FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2015 at 9.30 AM.

CORE MEMBERS:	Stephen Bird
	Cecil Meiklejohn (Convener)
	Rosie Murray
	Baillie Joan Paterson
	Depute Provost John Patrick
MEMBERS ATTENDING:	Jim Blackwood
	Brian McCabe
	Alan Nimmo
	Provost Pat Reid
OFFICERS:	Alex Black, Quality Improvement Manager
	Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy and ICT Improvement
	Deirdre Cilliers, Head of Social Work Adult Services
	Alex Finlay, Business Development Manager
	Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
	Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
	Philip Morgan-Klein, Service Manager
	Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
	Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
	Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services

PP6. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 21 May 2015 was approved.

PP7. SERVICE PERFORMANCE PLANS 2015 - 18

(i) Report by the Chief Executive

The panel considered a report by the Chief Executive setting out the Council's planning framework, the structure of the Service Performance Plans and highlighting the key challenges each service needed to address. Following the publication of the Best Value Audit the report also highlighted some areas where performance management arrangements would be developed. Appended to the report were the service performance plans for each service which covered the period September 2015 to March 2018. Mary Pitcaithly provided an overview of the report.

Members welcomed the comprehensive information provided, but raised some concern at the limited time available to fully consider and reflect on performance plans.

Decision

The panel noted the report.

(ii) Corporate and Housing Services – Service Performance Plan 2015 – 2018.

The panel considered the Service Performance Plan for Corporate and Housing Services for 2015 - 2018. Stuart Ritchie provided an overview of the performance plan.

The panel asked how many new builds had been completed since May 2012 and how many properties had been brought back into Council ownership through buy backs. Stuart Ritchie advised that he would provide the new build information after the meeting and that around 70 properties a year were brought into Council ownership through buy backs.

Members asked if in the process of integration to create the new Corporate and Housing Services there had been any duplication of service identified. Stuart Ritchie stated that the terms used to describe teams were a legacy from the previous service structure but that the work of each team was not duplicated by another.

The panel discussed the development of mobile flexible working and the Council's approach provision of IT services. Stuart Ritchie stated that an IT Governance board comprising officers developed the service's capital programme bids. In the previous year £1.8 million had been allocated from the capital programme fund to mobile and flexible working solutions to make necessary improvements to infrastructure. Mary Pitcaithly advised that there were other external influences on IT provision and highlighted the case of a replacement social work services IT system. In that case a system was required which would be compatible with NHS Forth Valley, Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council, particularly following the implementation of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. Members then asked if there were plans for the Falkirk Community Trust to develop an online booking system. Fiona Campbell stated that regular meetings were held with the Trust and that IT support was provided to the Trust from the Council. Further, capital programme funding had been allocated to the Trust previously.

Members sought an update on the pathways of the Council's modern apprentices and if they were entering employment after being an apprentice. Stuart Ritchie advised that the detailed information was held by the Employment Training Unit and that information could be provided after the meeting. Mary Pitcaithly stated that in the past nearly all modern apprentices who wanted to stay with the Council were able to be retained and that the Council still worked to assist all modern apprentices into further employment going forward. Rhona Geisler stated that at any one time there were approximately 500 trainees with the Council. She advised that the Council's STAR project would help to create more opportunities for young people as the Council's administration and support staff were being integrated and no new permanent positions would be recruited to.

The panel asked if the Covalent system was used corporately for performance management. Stuart Ritchie stated that Covalent was used on a corporate basis but that it was only one of the Council's performance management tools. He stated that it was also important that the views of Councillors and customers were utilised as that was the quickest method of getting feedback to take learning from.

Members discussed that in uncertain times for the public sector it would be challenging to inspire staff and asked how this would be done. Stuart Ritchie stated that it was important to communicate praise better and to recognise the hard work of staff. It was also important in talking up success to share that with all parts of the service so that different areas could take learning from each other. Further, there would be engagement with staff to ask for their views on improvement. Mary Pitcaithly stated that staff understood the pressures facing the Council but were committed and enthusiastic. Further, she advised that workload pressures would continue to be monitored.

The panel sought further information on best practice sharing across the service. Stuart Ritchie advised that staff were keen to know what their colleagues were doing and wanted to hear about others good practice. People from different staff groups were brought together to discuss practice, this was helpful in both areas of good work and less good work as issues were often not unique and staff could learn from how others had dealt with certain situations. Mary Pitcaithly stated that the strategic leadership team had a responsibility to ensure that good practice was shared. She highlighted the Celebrating Success Awards were appreciated by staff.

Members asked about the financial pressures facing the service and about the role of the third sector in service provision. Stuart Ritchie stated that a lot of funding was provided to the third sector, approximately £5 million. He advised that the future direction of partnership working and levels of funding would be determined by Councillors through the budget process. The service had made third sector organisations aware that reviewing funding to external organisations was part of the budget process and therefore any changes to funding levels would be notified with as much time as possible.

The panel asked about the anticipated increase to the number of properties for rent within the Council area over the period of the plan. Stuart Ritchie advised that around 70 properties a year would be added to the rental stock through buy back. He highlighted that there were constraints in the area of available land and so new builds were most often done in small pockets of 10 to 12 properties. He advised that he would provide more detailed information after the meeting.

Members asked for further information on a timescale regarding Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for mobile and flexible working. Fiona Campbell stated that mobile and flexible working would allow employees to engage with customers in locations and at times which suited them and then staff could communicate back to central offices. She advised that the service was looking at the specification of the tender for telephones, which would be 'follow me', mobile phones and that voice over the internet was to not be desk bound. She stated that the tender would be compiled in this calendar year.

