

AC42. BEST VALUE AUDIT 2014/15

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services setting out how Council will address issues arising from Audit Scotland's best value review of Falkirk Council.

The controller of Audit published his findings following a best value audit review of Falkirk Council by Audit Scotland.

Council considered a report on the review and findings on 7 October 2015 and agreed an Improvement Plan to address the issues raised in the audit. Council also agreed that there will be further discussion between the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition and the Provost regarding its implementation and agreed to receive a report on progress with the actions set out in the plan in March 2016.

The committee discussed the Business Transformation Board and the review of Standing Orders. The Director of Corporate and Housing Services confirmed that the Board had met once since Council on 7 October and that the minutes of its meetings would be submitted to the Budget Working Group. Members stressed the need for the review of Standing Orders to be completed by 31 March 2016. The committee discussed the role of members in decision making, stating that input and involvement should be at an early stage. The Chief Executive acknowledged the point, highlighting the purpose of policy development panels and scrutiny panels as examples of early member involvement in the decision making process.

The committee discussed the Improvement Plan. The convener stated that the Audit Committee would monitor its progress and have regard to any slippage. The committee discussed the recommendation from Audit Scotland that the Performance Panel should meet in public. Council had not agreed with this and meetings will be held in private although the agendas and papers will be available online. Following a discussion on this, the Chief Executive stated that Council had made its decision following debate and there was cross party support on this.

Following a question, the Chief Executive stated that she was unaware of formal protocols in regard to MSPs/MPs corresponding with elected members. However, this would be clarified. The committee then discussed training for elected members and questioned whether training in regard to scrutinising performance should be mandatory of all members. The Director of Corporate and Housing Services confirmed that training would shortly be provided for this but there had been no directive from elected members that participation should be mandatory.

Decision

The committee noted the report.