

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2014 at 12 noon.

COUNCILLORS:

Baillie William Buchanan (Convener)
 Craig Martin
 John McLuckie
 Baillie Joan Paterson
 Sandy Turner

OFFICERS:

Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
 Iain Henderson, Legal Services Manager
 Stuart Henderson, Environmental Health Officer
 Julie Seidel, Planning Officer
 Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer
 Russell Steedman, Network Co-ordinator
 Bernard Whittle, Development Management
 Co-ordinator

P104. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Chalmers, Meiklejohn and Nicol.

P105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

P106. ERECTION OF A SINGLE 500KW WIND TURBINE WITH A MAXIMUM TIP HEIGHT OF 77 METRES, WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS TRACK AND INFRASTRUCTURE AT SITE TO THE SOUTH WEST OF POLMONT GOLF CLUB, SIMPSON DRIVE, MADDISTON FOR MR ROBBIE TAYLOR - P/14/0318/FUL

With reference to Minute of Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 27 November 2014 (Paragraph P100 refers), Committee gave further consideration to a report by the Director of Development Services on an application for full planning permission for the erection of a single 500kw wind turbine, measuring 77 metres to blade tip, with associated access track and infrastructure at a site within open countryside to the south west of Polmont Golf Club, Simpson Drive, Maddiston.

Decision

The Committee agreed to refuse planning permission on the basis that:-

- (1) The wind turbine would have an unacceptable visual impact on the neighbouring settlement of Maddiston and surrounding rural properties, in terms of the proposed scale, design and aviation lighting being contrary to Policy ST21 'Wind Energy' of the Falkirk Council Local Plan (December 2010), Policy RW01 'Renewable Energy' of the Falkirk Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan April 2013) and the Falkirk Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (May 2013) 'Spatial Framework and Guidance for Wind Energy Developments'; and**
- (2) The applicant had failed to demonstrate that the wind turbine would not significantly affect surrounding residential properties by virtue of noise nuisance, being contrary to Policy ST21 'Wind Energy', of the Falkirk Council Local Plan (December 2010), Policy RW01 'Renewable Energy' of the Falkirk Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan April 2013) and the Falkirk Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (May 2013) 'Spatial Framework and Guidance for Wind Energy Developments'.**

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

MINUTE of MEETING of the APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2014 at 9.00 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Allyson Black
 Thomas Coleman
 Craig Martin (Convener)
 Cecil Meiklejohn
 Alan Nimmo

OFFICERS:

Karen Algie, Head of Human Resources & Customer First
 Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
 Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive

AP1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Nicol and Provost Reid.

AP2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

AP3. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and public for the following items of business on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the said Act.

AP4. APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which outlined the available options for recruitment and selection for the post of Director of Children's Services.

At its special meeting on 12 November 2014 Council agreed to create a new Director of Children's Services post to replace the previous Director of Education and Director of Social Work Services posts.

The report presented: the advantages and disadvantages of three recruitment options; advertising costs; additional selection methods, and a proposed recruitment timescale. A job description; personal specification; candidate information pack, and draft advert were appended to the report.

Decision

The committee agreed to:-

- (1) approve recruitment to the post of Director of Children's Services by external advertisement;**
- (2) advertise through MyJobScotland from 7 January 2015 and in the first appropriate edition of the Glasgow Herald of 2015;**
- (3) approve the timetable, job description, personal specification and terms and conditions appended to the report;**
- (4) request that officers amend the draft advert and advertising media to provide more specific information on the post, and**
- (5) approve the selection methods outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report and to carry out an in-house assessment centre process.**

AP5. APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE POST OF HEAD OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT

The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which outlined the available options for recruitment and selection for the post of Head of Educational Support and Improvement, which would become vacant on 31 December 2014.

At its special meeting on 12 November 2014 Council agreed to recruit to the post of Head of Educational Support and Improvement.

The report presented: the advantages and disadvantages of three recruitment options; advertising costs; additional selection methods, and proposed that the recruitment process for this post be delayed to allow the newly to be appointed Director of Children's Services to be involved. A job description; personal specification; candidate information pack, and draft advert were appended to the report.

Decision

The committee agreed to:-

- (1) amend the title of the post to 'Head of Education';**
- (2) approve recruitment to the post of Head of Education by external advertisement;**
- (3) advertise through MyJobScotland from 7 January 2015 and in the first appropriate edition of the Glasgow Herald of 2015;**
- (4) approve the job description, personal specification and terms and conditions appended to the report;**

- (5) request that officers amend the draft advert and advertising media to provide more specific information on the post;**
- (6) delay appointment to this post to allow the newly (to be) appointed Director of Children's Services to be involved in the selection, and**
- (7) approve the selection methods outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report and to carry out an in-house assessment centre process.**

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

MINUTE of JOINT MEETING of the PENSIONS COMMITTEE/PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2014 at 9.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:
 Jim Blackwood
 Steven Carleschi
 Tom Coleman
 Depute Provost Patrick (Convener)
 Dr Craig R Martin

Andrew Douglas, Unison
 Sandy Harrower, UCATT
 Mary Keggan, Unison
 Gordon Laidlaw, Scottish Autism
 Susan MacKay, Clackmannanshire Council
 Alistair Redpath, Pensioner Representative
 Jennifer Welsh, SEPA

ATTENDING:

Alastair McGirr; Pensions Manager
 Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer
 Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer

**ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Bruce Miller, Investment Manager, Lothian Pension Fund
 George Murphy, Stirling Council
 Catherine McFadyen and Lorna Lyon, Hymans Robertson
 Jim Rundell and Louise Dodds, Audit Scotland
 Claire Watson, Graeme Rutter and Anthony Doherty, Schroders

PE29. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Campbell, Stirling Council; Councillor Drummond, Clackmannanshire Council; Ian McLean, Pensioner Representative; Ed Morrison, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration's (SCRA); and Jim Boyle, Stirling Council.

PE30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

PE31. MINUTES**Decision**

- (a) The minute of the meeting of the Pensions Panel on 11 September 2014 was approved; and
- (b) The minute of the meeting of the Pensions Committee held on 25 September 2014 was approved.

PE32. PENSION FUND ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT - 2013/14

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer presenting Audit Scotland's Annual Report on the 2013/2014 Falkirk Council Pension Fund Audit.

Decision

The Committee noted Audit Scotland's Pension Fund Annual Report on the 2013/14 Pension Fund Audit.

PE33. GENERAL GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer presenting an update on various matters associated with the governance of the Falkirk Council Pension Fund.

The areas covered within the report included the following:-

- Social Housing;
- Local Infrastructure;
- Prudential Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's);
- Staff Transfer - Sign Factory; and
- The Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) of 58 local authority Pension Funds.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.

PE34. PENSION FUND - VALUATION AND STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on the progress of the 2014 Fund Valuation together with consideration of the pending review of the Fund's investment strategy.

The report indicated:-

- The requirement for a Pension Fund valuation by an independent actuary on a three yearly basis in line with the rules of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- The valuation's purpose to establish the financial position of the Fund in relation to assets and liabilities and, for this valuation, to set an appropriate rate of employers' contribution for the three years' commencing 1 April 2015;
- The valuation of the Fund being conducted as at 31 March 2014 by the Fund's Actuary, Hyman Robertson; and
- The funding considerations and objectives.

The Committee also heard from Catherine McFadyen and Lorna Lyon, Hyman's Robertson and circulated the Actuarial Valuation Initial Results for 2014.

The Convener thanked Ms McFadyen and Ms Lyon for the comprehensive information.

Decision

The Committee noted the report and associated presentations.

PE35. PENSION FUND - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on the recent developments in relation to the governance arrangements in respect of the ongoing reform of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) through the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 with effect from 1 April 2015.

The report confirmed:-

- That Falkirk Council was designated an Administering Authority within Local Government Pension Scheme legislation with responsibility for maintaining and managing the Pension Fund;
- The provisions of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 including the requirements for a Scheme Manager – the legally constituted decision making body and a Pension Board - a supporting entity;
- That at a national level the requirement for the overseeing of the Scheme to be undertaken by an Advisory Board comprising Employer and Trades Union representatives;
- The recently issued consultative draft Regulations and the Falkirk Council response on behalf of the Fund detailed in Appendix A to the report;
- The statutory requirements and the practical considerations relating to the operation of the Pensions Board;
- The guidance within the Governance Heads of Agreement and Model Constitution authorised by the Scottish Local Government Pensions Advisory Group (SLOGPAG);
- The publishing of the final Governance Regulations in late January 2015; and
- The overseeing national governance arrangements through the national Advisory Board.

The report also indicated (a) the current governance arrangements by Falkirk Council through the Pensions Committee and Panel; and (b) recommended (i) that the Falkirk

Pension Fund's business continue to be delegated to the Pensions Committee; and (ii) that the Pensions Panel discontinue with effect from 1 April 2015 with alternative governance arrangements to be put in place.

