

**FALKIRK COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT
2012/13**

Organisation Name	Falkirk & District Town Centre Management Ltd
Project	Management of town centres
Agreement Dates	1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013
Name of Lead Officer	Ian White

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

Falkirk & District Town Centre Management Ltd (the Company) is a company limited by guarantee. Its principal aim is to contribute to the economic performance of town centres in the Falkirk area (Falkirk, Grangemouth, Denny, Bo'ness and Stenhousemuir).

List of Agreed Outcomes

- To prepare an annual project plan for the town centres of Falkirk, Grangemouth, Denny, Bo'ness and Stenhousemuir.
- To deliver the above projects through marketing campaigns, events, PR, facilities and other activities.
- To liaise, as appropriate, with Falkirk Council, businesses, and other organisations in the planning and delivery of the above projects.
- To generate income additional to this Agreement for the above projects from businesses and other organisations.
- To manage a Business Improvement District (BID) for Falkirk town centre and work towards further integration of the BID and the Company.
- To promote the interests of town centres to Community Councils, area tourism groups and business groups and to participate in such groups as appropriate.
- To enable a Falkirk Council official to be represented on the Board of Falkirk & District Town Centre Management Ltd (currently the Director of Development Services and alternate Head of Economic Development and Environmental Services) and for an Elected Member to attend company and board meetings in the capacity of member Liaison Officer.
- To hold regular meetings on all aspects of service delivery by the Company with the Council's Head of Economic Development and Environmental Services.
- To ensure the plans and activities of the Company are consistent with and, where appropriate, contribute to the priorities of the Strategic Community Plan, My Future's in Falkirk and Falkirk Council's Town Centres Strategy for the district centres.

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

The operation of a separate company for town centre management enables a range of town centre businesses, as Members of the company, to play a direct part in the management of the company and to direct activities which best benefit the centres.

The BID needs to be managed separately from Council operations and the Company provides the vehicle for doing this. The BID generates additional income for town centre management activities through a business rates levy.

B ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES

Summary of Key Achievements

The Company has undertaken a wide range of activities to deliver the services specified under the Joint Working Agreement. The Company's activities are summarised below. The Company has also worked closely with the Council's town centres regeneration initiative and many of the company's activities have delivered or supported elements of regeneration.

Taking a pride in Falkirk – this strand of activities addresses the cleanliness of Falkirk town centre. The company employed a handyman to carry out small repairs, maintenance and clean-ups, including the prompt removal of any graffiti / flyposters. The Company works closely with the Council's Litter Strategy and is a member of Keep Scotland Beautiful which audits the cleanliness of the town centre. For its gum reduction campaign, the Company has its own machines and works with operatives from the Council's Criminal Justice service. Floral displays, seasonal clean ups and empty shop window displays are further examples of the Company's activities which contribute to *Taking a Pride in Falkirk*.

It's friendlier in Falkirk – safety and crime reduction are the key elements of the Company's operations. It operates one of the biggest radio link schemes in Scotland – enabling businesses to keep each other abreast of any security issues as they happen. It also operates a Child Safe Scheme for lost children in the town centre. The Company employs street ambassadors who are on regular patrol in the town centre to help the public, give information and liaise with businesses. Sense of security is particularly important for expanding the night-time economy and the company's Taxi Marshal Scheme, Pubwatch scheme and seasonal SafeZone/Safe Base all make valuable contributions. Many licensed premises participate in the national Best Bar None accreditation scheme.

Let's shout about it – the town centres are strongly promoted to increase footfall, spend and customer loyalty. Among the initiatives in the period under review are many events including Farmers' Markets, Italian / French markets, Christmas events and street parties. A decision was taken to operate the Farmers' Market on Fridays instead of Sundays and this has been very well received. The company introduced an annual comedy festival *Funny in Falkirk* in 2010 and this has proved itself as a major event annual event in the Falkirk calendar. Other marketing initiatives include advertising, public relations and promoting the area for tourism in conjunction with the Council and other local tourism operators.

District centres – many of the above initiatives cover or are replicated in Grangemouth, Bo'ness, Denny and Stenhousemuir. The company has run or supported events in each centre,

including the Victorian Street Fair in Bo'ness and the Grangemouth Music Festival. *Funny in Falkirk* shows are spread throughout the district centres and each centre has a programme of Christmas events including switching on the lights and the ever popular visit of the Aviemore reindeer. The company employs an Assistant Manager to deliver initiatives in the district centres and the company's handyman also operates in these centres.

Additional activities - the company participates in and lends its support to a range of initiatives and organisations which help strengthen the trading position and profile of the area. These include the Falkirk Business Panel, the Community Planning Partnership, Community Councils, the Falkirk Fairtrade Steering Group, and various other business groups. The company has made presentations at many local and national meetings on town centre issues and has thereby helped ensure Falkirk's pro-active approach to town centre management is widely known and respected throughout Scotland and beyond.

The Company and the BID – the Company took steps in the year under review to integrate the BID (which previously had a separate management board) with the Company. An augmented board of directors has been formed and in April 2013 the company changed its name to Falkirk Towns Ltd. The company activities are carried out under the name Falkirk Delivers.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

In managing town centres, the Company faces considerable difficulties arising from the loss of town centre footfall and trade which has been prevalent nationally in recent years. In common with the rest of the UK, the recession and the continuing drift to out-of-town retail has presented the Company with many challenges. Nevertheless, the Company's very active presence and operations have addressed many of these challenges and have helped engage many town centre operators in ensuring the town centres sustain their scale of operation and performance to the best possible degree.

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

With its long history of co-working with Falkirk Council, the Company is particularly well integrated with Council activities. The Council benefits from this established and mature relationship, with many activities being undertaken with the minimum of administrative effort, ensuring that resources are applied to front line delivery.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

N/A

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

The Lead Officer meets with the Company on a regular basis, usually at least monthly. The meetings focus on a range of different project on which the Council and the Company work jointly, as well as the overall management of the Joint Working Agreement.

C FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The Company's accounts for 2012/13 will be finalised, audited and lodged at Company's House by the due date – 31st December 2013.

The company's financial performance in 2011/12 was reported in the Following the Public Pound report of 26th February 2013 (Economic Strategy and Development Committee). There were no issues of financial concern at that time and no issues of financial concern have arisen since. This includes the latest financial update presented to the Board on 25th October 2013.

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

Financial – none in period under review. The integration of Company and BID activities in 2013/14 has proceeded smoothly to date and the position will continue to be monitored.

Operational – performance is to a great extent dependent on the economic climate but the company is showing much determination and success even in difficult circumstances.

Structural – none, the merged board is operating satisfactorily and key staff have been in position for there has been little staff turnover in

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Low (based on Company’s current and previous record in partnership working).

D CONCLUSIONS

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

Falkirk & District Town Centre Management Ltd has delivered a wide range of activities and contributed greatly to sustaining town centre activity and trading in very challenging circumstances.

Falkirk Council’s commitment to the concept of town centre management is considered to be working well for the benefit of the local economy.

E COMPLETED BY

<u>Name</u>	Ian White
<u>Designation</u>	Principal economic Development Officer
<u>Date</u>	25 th October 2013