The panel inquired if work was being carried out to encourage development of community councils where there was not one currently active. Mary Pitcaithly stated that the Council try to encourage community council participation but that there had been a lack of success in some areas. Prior to the next set of community council elections the issue would be looked at to identify if there were ways to promote the role of community councils and encourage participation.

Following a question on local CCTV provision, Stuart Ritchie advised that Enigma monitored the CCTV service and were based at Falkirk Police Station.

The panel discussed sickness absence levels and target setting as the sickness absence for craft employees in the service was over 2% higher than the target. Stuart Ritchie stated that the absence level had been too high and that the target had been ambitious. The service was looking closely at how to improve performance on absence, in particular there was a focus on staff who work outwith an office environment. Members commented that targets need to be achievable and set at particular levels for clear reasons. Stuart Ritchie advised that the figures from the previous two years had showed that the target should be achievable. Mary Pitcaithly advised that targets were being reviewed with Councillors and that improvement groups were focussing on this as well.

Members asked about the process of implementing and reviewing the Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment process across the Council. Stuart Ritchie stated that the work undertaken would be touched on in the budget briefings and would be reported to Councillors in due course.

The panel asked if shadowing was encouraged in the service as a part of staff development. Stuart Ritchie stated that shadowing was not actively promoted but that as part of a package of development it could be a useful tool, used in proportion.

Members asked about the service's priorities for mobile and flexible working. Stuart Ritchie stated that pilots would be run. Previously the capacity to utilise technology was limited by servers and licenses being restricted but capacity would be increased by the end of October. Chief Officers and Councillors were part of the pilot of mobile working and six staff from Building Maintenance had been provided with mobile handheld devices. Following the improvements to the servers the pilot would be rolled out further.

Decision

The panel noted the Service plan.

(iii) Development Services – Service Performance Plan 2015 - 2018

The panel considered the Service Performance Plan for Development Services for 2015 - 2018. Rhona Geisler provided an overview of the performance plan.

Members asked for information on employment opportunities to disabled people. Rhona Geisler advised that there were changes to the EU directive in the definition of supported businesses to, "businesses whose main aim is to socially and

professionally integrate disabled or disadvantaged people". The threshold of workers who must meet that description is being reduced from 50 % to at least 30 % and the scope is broadened beyond disabled people.

The panel commented on the quality of the waste collection service and asked if the level of complaints were as a result of the scale of the service. Rhona Geisler advised that this was likely to be the case and that the service would focus on how complaints of missed bins were measured.

Members requested that all services include the names of officers alongside their titles in all future Management Structure tables.

The panel asked for information on the impact of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. Rhona Geisler stated that the Act introduced the expectation that community benefit clauses would be used when appropriate. Members then asked about the requirement that public bodies comply with new duties including the publication of policies on community benefits. Rhona Geisler advised that this was already practice in Falkirk before having been required by the Act.

Members asked when the planning application for the new Council headquarters would be submitted. Rhona Geisler advised that the application would be submitted within the coming week.

The panel asked about the Development Management Customer Charter. Rhona Geisler stated that the charter would be published by the end of the year and that information had been gathered by an established format in line with a national approach. She stated that she would provide information on the process after the meeting.

Members discussed the value of performance measures which were to 'monitor and review' stating that these should be removed from the performance plan.

The panel discussed the timescales around works on Denny Town Centre. Rhona Geisler provided information on the work of phase one, which would be completed by March 2017.

Members asked about the measurement of responses to freedom of information requests. Mary Pitcaithly advised that there was a corporate approach across all services and that the Council worked to ensure compliance with statutory timescales.

The panel discussed the percentage of upheld complaints, asking if 50% was too high. Rhona Geisler stated that a lot of the complaints were in relation to waste management and the performance of a contractor in collecting small waste caddies. The service had altered the conditions of the contract to ensure improvement.

Members asked about asset management. Rhona Geisler stated that work was being done with the Community Planning Partnership on asset management projects and development of the corporate asset management plan.

The panel asked for further information on the Parks Development Plan. Rhona Geisler stated that each primary park would have a masterplan.

Members sought information on the work undertaken with job seekers with additional support needs. Rhona Geisler advised that the service worked with young people to develop pathways into employment. This was a developing strand of work and lots of useful learning had been taken from the project with Haven PTS.

The panel asked about the timescale for upgrading Falkirk crematorium. Rhona Geisler advised that the project was a phased programme. In 2016/17 the car park, building and cremators upgrades would be completed. Mary Pitcaithly stated that information on the crematorium upgrades had been included in the report to the Executive on Capital Programme Updates considered on 29 September 2015.

Members asked about work on flood prevention across the district. Rhona Geisler stated that mapping work was ongoing and that Grangemouth was the area of highest priority in Scotland.

Decision

The panel noted the Service plan.

(iv) Children's Services – Service Performance Plan 2015 - 2018

The panel considered the Service Performance Plan for Children's Services for 2015 - 2018. Robert Naylor provided an overview of the performance plan.

Members asked about monitoring and tracking arrangements in schools. Robert Naylor advised that testing was carried out in primaries one, three, five and seven and in second year of high school. This allowed the service to track the progress of a pupil and now that there was three years of data comparisons could start to be made. He stated that alongside test data the judgement of class teachers had an important role in tracking. Education Scotland had asked the Council for information on the data it held and found that 27 other councils had a similar system. This was an area of continued focus for the service, particularly on monitoring health and wellbeing indicators.