Circulated at the meeting were options for the future composition of the Committee and the Board issued (i) for information to Panel members; and (ii) for consideration by the Committee.

Decision

The Committee and Panel noted the report.

The Committee thereafter agreed:-

(1) to recommend to Council that:-

- (a) the Pensions Panel be discontinued from 1 April 2015;
- (b) the Pensions Committee should continue to operate as at present (i.e. with 6 elected members from Falkirk Council and 3 co-opted members representing Employer, Trade Unions and Pensioners;
- (c) in the event that the legislation remains as presently drafted, there should be a Pensions Board of 8 members consisting of 4 Employer and 4 Trade Union representatives or in the event that the legislation permits non Trade Union member representation, there should be a Pensions Board of 10 members with 5 Employer representatives, 4 Trade Union representatives and 1 non Trade Union member representative; and
- (d) the allocation of Board (dependant on the legislation at (c) above) seats to Employers and Trades Unions as detailed below:-

	Committee	Board
1.	9 Members 6 Falkirk Council Elected members + 3 Non-Falkirk Council members - 1 Employer representative + - 1 Trade Union representative + - 1 Pensioner representative For example: - 1 x Stirling Council (1) - 1 x Unison - 1 x Pensioner representative	8 Members 4 Employer representatives + 4 Member representatives 1 x Clackmannanshire Council 1 x SEPA 1 x SCRA 1 x Scheduled or Admitted Body 1 x Unison (2) 1 x GMB 1 x Unite 1 x UCATT <u>Comment</u> (2) It would be open to the Trade
	<u>Comment</u>	

	(1) Where the seat on the Committee is taken by Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council would be represented on the Board and vice versa.	Unions to agree an alternative composition among them.
2.	As above	10 Members 5 Employer representatives + 5 Member representatives 2 x Local Authority (3) 1 x SEPA 1 x SCRA 1 x Scheduled or Admitted Body 1 x Unison 1 x GMB 1 x UCATT 1 x Unite 1 x Non Union Member Representative <u>Comment</u> (3) One of the local authority representatives would be appointed by Falkirk Council.

and

- (2) that the final meeting of the Pensions Panel would be a joint meeting with the Committee and Panel on 12 March 2015.

PE36. ORDER OF BUSINESS

In terms of Standing Order 14.2(i), Depute Provost Patrick advised of a variation to the order of business from that detailed on the agenda for the meeting. The following items have been recorded in the order that they were taken.

Councillor Dr C R Martin left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

PE37. FUND MANAGER REVIEW

The Committee received a presentation by Claire Watson, Graeme Rutter and Anthony Docherty, Schroders.

The presentation covered the UK Equity and Property mandates and included information as undernoted:-

- The “Value” philosophy of the UK Equity Team;
- The rationale for recent sales and purchases;
- An overview of the underlying property funds, including the Continental European Fund, and
- The threats and opportunities in the property market.

The Convener thanked Ms Watson, Mr Rutter and Mr Docherty for their comprehensive presentation.

Decision

The Committee noted the presentation.

PE38. FUND MANAGER PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer reviewing the overall performance of the Fund and of the undernoted Fund Managers:-

- Aberdeen Asset Management;
- Baillie Gifford Bonds;
- Baillie Gifford Diversified Growth;
- Legal and General;
- Newton Investment Management;
- Schroder Investment Management UK Equities; and
- Schroder Investment Management Property.

Decision

The Committee noted the Fund Managers’ performance and the action taken by them during the quarter to 30 September 2014, in accordance with their investment policies.

PE39. PRIVATE EQUITY AND ALTERNATIVES UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer on the progress of the Pension Fund’s private equity and alternatives programme arising from the Investments Programme of SL Capital (Standard Life), Wilshire Associates, Grosvenor Capital and M&G for the quarter ending 30 September 2014.

The Committee agreed that the information contained in the Appendix to the report contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and resolved that, to the extent that there was confidential information in relation to new Grosvenor Infrastructure Fund.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress of the Pension Fund's private equity, infrastructure and credit markets programme for the quarter ending 30 September 2014; and**
- (2) agreed not to invest in the new Grosvenor Fund at this point in time ahead of the Investment Strategy Review.**

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

MINUTE of MEETING of the APPEALS COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER 2014 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Colin Chalmers
John McLuckie (Convener)
Sandy Turner

OFFICERS:

Tracey Gillespie, Human Resources Manager
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer

A21. APOLOGIES

No apologies were intimated.

A22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

A23. MINUTE**Decision**

The minute of meeting of the Appeals Committee held on 30 October 2014 was approved.

A24. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and public for the following item of business on the ground that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the said Act.

A25. APPEAL AGAINST DISMISSAL

The Committee considered papers relating to an Appeal against dismissal which included (a) Note of Procedure; (b) Submission from the Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice) dated 3 December 2014; (c) Copies of core documents relating to the Appeal, and (d) Submission from the Appellant.

The Depute Chief Governance Officer and the Human Resources Manager were in attendance as legal adviser and personnel adviser to the Committee respectively.

The Appellant, Ms W, was not present but had authorised G Allan, Unison to represent her at the meeting who was present and was accompanied by S Cook, Unison Shop Steward.

The Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice), K McCarroll, and Human Resources Adviser, J Simpson, were present as representatives of the Council.

The Appellant's representative presented the case on behalf of the Appellant and this was followed by the Unison Shop Steward providing further points of clarification.

The Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice) intimated that she had no questions for the Appellant's representative or Shop Steward.

Members of the Committee then asked questions of the Appellant's representative and Shop Steward.

The Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice) presented the case on behalf of the Council.

The Appellant then asked questions of the Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice).

Members of the Committee then asked questions of the Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice).

The Head of Service (Children & Families and Criminal Justice) summarised the case on behalf of the Council.

The Appellant's representative summarised the case on behalf of the Appellant.

The parties to the appeal withdrew.

The Committee, having given careful consideration to all of the submissions made, **AGREED** that the decision taken by management to dismiss Ms W from Council service was reasonable in all the circumstances. Accordingly the appeal was **REFUSED**.

The parties to the appeal were recalled and the decision intimated to them.

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

MINUTE of the MEETING of the AUDIT COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2014 at 9.30 a.m.

MEMBERS:

Roseann Davidson (Convener)
Councillor Steven Carleschi
Councillor Tom Coleman
Depute Provost John Patrick
Provost Pat Reid

OFFICERS:

Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services
Kenny McNeill, Educational Resources Manager
Gordon O'Connor, Internal Audit Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer
Allan Stewart, Business Improvement Manager
Amanda Templeman, Acting Depute Finance Officer

ALSO ATTENDING:

Fiona Mitchell Knight and Jim Rundell, Audit Scotland

AC26. APOLOGIES

No apologies were intimated.

AC27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

AC28. MINUTE**Decision**

The minute of the meeting held on 22 September 2014 was approved.

AC29. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Committee considered a report by the Internal Audit Manager summarising the progress with the 2014/15 Internal Audit Plan and on Services' progress in implementing Internal Audit recommendations.

In regard to the Audit Plan, 9 assignments had been completed to final report, 3 to draft report and 4 were in progress. 7 assignments had yet to commence. The findings from assignments completed to final report were set in appendices to the report.

The performance of Internal Audit, as measured against 5 key performances indicators was set out together with performance in the previous two financial years. In regard to outstanding audit recommendations, 6 remained from 3 reviews.

The committee sought clarification on the progress made in achieving the key performance indicator of 90% of audit recommendations accepted. It was likely that by the year end target would be exceeded and given that it was exceeded in the previous two years members queried whether it should be revised.

Members also sought assurance that the plan was achievable given resource pressures within the audit team. The Internal Audit manager confirmed that there was sufficient flexibility within the plan to ensure that he will be able to provide a balanced and full opinion on the adequacy of the Council's internal control framework in his April 2015 Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

- (1) the progress with completing planned 2014/15 internal audit work;**
- (2) internal audit performance; and**
- (3) the current position in relation to recommendations, from previous audits, which are outstanding.**

AC30. FALKIRK COUNCIL EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The committee considered a report by Audit Scotland on the progress of the 2014/15 audit plan.

The report summarised progress to date on the annual audit plan for 2014/15, together with planned audit outputs for the year and timescales for delivery. The plan focused on three key known governance performance and financial statements with 11 reviews planned. It was anticipated that all target dates for reporting would be met. Additionally the report summarised the role of Audit Scotland's performance audit and best value group and highlighted the key recommendations arising from the group's reviews to date.

The committee highlighted the pressures on local authorities' social care budgets in light of government priorities such as the NHS. Members also discussed the audit programme and sought further information on the balance struck between control audits and more strategic "public interest" reviews. In response Jim Rundell highlighted "public interest" areas such as expenses and senior officers' exit packages which although relatively low value had a significant impact on the public perception of the use of resources within local and national government.

