



Agenda Item 3

Minute

Draft

**Minute of meeting of the EXECUTIVE held within the Municipal Buildings,
Falkirk on Tuesday 10 December 2019 at 9.30 a.m.**

Councillors: David Alexander
Robert Bissett
Gary Bouse
Paul Garner
Nigel Harris
Gordon Hughes
Cecil Meiklejohn (convener)
Lynn Munro
Malcolm Nicol
Alan Nimmo
Pat Reid

Officers: Jack Frawley, Team Leader - Committee Services
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive
Colin Moodie, Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Pete Reid, Manager (Growth & Investment)
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer
Martin Thom, Head of Integration

Also Attending: Councillor Niall Coleman, for item EX92
Councillor Laura Murtagh, Public Protection Portfolio Holder
for item EX97

EX79. Apologies

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor Coombes.

EX80. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

EX81. Deputation Request

With reference to Standing Order 33, the Convener referred to a deputation request received from Bo'ness Community Council and Bo'net Networking Group to be heard in respect of item EX94 – Town Centre Capital Fund 2019/20.

The Executive agreed the deputation request.

EX82. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 29 October 2019 was approved.

EX83. Rolling Action Log

A rolling action log detailing decisions not yet implemented following the previous meeting on 29 October was provided.

Decision

The Executive noted the rolling action log.

EX84. Referral from Corporate Partnership Forum

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which sought immediate implementation of changes to the Dignity at Work Policy, the Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy and How to Prevent, Minimise and Manage Stress at Work. The report also provided information on voluntary severance and ill health retiral costs for 2018/19.

The Dignity at Work Policy had been reformatted into the new style format and included a “how to” document to provide additional support and information on the process. Further clarity was included in relation to informing individuals of a complaint against them where remedial action or an investigation was considered to be required. In addition, mechanisms for any required remedial actions would be fed back to the relevant manager. The policy had also been updated to allow formal investigation reports to be considered at Service Manager/ Headteacher level.

The Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy replaced the Mental Wellbeing & Stress Management Policy. It outlined the Council’s approach to improving the health and wellbeing of employees and related governance arrangements. The policy outlined responsibilities for Senior Leaders, Line Managers and employees.

The How to Prevent, Minimise and Manage Stress at Work document supported the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Policy. The “how to” guide outlined how the Council managed stress within the organisation and provided guidance for managers and employees to assist in managing stress. The Work Positive Stress Risk Assessment Tool had been

introduced, along with guidance for undertaking individual and group stress risk assessments. Improved guidance for the implementation of the HSE's management standards was also incorporated.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) approved the immediate implementation of changes to:**
 - **Dignity at Work policy;**
 - **Wellbeing & Mental Health policy;**
 - **How to Prevent, Minimise and Manage Stress at Work, and**
- (2) noted the costs and savings achieved from voluntary severance and ill health retiral arrangements for the period 2018/19.**

EX85. Referral from the Scrutiny Committee: Report of the Scrutiny Panel – Housing Allocations

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which presented the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee following the conclusion of the Scrutiny Panel review of the Housing Allocations Policy.

The Scrutiny Committee established a Scrutiny Panel to undertake the Housing Allocations review in early 2019. The panel reported its findings to the committee on 14 November 2019.

The panel met on six occasions and heard evidence on:-

- Introduction to Housing Allocations;
- Housing Allocations – Tony Cain, Policy Manager Association of Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO);
- Falkirk's Transition to Rapid Rehousing and Housing First;
- Housing Allocations and Challenges;
- Housing Allocations Review – Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) – Presentation from Link Housing;
- Meeting with all members.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed to make the following recommendations to the Executive at its meeting of 14 November 2019, that the Executive:-

- (1) approve the following for consultation:-

Local Letting Initiative High Flats

To bring this policy more in to line with legislation it was proposed to consult on reducing the age restriction to 50. This would assist with equality issues and enhance provision for the aging population.

Local Letting Initiative New Builds

In order to maximise the opportunity for meeting housing needs, it was proposed to consult on removing the restrictions applied to new houses. This would mean all categories could apply in line with the quota systems. This should assist with the Rapid Re-housing Transitional Plan and moving applicants on from temporary accommodation.

