommend the subject area for the Panel and the membership thereof.

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CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

Date: 4 June, 2013
Contact Name: Colin Moodie – Ext: 6097

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Scrutiny Workshop

Topic	Significant Service (s)
Use and management of community halls – Lets and charging	Education
Outcomes for looked after children	Education and Social Work
Health inequalities	C&NS
Support for Kinship care	Social Work
Business support	Development Services
Employability, Neet and youth unemployment	Development Service and Education
CABs – advice and support	C&NS
Support for Gala days and Fairs	C&NS
Role and support for CCs	Governance
Community Safety Wardens – use, deployment etc.	C&NS
Transport for Care and Education	Social Work, Education and Development Services
Welfare Reform - Impact of	C&NS, SW and Finance

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: ANNUAL SCRUTINY PLAN
Meeting: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date: 12 SEPTEMBER 2013
Author: CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   The new decision-making structure adopted by the Council requires that the Scrutiny Committee should agree an annual scrutiny plan for consideration by the Council. This report recaps on the suggestions previously considered by the Committee and invites it to recommend the subject areas for scrutiny to Council for the forthcoming year.

2.   **BACKGROUND**

2.1   A number of suggested areas for scrutiny were put to members at the Scrutiny Workshop which took place on 31st May, 2013. These were as follows:-

- Use and management of community halls – lets and charging
- Outcomes for looked after children
- Health inequalities
- Support for kinship care
- Business support
- Employability, NEET and youth unemployment
- CABSs – advice and support
- Support for gala days and fairs
- Role and support for Community Councils
- Community Safety Wardens – use, deployment etc
- Transport for care and Education
- Welfare Reform

2.2   At the workshop, members attending suggested further potential areas for scrutiny. These were:-

1.   the process of procurement and contract monitoring;
2.   the adequacy of consultation with the public and community engagement more generally; and
3.   schools capacities.

More recently, the Executive has decided to establish a Policy Development Panel to consider the role of and support for Community Councils. In discussion with the Convener of the Committee a further suggestion has emerged. This would involve the scrutiny of the Council's appointment of elected members to external organisations.

2.3 On 26th June, Council agreed that a pilot Scrutiny Panel should be formed prior to the agreement of the annual plan examining the work of Citizens' Advice Bureau in the Council area. The work of this Scrutiny Panel is underway and has provided useful information on the process of undertaking the in depth scrutiny envisaged in the formation of Scrutiny Panel. In this case, the process has involved:- a scoping meeting, three meetings in public taking evidence and a final meeting to agree recommendations to follow. When preparation and report reading is added, it can be seen that the demands on the time of the members forming the Scrutiny Panel can be extensive.

3. THE SCRUTINY PLAN

3.1 The experience of the pilot Scrutiny Panel has given useful information on level of commitment in officer and member time which should help to inform the Committee's decision on the scope of the plan. It should be also be acknowledged that the decision is to be taken against the background of a significant proportion of the members available to serve to Scrutiny Panels not currently being willing to do so.

3.2 It is suggested that the plan recommended to Council should contain no more than one Panel operating at any one time but with scope for the Committee itself to add a further Panel or Panels to the maximum of two operating at any one time should the availability of members increase at a later stage. This would allow the Committee flexibility to choose a further topic or topics for in depth scrutiny without the need to revert to Council.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Members are invited to consider the potential areas for scrutiny and to recommend these to Council.

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CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

Date: 2nd September, 2013
Contact Name: Colin Moodie – Ext: 6097

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
Nil