

EX23. Falkirk Community Trust Policy Development Panel – Interim Conclusions

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting interim conclusions from the policy development panel which had been reviewing Falkirk Community Trust.

On 17 March 2015, the Executive established a policy development panel to review Falkirk Community Trust (ref EX138). The remit of the panel was to review:-

- the original intention of establishing the Trust and whether those objectives and expectations have been realised;
- what has been achieved since its establishment in terms of service performance;
- governance, monitoring and relationships with the Trust as a charitable company limited by guarantee;
- financial performance and risk management issues, and
- where relevant, how other Councils manage their relationships with similar arm's length independent bodies.

The report set out the work of the panel to date and the areas considered as part of its work plan. The panel's findings in regard to governance, communication and engagement and service delivery were summarised.

The panel had identified areas for further discussion with the Trust and had recommended that these be facilitated by an external and independent party. The areas for further discussion are:-

- Governance
- Increasing external funding and income
- Accountability and responsibility for the Trust to the Council
- Engagement with the community and stakeholders
- Vision and planning for services over the coming years

During the discussion, Councillors D Goldie and Spears both declared a non-financial interest in the item as Directors of the Trust but did not consider that this required them to recuse themselves from the meeting having had regard to the specific exclusion in the Code of Conduct.

On 16 December 2015, Council had agreed to extend the remit of the panel to co-ordinate a strategic assessment of the Trust and Council's asset portfolio and requested that the panel complete this work by the end of August 2016(ref FC69). To accommodate the submission of its interim findings, the panel had agreed to take forward this further phase of its work with a view to reporting to the Executive on it, and on the outcome of the facilitated discussions, in the autumn.

Decision

The Executive agreed:

- (1) to note the interim findings of the policy development panel;**
- (2) that the panel will engage with Falkirk Community Trust on the issues arising from its work as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report;**
- (3) to the appointment of external and independent support for the panel in taking forward discussions with the Trust, and**
- (4) that the panel will report back in autumn 2016 on those discussions along with its findings as per the Council decision in December 2015.**