

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2015 at 11.00 a.m.

<u>COUNCILLORS:</u>	Jim Blackwood	Adrian Mahoney
	Tom Coleman	Craig Martin (Convener)
	Dennis Goldie	Dr Craig R Martin
	Gerry Goldie	Alan Nimmo
	Linda Gow	Robert Spears

OFFICERS:

Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services
Carl Bullough, Waste Manager
Colin Frame, Principal Surveyor (Strategic Projects)
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Alistair McGirr, Pensions Manager
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services
Brian Smail, Chief Finance Officer

ALSO Councillor Allyson Black
ATTENDING:

EX13. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors Alexander and Nicol.

EX14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were intimated.

EX15. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 19 May 2015 was approved.

EX16. REVIEW OF CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Social Work proposing the creation of a new purpose built care home.

The Housing and Social Care Committee agreed, on 6 November 2012 (ref HSC25), a review of the efficiency of residential and other high dependency services for older people. A driver for the review had been the physical environment of the Council's two care homes, Oakbank and Summerford House, which had been criticised by the Care Inspectorate as weak against quality standards.

The review considered that there was a need for the Council to maintain its current level of provision and looked at the feasibility of building a new facility on either of the current sites. A technical analysis concluded that while it was not feasible to build on the Oakbank site there was scope to build on the Summerford site. The capital cost of the provision is £3.729m with £3.459m provided for in the Capital Programme. It was proposed that the shortfall, £270k, would be met from the Social Work Repairs and Renewals fund. An anticipated £109k annual saving in running costs could be realised as a consequence of the proposal. Should the Executive agree to progress the proposal, a consultation with residents, families and staff will be carried out together with an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) note the feasibility study which has been undertaken and the proposals set out in section 4 of the report;**
- (2) ask the Chief Executive to ensure that residents and families in both Summerford and Oakbank are consulted about how the new development can be taken forward in a way that minimises disruption to residents and meets their needs; and**
- (3) ask the Chief Executive to provide an update following the consultation and completion of the Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment in order to enable a final decision to be taken.**

EX17. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the outcome of the consultation exercise carried out on the policy development panel's recommendations in regard to bereavement services together with an update on the refurbishment of Falkirk Crematorium.

The Executive requested, on 18 March 2014 (ref EX134), a consultation on the recommendations arising from a policy development panel review of bereavement services and on issues raised by members at the meeting in regard to the maintenance of headstones.

The report summarised the responses from the subsequent consultation exercise and set out, in an appendix, recommendations in regard to the panel's original recommendations. In regard to headstone maintenance it was proposed that an inspection regime is established and that a memorial mason registration scheme is

established to ensure that masons comply with the National Association of Memorial Masons' (NAMM) code of practice.

Additionally, the report set out the background to the proposed refurbishment of Falkirk Crematorium and the measures which will be put in place to minimise disruption during the estimated 12-16 week refurbishment.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) the recommendations set out in appendix 3 of the report subject to the adjustment of recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 as follows:-**
 - 2.1 that the details of headstone size and content would be required to be submitted in advance of its installation and approval would ultimately be at the discretion of the Director of the appropriate service. Whilst taking into account exceptional/unforeseen circumstances, family/history connections and any other reason, there will be a presumption that headstones will generally be of a size no larger than a height of 5ft (1524mm), width 3ft 8 inches (1117mm) and depth (thickness, excluding base stone) 5 inches (125mm)**
 - 2.2 headstones(that are drilled into the foundations) shall only be constructed of approved granite, stone or terrazzo materials;**
- (2) that officers prepare and implement a revised set of Cemetery Rules and Regulations based on the amended recommendations set out in appendix 3 of the report;**
- (3) the principle of establishing a Memorial Inspection regime of all its burial grounds;**
- (4) to establish a Memorial Mason Registration Scheme; and**
- (5) to note the proposed works to the Crematorium and that further updates will be provided as the project progresses.**

EX18. SCRUTINY PANEL CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS: FALKIRK COUNCIL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations following a scrutiny panel review of the implementation of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy, 'Have Your Say'.

