

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2014 at 9.30 AM.**

**CORE MEMBERS:**

Allyson Black  
Baillie Joan Paterson  
Depute Provost John Patrick

**MEMBERS**

**ATTENDING:**

Stephen Bird  
Jim Blackwood  
Colin Chalmers  
Tom Coleman  
Gerry Goldie  
John McLuckie  
Cecil Meiklejohn  
Provost Pat Reid

**OFFICERS:**

Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement  
Alex Finlay, Business Development Manager  
Arlene Fraser, Committee Services Officer  
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services  
Jennifer Litts, Head of Housing  
David McGhee, Head of Resources and Procurement  
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer  
John Paterson, Head of Operational Services

**PP10. MINUTE**

**Decision**

**The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 23 January 2014 was approved.**

**PP11. CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY REPORT**

The panel considered a report by the Director of Corporate & Neighbourhood Services setting out the performance for the service from April to December 2013.

Fiona Campbell gave an overview of the report and the new reporting format.

Members praised both the Council's Procurement Team and the Building Maintenance Division on their success in receiving awards at recent ceremonies.

Members sought information on the buy back initiative and in particular whether the criteria would be relaxed to include the purchase of 3 bedroom properties. Jennifer Litts advised that there was not such a demand on 3 bedroom properties and the Council already had difficulty in letting 3 bedroom flatted properties. The service would look at options and cost implications to address the high number of voids of this type and size of

properties within specific areas. In relation to void figures, properties can be excluded if major works are being undertaken.

Clarification was also sought on the criteria followed by the Council when purchasing properties on the open market. Ms Litts confirmed that the Council did not exceed the District Valuer's valuation when acquiring properties. She further advised that a progress report on the buy back initiative would be considered at a future meeting of the Executive.

Members questioned how the **Estate Management** outcomes were monitored. Ms Litts advised that there is an ongoing programme of works with feedback coming from various sources, including tenants' forums, customer surveys and officers undertaking "walkrounds".

In relation to **% of new tenancies sustained for 12 months**, members questioned why there is an "unknown" category for tenancy terminations. Ms Litts advised that this category was required due to no recorded reason being given for terminating the property, or due to property abandonment which equated to approximately 6 properties per month. Reference was made to the Council's resources which are available to support vulnerable tenants sustain their tenancy.

Members sought an update on the progress in relation to **Older Persons Housing**. Ms Litts advised that 4 properties at Tygetshaugh, Denny had been let through housing with care needs, with 2 other properties let via social work.

Members asked whether it was possible to have more specific areas included within the indicator, **customer complaints/enquiries**. Fiona Campbell advised that a review of the performance indicators which all services report was currently ongoing and perhaps this was an area which could be included.

Clarification was sought on how the audit of the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership (FCPP) by Audit Scotland had been reported. Fiona Campbell advised that the audit would be reported to FCPP in the first instance. She confirmed that she would seek advice on whether this item would be considered by the Executive or by Falkirk Council.

The panel discussed the improvement of the **% of repairs completed within target times**, particularly in relation to the external contractors' target. David McGhee referred to the quality management approach which had helped develop supplier relations and improved external supplier performance.

Information was provided in relation to the definition between an enquiry and a complaint and how staff absence levels had impacted on the performance in dealing with these within the specified timescales. Information was also provided on the new customer complaints system and the new timescales for resolving public sector complaints.

In relation to performance indicators, Fiona Campbell advised that it was not appropriate to set targets for certain PIs e.g. drug deaths which could not be compared and that for new PIs, as yet there was no measure of target and in addition some PIs are reported annually and will be included in the next report.

Members were advised that there is an ongoing review of call handling to ensure that realistic targets are met.

Clarification was given on the method of sharing customer survey data with members and the different ways of measuring surveys, in particular the reporting of **user satisfaction: street cleansing**. Information was also provided on the range of methods used to assess the **cleanliness in public places**.

The panel discussed the housing allocations system and in particular the supply and demand for certain property types/sizes; the special letting invitations for home movers

when applying for new build tenancies and the record checks undertaken on prospective applicants. Reference was made to problems arising when other parties moved in with tenants' after the tenancy was established.

Fiona Campbell advised that an update on the equal pay claim would be provided to members.