The panel asked when the looked after children and inclusion review reports would be available. Robert Naylor stated that the looked after children scrutiny panel was due to report in March 2016 and the inclusion review report would be submitted by June 2016.

Members asked about the percentage of children and young people responding that they felt safe and well looked after in school. Robert Naylor stated that he intended to change the measure. He wanted to put a new measure in place which would allow like for like comparisons to be made to track progress.

The panel asked for further information on service spending on looked after children. Robert Naylor stated that the information would be provided to the Scrutiny Committee on 15 October 2015.

Members asked if the Children's Service IT system would be designed to interface with that of Social Work Adult Services for the long term. Mary Pitcaithly stated that this was something of a dilemma as the Social Work Adults Service system also needed to be able to link with that of NHS Forth Valley. She advised that NHS Forth Valley were looking at replacing their system in the next few years. Robert Naylor advised that Police Scotland were also looking at developing a new system.

The panel asked about the high level of social work staff absence. Deirdre Cilliers stated that while absence was an issue the trend was improving. The service would utilise additional resources to address the issue. Members discussed that the target level of sickness absence should be 6% in recognition of the challenge in this area.

Decision

The panel noted the Service plan.

(v) Social Work Adult Services – Service Performance Plan 2015 - 2018

The panel considered the Service Performance Plan for Social Work Adult Services for 2015 - 2018. Deirdre Cilliers provided an overview of the performance plan.

Members asked about a review of the Council's approach to charging and if Falkirk's rates were lower than others. Deirdre Cilliers stated that the service was looking at a root and branch review back to the very basic principles. She also stated that the charges in Falkirk were not high compared with national averages. This was important to ensure that the approach fit better with self directed support. She advised that training of self directed support had been rolled out and people were asked about it during their assessments. There was also a dedicated team for more complex cases. The number of service users making use of self directed support was up from 1% in the previous year to 5% in the current year. Members asked about direct payments and if those levels had increased. Deirdre Cilliers stated that the uptake was not very high and had now been subsumed into self directed support. Figures on the options of uptake would be provided after the meeting.

The panel asked about the implementation of a new IT system in social work to enable single shared assessments. Philip Morgan-Klein advised that this area was a priority for the service and that the joint management group had recognised the need to progress the implementation of a replacement system.

Members asked how the service intended to improve its reputation with the public. Deirdre Cilliers stated that there would be a review of services and that practice would be changed to get more service provided more quickly. More technology would be utilised and the service would look to build confidence in communities.

The panel discussed the information on data zones in the most deprived nationally and how this compared with other authorities. Fiona Campbell stated that data zones were very small areas of only approximately two hundred people. The Falkirk area was comprised of hundreds of data zones in total. She advised that Glasgow had significantly the most data zones in the most deprived group nationally and that Ayrshire had more than Falkirk. She highlighted the Council's Poverty Strategy aimed to address issues of deprivation locally.

Members asked about the provision of occupational therapy equipment and occupational therapy assessments. Deirdre Cilliers stated that the issue with provision of equipment was to do with a staffing issue which had had a big impact as the team was quite small. The management of this issue was being looked at and contingency plans at the front line had been put in place. In relation to assessments Deirdre Cilliers stated that a review of the eligibility criteria would help to address the issue. She also advised that the most up to date position was that the figures were 3% down on the previous year.

Decision

The panel noted the Service plan.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – WAY FORWARD**
Meeting: **PERFORMANCE PANEL**
Date: **19 NOVEMBER 2015**
Author: **DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND HOUSING SERVICES**

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 This report outlines for Members proposals to take forward the recommendations made in the recent Best Value Audit report on Falkirk Council relating to performance management. It notes the actions agreed as part of the improvement plan agreed by Council and also suggests how these can be taken forward over the coming months.

2. BEST VALUE AUDIT

2.1 The best value report considered by Council notes that improvements were required to the way the Council looks at performance management. Specifically the report noted:

2.2 *The Council should integrate its various strands of performance management, service improvement and business transformation to ensure it has a coherent approach. It should use this to target its resources, focus on delivering its priorities and drive continuous improvement. It should:*

- *Coordinate its activities such as service reviews, self-assessments and business transformation and show how these will lead to specific improvement.*

- *Regularly and systematically carry out self-assessment of services, including comparison with other Councils and use this information to identify areas for improvement in its Service Plans.*

- *Ensure its programme of service reviews focuses on its strategic priorities and objectives and is based on areas for improvement identified through performance information.*

- *Ensure its business transformation and improvement projects build on the priorities identified through service reviews and good practice from other areas, to identify how to significantly improve services and contribute to required budget savings.*

2.3 *The Council should ensure that its performance reporting arrangements make improvement happen. It should produce action plans where performance reports identify a need for improvement, take the action required and provide assurance to Councillors that these actions are followed up.*

2.4 *The Council should further improve the performance information that it reports to Councillors and publishes so that Councillors and the public have a good understanding of the Council's performance.*

2.5   *In line with good practice, and the Council's new guidance, its public performance reporting should include:*

- *Performance indicators that include a baseline figure to show where services have improved or otherwise; they should also include contextual information or an explanation when using trend arrows or traffic light indicators to help readers interpret the data, for example whether an indicator increasing indicates performance is better or worse.*

- *Performance indicators that are SMART, and have a clear target for what is to be achieved or what is expected.*

2.6   In order to address the issues in the Audit, Council agreed that the following improvements would take place:

- A programme of reviews and self-assessments will be submitted to the Performance Panel by March 2016.