Decision

The committee noted the report.

AC31. ICT SERVICE REVIEW FOLLOW UP

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services on the progress being made on the action plan following Audit Scotland's review of ICT services in 2013.

The Committee had previously considered (ref AC33) a report setting out the key actions arising from Audit Scotland's review of Falkirk Council ICT services in 2012/13. An action plan had been agreed as part of the review and a follow up review was undertaken in 2013/14.

The report set out an updated action plan together with an overview of progress made in implementing the audit recommendations with particular reference to the two actions outstanding at the conclusion of the follow up review – in regard to information management and information security – both of which will be picked up as part of wider Council reviews.

In response to a question, in regard to the Council's wifi network the Business Improvement Manager advised that the roll out of wifi across the Council would be undertaken as part of the Council's technology strategy and was key to support the transition to mobile and flexible working. He also gave an update, in response to a question, on the position in regard to PSN compliance and confirmed that the Council was now in the accreditation phase and that a report would be submitted to the Executive in the new year.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.

AC32. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE 2013/14 AUDIT

The committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer presenting Audit Scotland's report on the 2013/14 Audit.

The report advised that the annual accounts had been audited and were unqualified. The key findings of the audit report were summarised together with details of an action plan, with 6 agreed recommendations.

The committee discussed the Council's reserves strategy and the risk, as set out by Audit Scotland, in having high levels of reserves. The Chief Executive stressed the prudence in building reserves, highlighting the anticipated funding gap, in the next financial years. Members also highlighted slippage in the capital programme and sought clarity on the rationale for including, within the plans, projects which were unlikely to progress such as Avon Gorge works. The Chief Executive responded that processes had been out in place to manage areas of slippage within the capital plan and to reprofile the plan.

The Internal Audit manager, in response to a question in regard to the blue badge parking scheme, provided an overview of the process for "policing" potential fraud, and highlighted some of associated sensitivities and risks.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2015 at 9.30 AM.

COUNCILLORS:

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

OFFICERS:

John Angell, Head of Planning and Transportation
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement
Elaine Costello, Integration Support Manager
Andrew Facherty, Additional Support for Learning Manager
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
Eileen Hutton, Childcare Provision Co-ordinator
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Pete Reid, Growth and Investment Manager
Alan Rodger, Planning and Environment Manager

ALSO ATTENDING:

Gary Laing, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
David Lockhart, Group Manager, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Alastair Mitchell, BID Manager, Falkirk Towns Ltd
Stuart Stevens, Prevention and Protection Group Manager, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

S54. APOLOGIES

An apology was intimated on behalf of Baillie Buchanan.

S55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Black declared a non-financial interest in S58, as a director of Falkirk Towns LTD and considered that this required her to recuse herself from consideration of the item having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct.

Councillor McLuckie declared a non-financial interest in S58 as a director of Falkirk Environment Trust and considered that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item having regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct.

S56. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 1 December 2014 was approved.

S57. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – FALKIRK & WEST LOTHIAN COMMAND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the local performance report and supporting appendices by the local senior officer for the period 1 April to 30 September 2014.

Members asked if there had been an increase in electrical fires caused by overheating chargers for mobile devices when left switched on. Stuart Stevens stated that white and electronic goods were often the cause of domestic fires. These incidents were monitored nationally and where trends were found they were focussed on through media statements and guidance. Issues often arose where illegal chargers or those brought in from other countries which did not meet British or European safety standards were used. Stuart Stevens highlighted that even where appliances meet safety standards failures can still occur and cause fires.

The committee asked what the main reasons were that some areas had higher levels of false alarm calls than others. Stuart Stevens stated that human activity was the main influence on false alarms as well as inappropriate placement of detectors and faulty appliances.

Members asked if the decrease for priority two should have been more significant with the perceived decreased use of chip pans. Stuart Stevens stated that modern cooking appliances and methods had helped to reduce the number of incidents. However he highlighted that the use of chip pans was still widespread and that a main cause of accidental dwelling fires was cooking while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The committee sought information on what multi-agency work the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was involved with in regard to priority six, special service – casualties (fatal & non-fatal). Gary Laing advised that in the Falkirk area a weekly meeting was held involving community safety partners. At this meeting incident statistics were analysed and where trends were identified collective actions were taken forward to tackle the identified issues. Further, Gary Laing stated that ward plans had been created which had been submitted to the citizens panel for feedback, which would increase community ownership of community safety.

Members asked for further information about the reduction of accidental fires during the summer period. Stuart Stevens stated that a number of factors had contributed to the decrease including the resources put in to community safety, the creation of thematic action plans and effective school engagement.

The committee asked for further information about recent training exercises carried out at high rise flats. David Lockhart stated that there was a new standard operating procedure, brought in to ensure that all crews could perform effectively at multi-level dwellings. Further, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service ensured that all officers regularly maintained their training across all areas of risk.

Members asked questions about the review of special equipment and raised concerns about the impact on the Falkirk area.

Regarding the relocation of line rescue assets to stations outwith the Falkirk area, Gary Laing advised mobilisation and response times would improve. This was because these assets would be operated by wholetime firefighters and able to respond immediately to incidents whereas, when located in Falkirk they had been operated by retained duty firefighters.

The committee expressed concern at the relocation of environmental protection and mass decontamination assets outwith the Falkirk area. Gary Laing stated that environmental protection assets were available on all appliances. Further, he stated that the mass decontamination assets, which were removed from the Falkirk area, would not adversely affect the ability of firefighters to respond to incidents at Grangemouth petrochemical plant. Gary Laing stated that the most likely type of incident would involve fire or an explosion and that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was prepared to respond to such incidents. Further, the service held frequent meetings with representatives from the petrochemical plant to discuss any planned and actual changes to production and would bring any changes to risk to the attention of the national group to ensure the response was correct. He highlighted the good level of on-site security. Gary Laing invited members of the committee to visit a local fire station to see what equipment was available to local teams.

The committee asked what was being considered in terms of service delivery for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service going forward. Gary Laing advised that consideration was being given to firefighters providing colleagues from the Scottish Ambulance Service with assistance in cardiac arrest treatment situations. He stated that research had found that 2,000 lives a year could be saved by having a third first responder on the scene of a cardiac arrest. Members highlighted that there remained difficult operational questions which would need to be answered before this service could be rolled out. Gary Laing stated that they were being looked at through a pilot scheme and that partners had been involved from an early stage.

Members asked for information on retained duty station provision. Gary Laing stated that a challenge for retained duty firefighters was for individuals to arrange getting release from their main employment for duty. There was a programme of recruit and retain work ongoing within the service. A full review of the system was to take place and retained duty staff would be involved and the service was looking to improve safety in remote areas.

The committee asked about the timing of the review. Gary Laing stated that current practice would be looked at in around a years time while the futures project would be a longer term 2 to 3 year project.

Members asked why the audits activity for Houses of Multiple Occupation achieved was at 23% of target. Stuart Stevens advised that this was because the license review was not yet due and that the figures would improve for the rest of the year.

Decision

The committee noted the performance report and supporting information.

In accordance with his declaration of interest, Councillor McLuckie left the meeting at this point.

S58. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND REPORT: FALKIRK ENVIRONMENT TRUST/FALKIRK TOWNS LTD

The committee considered a report by the by the Director of Development Services which provided an update on the work of Falkirk Environment Trust (FET) and Falkirk Towns Ltd as external organisations in receipt of funding which fall within the Following the Public Pound (FPP) reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The report provided an overview of each organisation and an assessment of their performance. The committee heard from officers in relation to the individual reports.

(a) Falkirk Environment Trust

John Angell provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £27,450 of Council funding. FET was established in 1998 as a charitable company to disburse monies available from the Landfill Communities Fund to local agencies and community groups engaged in appropriate, qualifying environmental improvement works.

The committee asked if there was a way to increase the number of independent community organisations benefiting from FET. Alan Rodger stated that many projects already came forward from communities and community councils. It was also the case that FET or a development manager would work with communities after they had identified projects to look at ways to draw on as much external funding as possible. Alan Rodger also highlighted the promotion strategy used by FET.

Members asked if the amount of money available to FET from landfills would reduce. Alan Rodger stated that for the next 2 to 5 years funding was secure but that there would be an impact in the longer term of the Scottish Government Zero Waste Plan.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Falkirk Environment Trust in meeting Council priorities.

Councillor McLuckie re-entered the meeting following the conclusion of the previous item of business.

In accordance with her declaration of interest, Councillor Black left the meeting at this point.

