

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: CULTURE AND SPORT STRATEGY – POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**  
**Meeting: EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 18 MARCH 2014**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report advises the Executive of the process followed by and the outcomes of the policy development panel established to review the draft Culture and Sport Strategy prepared by the Falkirk Community Trust on behalf of Falkirk Council.

**2. BACKGROUND AND PROCESS**

- 2.1. The policy development panel was established in September 2013. It had its initial scoping meeting at the end of September establishing a programme of review work. The scope of the policy development panel is to:-

- *Reflect on the draft strategy and propose changes, look at how the strategy will progress to implementation beyond the broad intent set within the strategy, and then reflect on this recommending the final strategy to the Executive.'*

- 2.2. The policy development panel consisted of Councillor Adrian Mahoney (Chair), Councillor Dr Craig R Martin and Councillor Allyson Black.

- 2.3. An information pack was collated and distributed to panel members ahead of the first scoping meeting, setting out some background information. This included a copy of the draft strategy, the Strategic Community Plan, the Single Outcome Agreement, the Council's Corporate Plan and guidance on the Policy Development Panel process. The draft strategy had been sent to all Members for comment as part of an early consultation undertaken by the Trust and then again at the start of the panel process. As part of the panel invitation all Members were encouraged to participate in this consultation exercise. This preparatory work allowed the Panel to think about what they want to cover to ensure they fulfilled their remit and also what evidence they wanted to hear in the course of their business. This scoping meeting was held in private and determined how the panel would do its business and determine the format of the review. The following programme was then developed.

- 2.4. The first meeting of the Panel comprised an overview presentation provided by the Chief Executive of the Falkirk Community Trust, supported by her Business Manager, on the key aspects of the draft strategy, including:

- How it was developed;

- Its role and purpose;
- Its structure, which comprise a vision, aims, key themes, reference to delivery plans and monitoring and review arrangements;
- The strategy's key themes including participation, motivation, venues and partnership;
- An outline of its key principles including, working together, understanding need and targeting investment;
- The local and national issues facing the delivery and implementation of the strategy and the attainment of its core outcomes;
- Linkages to and integration with the Strategic Community Plan and our Single Outcome Agreement; and
- An outline of the consultation process followed by the Trust

2.5. Following the presentation Panel Members asked a number of questions pertaining to the development and content of the draft strategy. Some of the key issues which emerged from the discussions included:

- The lack of responses to the consultation activity undertaken by the Trust. A summary of the responses received by the Trust is attached at Appendix 1;
- Proposed changes to the draft strategy. Two particular requests focused on ensuring the document was written in as plain English as possible and that any technical terms and abbreviations were explained;
- How the detailed implementation of the strategy will be taken forward. Trust colleagues highlighted that a programme has been prepared for the development of functional delivery plans, which will provide more detail on actions supporting the implementation of the strategy. These documents are likely to be of interest to Members, but currently no mechanism exists to consider these. An agreed mechanism needs to be developed to facilitate Member input. The Trust has asked that any process developed to facilitate this needs to provide speedy decisions and feedback;
- How we assure that our asset base in this area remains fit for purpose. This will need to be the subject of a separate process, as this issue concerns resources and assets which the Council owns; and
- The assets we have supporting this area provide a continuing opportunity to assist with the delivery of a number of key aims within the strategy.

2.6. A further meeting took place on 28 January 2014, to which key stakeholders including Education Services, Operation Services with Corporate and Neighbourhood Services and NHS Forth Valley were invited. This was to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute their views on the strategy and how they would support its delivery. NHS Forth Valley was unable to attend the meeting. The following key issues emerged from the discussion:

- The need to ensure that elected members are engaged at an early stage in consultations/policy development
- Confirmation that the Trust had started work on the development of the Heritage Delivery Plan, with most of the early consultation responses coming from national agencies;
- How Community Learning and Development currently collaborate with the Trust. There was general agreement that scope exists to further develop and deepen the

scale of collaborative working, particularly in building capacity amongst local community groups to deliver sport and physical activity sessions for themselves;

- Operational Services tend to support the Trust in maintaining local parks, pitches etc, which the Council owns. The discussion however highlighted that the Parks Development Plan needs to be refreshed and a Strategic Masterplan for our Parks needs to be developed. This will provide an overall vision for our parks and clarity in the way in which they will be both managed and maintained into the future; and
- The need to ensure that effective links are made between the strategy and delivery plans and our Single Outcome Agreement and Strategic Community and that the contribution made to these is clear.

- 2.7. The panel met in private on a number of occasions to consider evidence and develop key issues arising from the process. The Trust had taken on board comments and feedback regarding the draft strategy as the panel has progressed through its evidence gathering and deliberations. This includes improvement in language simplification and the explanation of technical terms. A copy of the panel's feedback and how this has been acted on is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the final draft of the Culture and Sport Strategy is attached at Appendix 3.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1. This is one of the first policy development panels to report, under the Council's new governance arrangements. Although it only met on a small number of occasions, the range of evidence considered was both varied and extensive. The process has provided a degree of rigour and challenge on the development and supporting processes which have contributed to the draft strategy. There are however a number of key issues which have emerged from the process and need to be considered by both the Trust and the Council on how best to respond. Recommendations are made in a constructive manner to complete the strategy but also to help shape the development of other policies and strategies including those developed by the Council. In general terms the panel is satisfied that the general direction and commitments made within the draft strategy are sound, although a number of amendments were requested during the course of the process. This can be further underpinned by ensuring that Members are engaged in a meaningful way in the development of Delivery Plans. In order to progress this a proposed protocol has been developed, which comprises the following:

- The Trust prepares a communication plan for each delivery plan which will outline when and where key stakeholders, including Members will be consulted. This should include early dialogue prior at an early stage in the development of delivery plans;
- Early consultation should include the portfolio holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism and the Council Leader;
- All Members should be encouraged to contribute to the development of delivery plans; and
- The Trust seeks the approval of its Board for draft delivery plans, after which they are sent to the Council for sign off by the Executive.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- 4.1. Notes the work of the panel:
- 4.2. Notes the views and evidence provided to the panel by Falkirk Community Trust and other stakeholders;
- 4.3. Agrees the proposed protocol outlined at 3.1, which will allow Delivery Plans supporting the strategy to be considered promptly by Members and provides the Trust with the feedback it requires;
- 4.4. Takes steps to ensure that we optimise opportunities provided by the HELIX to contribute to the attainment of the strategy and its supporting delivery plans;
- 4.5. Advises the Trust, Falkirk Council and other partners to optimise opportunities and resources for collaborative and partnership working;
- 4.6. Ensures that effective links are made between the strategy and delivery plans and our Single Outcome Agreement and Strategic Community and that the contribution made to these is clear; and
- 4.7. Requests that officers in Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, Development Services and the Trust progress the development of a Strategic Masterplan for our parks and refresh the Parks Development Plan as appropriate by the end of 2014.
- 4.8. Approves the final draft of the Culture and Sport Strategy attached at Appendix 3.

PP.....  
**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

Date: 25 February 2014  
Ref: ABBE0314AW – CandS Strategy PDP Report  
Contact Name: Andrew Wilson  
EXT 6046

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Papers presented to the Policy Development Panel

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506046 and ask for Andrew Wilson.