- A systematic programme of service reviews and self-assessments will be undertaken to influence the Council's budget strategy and improvement agenda.

- Performance reports will be developed through the Performance Panel to reflect the good practice outlined. These reports will in turn, be published on the Council's website

2.7   At the last meeting of the Performance Panel and following the presentation of annual Service Plans, it was agreed that the format of performance reports would be revised and refined and that a workshop would be organised for Members to start the process of reviewing our performance management arrangements. This report notes progress on both these issues.

3.   PERFORMANCE REPORTING

3.1   Over the last number of years Services have reported a range of information to Members of the Performance Panel. There have been issues raised about the quantity of information, the focus of information and also the level of detail presented. Concerns have been expressed by Members that it is unclear how the information presented gives Members a picture of how services are improving over time and where they need to specifically focus attention on.

3.2   A new template has been prepared and issued to Services for performance reports. This requires Services to report on the following information:

- Service Priorities
- Areas for Improvement
- Challenge and risks
- Public Performance Reporting
- Actions within the service plan that are behind schedule
- Important PIs including more detail on those area behind target or in danger of not achieving target
- Audits and Inspections for each Service.

3.3   The Performance report from Corporate and Housing services has been prepared in this new format and feedback from Members on this is invited following the meeting. It is proposed that this new format is discussed further at a workshop to be organised for Members on performance management.

4.   MEMBERS WORKSHOP

4.1   It was agreed at the last Performance Panel that a workshop for Members would be organised focussed on developing clarity around performance management and the framework that underpins this. It is proposed that this workshop be organised for December and that the purpose of this would be; to raise Members awareness of performance management; ensure effective scrutiny and also to drive improvement. Services of the Council have done work over the last few months on performance management and in particular identifying areas for improvement and important PIs. It is proposed that the rationale for this work is presented and discussed at the workshop. A number of areas will be covered in this initial workshop. These are:

Session One

4.2   This session will provide an overview of the Council's Strategic Planning and management System. What is our performance management framework and the various elements of this i.e. SCP, Corporate Plan and Service Plans?

4.3   The purpose of service plans, the process of development and their content, ensuring resources are assigned to driving achievement of Council and service priorities and outcomes will be covered.

Session Two

4.4   This session will explore the improvement framework. Various elements of continuous improvement cycle including:

- Service Plans
- Self-Assessment – purpose and criteria for selection, improvement planning etc.
- Service / Best Value Reviews – purpose and criteria for selection of areas of service
- PIs - important indicators – targets, tolerances and benchmarking
- Audit and Inspection

Session Three

4.5   This small group work session will be designed to engage Members more fully in discussing, and therefore, understanding the process of improvement.

- Review of important PIs: criteria for determining an important indicator
  outputs of the work with services
  targets and tolerances

Session Four

4.6   How will Members know we're improving

- Reporting to the Performance Panel – structure of new report.
- Scrutiny of services – what are the best questions to ask?
- Reporting to the public.

4.7   It is proposed that this first workshop will last a couple of hours and be open to all Members. The output of this workshop will inform future work on performance management.

5.   **CONCLUSIONS**

This report sets out some of the key actions that will take forward and inform the Council's response to its Best Value Audit. The new style Performance Report and the proposed workshop will give Members more oversight and engagement in how Services plan to improve and report.

6.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

6.1   **Note the specific improvement actions in our Best Value Improvement Plan relating to Performance Management;**

6.2   **Note that a workshop for Members is being organised and is focussed on the areas outlined in section four of this report; and**

6.3   **Note the new style performance report format being prepared by Services.**

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES
Date: 11 November 2015
Ref: ABC1115FC – Performance Management Way Forward
Contact Name: Fiona Campbell

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1.   Report to Falkirk Council – Best Value Audit – October 2015

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506230 and ask for Fiona Campbell.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: **CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE**
Meeting: **PERFORMANCE PANEL**
Date: **19 November 2015**
Author: **DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES**

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   This report sets out an executive summary of Corporate & Housing Services performance for the period April to September 2015 and includes our:

- key priorities;
- key areas for improvement;
- significant challenges, risks and changes in Service pressures since last Performance Panel update;
- important indicators; and
- engagement with our customers.

1.2   The attached Performance Panel Statement seeks to update Members on progress towards achieving the important actions and indicators drawn from our Service Plan.

2.   **KEY PRIORITIES**

2.1   We have set the following key priorities for our Service since the development of the Service in August 2015. These are:

   Priority One: **Delivering improvement and transformation of services across the Council**

   Priority Two: **Reviewing our services to ensure they meet the changing needs of our customers and communities**

2.2   As Officers we continually monitor progress on all of the actions within our Service Plan. We have identified ten key actions which ensure the above priorities are met. Progress on each of these is provided in the attached Performance Panel Statement.

2.3   The Performance Panel Statement also includes our Service Plan actions that are currently significantly behind target.

3.   **KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

3.1   We have established four Improvement Groups within the Service. An update on the progress of each Group is provided below:

Future Frontline Service Delivery to Customers

3.2   The objective of the Future Frontline Service Delivery to Customers is to:

- ensure our frontline services are focussed on supporting those who need our services most;
- improve customer services to all our citizens and communities but access to services on line; and
- achieve savings and efficiencies by rationalising customer facing services focused around addressing the needs of customers.