Under Occupancy

It was proposed that consultation was undertaken on aligning the application of Band 1 priority for under-occupation with overcrowding i.e. Band 1 priority applied in cases of under occupation by 2 or more bedrooms.

It was further proposed to consult on changes to when an applicant could make an application to move when first allocated a house. It was proposed that once an applicant had been allocated a house they could not apply for a move within 12 months unless there was a significant change of circumstance that changed their housing need. This meant if an applicant accepted a house that was too large for their current need, they could not immediately then apply for a move and be prioritised due to under occupancy.

Time limiting Priority (Band 1 Applicants)

It was proposed to consult on limiting the time applicants with Band 1 and 2 priorities in Home Mover and Home Starter categories to 3 months of non bidding. This would be from the date of them being awarded the priority banding. Once an applicant had been determined as at risk of having priority removed, a housing interview would take place to review the circumstances including the availability of appropriate housing etc. Once it had been determined that priority would be removed the applicant would be moved to Band 4 in line with other Home Seekers.

It was further proposed to consult on removing people who were on Band 3 or 4 and who had not bid within 12 months. Their application would be cancelled after 12 months of no bidding activity and removed from the housing list. Their removal did not mean they would not be able to reapply but did mean that any advantage accrued due to the time they had been on the list, would be lost. It should be noted that the length of time a person has been on the list only would matter if two applicants of equal housing need applied for the same house.

Home Seeker Category Offers

In order to minimise the time spent in temporary accommodation and the emotional impact that living in temporary accommodation had on people, there would be consultation on the number of offers Home Seekers were awarded before priority was removed. It was proposed to

consult on reducing the number of offers to Home Seekers from two to one.

This could be achieved in one of two ways:-

- An applicant who was actively bidding being offered a house through the choice based lettings system, or
- An applicant being offered a direct match after 3 months of no bidding activity.

There would however be a review meeting to determine the reasons for non bidding e.g. lack of appropriate housing etc.

Housing Debt and Allocations

It was proposed to amend the policy to make it clear to tenants their obligation to address and repay their current housing debt before being made an offer of housing. This was to ensure that those who were able to pay but refused were addressed. Applicants who were suspended from the housing list for housing debt would require to be on a payment plan to address their housing debt for a 3, 6, or 9 month period, depending on the outcome of the public consultation, before being considered for re housing.

Letting Quotas

In order to fulfil obligations under the Rapid Rehousing plans, it was proposed to consult on amending the letting quotas to 50% Seeker, 25% Mover and 25% Starter. In addition any property normally considered for All Groups should be utilised for Homeless applicants as a direct match offer. The quotas would be reviewed 24 months after amendment to ensure that it was meeting the needs of applicants, and

- (2) request that the scrutiny panel along with the portfolio holder review the outcome of the consultation in regard to the recommendations prior to final consideration by the Executive.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) approved the areas recommended by the Scrutiny Committee for consultation, and**
- (2) requested that the outcome of the consultation comes back to the Executive and that the Executive reviews the outcome of the consultation.**

EX86. Construction Charter

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which sought approval to adopt a Falkirk Council Construction Charter. The Unite Trade Union had contacted the Council with a view to adopting the Unite Construction Charter. Discussions took place with Unite and, in conjunction with Unite officials, a Falkirk Council Construction Charter had been drafted. The Falkirk Council Construction Charter was based on the Unite document and took into consideration local and operational matters particular to Falkirk Council. The draft Construction Charter for Falkirk Council was provided as an appendix to the report. Individual Construction Charters had been adopted by a number of Local Authorities across the UK, including Aberdeen City, Dundee, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils.

The Construction Charter had the following objectives:-

- Set the highest possible standards on construction projects funded by public money;
- Promote direct and secure employment;
- Promote quality apprenticeships and opportunities for local workers;
- Guarantee the highest possible health and safety standards, including quality welfare facilities;
- Encourage and support the role of trade unions.

The adoption of a Construction Charter aligned with the Council's Procurement Strategy objectives. Part of future tender processes would be to utilise selection criteria to assess tenderer compliance with the Falkirk Council Construction Charter, in order to ensure interested parties were aware of the Charter requirements and confirm compliance prior to progression.

