

The background of the slide is the coat of arms of the City of Vancouver. It features a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a city skyline with a prominent tower. The top-right quadrant depicts a stag's head with large antlers. The bottom-left quadrant shows a three-masted sailing ship on the water. The bottom-right quadrant features a grizzly bear standing on its hind legs. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom contains the motto in Gaelic.

AGENDA ITEM

3

MINUTE

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (EXTERNAL) held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 7 JANUARY 2016 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

David Balfour
Gordon Hughes
Steven Jackson (Convener)
Charles MacDonald
Brian McCabe
Depute Provost John Patrick

OFFICERS:

Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology & Improvement
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
Gary Greenhorn, Head of Planning & Resources
Iain Henderson, Legal Services Manager
Mark Meechan, Community Learning & Development Manager
Andrew Wilson, Policy & Community Planning Manager

ALSO ATTENDING:

Chief Inspector Damian Armstrong, Police Scotland
Detective Superintendent David Gordon, Police Scotland
Detective Chief Inspector Wilson Gill, Police Scotland
Chief Superintendent John Hawkins, Police Scotland
Inspector Amy McGregor, Police Scotland
Detective Chief Inspector Laura McLuckie, Police Scotland
Superintendent Mandy Paterson, Police Scotland

SE20. APOLOGIES

An apology was received on behalf of Councillor Murray.

SE21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SE22. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (External) held on 12 November 2015 was approved.

Councillor Hughes entered the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

SE23. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND 2014/15 MONITORING REPORT – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding to provide services to children and young people and who fall within the Following the Public Pound (FPP) reporting and monitoring arrangements. Gary Greenhorn provided an overview of the report.

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

(a) Denny Community Support Project

Mark Meechan provided an overview of the report, advising that Denny Community Support Project received a direct grant of £29,250 in the period and a grant of £22,000 from the Community Safety Partnership.

The committee discussed the monitoring of organisations within FPP and the role of joint working agreements. Mark Meechan advised that joint working agreements were developed through negotiation with funded organisations and provided an understanding of actions which would be taken along with outcomes which should be achieved. In response to a question on the structure of monitoring, Mark Meechan advised that there were monitoring officers who were responsible to their normal line managers and directorate. He stated that monitoring was also achieved through the presentation of reports to the committee and auditors, while voluntary organisations of a charity nature also submitted their accounts to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Fiona Campbell advised that all monitoring officers were provided with a risk assessment framework which informed the risk rating which is then presented in the reports to committee. Further, the budget process includes a review of external funding and makes recommendations.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by Denny Community Support Project in meeting Council priorities.

(b) Dennyloanhead Community Project

Mark Meechan provided an overview of the report, advising that Dennyloanhead Community Project had received £12,561 of Council funding in the reporting period.

The committee asked about digital learning opportunities and who had benefited. Mark Meechan highlighted, as an example of those accessing the courses, that the volunteers and parents who ran the playgroup had used a number of other classes at the project. Further, a number of parents from the playgroup had enrolled their older children in other classes.

Members asked about the accreditation available through courses at the project. Mark Meechan stated that there was an SQA qualification available for IT but that it required completion of ten, one hour units which was not what the learners wanted as it was too much of a time commitment. For young people he advised that the Duke of Edinburgh and Saltire Awards were available.

The committee asked about the provision for older people and what IT courses they accessed. Mark Meechan advised that older people were welcome to participate in any class and that there had been demand for an iPad training course. This had been offered at the Wider Access to School Project.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by Dennyloanhead Community Project in meeting Council priorities.

(c) The Powerstation

Mark Meechan provided an overview of the report, advising that The Powerstation received £10,620 of Council funding and £3,500 of in-kind support in the reporting period.

The committee asked for information on the role of community education workers in supporting the project. Mark Meechan advised that there were three Community Learning and Development staff involved with the project, one had a specific focus on capacity building. There had been work undertaken with the management committee which had developed specific skills. The organisation had received funding from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for a period of three years to train a local person to be a community worker which would build community capacity. The funding would be on stream in early 2016.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by The Powerstation in meeting Council priorities.

(d) Workers Education Association

Mark Meechan provided an overview of the report, advising that the Workers Education Association received £49,635 of Council funding and £8,000 of in-kind support for the reporting period.