3.3   This work is being led by a Project Board with representatives from across Corporate & Housing Services. The proposal subject to Member approval is to deliver a hub and spoke model of advice and support, rationalising local offices into 3 main advice centres with additional outreach throughout the Council from other facilities, e.g. libraries etc. It is proposed that this be piloted in one area of the Council over the coming year to ensure it fulfils the objectives noted above.

3.4   The workstreams underpinning this group, and progress to date, are:

- **Digital Self Service** – This work is being taken forward by the Council's Communications Manager and will focus on providing information and means by which people can get or request services on line without having to visit or phone a Council office. Work has already been undertaken to identify priorities for digital self service focussing on areas such as benefits, rents, council tax etc;
- **Staffing** – To deliver a new model of service delivery we need to utilise the skills and experience of our staff in a way that maximises their individual expertise while ensuring that customers' needs are met fully. Discussions will take place with Trade Unions on this work once a model has been agreed by Members;
- **Infrastructure** – As the new model of service delivery assumes that we will develop outreach support and advice clinics, we will introduce mobile and flexible working solutions for our advisers. This is currently being scoped and will be developed as part of our roll out of mobile and flexible working;
- **Processes and Training** – Work has started to indentify what processes we need to rationalise and deliver differently if we are to move to on line services. A critical part of the workstream is to identify what training needs to be put in place for all staff within the new provision; and
- **Property** – In order to deliver savings and to be able to consolidate advice and support, there is a need to rationalise the number of one stop shops that the Council has. Savings will therefore be derived from this project. There will however have to be a reconfiguration of remaining local offices to deliver the new services.

3.5   A report on this work is being prepared for the Council's Executive in the near future. This report will propose a new model of service delivery based on principles previously agreed by Members.

Services to Tenants

3.6   The objective of the Housing Management Review Group is to carry out a comprehensive review of our housing management service. The housing front line is changing and the core competencies of front line officers and the qualities those officers need to deliver those services is evolving. There is a need to ensure that services are reviewed and developed to meet those new challenges, given the demographic changes in our communities in terms of the number of older people and those with more complex support needs.

3.7   There have been major changes to the environment in which the service operates. The incremental roll out of welfare reform measures, which the service has yet to feel the full impact of, housing supply and constraints on household income have implications for the service. If the Council is to ensure high quality frontline services for its tenants, a review of where savings can be realised in housing management is required, thereby ensuring ongoing investment and enhancement of the customer experience for tenants.

3.8   The Group comprises representatives from Housing, Governance and Finance Divisions and will include a tenant representative. In addition, representatives from Adult Social Care and Children's Services will attend on an ad-hoc basis.

3.9   Work streams and key actions will be determined in December once the group has agreed the action plan.

Rent Collection & Rent Arrears

3.10   The objective of the Rent Collection & Rent Arrears Improvement Group is to ensure Falkirk Council's performance is within the top half of authorities in Scotland by the end of 2017/18 and then progress on to top quartile performance from that platform. We are currently ranked 21st out of 26 authorities in Scotland who have retained housing stock and therefore in the bottom quartile.

3.11   The Group comprises representatives from Finance, Housing and Governance Divisions of our Service and will consider the following areas:

- contractual arrangements (frequency of rent payments and payment in advance/arrears);
- support for tenants;
- engagement;
- recovery policy; and
- documentation.

3.12   A number of key actions will be progressed over the next three months including:

- review working practices of best performing authorities; and
- develop action plan for improvements.

Building Maintenance Division

3.13 An Improvement Group was established following the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) assessment of operating practices within the Building Maintenance Division (BMD). The Group comprises representatives from Trades Unions and BMD management. The main objective is to ensure the future viability of the BMD over the next 5-10 years.

3.14 APSE identified and recommended that a number of workstreams be considered to deliver financial and operational efficiencies going forward. These are:

- review current depot provision, linked to the introduction of a mobile working solution. The objective being to reduce the number of depots in order to deliver savings in terms of supervision, management and administration costs, along with lower property operating costs;
- review the appointments process to ensure that adequate appointment slots are made available and are being utilised;
- review the process for determining emergency jobs to reduce the 'over' prioritisation of work and reduce the response time which is placing a significant demand on the service;
- review the present working arrangements within the cyclical maintenance programme to identify more efficient and cost effective service delivery arrangements;
- review the voids process to reduce the number of days to return a void property and increase the overall % voids being completed within the local target times, thereby minimising lost rent;
- review the current productivity scheme to increase levels of productivity, including the introduction of multi-skilling for certain tasks;
- review current fleet size to increase productivity, which may result in additional vehicles being required on a spend to save basis;
- review operating costs within Fleet Management to identify cost efficiencies and see how costs associated with fleet per vehicle per annum can be reduced to nearer the average value experiences by other authorities.