As part of its annual workplan the Scrutiny Committee had established a scrutiny panel to review the implementation of the Community Involvement Strategy and to make recommendations. The panel reported its conclusions and recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee on 14 May 2015 (ref S10) and the Committee had agreed to refer the recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

Councillor Black, chair of the Scrutiny Panel, presented the recommendations.

Decision

The Executive agreed the following recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) to review the role, remit and membership of the Corporate Participation Group. This group has a central role in ensuring that there is a consistent approach to participation and engagement across the Council and promoting a best practice approach within Services;
- (b) to develop a robust process for local community planning which sets out a defined process for the production of plans. This would include consideration of using 'place shaping' tools such as "Planning for Real" in a consistent manner;
- (c) to develop a defined reporting framework for local community plans to ensure that reports on them are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee and then the Executive prior to submission to the Community Planning Leadership Board;
- (d) to promote Have Your Say, the Plan for Local Involvement, and the principles set out within it more effectively, internally to Members and officers, and externally to communities and partner organisations. This would include producing a concise summary of the plan;
- (e) to ensure appropriate training is put in place for officers to enable them to implement the principles set out in the plan, for example Plain English training, training in survey design etc;
- (f) to record all consultation activity in a corporate database of consultation activities, drawing on Service Plans, Community Planning, to avoid duplication of consultation/engagement. The effectiveness and accessibility of the current data base will also be reviewed;
- (g) to provide information to the public/specific stakeholders prior to and after they have informed, consulted or engaged with communities, including feedback. There should also be a clear process for advising Members about consultations that are taking place and feeding the results back to them;
- (h) to provide more information on consultations, community engagement and Local Community Planning in the consultation section of the Council's website;
- (i) to explore different digital means of engaging with local and thematic communities. This could include the potential for using a bespoke online consultation platform such as Citizen Space. It would also include a review of how the Council's use of social media platforms could be expanded to support its engagement activities;
- (j) to provide guidance and training to Members and officers on the use of social media to ensure this is being used more actively but appropriately;

- (k) to ensure that appropriate methods are used to effectively consult and/or engage with hard-to-reach groups and consideration will be given to specific training on consulting and/or engaging hard-to-reach groups;
- (l) to consider the impact of the Community Empowerment Bill and the Council's response to this in August 2015;
- (m) to consider different ways of consulting on the budget employed by other Councils by August 2015 to inform the process going forward and include Councillors in this process; and
- (n) to ask Officers to report back to the Scrutiny Committee periodically on progress on the above

EX19. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services in regard to employers' discretionary powers as set out in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions and Savings) (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

A new version of The Local Government Pension Scheme 2015 was introduced on 1 April 2015. Under the regulations, all pension scheme employers, such as Falkirk Council, are required to prepare and publish a written statement indicating how they intend to exercise their discretionary powers in terms of the regulations. In doing, so employers must have regard to public perception and should not 'fetter their discretion'.

The proposed statement, setting out current and proposed policies was attached as an appendix to the report.

Decision

The Executive agreed the Discretionary Policies for immediate implementation.

EX20. REVENUE BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2016-17 – 2018/19

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services and the Chief Finance Officer setting out the broad Revenue Budget framework for the period 2016-2019 together with an update on Business Transformation projects.

The report set out the budget setting timetable highlighting particular likely pressures in regard to

- Adult Health and Social Care Integration;
- Joint Resourcing;
- Participating budgeting;
- Service Restructure; and
- Commission for Local Tax Reforms.

The report also summarised the likely central government position in regard to funding local government and set out the estimated budget gaps in each of the next three financial years.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- (1) the Budget Framework for 2016/17 – 18/19 as set out in the report, and**
- (2) to note the status of the Business Transformation programme and to request a further update after the recess.**

EX21. DENNY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on the Denny Town Centre Regeneration Project including options in regard to the development of phase 2.