(b) Falkirk Towns Ltd – Management of Town Centres

John Angell and Alastair Mitchell, Bid Manager provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £188,309 of Council funding. Falkirk Towns Ltd contributed to the economic performance of town centres in the Falkirk area.

The committee asked what work was ongoing to encourage occupation in vacant properties. Alastair Mitchell stated highlighted a case of a pharmacy which had been given a small grant and exemplified that the local independent sector was doing well.

Members asked about the level of business rates. Alastair Mitchell stated that there were a number of campaigns going on in this area to lobby for revaluation. The Association of

Town Centre Management researchers were looking at the impact on town centres of the current business rates.

The committee asked if a quantifiable benefit was achieved from the performance of the Red Hot Chilli Pipers at the Steeple 200 years celebrations. Alastair Mitchell stated that there had been a 19% increase in town centre footfall on the day and that traders reported it to have been their best day of trading. Alastair Mitchell also highlighted that work in the town centre had resulted in winning the Association of Town Centre Management developing the evening and night time economy award and coming runner up for BID of the year.

Members asked what work had been done to support Denny town centre. Alastair Mitchell highlighted a number of events which had taken place in the town centre, which had been well supported by the local community.

The committee asked about the presence of charity collectors and beggars in the town centre. Alastair Mitchell stated that a license was required to carry out charity collection in the town centre but that this did not apply to the Howgate shopping centre as it was private property. It was policy to have only one authorised charity collection per day. Colin Moodie advised that begging was not a criminal activity unless causing distress to the public but that Police Scotland had stated they were monitoring the situation closely.

Members asked about the future challenges of maintaining high street occupancy and what type of retail offer would be available for customers. Alastair Mitchell advised that it was unlikely that 100% occupancy through retail could be achieved in the town centre due to the changes in how people shop. However, occupancy could be improved through allowing offices in the town centre and that where young entrepreneurs wanted to try retail in the town centre Business Gateway would provide support.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Falkirk Towns Ltd in meeting Council priorities.

Councillor Black re-entered the meeting following the conclusion of the previous item of business.

S59. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: SERVICES TO EARLY YEARS CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE – 2013/2014

- The committee considered a report by the by the Acting Joint Director of Education Services which provided an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding which provided services to early years, children and young people, and which fall within the FPP reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The committee had requested on 31 October 2014 (ref SC39) that further information on four organisations: Family Support Service – Langlees; Early Years Outreach; Braes Children and Family Centre, and New Beginnings be provided to the committee.

The report provided information on factors which impact service demand including national and local policy context and demographic change. An individual report was appended for each of the fourteen organisations which received funding. Each report set out the service provided, the agreed outcomes/objectives and performance information.

The committee heard from officers in relation to the individual reports.

The Committee agreed to conjoin the following two items of business.

(a) Aberlour Childcare Trust – Family Support Centre – Langlees

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £255,012 of Council funding. The first agreed outcome for the service was to provide support to expectant parents and children under the age of 4 years old and children under the age of 12 years old where there was a need for additional support. The second outcome was to support parents to improve the well-being and development of their children and young people.

Members asked if the manager had been seconded to another post within Aberlour. Elaine Costello advised that this was the case.

The committee highlighted that it was difficult to quantify the impact of the work of the organisation on families and asked how the number of sessions delivered related to individuals supported. Eileen Hutton stated that two half day sessions per week were provided per child, with a third session available in exceptional circumstances. Where the report stated that 32 parents had been supported this represented 32 families and it was not known how many parents or carers this equated to in total. Elaine Costello stated that the work was intensive and that the two sessions per week were provided for the whole year in addition to learning and childcare sessions.

Members asked what was being done to identify and deal with areas where there was duplication in service delivery or surplus supply of services. Elaine Costello stated that a Public Social Partnership review of all services to children and young people was being undertaken.

The committee asked if art therapy support represented best value with only three children benefiting from the support. Eileen Hutton stated that the service was delivered at no cost as it was provided by students on placement from Queen Margaret University, although premises were provided.

Members asked for further information on the infant massage classes. Elaine Costello advised that this service was provided to families where poor attachment existed between parent and child. She also stated that the evidence showed there would be much more significant long term costs if attachment left unresolved and the individual progressed into adulthood. The committee raised that if there was evidence of a medical benefit which justified the provision of infant massage then it may be an area for the Health Board to fund. The committee also requested that members were provided with a briefing on the theory which supported this service.

The committee discussed the definitions of areas of multiple deprivation, raising that it was determined by the Scottish Government. Elaine Costello stated that considerations around deprivation would be included in the review.

Members highlighted the need for a holistic approach to dealing with families where substance abuse issues were present. Elaine Costello stated that some families were involved with other support agencies and in other cases appropriate referrals to other services were made.

The committee asked how the performance target was set. Eileen Hutton stated that performance targets were agreed between the monitoring officer and the organisation. Elaine Costello advised that the service level agreements were under review.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Aberlour Childcare Trust – Family Support Centre – Langlees in meeting Council priorities.

(b) Aberlour Childcare Trust – Early Years Outreach

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £315,162 of Council funding. The first agreed outcome for the service was to provide a service to vulnerable families and those expecting multiple stress. The second outcome was to support expectant parents and children under the age of 4 years old. The third outcome was to support parents to improve the well-being and development of their children and young people.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Aberlour Childcare Trust – Early Years Outreach in meeting Council priorities.

(c) One Parent Families Scotland – Braes Children and Family Centre

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £136,064 of Council funding. The first agreed outcome was to provide places for children aged 2 years who need additional support due to developmental difficulties or family problems. The second outcome was to undertake group and individual work with parents and children aged 0 to 2 to promote positive parent/child interactions and healthy development. The third outcome was to support vulnerable children on an individual and group basis in nursery and primary schools in the Upper Braes area and in the Family Centre, including work with parents.

Members discussed the difficulties of providing a sensitive service in rural areas. The committee asked if this was the right type of support in all cases or if it became long term for some families if they would benefit more from referrals to other services. Elaine Costello stated that the support provided was tailored to the needs of each family.

The committee asked for information on outside support received by the Braes Children and Family Centre. Eileen Hutton stated that external funding secured by the centre was for other projects.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by One Parent Families Scotland – Braes Children and Family Centre in meeting Council priorities.

(d) Barnado's – New Beginnings

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £192,341 of Council funding. The agreed outcomes were to promote pupil well-being. Elaine Costello stated that staff shortages at Oxbang school had required the family support team to provide more support in school. This had an effect on the amount of outreach and family work which could be carried out. The service was looking at ways to protect family support resources in the future to ensure service delivery would not be impacted.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Barnado's – New Beginnings in meeting Council priorities.

S60. SCRUTINY PLAN – 2015

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer which provided a summary of the committee's consideration of reports requested at the meeting of 14 August 2014 as potential areas of scrutiny for the 2015 plan.

Decision

The committee continued consideration of the report to a future meeting following the conclusion of the Decision Making Structures working group.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2015 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Dennis Goldie
Gerry Goldie
Linda Gow
Adrian Mahoney
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Alan Nimmo
Robert Spears

OFFICERS:

Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work
Ross Fenwick, Assistant Waste Strategy Co-ordinator
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Kenny Gillespie, Property and Asset Manager
Elizabeth Hood, Neighbourhood and Access to Housing Manager
Jennifer Litts, Head of Housing
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Gillian McIntyre, Customer and Development Manager
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

EX98. APOLOGIES

No apologies were intimated.

EX99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

EX100. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of meeting of the Executive held on 2 December 2014 was approved.

EX101. CORPORATE PRINT AND MFD POLICY

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer presenting a Corporate Print and MFD (multi functional devices) Policy. The proposed policy aims to ensure that printed material is produced cost effectively, is of a professional standard and is fit for purpose.

Decision

The Executive agreed the Corporate Print and MFD Policy as detailed in the report.

Councillor Gow joined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.

EX102. REVIEW OF STANDARD FOR RE-LETTING PROPERTIES

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting a revised Void Management Policy and updated Standard for Letting of Council Housing.

A consultation on the Council's current Standard for Letting Council Housing was undertaken in 2014. The responses to the consultation were presented together with proposed amendments to the Standard and to the Council's Void Management policy which includes the Standard, (attached as appendices to the report) to ensure that void properties are let as quickly as possible to deliver a quality service to customers.

Decision

The Executive agreed the Standard for Letting Council Housing including Void Management policy appended thereto.

EX103. ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting proposed revisions to the Allocation Policy and presenting the allocation outcomes for 2013/14.

The Council's Allocation Policy was introduced in January 2010 (ref FC75). The allocations outcomes are reported annually. The outcomes for 2013/14 were appended to the report.

The Allocation Policy has been subject to minor amendments since its introduction. In 2014 a review of the policy was undertaken, driven in part by provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. A consultation exercise was undertaken as part of the review and the responses were summarised together with proposed amendments in regard to:-

- letting quotas;
- local letting initiatives including high flats and new build Council houses;
- exceptional circumstances;

- the appeals process; and
- Welfare Reform rules.