3.15 Work groups to support the Improvement Group have been created to progress the workstreams identified. These workstreams, and progress to date, are:

- **Work Scheduling Team** – This was established in August to handle repair requests in Braes, Bo'ness and Grangemouth areas. Tenant satisfaction surveys are being undertaken with c98% of customer satisfaction; 100% of General Maintenance jobs within the pilot area are now appointed with a date and am/pm timeslot being given. Tradesmen now ring ahead to the customer before attending the appointment. This compares to c1/3rd of repairs previously appointed;
- **Mobile Working** – Testing of mobile working commenced at the end of June with 6 operational mobile devices;
- **Depot Provision** – A single depot solution is the objective going forward, with Inchyra Depot as the preferred site option. However, such a move will take time and is dependent on matters such as mobile working; stores arrangements and vehicle storage being progressed. The first initial phase will be relocation from Winchester Depot, the lease of which expires in approximately 12 months;

- **Working Procedures** – Reviewing clerical and administration arrangements;
- **Cyclical Maintenance** – The need for appropriate benchmarking data was also highlighted by APSE. As such an opportunity was available to undertake a tender exercise for 1/3rd of the cyclical painterwork (time limited to end of March 2016). This has not impacted on our workforce as our existing painters are undertaking new internal work in Void Houses as part of the new voids house standard;
- **Fleet / Vehicles** – Areas being considered include better use of our vehicle tracking systems and identifying opportunities for more efficient working through one person per vehicle arrangements; and
- **Schedule of Rates** – An independent review of the labour element of our SOR's is being carried out and is comparing c2,000 SOR's with external market and national schedule of rates This review will also provide details of different and modern working practices which impact on the SOR comparisons.

3.16   Around 70 voluntary severance applications have been received for BMD employees. Severance offers have been made to 22 employees, 18 have accepted with a leaving date of 31 October 2015. Accepted offers will cost c£400k and will be funded directly from BMD budgets this financial year, with no impact on the Council's General Fund. Annual salary savings of c£500k are estimated from the accepted voluntary severance applications.

3.17   As there will be no back-filling or replacement of posts released through voluntary severance, efficiencies will be delivered through the above work groups.

3.18   A number of key actions will be progressed over the next 3-6 months:

- expansion of the geographic coverage of the Work Scheduling Team to include a minimum of 1 further local Housing Office area;
- Work Scheduling Team responsible for scheduling all operatives work for the pilot areas, generating supervisory staff efficiencies;
- expansion of mobile working;
- revised store and material supply arrangements agreed;
- agreed "Home to Work" Protocol in place and commencement of home to work arrangements for agreed employee groupings;
- lease terminated for Winchester Avenue and relocation plan in place; and
- tranche 2 voluntary severance applications considered and decision made. Further savings of c£500k are targeted as part of this second wave of voluntary severance.

4.   UPDATE FROM LAST PERFORMANCE PANEL

4.1   There have been a number of significant challenges, risks and changes in Service pressures since our last report to Performance Panel. This section notes some of these:

- Best Value Audit Improvement Plan has been agreed by Council and will be supported in its delivery by our Service;

- the Community Planning Partnership has agreed its priorities and outcomes and these will be finalised over the coming months and presented in a final Plan early 2016;
- The service is currently co-ordinating work with regards to refugees both within the Council and across the Community Planning Partnership. This again will be subject of a report to the Executive in the near future.

5. IMPORTANT INDICATORS

5.1 Our Service has a suite of indicators that are required for statutory and business related purposes. We have identified 16 important indicators. We have provided information on all our important indicators in the attached Performance Panel Statement. Indicators that are on target have comparative data for your information. Indicators that are significantly below target or slightly below target have additional background information on the progress and improvement actions for each.

6. ENGAGEMENT WITH CUSTOMERS

6.1 Our Service is currently in the process of engaging with our service users on the following:

- **Budget Engagement** – detailed budget options for our Service are currently on the Council website and our customers have the facility to make comments to us directly on any of the proposals. We are currently in the process of engaging with service users in terms of any equality and poverty impact that the budget proposals may have;
- **Strategic Community Plan** – the most recent Citizen Panel were asked about their perceptions of the area in order to inform the Plan;
- **Housing Rent** – Tenants will be consulted on rent and value for money through the Tenants Forum and Newsletter in November and December; and
- **Local Housing Strategy** – the next Citizen Panel will go out at the end of November and will include questions about the Strategy.

…………………………………..
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES
Date: November 2015
Ref: 0002 – C&HS Performance Panel Report – November 2015/DAT
Contact Name: Stuart Ritchie, Ext: 6005

Corporate & Housing Services - Performance Panel Statement - April to September 2015

Key Actions Progress

(red octagon)	Action is significantly behind target.
(yellow triangle)	Action is slightly behind target or in danger of not achieving deadline.
(green arrow)	Action is on target.
(green tick)	Action is completed.

Key Priorities

CHS Priority One: Delivering improvement and transformation of services across the Council

Action		Progress	Status
CSP15BT004	Review business support functions across all Services to streamline processes, eliminate duplication and deliver efficiencies.	On target. All Services live with the exception of schools support staff, on target to transfer in 2016. Project plans for re-design of functional areas on target.	(green arrow)
CSP15BT007	Deliver a mobile flexible working solution for the Council - including Mobile Device Management, Virtualisation, Home Working etc.	Servers have been received from both suppliers (Atlantis & HP) and are currently being installed and will then be configured. Configuration of the servers is scheduled for completion by 4th November. The applications and desktops will be set up from 4th November until the 17th & testing of the applications will be carried out until the 3rd Floor early adoption goes ahead on the 9th December. BMD/Members and Staff tablets will then be transferred to the live set-up. Sessions with Services to discuss transfer to virtual desktops has started with further sessions being scheduled.	(green arrow)
CSP15VALPER17	Take forward a review of the Council's approach to performance management.	Following the publication of the best value of the Council and improvement plan has been agreed by the Council. This will include a review of how we identify, undertake and support self-assessments. This will be considered alongside other performance management tools such as service review, PIs etc. A workshop for Members on Performance Management is being planned for 2016.	(green arrow)
CSP15VALPER28	Continue to develop the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	The MTFS is regularly updated as new information becomes available and is a working document. Work is ongoing at the moment to facilitate the use of the Integra system to monitor the MTFP and move away from the current spreadsheet system. The BV report recommended longer term planning (5-10 years) and we are looking at how this can be taken forward in a meaningful way.	(green arrow)

