



Agenda Item 3

Minute

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of meeting of the EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE held remotely on Thursday 20 August 2020 at 11.25 a.m.

Councillors: David Alexander
Robert Bissett
Fiona Collie
Joan Coombes
Paul Garner
Nigel Harris
James Kerr
Adanna McCue
Cecil Meiklejohn (Convener)
Malcolm Nicol
Alan Nimmo

Officers: Douglas Duff, Head of Planning and Economic Development
Jack Frawley, Team Leader - Committee Services
Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive
Colin Moodie, Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services

Also

Attending: Councillor Laura Murtagh, Public Protection Portfolio Holder for item EE45

After a short adjournment the meeting commenced at 11.25am.

In accordance with section 43 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Convener had directed that the meeting would be conducted by video conference to allow remote attendance by elected members.

In accordance with section 50A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public were excluded from this meeting as it was likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be a real and substantial risk to public health due to infection or contamination with coronavirus.

EE39. Apologies

An apology was submitted on behalf of Councillor Reid.

EE40. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

EE41. Valedictory

The Convener noted that Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services retired from Council service at the end of the month. The Leader of the Council led members in thanks to Mrs Geisler for her many years of excellent service and for leading the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

EE42. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Emergency Executive held on 6 August 2020 was approved.

EE43. Schools Re-Opening Update

The Emergency Executive received a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services on schools re-opening. All pupils had access to at least one day in school during the initial three days of opening in the week commencing 10 August with the exception of some pupils whose schools were affected by flooding or a fire event. The full return to education had commenced on Monday 17 August. The figures showed an attendance rate of 97% across the entire estate. The Service was engaging with a small number of families who had concerns around sending their children into the school environment.

School transport had operated successfully with the bus service operating as normal. Some of the ASN taxi provision required to make double runs but the availability of taxis was improving. Additional daytime cleaning had been put in place in the schools and pupils had been well briefed on the rules, one way system and hand washing requirements. The provision of school meals was working well and would be reviewed on 30 August. There was also a robust supply chain in place to provide PPE.

The Service had engaged with the Trade Unions who were satisfied with the robustness of the risk assessments in place and with the level of engagement between Head Teachers and the wider staff cohort. The Service would meet with Trade Unions again at the end of the week.

A daily call was in place with NHS Forth Valley to discuss any suspect cases of Covid. There had been no positive tests across Forth Valley in the cohort of school age children.

Decision

The Emergency Executive noted the verbal update provided by the Director of Children's Services.

EE44. Referral from Corporate Partnership Forum

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which sought approval of revised Casual Employment and Retirement policies which were approved by the Corporate Partnership Forum on 3 July 2020.

The Casual Employment Policy had been updated to provide clarity on when casual employment should be used and included a How To guide on managing casual employment. The policy also ensured that a Casual Co-ordinator had responsibility for the creation and maintenance of a casual employment database within their Service area.

The Retirement Policy had been updated to the new format including creation of guidance documents for employees and managers. The policy gave clearer guidance on the requirements for reduced hours to allow flexible retirement to progress. There was now a requirement to give 6 months' notice for flexible retirement. Employees who had a pension strain cost required to accept an actuarially reduced pension to allow flexible retirement to progress. The time period for newly agreed cases had been limited for flexible retirement to 5 years before retirement.

Decision

The Emergency Executive approved the immediate implementation of changes to the Casual Employment and Retirement policies.

EE45. Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 Taxi and Private Hire Car Driver Medicals

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which sought approval for a temporary change in relation to the requirement for new applicants and existing drivers to undergo a medical examination to a system of self declaration.

Medical examinations prior to the Coronavirus pandemic were carried out by a local GP. No medicals had been undertaken for during the period of the pandemic. The local GP had advised that there was no realistic prospect of undertaking face to face medicals until a vaccine was in place. A suggested alternative approach was that of a self-declaration. An arrangement would be in place for the GP to consider any application forms that required further medical scrutiny. It was proposed that the policy adjustment initially endure

for six months and be subject to review at that point. The Service would also continue work to increase the pool of GPs undertaking the examinations. The temporary self declaration would be kept under review and a return to normal practice instituted as soon as possible if the situation changed.

Decision

The Emergency Executive agreed the change to a system of medical self declaration in place of medical examinations by applicants and existing drivers for a period of six months.

EE46. Falkirk-Grangemouth Investment Zone and Economic Recovery Update

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services which advised of the announcement of £90m of 'Growth Deal' grant support from the UK and Scottish Governments for the Falkirk-Grangemouth Investment Zone. The next steps to finalise arrangements for delivery of the Investment Zone were identified along with details of the work taking place to prepare an economic recovery plan post Covid-19.

The Falkirk Economic Partnership had developed a package of proposals for an Investment Zone for the Falkirk and Grangemouth area which aimed to fulfil the economic potential of the area. A series of Investment Zone projects were detailed in a strategic business case submitted to UK and Scottish Governments last year. The Governments had pledged £90m of Growth Deal funding towards delivery of the initiative.

In order to progress the Investment Zone, further work was necessary to focus and prioritise the proposals for delivery. It was hoped that Heads of Terms for the proposals could be achieved by the end of 2020, with a finalised agreement being reached by mid-2021. The finalised agreement would allow drawdown of the £90m capital funds to be undertaken over a 15 year period.

In light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic the Emergency Executive previously agreed that consultations should take place on a draft economic recovery plan. The finalised recovery plan would be submitted to a September meeting of the Emergency Executive.

Decision

The Emergency Executive:-

- (1) noted the award of £90m of growth fund monies by UK and Scottish Government towards delivery of the Falkirk-Grangemouth Investment Zone initiative;**

- (2) agreed that work proceeds to prepare Heads of Terms for agreement with UK and Scottish Governments on the delivery of the initiative and that a further report on progress is supplied to the Executive, and**
- (3) noted the progress of work on the Covid-19 economic recovery plan and that a finalised version of the plan will be presented to the September meeting of the Emergency Executive.**

EE47. Decisions Taken Under Delegated Powers

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided details of two decisions taken under delegated powers during the summer recess. The decisions taken were: award of contract in respect of proposed Nursery Extension at St Margaret's Primary School; and award of contract in respect of proposed New Council Housing at the former Torwood School, Larbert.

Decision

The Emergency Executive noted the decisions taken under delegated powers.