Decision

The Executive approved the Construction Charter as detailed in appendix 1 to the report.

EX87. Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2019 – 2022)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which sought approval of the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2019 – 2022).

The Council met the requirements of The Scottish Social Housing Charter by providing a range of ways for tenants to be involved in service planning and decision making at a level at which they feel comfortable. Tenants were represented on the Housing Asset Management Plan (HAMP) group, participated in focus groups including "How Your Rent Money is Spent" and approved publications through the Editorial Panel as well as participating in

Scrutiny Panels. The Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2018) results showed that 93% of tenants were satisfied with the “opportunity to participate” and 95% were satisfied that they were “kept informed by their landlord”. Both statistics exceeded the national average.

Decision

The Executive approved the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2019 – 2022) as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

EX88. Funeral Poverty

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services which provided information regarding funeral poverty. It considered the new national Funeral Support Payment, the approach of existing services and reviews of some examples of other funeral poverty assistance models from across the UK. A number of service improvement measures were currently being implemented and therefore the report did not propose any new service changes. The report sought approval to carry out bereavement sector engagement on funeral poverty on completion of the new measures and to report back as appropriate.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the content of this report and the existing measures in place to assist with funeral poverty at a national and local level;**
- (2) instructed officers to review and amend the Council’s website and promotional materials to incorporate updated information and links concerning funeral poverty, and**
- (3) instructed officers to engage with the bereavement sector on a) any further change options to Falkirk Council service delivery and their financial implications, and b) any Scottish Government revisions to the new Funeral Support Payment, reporting back to members as appropriate.**

EX89. Capital Programmes Update 2019/20

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided details of the forecast position for the General Fund Services and Housing Capital Programmes. It also presented the Prudential Indicators for information.

The General Fund Services Capital Programme was approved by Council on 27 February 2019 and the Housing Capital Programme was approved by Council on 23 January 2019. The 2019/20 budgets for both programmes were part of a five year plan and as such there would be movement in spend across the years. The approved 2019/20 budget for the General Fund had been revised to £41.734m (£38.234m after the deduction of the slippage allowance). The forecast spend for the General Fund was £33.753m, which was £7.981m less than budget. The forecast spend for the Housing Capital Programme was £40m, which was £7.7m less than the budget.

Decision

The Executive noted the:-

- (1) forecast spend for both the General Fund Services (£33.8m) and Housing Capital Programmes (£40m);**
- (2) Prudential Indicators, and**
- (3) external borrowing requirement.**

EX90. Treasury Management – Interim Review 2019/20

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an interim review of the Treasury Management function.

The report provided an update in regard to:-

- the economic and interest rate outlook
- the borrowing strategy
- the investment strategy
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators
- Treasury Management Advisers
- Benchmarking, and
- Member Training.

The benchmarking information showed that Falkirk Council was 18th out of 32 Scottish Local Authorities in regard to investment balances at 30 September 2019.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the progress of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20;**
- (2) noted the reduction in the long term borrowing requirement for 2019/20, and**

(3) agreed to refer the report to Council for consideration.

EX91. Scottish Welfare Fund Update

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on the Scottish Welfare Fund further to the decision of Council on 25 September 2019. In July and August 2019 unplanned absences and staff turnover within the Scottish Welfare Team resulted in significant delays in the assessment of Community Care Grants. This impacted on some of the most vulnerable households. The Service aimed to assess all claims within 15 working days. During the period Crisis Grants were kept up to date.

To prevent a repeat of the circumstances, which resulted in an unacceptable service to applicants, the Service was in the process of training a small number of multi-skilled advisors, from the Advice and Support Hubs, to undertake the role, if required. There were 4FTE permanent officers within the team supplemented by 2 temporary officers. It was unlikely that a team of 4 could be self-sufficient and would need regular support. Demand on the service continued to grow with an 11% increase in Crisis Grants and 13% increase in Community Care Grants in 2018, relative to 2017. The 2019 application numbers had seen a further increase, on 2018.

Decision

The Executive noted the report.

EX92. Tax Incremental Finance Initiative and Falkirk Gateway Update Report

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services which provided an update on the Falkirk Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) initiative including revisions to the delivery timescale for the infrastructure programme, and the legal negotiations relating to the Falkirk Gateway. The report also provided the results of the Falkirk Gateway retail impact assessment and progress with site investigations and the hotel capacity study undertaken for the development.