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Action		Progress	Status
CSP15VALPUB04	Investigate the options for a suitable corporate electronic document and records management system (EDRMS).	Initial work has been undertaken to investigate the opportunity to procure a suitable electronic document records management system. Further work to determine the exact requirements for each Service requires to be undertaken following work being undertaken by the Records Management Group on the classification scheme.	🔴

CHS Priority Two: Reviewing our services to ensure they meet the changing needs of our customers and communities

Action		Progress	Status
CSP15BT009	Develop a proposal for a suitable channel shift for our citizens to allow them to access our services in a variety of ways and to enable the Council to deliver services as efficiently as possible.	This project is significant in supporting improved access to services, in particular the review of Frontline Service Delivery. There are a number of aspects to this including ensuring clear information on services is provided to the public through a number of medium but also importantly provides services online to the public. Funding for a technical solution to the delivery of online services is currently being considered.	▶
CSP15ECOWEA01	Review and refresh the Council's Poverty Strategy.	Work started on the review of the Poverty Strategy. This area of work is being progressed alongside the review of the Strategic Community Plan and will inform the priorities within the new Plan.	▶
CSP15EQUHSG01	Implement the 2015-18 Housing Investment Programme to ensure housing stock continues to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standards beyond 2015; improves energy efficiency; provides additional affordable homes to meet needs and improve our housing estates.	**Housing Investment Programme 2015/16 to 2017/18:** **1.** The 3 year programme which includes a total investment of £85.7m was approved by Falkirk Council on 11 February 2015. **2.** Over the life of the programme c£51.45m will be spent on maintaining our existing council housing stock to the SHQS and improving the energy efficiency of our stock to the new EESSH. **3.** c£34.2m will be spent in delivering a range of initiatives to deliver new and additional affordable homes and to expand the scope of housing options to help meet tenants housing needs. 4. The projected expenditure for 2015/16 as reported to executive on 29/09/15 was £28.3m, an underspend of £2.1m. Work is ongoing to identify works that can be brought forward to mitigate the underspend. 5. The underspend is due to the planned start dates for Council new build projects being delayed: Duke Street due to planning constraints and Stenhousemuir due to issues with retaining the front facade.	▶
CSP15EQUHSG02	Develop a Housing Strategy for older people to meet the needs of increasing aging population.	The Older People's Housing Plan has now been prepared and will be reported to Executive in January 2016.	▶
CSP15VALPAR02	Support and lead the review of the areas in the new Strategic Community Plan.	A draft Plan which sets out priorities and outcomes will be presented to the Community Planning Leadership Board at its meeting in November. Following this a period for consideration and review by partners will allow a finalised Plan to be prepared for approval by the Board and partners in the new year.	▶

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Important Indicators on Target

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Target	Benchmark
	Value	Value	Value		
AHS 1 Percentage of New Tenancies sustained for more than a year	87.7%	89.1%	89.4%	90.0%	87.7% SHBVN / SHR 2014-15
AHS 12 Percentage of settled accommodation secured by unintentionally homeless applicants	84.1%	89.9%	91.6%	80.0%	80% (Scottish Government report on Operation of Homeless Persons Legislation June 2014)
FIN_ISG_061 Number of days to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims	40	26	20	25	24 days DWP Scottish average for 2014/15
FIN_ISG_063 Number of days to process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction change events	16	10	9	10	8 days DWP Scottish average for 2014/15
CHS060 Percentage of FOI enquiries dealt with in 20 working days	N/A	N/A	92%	100%	No Benchmark applicable, however expectations would be 100% as per FOI timescales.
CNS056 Procurement Capability Assessment	60	70	Annual	75	60 Scotland Excel Local Authority Average 2014
GGV 6 Percentage of Rent Lost through properties being empty during the last year	1.25%	1.72%	1.19%	1.0%	1% SHBVN / SHR 2014-15
HQM 3a Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (in hours)	6	7	6	7	6.3 hours SHBVN / SHR 2014-15
HQM 4a Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (in working days)	14	14	12	12	8.6 days SHBVN / SHR 2014-15
HQM 9 Percentage of Tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	82.3%	84.1%	92.0%	90.0%	81.7% SHBVN / SHR 2014-15

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	2013/14 Value	2014/15 Value	2015/16 Value	Target	Benchmark
HQM 11 Percentage of Tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	89.7%	89.3%	88.7%	90.0%	86.90% SHBVN / SHR 2014-15

Important Indicators slightly below target

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Target	Benchmark
CHS061 Sickness Absence: Corporate & Housing Services	N/A	N/A	4.51%	4%	No benchmark - target locally determined

Progress

Absence is managed in line with the Council's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy. This involves a combination of Return to Work interviews; specialist medical and OH referrals; workplace adaptations; informal and formal monitoring. All staff has been trained on the Council's absence policy.

Information updated October 2015.

