

S24. PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate & Housing Services Providing information following the evaluation of public performance reporting by Councils carried out by Audit Scotland. The report covered the background to the evaluation, information about Falkirk Council's assessment and set out improvement actions that would be taken by the Council. Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the report and Caroline Binnie then provided the committee with a short presentation.

The committee asked when the improvement plan would be available and stated that it was good to compare practice against other local authorities. Caroline Binnie stated that Audit Scotland rated each Council on each area, if it is identified that Falkirk needed to make improvements in a particular area the service would look at exemplar Councils to then draft an action plan.

Members asked about take up of information by age group and the use of Falkirk News. Caroline Binnie stated that the approach varies and that there had been positive feedback on the different methods used. It can be difficult to engage younger people in traditional forms of engagement. The Falkirk News was recognised as being a good method of providing information to the public. The service was using Twitter more actively to engage with young people and this had been found to be successful. There had recently concluded a scrutiny panel on consultation and engagement which had spent time focussing on the issue of engaging younger people.

The committee asked how the Council shares improvements through You Said, We Did. Caroline Binnie advised that the Citizens Panel was in the format of You Said, We Did and that the service could look at extending this. She also highlighted the use of plasma screens in various Council offices which displayed information to the public.

Members discussed the use of the Council's website. Caroline Binnie advised that the information presented on the home screen was varied to keep it relevant and up to date. She highlighted that most external visitors to the website do not access it through the homepage.

The committee asked about the cost associated with utilising new methods such as Twitter. Caroline Binnie advised that there was a staff cost involved as people were needed to monitor and feed information into the account. This was met through existing resources. Teams were becoming more aligned to digital media.

In response to a question on what information was provided to the public on staff performance, Caroline Binnie advised that reports with indicators on sickness absence, turnover, training and satisfaction were provided.

The committee discussed what areas it was felt the public was most interested in. Caroline Binnie stated that a question was asked in the bi-annual customer survey about what the public is most interest in and how they want that information. She advised that Falkirk News rated highly and that the rating for the website was increasing.

Members asked what information on the website was the most popular. Caroline Binnie advised that school holiday information was very popular as was information on Home Spot. Further, there were areas which had spikes in demand seasonally such as information on road gritting during winter.

Decision

The committee noted the report.