The TIF was a major initiative for the Council and was being pursued to assist in the economic transformation of the area. Given the complexity of the infrastructure projects being undertaken, delivery timescales had been affected by third party funding requirements, utility issues and finalising the detail for cost effective designs. As a consequence, the process had taken longer than was initially programmed. The adjusted timescales required an extension to the 11 year infrastructure programme as established in the legal agreement between the Council and Scottish Government. The Scottish Government had agreed in principle to the proposed extension. In addition, it was suggested that the Council seek the Scottish Government's agreement

to a one year extension to the TIF to mitigate the effects of the implementation of the Barclay report.

The Falkirk Gateway development provided exciting investment and economic growth opportunities at a key location in the Council area. The conclusion of the site investigation and hotel development studies would allow the Council to finalise the development agreement with Fintry Estates Ltd/Hargreaves to drive the project forward. The retail impact assessment showed that the Gateway project would have a limited impact on the commercial position of Falkirk town centre providing the confidence to move forward. A further report would be submitted to the Executive in 2020 confirming the proposed final terms of the development agreement with Fintry Estates/Hargreaves incorporating the outcome of the site investigations and hotel capacity study and recommending a way forward in relation to the development of the Gateway sites.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) agreed the revised implementation schedule for TIF projects as outlined in Appendix 1 including the proposed extension to the infrastructure programme period to meet adjusted delivery timescales;**
- (2) to forward a request to Scottish Government to extend the TIF payback period from 25 years to 26 years to reflect the change in Scottish Government Non Domestic Rates policy as a consequence of the Barclay Report;**
- (3) noted the progress of the Falkirk Gateway development and the outcome of the retail impact assessment;**
- (4) to proceed to finalise the development agreement with Fintry Estates/Hargreaves incorporating the outcome of the site investigations, hotel capacity study and further details for delivery of development at the Gateway sites, and**
- (5) agreed that a further report on the finalised development agreement be submitted to the Executive in 2020.**

EX93. Bonnybridge Transport Issues - Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Pre-Appraisal

The Convener advised that a request had been made under Standing Order 38.1(x) by Councillor Coleman to speak at the meeting. The Convener stated that having taken regard of the ward specific nature item of the item and that Councillor Coleman was a local member for the affected ward that she would consent to the request.

Councillor Coleman was then heard in relation to the item.

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services which provided an update on the STAG pre-appraisal prepared to investigate transport issues in the Bonnybridge area and possible options for future STAG1 and STAG2 Appraisal.

The STAG pre-appraisal considered existing transport issues relating to the Bonnybridge area. The current transport provision including up to date base data for public transport services had been included. That element had required to be updated twice due to alterations to bus and rail timetables since the surveys were carried out. Other data used included information on travel to work, modal choice and barriers to using alternative modes of travel.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the contents of the report;**
- (2) agreed to a further more detailed appraisal as part of STAG 1 and STAG 2 being undertaken for transport issues in the Bonnybridge area subject to agreement with Transport Scotland, as set out in section 5 of the report on the following options:-**
 - new railway station**
 - improved and expanded car parking at railway stations**
 - better access to bus and rail services**
 - upgraded pedestrian and cycling facilities**
- (3) agreed, subject to Transport Scotland comments and representations that Development Services appoint an appropriate transport consultant to carry out the further STAG 1 and STAG 2 appraisal work with appropriate funding as per paragraph 6.1 of the report.**

EX94. Town Centre Capital Fund 2019/20

Madelene Hunt, on behalf of Bo'ness Community Council and Bo'net Networking Group addressed the Executive.

Questions were then asked by members.

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services which updated the Executive on the work taking place to revitalise Falkirk's

town centres. There were proposals for the delivery of works relating to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund allocation for 2019/20.

To assist the national town centre regeneration effort, the Scottish Government launched a £50 million fund to improve amenity and help regenerate town centres. The 'Town Centre Capital Fund', was set up in partnership with COSLA to support Councils to ensure their high streets were more diverse, sustainable and successful in the face of changing and evolving retail patterns. The allocation for Falkirk was £1,976,000 which required to be committed by March 2020. The proposed projects were intended to stimulate and support place based investment to encourage town centres in the Falkirk area to diversify and flourish.

