

FC48. FALKIRK COUNCIL BEST VALUE REPORT

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive setting out a proposed response to the Accounts Commission's findings in respect of the Best Value audit of Falkirk Council.

The Accounts Commission published its findings on 27 August 2015. Council was required to consider them within 3 months and to advise the Commission of its response.

Following a decision of Council on 18 September 2015 (ref FC40), the Provost, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition met with officers to prepare a draft Improvement Plan in response to the issues raised in the audit report and the findings thereon. The plan was appended to the report for consideration.

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Baillie Paterson, moved that having considered the findings set out in the report by the Accounts Commission which was published on 27 August 2015, Council agrees:-

- (1) to note the recognition by the Commission that the Council provides generally good services;
- (2) to acknowledge the need to find savings of c. £46m over the next 3 years as set out in more detail in the report on the revenue fund framework which is also under consideration at this meeting;
- (3) to adopt the Improvement Plan, as appended to the report;
- (4) that the terms of reference for the Cross Party Budget Working Group will be determined by the Group at its first meeting, with the composition of the Group being as follows;
 - (i) Labour Group - 3 members
 - (ii) SNP Group - 3 members
 - (iii) Conservative Group - 1 member
 - (iv) Non-Aligned Independent Group - 1 member
 - (v) Independent - 1 member
- (5) to the Leaders of the Council and the Opposition providing political leadership on the Business Transformation Board;
- (6) that a report on progress with the actions set out in the Improvement Plan will be submitted to Council in March 2016; and
- (7) to note that the review of Standing Orders currently underway will be the subject of a report to Council in December 2015.

Council then adjourned at 10.00a.m to allow members of the Opposition to consider the terms of the motion and reconvened at 10.20a.m. with members present as per the sederunt.

Following discussion Councillor Martin, with the consent of the Provost and Baillie Paterson, as his seconder, amended clause (3) of his motion to read:-

- (3) to adopt the Improvement Plan, as appended to the report, and note that there will be further discussion among the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition and the Provost regarding its planned implementation.

At this stage, Council also noted that the word “could” where it appeared in the third last line of the paragraph 5.1 of the report should read “will”.

As an amendment, Councillor Spears, seconded by Councillor McCabe, moved the terms of the motion subject to the insertion of “ a representative of the Non- Aligned Independent Group between the words ‘Opposition’ and ‘and’ in clause (3).

On a division 30 members voted for the motion and 2 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (30):- Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Baillies Buchanan and Paterson; Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Bird, Black, Blackwood, Carleschi, Chalmers, Coleman, Garner, D Goldie, G Goldie, Gow, Hughes, Jackson, MacDonald, McLuckie, Mahoney, Martin, C R Martin, Meiklejohn, Murray, Nicol, Nimmo, Oliver, Ritchie and Turner.

For the amendment (2):- Councillors McCabe and Spears.

Decision

Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the recognition by the Commission that the Council provides generally good services;**
- (2) to acknowledge the need to find savings of c. £46m over the next 3 years as set out in more detail in the report on the revenue fund framework which is also under consideration at this meeting;**
- (3) to adopt the Improvement Plan, as appended to the report, and note that there will be further discussion among the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition and the Provost regarding its planned implementation.**
- (4) that the terms of reference for the Cross Party Budget Working Group will be determined by the Group at its first meeting, with the composition of the Group being as follows;**
 - (i) Labour Group - 3 members**
 - (ii) SNP Group - 3 members**
 - (iii) Conservative Group - 1 member**
 - (iv) Non-Aligned Independent Group - 1 member**
 - (v) Independent - 1 member**
- (5) to the Leaders of the Council and the Opposition providing political leadership on the Business Transformation Board;**
- (6) that a report on progress with the actions set out in the Improvement Plan will be submitted to Council in March 2016; and**
- (7) to note that the review of Standing Orders currently underway will be the subject of a report to Council in December 2015.**