Additionally, the report provided background to, and the main conclusions arising from, a pilot Tenants' Incentive Scheme, together with proposals for development of the Scheme.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) the recommendations set out in section 4 of the report;
- (2) that there should be consultation with tenants on a proposal that a tenant should be suspended from receiving an offer for a period of 6 months where the tenant has not kept the garden and/or property to the required standard and has received warnings from the Council for this or the Council has required to undertake work to maintain the garden or property because of the tenant's failure to do so, with a report to return to the Executive following the consultation;
- (3) to review of the High Flat Local Letting Initiative;
- (4) the development of the Tenants' Incentive Scheme; and
- (5) to revise the current Allocation Policy to reflect the changes set out in the report to be effective from 1 April 2015.

EX104. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT LAND SALE – NAILER ROAD, CAMELON

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services proposing that land at Nailer Road, Camelon is declared surplus to requirements to enable it to be sold.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) declare the land detailed in the plan attached to the report surplus to operational requirements; and
- (2) authorise the Director of Development Services to, subject to obtaining any necessary consent from the Scottish Ministers, organise the negotiated disposal of the site at Nailer Road detailed in the plan contained within the report.

EX105. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2013-2018

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services in relation to the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) presenting suggested revisions to the Strategic Local Programme (SLP) which lists the projects prioritised in the SHIP.

The Executive agreed an SLP for 2013 – 2018 on 18 March 2014 (ref. EX136). The SLP sets out the proposed new affordable housing programme for Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners based on Scottish Government Funding.

The report set out the annual funding required against the anticipated funding allocated together with the cumulative variances. As a consequence of a shortfall in funding from 2013/14 to 2016/17, it was proposed that the SLP for the period is revised.

In addition, the report provided an update on a proposed Social/Affordable Housing investment project at Bellsdyke together with details of a shortfall in funding of £4m for the project. Although funding of £2m had been secured for the proposed development from the Scottish Government Financial Innovation Unit, a shortfall of £2m remained. The report set out the development proposal together with funding options, which included securing funding from Falkirk Council.

Decision**The Executive agreed:-**

- (1) the revised Strategic Local Programme for 2013/14 – 2016/17 outlined in the report;**
- (2) not to fund the £2m shortfall in funding of the proposed development by Castle Rock Edinvar at Bellsdyke, Larbert; and**
- (3) to ask officers to liaise further with the Scottish Government Housing, Regeneration and Welfare Directorate with a view to securing additional Affordable Housing Grant.**

EX106. FINANCIAL POSITION 2014/15

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer presenting the Council's projected year end financial position.

An overspend of £3.471m was projected in the General Fund. This is a decrease of £0.236m from the position reported on 11 November 2014 (ref. EX76). The report summarised the main deviations from budget.

The Executive was reminded that the current reserves policy was agreed on 4 September 2012 (ref. PR32). A review of the strategy concluded that the policy of retaining 2% of annual revenue expenditure in reserve as a contingency against unforeseen events and emergencies remained fit for purpose.

In regard to the Council's spend to save projects it was proposed that the £1m allocated for the provision of a new health and fitness suite at Stenhousemuir is returned to the fund and replaced by prudential borrowing.

The projected year end positions in regard to the Trading Account, Housing Revenue Account and General Fund Reserves were also provided, together with details of movements on the Repairs and Renewals Fund.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) to note the Council's projected year-end financial position for 2014/15;**
- (2) that the reserves strategy will retain an uncommitted General Fund Balance of 2% of annual revenue expenditure;**
- (3) to note the transfers to the Repairs and Renewals Fund and Earmarked Reserves as outlined at appendix 3 to the report;**
- (4) that the new health and fitness suite at Stenhousemuir is financed by prudential borrowing;**
- (5) to note the position on the General Fund Reserve set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report; and**
- (6) to instruct Chief Officers to take action to bring expenditure more into line with the approved budget in the current financial year.**

EX107. CAPITAL PROGRAMMES UPDATE REPORT

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer presenting the position of the General Services and Housing capital programmes at November 2014.

A projected underspend of £9.243m in regard to the 2014/15 General Services capital programme was reported to the Executive on 30 September 2014 (ref. EX63). Details were given of revisions to the programme and of movements in projects since the previous report. In particular 5 projects, totalling £7.263m, which would not commence until 2015/16 or 2016/17, were removed from the programme giving a revised current year's budget of £28.274m against anticipated expenditure of £26.982m.

The 2014/15 Housing capital programme projected outturn remained unchanged, with spend of £36.50m against a budget of £36.53m forecast.

The report also set out the Prudential Indicators for 2014/15.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) note the budget and forecast position for the General & Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes for 2014/15; and
- (2) note the Prudential Indicators as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

EX108. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2015/16

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on the Scottish Government's revenue and capital allocations to local authorities for 2015/16.

A report to a special meeting of Council on 12 November 2014 (ref. FC45) included the anticipated budget settlement for 2015/16. In December 2014, Scottish Government Finance Circular 9/2014 set out each local authority's revenue and capital allocations for 2015/16. In order to receive the settlement set out the circular, Councils are required to agree to:-

- maintain the Council Tax freeze in 2015/16; and
- secure places for all probationers who require one under the teacher induction scheme.

The report set out the grant allocation to local authorities nationally together with Falkirk Council's allocation. In 2015/16 Falkirk Council will, subject to the commitments above, receive a grant allocation of £274.056m for revenue funding and an allocation of £16.208m in capital funding.

Decision

The Executive noted the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2015/16.

EX109. FALKIRK/GRANGEMOUTH ENERGY PROJECT: INTRODUCTORY REPORT

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on an energy project based in Grangemouth and the potential benefits in establishing an energy service company (ESCo) to deliver a range of energy related services to commercial, industrial and residential premises in Falkirk and Grangemouth.

The report provided background on an energy project which could utilise renewable technologies to deliver substantial energy cost savings to the Grangemouth industrial complex and potentially to the wider area through the development of a district heating scheme and on proposals to establish an energy service company (ESCo).

Three options for the structure of a Falkirk ESCo were set out together with anticipated benefits for the area. Scottish Enterprise has offered to lead in the development of a detailed business case and it was proposed that Falkirk Council contribute up to £25,000 towards the cost of this.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) note the report on the development of an energy project for Falkirk and Grangemouth and the possible formation of a Falkirk ESCo to support the energy needs of the area;**
- (2) contribute up to £25,000 towards the development of a detailed business case with stakeholders; and**
- (3) request that officers report back in due course, recommending the next steps.**

EX110. BANKNOCK AND HAGGS SPECIAL INITIATIVE FOR RESIDENTIAL LED REGENERATION: DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ALTERATION

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting a Development Framework Alteration for the Banknock and Haggs Special Initiative for Residential Led Regeneration for approval as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The Executive agreed, on 19 August 2014 (Ref. EX44), to instruct officers to consult on a draft Development Framework Alteration. The report set out the comments received during the consultation together with responses. Proposed modifications to the Framework Alterations were set out. It was proposed that the modified Framework Alteration is approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Decision

The Executive agreed the proposed responses and modifications contained in the appendix to the report and approved the modified Banknock and Haggs Special Initiative for Residential Led Regeneration: Development Framework Alteration, as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

EX111. REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting a review of parking charges in Falkirk together with proposals to introduce multiple purchase permits.

The report summarised the pricing structure applied to car parks in the Council area together with the location and structure for each of the 8 pay and display car parks in Falkirk. It was proposed to amend the pricing structure for the West Bridge Street car park from tier 1 to tier 2 i.e. from short stay to short stay/long stay. The report summarised the rationale for this proposal together with the anticipated benefits.

The report also provided an overview of a trial to introduce multiple annual parking permits and proposed that a multiple purchase permit scheme is introduced for long stay car parks.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) formalise the multi purchase permit scheme as set out in paragraph 8.2 of the report for the Council's long stay car parks; and**
- (2) change the tariff structure at West Bridge Street car park to a tier 2 short stay/long stay car park.**

EX112. KERBSIDE RECYCLING COLLECTION

The Executive considered a report recommending acceptance of a tender for the provision of kerbside collection services together proposals for the collection of Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs) and bric-a-brac.

The current contract for the provision of kerbside collection services will expire on 2 May 2015. Tenders were invited for four lots: –

- lot 1: Collection of Fortnightly Box and Weekly Food; Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm
- lot 1A: Collection of Fortnightly Box and Weekly Food; Monday to Sunday, 8am to 8pm
- lot 2: Collection of Weekly Box and Weekly Food; Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm
- lot 2A: Collection of Weekly Box and Weekly Food; Monday to Sunday, 8am to 8pm

Bidders were also invited to highlight additional material which could be collected as part of the service, including AHPs and bric-a-brac.

