

### **EX31. ENGAGEMENT ON THE 16/17 COUNCIL BUDGET**

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services setting out proposals for engaging with the public on the Council's budget for 2016/17.

The Executive agreed, on 9 June 2015 (ref EX18), to consider different ways of consulting on the budget employed by other Councils in order to inform the Council's budget setting process.

The report set out the principles for engagement based upon:- purpose; involvement; methods; information; working together; and feedback.

In regard to engagement by other Councils, the report highlighted the City of Edinburgh Council's processes which include the use of an online planner. The report summarised the benefits in using such a tool together with the cost implications.

It was proposed that an internal and external engagement plan is developed and that it should include the following methods:-

- online information – this could include a questionnaire as in previous years or an online budgeting tool such as that used by City of Edinburgh and other Councils.
- Falkirk Council News. The next issues were due to be published at the end of September and the beginning of December. To accommodate budget information, the next issue will now be published in October;
- engagement with stakeholder groups, such as the Community Planning partners, discussions with special interest groups, such as parents and the business panel.
- Citizens Panel questionnaire and focus groups;
- engagement with employees and Trades Unions;
- media briefings; and
- social media activity, including Twitter.

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Councillor C R Martin moved that the Executive agrees:-

- (1) that further information on the purpose of budget engagement will be considered at the meeting of Council in October 2015;
- (2) that information about the budget process will be made available from October onwards, using the methods set out at section 5.7 of the report;
- (3) to note the information about budget engagement carried out in other Council areas and that the required resources to populate the online budget planner tool described in section 4 of the report cannot be easily identified at this time; and
- (4) to note that officers will produce a tactical internal and external engagement and communications plan, to be implemented from October 2015.

As an amendment, Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Alexander, moved the terms of the motion, with an additional clause:-

(5) to establish an all party budget group.

On a division, 9 members voted for the motion and 2 voted for the amendment with voting as follows:-

For the motion (9) – Councillors Blackwood, D Goldie, G Goldie, Gow, Mahoney, C Martin, C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

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

### **Decision**

**The Executive agreed the motion.**