

DRAFT

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 10 APRIL 2014 at 9.30 AM.

COUNCILLORS:

Allyson Black
Charles MacDonald.
John McLuckie
Baillie Joan Paterson
Provost Pat Reid (Convener)

OFFICERS:

Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement
Iain Henderson, Legal Services Manager
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer
Celia Sweeney, Corporate Policy Officer

ALSO ATTENDING:

Neil Brown, General Manager, and Jane Clark, Business Development Manager, Falkirk Community Trust

S1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Baillie Buchanan.

S2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Provost Reid and Baillie Paterson each declared a non financial interest in Item S4 as Directors of Falkirk Community Trust but did not consider that this required them to recuse themselves from consideration of the item, having had regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct and the relevant specific exclusion contained in the Code.

Provost Reid declared a non financial interest in Item S6 as a Director Central Scotland Regional Equality Council, in consequence of which he recused himself from consideration of the item, having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct.

S3. MINUTES

Decision

- (a) The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 March 2014 was approved, with the addition within the members' comments narrative on the Police Scotland report, of concerns relating to the loss of support staff and the implications for frontline services; and

- (b) The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 20 March 2014 was noted.

S4. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: FALKIRK COMMUNITY TRUST PERFORMANCE REPORT APRIL - DECEMBER 2013

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services on the performance of Falkirk Community Trust against key objectives covering the periods during 2013:- (1) April to June; (2) July to September, and (3) October to December.

Fiona Campbell provided a general overview of the report including the Trust's significant contribution to the attainment of the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan as undernoted:-

Corporate Plan Goal	Trust Outcome
Continuing to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities	People are fitter, healthier and more active, more often
Further developing a thriving and sustainable vibrant economy	People benefit from lifelong learning opportunities
Continuing to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities	People are more creative and the potential for success and wellbeing is nurtured
Enhancing and sustaining an environment in which people want to live and visit	People are involved in caring for the area's heritage and environment

This overview was followed by Neil Brown providing further detail in relation to the individual reports. He thereafter, together with his colleague Jane Clark, answered members' questions.

During discussion on the reports, members welcomed the increased number of visits to the various cultural and sporting venues and the partnership arrangements currently being developed with other organisations. Clarification was sought on the measures in place to reverse the public's reduced use of libraries.

Neil Brown, in response, confirmed that there were various challenges ahead in relation to the public use of all the Trusts venues and facilities. The use of libraries was an area which required a concerted effort to rejuvenate them and their use. Consultation with library staff was underway and innovative projects within libraries were being developed. This included the organisation of author visits and the location of social media outlets within libraries. Callendar House had enjoyed an increase in visitors and this was assisted by the location within the House of the Park Gallery and the Tea Room. In relation to the Kinneil Museum, Heritage Lottery Funding had contributed to the refurbishment of various internal areas within the museum and to new exhibitions and projects.

Members thereafter highlighted the importance of detailing with future reports the valuable work undertaken within all arts, cultural and sports facilities throughout the Falkirk Council area. This would ensure that reports were fully reflective of the wideranging work within local areas. Members also stressed the value of developing partnership working arrangements, enhancing marketing and improving the venue and facility signage for all arts, cultural, sports and library facilities. This was necessary to ensure public use throughout the day including Falkirk Town Hall.

Neil Brown confirmed that a report on the use of Falkirk Town Hall would be submitted to a future Committee.

Decision

The Committee approved the reports and the further actions.

S5. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND - REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services on the review of the scrutiny process agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 13 June 2013 (Paragraph S8 refers) and the options for scrutinising the Following the Public Pound arms-length and external organisations including voluntary and charitable organisations.

Fiona Campbell provided a general overview of the report which detailed the Council support to the organisations in their service provision, often in conjunction with other public organisations. The report confirmed the work in line with the Council's corporate priorities and the robust framework in place for providing and monitoring financial support. The annual financial support to the organisations from the Council currently totalled approximately £5.5m. This was coupled with non financial support including the provision of premises, equipment and employee time.

The report proposed that future reports would be presented by the service provided, with organisations and associated reports grouped under themes. This aimed to provide Members with further context by which to scrutinise each external organisation and its service delivery.

The Committee members confirmed the value of the reporting arrangements outlined within the report.

The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed that a review of the scheduling arrangements would take place prior to meeting in August 2014 and at the request of members noted that the one officer from each organisation would be sufficient to attend.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the reports; and**
- (2) agreed the scheduling arrangements detailed in the Appendix to the report for May and June subject to a review taking place prior to subsequent meetings.**

In accordance with his declaration of interest, Provost Reid left the Chair and the meeting and took no part in consideration of the following item of business. Councillor MacDonald assumed the role of Convener. Provost Reid did not re-enter the meeting.

S6. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND - UPDATE - CENTRAL SCOTLAND REGIONAL EQUALITY COUNCIL (CSREC)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services providing an update on the Following the Public Pound report presented at the meeting of the Committee on 12 September 2013 (Paragraph S21 refers) on the operation of Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC). At that meeting it was agreed that an update report be presented within 6 months on the progress of the organisation in meeting its objectives and outcomes.

Celia Sweeney provided a general overview of the report including the funding of the organisation totalling £15,200 and associated 'in kind' support. The scrutiny of the organisation had identified it as medium risk. Its core funding acted as a catalyst for attracting external funding of £159k. The organisation had however experienced Board and staffing issues over the financial year 2012/13 resulting in concerns in relation to its leadership and governance arrangements.

The report highlighted the development of a wide range of projects up to the period 31 December 2013. The challenges facing the organisation however included:-

- The current inability to demonstrate significant partnership working with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils;
- The development of the organisation's core business;
- That effect of reduced core funding on the organisation's ability to attract and draw down new funding; and
- The recent changes to the Board and the impact on the organisation's leadership and governance arrangements.

The Committee discussed the importance of good governance arrangements, partnerships with other organisations, work within schools and anti sectarianism work organised throughout the Council area.

Decision

The Committee noted the report and that a future report would be presented to the Committee in June.

S7. CONSULATION AND ENGAGEMENT - SCRUTINY

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services on the annual scrutiny programme agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 13 June 2013 (Paragraph S8 refers) and indicating that one of the areas for scrutiny was the adequacy of the Council's approach to consultation with the public and community engagement more generally.

Decision

The Committee agreed that the Scrutiny Panel consist of 5 members from the Administration and Opposition on a 3:2 basis.