The report summarised the evaluated bids for each lot together with recommendations.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) to accept the tender submitted by FCC Environment (UK) Limited for lot 1A, in the sum of £6,082,216, for the seven years of the contract from 4 May 2015 to 3 May 2022;**
- (2) to accept the proposal by FCC Environment (UK) Limited to collect the additional material of Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs) and Bric-a-brac for an additional £10,081 per annum (the total contract value will therefore be £6,152,783); and**

- (3) to note that, should the proposal to collect the additional material be accepted, officers will present a report at a future meeting with a collection methodology.

EX113. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Executive agreed in terms of s50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the said Act.

EX114. MINUTE

Decision

The Executive approved the extract of the minute of the meeting held on 2 December 2014.

MINUTE of MEETING of the CIVIC LICENSING COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2015 at 9.30 A.M.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Gordon Hughes
Baillie Joan Paterson
Provost Pat Reid (Convener)
Ann Ritchie

OFFICERS:

Bryan Douglas, Licensing Co-ordinator
Arlene Fraser, Committee Services Officer
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Frances Kobiela, Senior Solicitor
Brian Samson, Licensing Enforcement Officer (for items
1 – 5 (CL118 – CL122))

CL118. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Depute Provost Patrick, Baillie Buchanan, and Councillor Turner.

CL119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were intimated.

CL120. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Civic Licensing Committee on 3 December 2014 was approved.

CL121. LIST OF APPLICATIONS GRANTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN NOVEMBER 2014 AND NOTIFICATIONS OF PUBLIC PROCESSIONS PENDING

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer detailing (a) applications granted under delegated powers between 1 and 30 November 2014 in terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and the Marriage (Approval of Places) (Scotland) Regulations 2002, and (b) notifications of pending public processions.

Decision

The committee noted the report.

CL122. CIVIC LICENSING ENFORCEMENT – NOVEMBER 2014

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer giving an overview of enforcement action taken with regard to Civic Licensing activities during November 2014.

Decision

The committee noted the report.

CL123. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the said Act.

CL124. APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF A TAXI DRIVER LICENCE

The applicant, Mr C, entered the meeting.

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer on an application for the renewal of a taxi driver licence (a) advising of the background to the application; (b) summarising the consultations undertaken and the responses received, and (c) detailing the applicant's record.

Mr C spoke in support of the application.

Questions were then asked by members of the committee.

Decision

The committee agreed to renew the taxi driver licence for a period of one year subject to the standard conditions.

CL125. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A NEW TAXI DRIVER LICENCE

The applicant, Mr McI, entered the meeting.

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer on an application for the grant of a new taxi driver licence (a) advising of the background to the application; (b) summarising the consultations undertaken and responses received, and (c) detailing the applicant's record.

Decision

The Committee agreed to instruct officers to arrange for the applicant to undertake a medical and should the applicant pass the medical, to grant the application for a new taxi driver licence for a period of one year, subject to the standard conditions. Should the applicant fail the medical examination, the application will be submitted again to the Civic Licensing Committee for further consideration.

CL126. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A NEW TAXI DRIVER LICENCE

The applicant, Mr P, was not in attendance. The Licensing Co-ordinator advised that he had spoken with the applicant by telephone and was advised that the applicant wished to withdraw his application at this time. This request was subsequently confirmed in writing by the applicant.

NOTED.

CL127. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PRIVATE HIRE CAR OPERATOR LICENCE

Mr A and Mr M, directors of the applicant company, entered the meeting.

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer on an application for the grant of a private hire car operator licence (a) advising of the background to the application, and (b) detailing the consultations undertaken and the responses received.

Mr A spoke in support of the application.

Questions were then asked by members of the committee.

Decision

The committee agreed to grant the private hire car operator licence for a period of one year subject to the standard conditions.

CL128. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A NEW STREET TRADER

Having heard from the Licensing Co-ordinator that the applicant was not in attendance, nor had he made contact with the Licensing section, the Committee determined not to consider the application in the applicant's absence.

Decision

The committee agreed to continue the matter to a future meeting to allow the applicant to attend.

CL129. APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF A LATE HOURS CATERING LICENCE NO. 229

With reference to Minute of Meeting of the Civic Licensing Committee held on 3 December 2014 (paragraph CL115 refers), the committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer on an application for the renewal of a late hours catering licence No. 229 (a) advising of the background to the application; (b) summarising the consultations undertaken and the responses received, and (c) attaching as appendices 1 to 3 respectively, the late hours catering policy, the late hours catering conditions and a location plan.

Having heard from the Licensing Co-ordinator that the applicant was not in attendance, nor had he made contact with the Licensing section, and having regard to the applicant's failure to attend the previous meeting on 3 December 2014, the Committee determined to consider the application in the applicant's absence.

Decision

The committee, having been satisfied that other good reason (the application was contrary to established policy, had previously been granted on a trial basis, there was no over-riding argument to continue that trial and, in any event, the premises were not actively trading) for refusing the application had been shown in terms of paragraph 5(3)(d) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, agreed to refuse the renewal of Late Hours Catering Licence No. 229.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2015 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Baillie William Buchanan (Convener)
Colin Chalmers
Craig Martin
John McLuckie
John McNally
Cecil Meiklejohn
Alan Nimmo
Baillie Joan Paterson

OFFICERS:

John Angell, Head of Planning and Transportation
Kevin Collins, Transport Planning Co-ordinator
Ian Dryden, Development Manager
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Iain Henderson, Legal Services Manager
Stuart Henderson, Environmental Health Officer
Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer
Russell Steedman, Network Co-ordinator
Brent Vivian, Senior Planning Officer
Bernard Whittle, Development Management Co-ordinator

P107. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors Carleschi, Mahoney, Nicol and Turner.

P108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

P109. MINUTES

Decision

- (a) The minute of meeting of the Planning Committee held on 27 November 2014 was approved;

- (b) The minute of meeting of the Planning On-Site Committee held on 8 December 2014 was approved, and
- (c) The minute of Special Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8 December 2014 was approved.

P110. DEMOLITION OF FORMER SCOUT HALL AND ERECTION OF 3 DWELLINGHOUSES AT SCOUT HALL, GARTCOWS ROAD, FALKIRK FOR GRS HOMES LTD - P/14/0336/FUL (CONTINUATION)

With reference to Minutes of Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 29 October and 27 November 2014 (Paragraphs P79 and P91 refer), Committee gave (a) further consideration to a reports by the Director of Development Services; and (b) considered an additional report by the said Director seeking full planning permission to demolish a former scout hall and the erection of three detached dwellinghouses on a site extending 0.33 hectares on land to the south of Gartcows Road, Falkirk.

Councillor Chalmers, seconded by Councillor Meiklejohn, moved that the application be refused on the grounds that the proposal was contrary to Falkirk Council Local Plan Policy SC8 'Infill Development and Subdivision of Plots' and would have an adverse impact on road safety and the amenity of the area.

By way of an amendment, Councillor McLuckie, seconded by Baillie Paterson, moved that Committee grant full planning permission with conditions as detailed in the Report.

On a division, 3 Members voted for the motion and 5 voted for the amendment.

Decision

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the plan(s) itemised in the informative below and forming part of the permission unless a variation is required by a condition of the permission or a non-material variation has been agreed in writing by Falkirk Council as Planning Authority.
- (2) No dwellinghouse shall be occupied prior to the first 50 metres of the access to the site on Well Road from Gartcows Road being brought up to Falkirk Council adoptable standards as shown on approved drawing "Access Surface Treatment Plan".
- (3) Before development commences, a Tree Protections and Planting plan shall be submitted for the site, which plots the position of each tree accurately and tabulates details of species, crown spread, height, stem diameter and condition (in accordance with the

Council's SPG 'Trees and Development'). From this tree survey information and specifically the tree stem diameters, a 'Tree Constraints Plan' shall be provided to show the root protection areas (RPA) required for each tree where no development or construction operations shall take place. Development shall not commence on site until the submitted Tree Survey and Constraints Plan has been approved by Falkirk Council as Planning Authority including amendment as required.

- (4) (i) No development shall commence on site unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority until a contaminated land assessment has been submitted and approved. The assessment must determine the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, including contamination that may have originated from elsewhere. Any potential risks to human health, property, the water environment and designated ecological sites should be determined. The contaminated land assessment must be approved in writing by the Planning Authority;
- (ii) Where contamination (as defined by Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) is encountered, a detailed remediation strategy should be submitted to the Planning Authority demonstrating that the site will be made suitable for its intended use by removing any unacceptable risks, caused by the contamination;
- (iii) Prior to the commencement of development of the site, the remediation works must be carried out in accordance with the terms and conditions of the remediation scheme, and as agreed by the Planning Authority. No part of the development shall be occupied until a remediation completion report/validation certificate endorsed by the relevant parties have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority, and
- (iv) If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development of the affected part of the site must stop. The developer must notify the Planning Authority immediately and carry out a contaminated land assessment, and undertake any necessary remediation works, before development of the affected part of the site may continue.
- (5) Before development commences a detailed specification schedule for all masonry, fenestration rain water goods and roofing construction materials shall be submitted for the written approval of Falkirk Council as Planning Authority including amendment as required.