## **Decision**

**The panel noted the performance statement.**

Councillor Goldie left the meeting after consideration of the foregoing item of business.

## **PP12. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SCRUTINY REPORT**

The panel considered a report by the Director of Development Services setting out the performance for the service from April to December 2013.

Rhona Geisler gave an overview of the report.

Members praised staff within Development Services on their success in receiving awards at recent ceremonies.

In response to a question in regard to how Development Services collects data on energy consumption, Rhona Geisler advised that data was collected in a number of ways with work being undertaken to develop the CRC template which would enhance the data quality. She confirmed that with regard to council buildings, only energy consumption is measured and not energy efficiency.

Members sought clarification on the **Community Benefits in Procurement (CBiP)**. Mrs Geisler advised that the initiative had been developed jointly by Development Services and Corporate & Neighbourhood Services. The programme was seen as an exemplar and had generated training and employment opportunities for youngsters through various diverse projects and contracts.

Clarification was also sought on how Falkirk reached the target figure for the **number of graduates placed with Falkirk Council**. Mrs Geisler confirmed that the target figures had been developed based on our own knowledge and the Council strived to make a commitment to place graduates.

In response to a question in regard to apprentice opportunities offered by the NHS and the Child Support Agency, Mrs Geisler advised that certain posts e.g. cleaning and catering were delivered by SECRO and not in-house.

The expression of interest relating to **Bo'ness Town Centre – progress regeneration potential** was welcomed and it was hoped that the developer would take this forward.

Members sought clarification on the **overall % of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment**. Mrs Geisler advised that overall roads are improving, however, if there was any specific road which members considered required maintenance, she would have this investigated.

Members discussed the number of road networks and bridges which are currently undergoing major reconstruction and maintenance work, and the impact and delays that this is having on commuters and businesses.

In response to a question in regard to the **public access: % of Council buildings that are suitable and accessible to disabled people**, Mrs Geisler advised that those which are not accessible are Council buildings which are older and unable to be adapted for various reasons.

Clarification was sought on the lengthy planning process and how it affects business. Mrs Geisler advised that all applicants should be encouraged to make early contact with Development Services staff who can assist at pre-application stage and help streamline the application process.

The Panel then discussed the outcome **our open spaces will be attractive, accessible and safe** and, in particular, to the development of the open spaces in Hallglen/Lionthorn area which has had economic benefits and assisted business developments. Mrs Geisler advised that partnership working with communities had ensured the successful delivery of projects. She further advised that the Council had recently been invited to bid for funding for community link projects by the Sustrans cycling charity. Members enquired about the possibility of providing additional provisions to encourage children and adults to use cycle paths e.g. outside libraries, cycle racks for all schools. The issue of lack of signage within some areas of the pathways network to the Helix was also highlighted, particularly in relation to villages within the Braes area.

In response to a question in regard to the outcome **our Citizens will be protected**, Members were advised that the Council develops the Major Accident Hazard Plan which is shared with all multi-agency blue light services. Since the change over to Police Scotland, changes and new enhanced arrangements had been applied and tested during the recent flooding risk in Grangemouth.

Clarification was sought on the lack of tourism signage, particularly in relation to the “Kelpies” and the launch of “Home” in April. Mrs Geisler advised that the Council were currently working with Transport Scotland in relation to motorway signs and that our Tourism Signage Strategy was now being implemented. The promotion of “Home” was underway with various marketing channels and events being utilised to ensure national and international awareness.

Provost Reid and Councillor Blackwood left the meeting at this point.

In relation to performance indicators that showed a N/A value, Mrs Geisler explained that the majority of these PIs are reported annually and would be included within the next reporting period. She further explained that the 100% target set for **customer complaints/enquires Stage 1 responded to within target time** is a corporate target and it is hoped that the target will be achieved with the introduction of the new CRM system which will better categorise what is a complaint/enquiry. The new system is far more sophisticated and designed to inform customers of what will happen next, when to expect this, and not just acknowledge a complaint/enquiry. Standard letters are currently being developed and it was suggested that it may be useful to include additional response information for the customer to ensure they are in agreement with the process to be followed.

## **Decision**

**The panel noted the performance statement.**