Members asked about lifelong learning and if the skills developed in adult literacy were found to benefit others and spread through communities. Mark Meechan stated that there was improved confidence in a community where adult literacy improved and that more people were able to participate more widely. He highlighted direct benefits such as the ability to participate in a child's homework and having more confidence in dealing with banks and utility bills.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by Workers Education Association in meeting Council priorities.

(e) Dobbie Hall Trust

Mark Meechan provided an overview of the report, advising that Dobbie Hall trust received £14,356 of Council funding for the reporting period.

The committee asked for further information on the repair works required to the fabric of the building. Gary Greenhorn stated that officers from Children's Services and Development Services were looking at the issue to identify costs. It would cost approximately £200,000 to make the building wind and water right. Therefore the service was working to identify priority areas of work to best utilise the £60,000 which was initially available from the capital programme. Further, the service was working to identify external funds to assist in the repair works due to the historical importance of the building.

Members asked if the most recent accounts for the organisation had been audited. Gary Greenhorn stated that many organisations did not hold their annual general meetings until August and September and that the accounts would be provided to the Council subsequent to this.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by Dobbie Hall Trust in meeting Council priorities.

(f) CVS Falkirk & District

Andrew Wilson provided an overview of the report, advising that CVS Falkirk & District received £113,748 of Council funding for the reporting period.

The committee asked for further information on the decrease to Trading Income. Andrew Wilson advised that he did not have further information available but that the Chief Executive had put in place measures to focus on the organisations core activities and funds were aligned to that. The Council was satisfied with the reserves position of the organisation.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by CVS Falkirk & District in meeting Council priorities.

SE24. POLICE SCOTLAND – FALKIRK AREA COMMAND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing as an appendix the local police performance report by the Local Commander.

Local Commanders are required, in terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, to report performance of local policing as measured against the Local Policing Plan and to provide information about complaints against the police or in regard to policing.

The committee received a presentation by Detective Superintendent David Gordon, Detective Chief Inspector Wilson Gill and Detective Chief Inspector Laura McLuckie providing information on the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) – Forth Valley Division. The presentation covered the aims of the department; the service structure; CID operations, and the public protection unit.

The committee thanked the officers for their presentation and commented on the positive work which had been undertaken by CID locally.

Chief Superintendent John Hawkins then provided the committee with an overview of the Falkirk Policing Performance Scrutiny Report for 1 April to 30 September 2015.

The committee discussed the role of ward based officers and commented that they had made positive contributions including regular attendance of community councils. Members also discussed the role of schools based police officers. Mandy Paterson stated that a new model for ward officers had been introduced. Officers who were well known in local areas had been selected and where there were officers who were less well known meet and greet sessions had been put on. Police Scotland was keen that there would be consistent representation at community events and that people would get to know all levels of management in communities. John Hawkins advised that the changes to the model had been brought in as officers desired more clarity on their role and time dedicated for community work.

Members discussed counter terrorism and asked if this area was overseen nationally. John Hawkins stated that counter terrorism was an area where the benefit of a national service delivered locally was seen as there was national command but with local officers involved in delivery. Further, he highlighted the CONTEST strategy and that additional information could be provided to members if desired.

The committee discussed the enforcement of parking restrictions at schools. Mandy Paterson advised that the issue had been raised on multiple occasions but that there were not sufficient resources to attend all schools during peak times. She stated that where officers had issued warnings drivers had taken notice of these and that when officers were present restrictions would be enforced. However, she stated that enforcement was not the long term answer and that a change of culture was required to modify behaviours. The police were looking to work with Falkirk Community Trust and Children's Services to encourage more people to walk to school.

Members asked if the use of mobile speed indicator signs could be increased as they were felt to be an effective tool in combating speeding. Mandy Paterson stated that it would be looked at and that such signs had previously been used in Bainsford.

The committee asked if any of the reported deaths relating to drug use were due to the use of legal highs. Mandy Paterson advised that there were no confirmed instances but that one of the deaths may have been related to the use of legal highs. She advised that in most cases deaths relating to drug use were the result of a lifestyle of abuse and that multiple substances were involved. She commented that there was a belief that there was an increased number of hospital admissions relating to the use of legal highs and that in other Council areas there had been a rise of violence associated with legal highs. Fiona Campbell stated that the Falkirk Drug & Alcohol Partnership would provide further information on legal highs to members in the future.

Decision

The committee noted the report.