Reason(s):-

- (1) As these drawings and details constitute the approved development.
- (2) In the interests of road safety.
- (3) In the interests of landscape quality.
- (4) To ensure the ground is made suitable for the approved development.
- (5) In the interests of visual amenity.

Informative(s):-

- (1) For the avoidance of doubt, the plan(s) to which the decision refer(s) bear the online reference number(s) 01-06.
- (2) Records indicated that a public sewer/water main crossed the application site. Scottish Water is the Water and Drainage Authority for the area and has a policy of not permitting building over or in close proximity to sewers/water mains. Attention is therefore drawn to the fact that the planning permission does not constitute consent to build over or close to a public sewer/water mains.

P111. ERECTION OF 4 RETAIL UNITS AND 4 FLATS WITH ACCESS AND PARKING FACILITIES ON LAND TO THE EAST OF 22A GLASGOW ROAD, GLASGOW ROAD, DENNY FOR MR NIMI DHILLON – P/14/0077/FUL

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services on an application for full planning permission for the erection of a two storey building comprising four retail units and four flatted dwellings, with associated access and parking facilities, on a site consisting of vacant land on a lower level from the adjoining road to the east of 22A Glasgow Road, Glasgow Road, Denny.

Decision

The Committee agreed to continue consideration of this item of business to allow an inspection of the site by Committee.

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

MINUTE of MEETING of the APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2015 at 9.00 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Allyson Black
Thomas Coleman
Craig Martin (Convener)
Cecil Meiklejohn
Alan Nimmo
Provost Pat Reid

OFFICERS:

Karen Algie, Head of Human Resources & Customer First
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive

AP6. APOLOGIES

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor Nicol.

AP7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

AP8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and public for the following items of business on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the said Act.

AP9. SHORT LEETING – APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which outlined the progress to date and selection methods in respect of the post of Director of Children's Services. Application forms and supporting papers for the post were appended.

Decision

The committee agreed:-

- (1) that a short list of four applicants should be interviewed by the committee, and**
- (2) the presentation topic.**

AP10. SHORT LISTING – APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF EDUCATION

The committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which outlined the progress to date and selection methods in respect of the post of Head of Education. Application forms and supporting papers for the post were appended.

Decision

The committee agreed that a short list of four applicants should be interviewed by the committee.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2014 at 9.30 AM.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Dennis Goldie
Linda Gow
Adrian Mahoney
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Malcolm Nicol
Alan Nimmo
Robert Spears

**REPRESENTATIVES
OF RELIGIOUS
BODIES:**

Hector Cairns
Margaret Coutts
Rev Michael Rollo

CO-OPTEES:

Mike Ablett (Parent Representative)
Fiona Craig (Teacher Representative)
Martin Craigen (Parent Representative)
Margaret Smith (Teacher Representative)

OFFICERS:

Arlene Fraser, Committee Services Officer
Gary Greenhorn, joint acting Director of Education
Kenny McNeill, Educational Resources Manager
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Anne Pearson, joint acting Director of Education

EE34. APOLOGIES

No apologies were intimated.

EE35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point.

EE36. OPENING REMARKS

Councillor Nimmo advised that Denny Primary School was one of only four Scottish winners of the BBC's Ten Pieces Project and that the BBC symphony orchestra will be holding a workshop for the pupils on 27 March 2015. The children will also participate in a concert which will be televised at a later date. The Education Executive passed its congratulations to pupils and staff at Denny Primary School on this achievement.

EE37. MINUTE**Decision**

The minute of the meeting of the Education Executive held on 11 November 2014 was approved.

EE38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr Martin declared a financial interest in the following item of business as he would financially benefit from the changes in childcare hours and considered that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item having regard to the objective text in the Code of Conduct.

Councillor Dr Martin then left the meeting in accordance with his declaration of interest.

EE39. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE TO 600 HOURS PER ANNUM

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education on the progress to date on the expansion of early learning and childcare to 600 hours per annum and seeking approval to review the Early Years Admission Policy.

The current Early Years Admission Policy does not allow for reserved places to be retained for children moving into the catchment area during the session. It was proposed that a review be undertaken to consider whether a change could be made to the policy to introduce reserved places.

The Council is also required by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to provide 600 hours early learning and child care for 2 year old children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits. A summary of the actions required to manage the anticipated increase in provision was set out, including additional financial and resource implications.

In order to allow for future capacity expansion needs, the proposed provision at Beancross and Denny Primary Schools require to be changed to Rannoch Nursery and Denny Nursery.

Decision

The Education Executive:-

(1) noted the:-

- (a) implementation position as detailed in sections 2 and 3 of the report, and**
- (b) financial position as detailed in section 4 of the report; and**

(2) agreed:-

- (a) to review the Early Years Admission Policy as set out in section 2.3 of the report;**

(b) the change of locations as detailed in section 3.4 of the report, and

(c) the next steps/way forward as set out in section 6 of the report.

Councillor Dr Martin re-joined the meeting following consideration of the previous item.

EE40. IMPACT OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY STRATEGIES IN FALKIRK COUNCIL SCHOOLS

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education on the progress made by Falkirk Council's primary and secondary schools since the implementation of its literacy and numeracy strategies.

Both strategies were developed and implemented to ensure that standards are raised in both literacy and numeracy across the council area.

Progress is measured through the programme of standardised testing which has been in place since session 2011/12 which enables primary and secondary schools, as well as officers at the centre, to gain an increased awareness of attainment in both literacy and numeracy.

The strategies are both driven by eight main work streams which were set out in the appendices to the report. The strategies had been revised in light of on-going evaluation and will be adapted further according to changing circumstances.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed the updated Literacy and Numeracy Strategies 2014/17.

EE41. THE SQA RESULTS SERVICE – CHANGES IN 2014

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education on the changes to the SQA's results service introduced in 2014.

In previous years post-appeals information was provided which included national performance figures as well as those relating to comparator authorities. Due to the Scottish Government introducing a new benchmarking tool, Insight, this information will no longer be available. As comparator authority data is no longer available, Insight will create a virtual comparator authority against which future comparison will be made.

The new SQA results services replace the previous appeals procedure and cover all levels from national to advanced higher.

The 2 services are:

- Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service – this service supports students who have been unable to attend an examination or whose performance may have been affected by an incident beyond their control. This is only available prior to publication of the results and there is no charge for this service.

- Post-Results Service – this service allows schools or colleges to request a priority marking review, clerical check or a marking review of a candidate's result which they believe does not reflect expectations. This operates after exam results and has a cost for any grade which remains unchanged following the check/review.

Decision

The Education Executive noted the changes to the SQA Results Service.

EE42. REVISION OF THE FALKIRK COUNCIL PUPIL COUNCIL

The Education Executive considered a report by the joint acting Director of Education summarising the outcomes of discussions with young people on the effectiveness and purpose of the current Falkirk Council Pupil Council.

The outcome of the discussions highlighted the need for changes to allow young people a greater input on decisions that affect them and on issues they care about.

It is proposed that the pupil council be replaced with the Youth Ambassadors programme which will include representatives from all Falkirk Council's secondary schools. The programme has been designed to enhance and develop the four capacities set out in the Curriculum for Excellence.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed:-

- (1) **the implementation of the Youth Ambassador programme, and**
- (2) **that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Youth Ambassadors team will become the pupil representatives on the Education Executive.**

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2015 at 11.00 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Dennis Goldie
Linda Gow
Adrian Mahoney
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Malcolm Nicol
Alan Nimmo
Robert Spears

OFFICERS:

Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Robert McMaster, Head of Roads & Design
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager

EX115. APOLOGIES

No apologies were intimated.

EX116. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors D Goldie, Gow, Mahoney and Nicol each declared a non-financial interest in item EX117 as directors of Falkirk Community Trust, but did not consider that this required them to recuse themselves from consideration of the item, having regard to the specific exclusions contained in the Code of Conduct.

EX117. THE HELIX: VISITOR BUILDING

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services proposing that the contract for the provision of the Helix visitor centre is varied to allow design changes to the building to be carried out.

The Executive had, on February 2014 (ref Ex122), awarded a contract to Balfour Beattie to build a visitor centre in the Helix. In December 2014, following the withdrawal of this contractor, the contract was awarded to Maxi Construction Limited.