The Executive agreed, on 24 February 2015 (ref EX125), to remarket the phase 2 site on the basis that the Council will take responsibility for any balance outstanding for phase 2's contribution to the Denny Eastern Access Road. One offer had been received, from County Properties (Northern) Limited. The report provided an assessment of the offer which included proposals for a 23,500sq ft single storey retail unit with a second 2000 sq ft retail block and set out 3 options for consideration:-

- (1) accept the offer; or
- (2) request that the bidder reviews and resubmits their proposals; or
- (3) reject the offer

Of these, option 2 was recommended.

A timetable for the completion of phase 1 of the project was set out. As part of the development, the Council's Automated Public Convenience (APC) in the town centre was to be relocated. However, it was now proposed that the facility is closed and that officers develop an alternative option for the town centre.

The report also summarised the outcome of a consultation on the siting of the War Memorial and recommended that it remain in the Memorial Garden at Broompark on a permanent basis.

Information about the price contained in the offer formed an appendix to the report. The Executive agreed that the appendix contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and resolved that, to the extent that there required to be discussion on the detail contained therein, it would be taken in private, and the document would not be available to the press or public.

Councillor D Goldie, seconded by Councillor Blackwood, moved that the Executive:-

- (1) notes the progress of the Denny town centre regeneration project;

- (2) agrees to the closure of the Automated Public Convenience (APC) located on Stirling Street and that further proposals are developed for a comfort scheme for the town centre;
- (3) authorises the Director of Development Services to invite County Properties to provide a further submission confirming operator interest and reviewing the masterplan on the basis of the Design Guidance document provided, reporting back to the Executive on the revised proposal; and
- (4) notes the outcome of the survey on the final location for the War Memorial Plaques and agrees the continued and permanent siting in the Broompark Community Garden.

As an amendment, Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Spears, moved the terms of the motion subject to the substitution of clause (3) with the following:-

- (3) rejects the offer from County Properties and agrees to withhold marketing of the Phase 2 site until completion of Phase 1.

On a division 8 members voted for the motion and 2 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (8) –Councillors Blackwood, D Goldie, G Goldie, Gow, Mahoney, C Martin, Dr C R Martin and Nimmo.

For the amendment (2) – Councillors Coleman and Spears.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

EX22. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Executive agreed in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting 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.

EX23. GRANGEMOUTH ENERGY & INVESTMENT PROJECT – UPDATE

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on the Grangemouth Energy Project and advising of a proposal for investment.

The Executive agreed, on 13 January 2015 (ref EX109) to examine the potential development of an energy related project to deliver substantial energy cost savings to the Grangemouth Industrial Complex and wider area through the development of a district heating scheme. The report summarised progress to date. Mace consultants were appointed to develop a business case for the Scottish Government led project. The report also set out a proposal to progress a connection to the national power grid and set out the costs and benefits to the Council.

Proposals to establish a dedicated investment fund were set out. It was intended that the fund would attract supporting finance from the EU and both the public and private sectors and would be directed towards supporting investment in real estate development, energy projects, infrastructure projects and Council-led asset initiatives.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the progress of the Grangemouth Energy Project and the development of an investment fund model for Falkirk and Grangemouth;
- (2) agreed to progress an application for a grid connection via National Grid to assist delivery of the Grangemouth energy network at a cost to the Council of up to £40,000 and subject to an agreement in suitable terms with Silva Renewables and Scottish Enterprise;
- (3) agreed to proceed with development of a business case for an investment fund in liaison with partners at a cost of £20,000, and
- (4) requested that officers report back in due course, recommending the next step.

EX24. EXTERNAL REVIEW: OPEN SECRET

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Social Work presenting a review of Open Secret together with options for future service delivery.

The Executive adjourned at 1.40 p.m. to allow members time to consider further documents submitted at the commencement of the meeting and reconvened at 2.30 p.m. with the same members present with the exception of Councillor D Goldie.

Decision

The Executive agreed that officers put in place a commissioning and procurement process for the services outlined in the original report with a view to tendering these services over the coming months and the successful provider commencing the delivery of such services in April 2016.