Town	Project	Anticipated Cost (£)
Falkirk	Car Park and Signage:	
	a) Audit to enable upgrade of ticket machine infrastructure, improve user experience/business satisfaction and technical advice/costed action plan options.	45,335
	b) Implementation of agreed car park and signage upgrade options.	170,000
	Conservatoin and Regeneration Scheme (CARS) II scheme – an extension of the former THI grant support scheme for refurbishment of heritage properties, giving opportunity to protect and improve buildings in Falkirk town centre.	
	a) Appointment of consultants to develop a future funding proposal, identify and prioritise a grant intervention scheme for the town centre.	25,000
	b) Town Centre Vacant Repurposing Feasibility Grant.	350,000
	Public Realm Improvements to Newmarket Street and Lintriggs. Prepare and implement a scheme for improved pedestrian safety and enhancement of this important area of the historic town centre.	550,000
Provision of luggage lockers at Falkirk Grahamston Station to support local tourism expectations.	3,600	
Enhancements at Falkirk High and Grahamston Stations to improve accessibility and connection to town centre (matching recently submitted bid to Abellio Scotrail Station Travel Plan Fund).	3,000	

	<p>Wi-Fi – digitally managed service offering town centre users connectivity and digital opportunities for business.</p>	29,408
	<p>Public Art – Explore and deliver opportunities for Public Art on High Street and Grahams Road.</p>	30,000
Grangemouth	<p>Grangemouth <i>'Making Places'</i> recommendations to be progressed including:-</p> <p>Demolition of longstanding vacant and unlettable commercial assets. This would involve clearance of longstanding vacant units to shrink the town centre footprint and enable a re-purposing of parts of the town centre. Where appropriate, consultation will be initiated with tenants to consider measures such as relocation to vacant units elsewhere within the town centre. The subsequent creation of a cleared site would enable redevelopment.</p> <p>Conservation audit of town centre properties and engagement with private owners. To align with the strategic vision and aims for the historic environment of the Falkirk Council Area as enshrined in the Local Development Plan.</p> <p>Wi-Fi – digitally managed service to Charlotte Dundas and Grangemouth town centre (matched to EU funding).</p>	<p>249,000</p> <p>12,000</p> <p>5,000</p>
Bo'ness	<p>Library Access Improvements – improve access opportunities (including access for people with disabilities) to this facility.</p> <p>Improved entrance works including lighting and signage to library building.</p> <p>Wi-Fi – digitally managed service to Bo'ness town centre. (In addition progress opportunities for a free upgrade to Denny system and introduction of Wi-Fi service to Stenhousemuir)</p> <p>South Street/East Partings Grant Scheme – provision of grant scheme adopting similar approach to Falkirk CARS II model above.</p>	<p>175,000</p> <p>21,000</p> <p>16,433</p> <p>280,000</p>
Further Opportunities	<p>Removal of unsightly APC/DPC units across the area including: Camelon, Grangemouth (2), Falkirk (2), Bo'ness (2), Polmont, Bonnybridge (2).</p>	13,000
Total		£1.97m

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) to proceed with the delivery of the town centre capital fund projects as summarised in the table at para 4.4 of this report;**
- (2) that further reports on the progress of this programme and further measures to assist in revitalising town centres be provided to members during 2020; and**
- (3) to consult with tenants where work arising from the programme would result in the disposal of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) assets.**

EX95. Transport Projects – Acquisition of Land for the Denny Eastern Access Road (DEAR)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services which provided an update on the progress of the Denny Eastern Access Road (DEAR). Authority was sought to proceed with a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to enable delivery of the project should it not prove possible to acquire the land by negotiation or gain access to the land under licence.

The Council owned land that would deliver the northern section of the proposed scheme. This was shown on a plan appended to the report. Plot 3 was owned by Avant homes. This road was subject to a Roads Construction Consent and would be adopted as part of the Public Road network in due course. The land shown on the plan as Plots 1 and 2 was the balance needed to complete the land assembly to allow the remaining section of DEAR to be constructed along with associated roads features and infrastructure. This land was owned by Callendar Estates and leased to 2 tenant farmers who occupied different parts of the Order Land at Mydub farm and Cuthelton Farm.