Work started on site in January 2015 with an anticipated opening date of early August 2015. It was proposed that the visitor building is extended, as a consequence of higher than expected visitor numbers at the Helix and Kelpies in their first year. It was anticipated that annually the sites will attract over 700,000 visitors against initial estimates of 350,000. The extension of the facility would allow enhanced retail and circulation space to be provided at an additional cost of £160,000 which can be met from the Falkirk Community Trust's Helix budget. Extending the contract would add approximately seven weeks to the build programme with the visitor centre opening in October 2015.

Decision

The Executive agreed to vary the contract for the Helix visitor building to allow the extension of the building at a cost of £160,000.

DRAFT**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2015 at 9.30 AM.

CORE MEMBERS:

Rosie Murray
Baillie Joan Paterson
Depute Provost John Patrick (convener)

MEMBERS**ATTENDING:**

David Alexander
Stephen Bird
Allyson Black
Jim Blackwood
Tom Coleman
Linda Gow
Gordon Hughes
Provost Pat Reid

OFFICERS:

Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
Kathy McCarroll, Head of Children & Families and Criminal Justice
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Philip Morgan-Klein, Service Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Marion Reddie, Head of Community Care

PP13. MINUTE**Decision**

The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 20 November 2014 was approved.

PP14. SOCIAL WORK SERVICE: SCRUTINY REPORT

The panel considered a report by the Director of Social Work Services setting out the performance for the service from April to September 2014. In response to a request from the convener, Margaret Anderson gave an overview of the work which had been undertaken regarding the integration of health and social care, including the preparation of the integration scheme and the formation of the transitional board .

The panel asked for information on funding available to support the integration process. Margaret Anderson advised that the transitional fund had been used to support the process for the current financial year. Funding was allocated to the NHS Forth Valley board and then allocated within partnerships. One example of the use of funding to support the integration process was the creation of the programme manager post for Falkirk. From April 2015 the integrated care fund of £2.88 million would be available and its use would be determined by the Integration Joint Board (IJB). An integrated care fund plan had been drawn up in consultation with the private and voluntary sectors. High level priorities had been set and further work was required to finalise detailed proposals on spending.

Members asked if some of the funding would support carers. Margaret Anderson advised that the Carers' Centre had been involved in discussions as part of the voluntary sector in achieving sign off from the sector.

The panel asked how many meetings of the transitional board had taken place to date and for further information on the operation of the board. Margaret Anderson advised that the board had met once but would have its second meeting the next day. Colin Moodie advised that, at present, the Council provided the administrative and clerking support. Members raised concern that information on the work of the board was not fully accessible to all members of the Council. Colin Moodie advised that the board had agreed that minutes of the Integration Joint Board, once constituted, would be public as would its meetings. Prior to it being constituted, however, it had decided that papers and meetings would not be public. In accordance with the Council's recent decision, the approved minutes of the transitional board would be available at Council meetings. The integration scheme itself would also come to Council as it was its agreement that was required not that of the board.

Members asked if there was guidance from Audit Scotland about the participation of members in the process. Margaret Anderson and Colin Moodie stated that they were unaware of any specific guidance from Audit Scotland on this matter.

The panel asked about chairing arrangements of the board. Councillor Gow advised that the transitional board chair alternated from meeting to meeting between a Councillor and Health Board member. Following the appointment of the chief officer the chair would be appointed from members of the organisation whose terms and conditions the chief officer did not select. The vice-chair would be a member from the appointing organisation, after which the chair and vice-chair would rotate on a one yearly cycle. The period of the first chair would run until the next local government elections in 2017.

Members asked if there was a communication plan in place to ensure that staff were briefed on changes. Margaret Anderson stated that the plan was being worked on. A letter would be sent to staff across the partnership area from the Chief Executive and a series of staff briefings were planned. She stated that it would be the biggest cultural and organisational change for social work staff.

The panel asked for information on the engagement of clients in the integration process. Margaret Anderson advised that clients had been included in the consultation to date. There had been significant consultation carried out in relation to reshaping care for older people. Previous consultations would be a starting point for informing the consultation on the transition. However, she highlighted that information should make it clear that changes were part of a long term process. The focus would be on improving outcomes for service users.

Members sought information on the type of responses received from client groups. Margaret Anderson highlighted the good work carried out in relation to older people which could be built on. She stated that consultation was currently at an early stage and that service user involvement would be fundamental to the development of the strategic plan.

The panel asked that a section of the report to the performance panel or Council show what was being asked for by clients and what was done as a result of this. Highlighting that it was important to demonstrate a user centred approach. In response to a question on evaluation of service users' feedback on the Bo'ness test of concept project, Margaret Anderson stated that a range of detailed feedback was available. Margaret Anderson stated that she would give further consideration to how to best present feedback of service users' views.

The panel asked about the budget process relating to the IJB and any transfer of assets from the Council to the IJB. Margaret Anderson advised that no transfer of staff was anticipated as the body corporate model had been selected and therefore all staff involved in delivery of IJB functions would continue to be Falkirk Council employees. She further stated that the budget setting process would be set out in the integration scheme.

In relation to self directed support members asked if there was an appeals process available when impasses in discussion were reached. Margaret Anderson stated that the current appeals process was an internal social work services one in regard to the allocation of care packages. All requests were looked at independently. After a care package and budget were agreed the service did not interfere with how resources were used as long as they were used to achieve agreed outcomes. She advised that allocating self directed support resources was a complex process.

Margaret Anderson then provided an overview of the report.

A question was asked by the panel which sought to clarify if delayed discharge was caused more often by patients' choice of care placement rather than the availability of care home places. Margaret Anderson stated that the issues were interrelated in that there were not a high number of care home places available, which limited the choices that families and people could make. Margaret Anderson stated that social work services staff treat people with compassion and would never force a move from hospital to care home.

The panel asked if the issue could be lessened by the NHS offering convalescent home places. Margaret Anderson stated that there were not any convalescent homes at the current time. In relation to community hospitals, once medical needs had been met social work services were required to arrange a move for the individual into a registered care home. The service approached delayed discharge by looking at every stage of a patient's journey. Margaret Anderson highlighted that some problems are developed while in hospital so the service was working jointly with NHS Forth Valley to look after people in the community and avoid unplanned admissions. The aim was to look after people for as long as possible as well as possible in their own homes.

Members asked about situations where people refuse to move from hospital, feeling no care home placements are acceptable, and so block hospital beds. Members asked what happens to the person waiting for hospital admission. Margaret Anderson stated that the situation members referred to highlighted the importance of tackling delayed discharge to ensure that new admissions are able to be accepted. Where people and families don't want to move to any available care home places social work services could not and would not force a move. She advised that in terms of the choice policy the hospital had responsibility for escalation, which could result in the medical director writing to the patient with a date of discharge. However, a legal process would need to be undertaken in order to enforce a move. Margaret Anderson stated that staff in social work services and the NHS work to avoid escalation situations.

The panel asked about additional hospital beds in the Falkirk area as a response to the high pressure being exerted on current resources. Margaret Anderson stated that some temporary beds had been made available in order to deal with the added winter pressure and that the funding for this was short term.

Members asked if self funding individuals were able to access care home places more easily than others. For example where one place was available and two people waiting, one self funder and one not, would care homes select the self funder. Margaret Anderson stated that it had been the practice of some care homes to accept self funders first. The National Care Home Contract was negotiated on an annual basis by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities with representatives of the independent care home sector. Each year these negotiations set a standard rate that local authorities would pay toward care home fees for publicly funded service users within private and voluntary care homes. Compared to this, self funding individuals could be charged increased rates by independent care homes.

In answer to a question about whether some care homes deliberately leave places empty to wait for self funders who could provide higher levels of income, Marion Reddie stated that she was not aware of such practice in the Falkirk area. However, she stated that it had been the case in other council areas to have units reserved for self funders.

Members asked for information on the number of people who refused care home placements. Marion Reddie stated that of those currently awaiting discharge two people had refused to make any choices while a number of others had made three choices but with no availability at any of their choices.

The panel asked for information on how the number of people refusing in the Falkirk area compared to other areas. Marion Reddie advised that this information was not known but that in Falkirk the number of people who refused places tended to be in the range of 5% - 10%. Margaret Anderson stated that delayed discharge was a combination of both refused placements and the number of available placements.

A question was asked to find out if there had been a change to NHS discharge policy resulting in people being discharged from hospital late in the day with no care package in place, particularly in relation to acute beds. Margaret Anderson stated that NHS Forth Valley reported that there was severe pressure on acute bed availability. Where social work were involved in discharge processes they always advocated that a care plan should be in place before discharge. However, if people wanted to be discharged quickly then they are sometimes discharged before a plan is in place, when this occurs social work services were good at getting care packages into place as quickly as possible.