Improvement Action

A number of measures have been taken to minimise sickness absence across the Service. These include:
• Barrachd has now been rolled out and provides management information. Work continues to develop this process.
• New divisional absence targets have been identified and agreed by Joint Consultative Committee.
• The trigger process has ceased and has been replaced by a number of new actions as reported at Joint Consultative Committee.
• HR is currently reviewing absence/capability policies.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Target	Benchmark
GGV 5a Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	7.65%	7.66%	Annual	6.10%	6.1% SHBVN / SHR 2014-15

Progress

The 2015/16 data will be available in April 2016. We have developed an approximation to allow monthly tracking of rent arrears. The approximation is currently 6.67% as at end September 2015. At present we are seeing an improvement on associated indicators that indicate we will be close to achieving our target by the end of 2015/16.

Improvement Action

A Rent Arrears Improvement Project has been commissioned, with membership agreed. The objective of that project is to ensure that we are in the top half of Scottish authorities be the end of 2017/18 financial year.

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	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Target	Benchmark
HQM 1 Percentage of Stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	87.30%	82.79%	Annual	89.15%	84.1%

Progress

Our percentage for both SHQS compliance and meeting the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is 100% for all properties within the scope of the SHQS. The properties within the scope of SHQS include all social rented properties (16328) excluding all exemptions and abeyances.

Our exemptions and abeyances include the following:

Exemptions – 730 Properties
. 244 properties have undergone a design feasibility study to extend our existing CHP and install a district heating scheme. The initial findings have indicated that the extension is not economically viable and further investigations are ongoing.
. 24 properties are located within a conservation area, which is restricting the energy efficiency measure that can be carried out. Design and liaising with planning is ongoing.
. 462 properties that have an electric wet heating system installed and we are currently working with BRE and Scottish Government to ensure that the energy efficiency methodology best reflects the performance of the system.

Abeyances – 2080 Properties
. 57 properties that await gas supply. Work ongoing with utility company.
. 569 properties have gas supply installed and we are waiting on the tenants arranging their meter upgrade.
. 262 properties where we have been unable to gain access.
. 1026 properties where tenants have refused programmed work.
. 166 properties where owner occupiers have refused to participate.

Therefore our overall SHQS compliance within our total stock is 83% (and the 17% is made up entirely of exemptions and abeyances).

Information updated October 2015.

Improvement Action

A 3-year investment programme is in place and this identifies works required across our properties to meet the SHQS by the 2015 deadline. Works include replacement heating and heating upgrades to improve the energy efficiency ratings, fabric improvements, upgrading the remaining high rise flats, replacing kitchens and bathrooms, electrical upgrades, estate improvements and health & safety improvements. We have completed a full stock condition survey, and have initiated a 5 year rolling programme of stock condition surveys to maintain our properties in line with the SHQS beyond 2015.

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Important Indicators significantly below target

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Target	Benchmark
CHS033 Sickness Absence: Craft Staff	5.5%	7.1%	6.8%	5%	4.09% APSE Performance Network (BMD Family Group) 2013/14

Progress
Absence is managed in line with the Council's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy. This involves a combination of Return to Work interviews; specialist medical and OH referrals; workplace adaptations; informal and formal monitoring. All staff has been trained on the Council's absence policy. . Information updated October 2015.

Improvement Action
A number of measures have been taken to minimise sickness absence. These include new software to improve management information. Further training for managers on the occupational health process has been completed. Long term absences and those employees meeting absence triggers are regularly reviewed in consultation with HR. HR are also developing new procedures to assist managers in the process of managing absence, as reported to JCC.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Target	Benchmark
CHS047 Percentage of 1st stage complaints responded to within timescales	N/A	N/A	83%	100%	100% SPSO Target

Progress
Performance levels will continue to be closely monitored on a monthly basis. 1st stage complaints received year to date was 539. Those closed within 5 working days were 439. April 80%, May 87%, June 76%, July 91% Aug 83% Sept 71% Year to date performance is 83%. Information updated October 2015.

Improvement Action
Increased focus on checks by Customer Service Team and Service Unit Managers on a twice-weekly basis on overdue cases and increased focus on performance. We are continuing to develop our processes to ensure that timescales are adhered to.

Audits

Title		Update	Status
CSP15AU002	Community Planning Audit - Follow up work	Review and submission submitted to Audit Scotland.	✅
CSP15AU003	Data Accuracy Visit in relation to Annual Return on Charter carried out by Scottish Housing Regulator	Inspection completed and letter received to confirm that Falkirk Council's data was found to be accurate. Full report is still to be published	✅
CSP15AU004	BSI Accredited Services - Internal and External Audits	The British Standard Institution (BSI.) completed their last visit in May 2015 and confirmed the areas assessed during their audit to be effective. In November 2015, BSI will conduct a further surveillance visit and again look evidence to ensure our quality management system meets the requirements of ISO9001:2008. In addition to the above a program of over 25 internal audits were completed, over the year, to support the achievement of statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements. The effectiveness of these internal audits is also subject to scrutiny by BSI as part of their regular program of surveillance visits.	▶

Inspections

Title		Update	Status
CSP15IN001	Benefit Risk Inspection	Stage 2 of 8 completed - self assessment and updated action plan returned to Audit Scotland. Awaiting contact from them for Stage 3 - site visit.	▶
CSP15IN002	Thematic Inspection of Rent Consultation Methodology	Inspection completed but report from the Scottish Housing Regulator has still to be published	✅
CSP15IN003	Annual Inspection of Registered Events	The inspection is due to take place in January/February 2016 for events registered in 2015.	▶
CSP15IN004	Inspection of Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 (RIPSA) Activities	An inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners (OSC) will be undertaken on 17 November 2015. OSC will report back and provide recommendations which will then be considered.	▶