The District Valuer commenced negotiations in April 2018 with Callendar Estates. The Council offered to purchase the land at a nominal cost to reflect the purpose and betterment to Callendar Estates land as a result of the construction of DEAR. Callendar Estates had co-operated with the negotiations, enabling various ground investigations. However, some concern had recently been expressed regarding the extent of land required for DEAR, including the temporary ancillary areas needed to facilitate construction.

Callendar Estates suggested that a temporary licence and road adoption agreement be agreed between the parties, permitting early access onto their land. The licence was prepared and issued by Falkirk Council in February 2019. The intention was that once completed and publicly adopted, Council

would acquire ownership of only the footprint of the new road and the surplus ancillary areas would revert to Callendar Estates. However, the licence agreement had not been concluded.

The Council sought to progress and simplify the matter by seeking a straight purchase of the land specifically required for the construction of DEAR. A land cost estimate was provided in June 2019 and revised terms and conditions were issued to Callendar Estates for the land acquisition. Discussions with Callendar Estates continued and it was evident that they wished to take a holistic view and were keen that the roads and planning matters applicable to the development of their adjacent land ownership were clarified. This uncertainty was impeding the early construction of DEAR and added justification for the need to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

In order for CPO to be confirmed, an acquiring authority must establish whether the public benefits of acquiring the necessary land outweigh the private interests and that there is no suitable alternative way to realise its objective. The principle of housing development in the area had been long established and growth had been encouraged through the local development plan process. The resultant impacts on traffic congestion, at Denny Cross and the need to provide a robust traffic network solution for proposed new housing developments in the area meant that the DEAR solution was the only viable way of addressing these issues.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the progress of the Denny Eastern Access Road (DEAR) project;**
- (2) agreed to the promotion of a Compulsory Purchase Order under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 over the private interests in the land outlined in the report and shown on the plan annexed to allow for the construction of the remaining section of the DEAR and associated roads infrastructure, and**
- (3) (if necessary to complete the transaction), agreed to the subsequent referral of the CPO to Scottish Ministers for confirmation.**

EX96. Update on Implementation of Unison Ethical Care Charter

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Officer, Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership which provided an update on progress towards implementation of the Unison Ethical Care Charter.

Progress toward implementation of the recommendations and principles included:-

- Home carers were paid for travel time between appointments and provided with a mobile phone;
- External service providers were paid an all-encompassing rate, inclusive of travel time;
- Sickness benefits were available in line with national conditions;
- Zero hours contracts were not used and all employees were paid in excess of the national living wage;
- Services had worked with external care at home providers to identify areas for improvement in the quality of service provision;
- Worked with all providers to promote the living wage and encourage adoption;
- All new procurement exercises undertaken required the provider to demonstrate suitable employee conditions and benefits;
- A contact manager was available 24/7 to deal with complaints and provide support;
- All home care staff received appropriate training, including a 5 day induction programme for new employees; which included personal care training, an element of which was delivered jointly with colleagues from NHS Forth Valley. Additional training such as moving and handling and adult support and protection was also provided;
- Wherever possible, a service user had allocated carers;
- The Real Time Monitoring System helped with consistency of care for service users;
- Regular meaningful dialogue with the Trades Unions, working to develop care at home service improvements. This was jointly progressed through an established Home Care Board, and
- Service Management and Trade Unions worked together to ensure regular dialogue when working on specific issues, and had established an Improvement Group across the Care & Support at Home Service to consider improvements within the service.

Decision

The Executive noted the contents of the report.

EX97. Exclusion of Public

The Executive agreed in terms of section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 11 of part 1 of schedule 7A to the said Act.

EX98. CCTV & Alarm Monitoring Services

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on an option appraisal on the future provision of CCTV services in the Falkirk area. The Executive was invited to consider which option was its preferred way forward, subject to any budget decisions on required capital investment.

Decision

The Executive agreed that its preferred option was to upgrade and maintain the current public realm CCTV and establish an in-house Digital Alarm Hub, at a capital cost of c£980k, subject to final decisions by Council when setting the Capital Programme.