

## **SE20. Following the Public Pound: Falkirk Community Trust**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing an update on services provided by Falkirk Community Trust on behalf of the Council and which are reported under the following the Public Pound reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The report covered the reporting period, 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, and provided performance information in regard to 27 performance indicators.

The Trust General Manager gave an overview of services provided, performance, together with a summary of notable achievements.

Following questions in regard to the programming of events at the Bo'ness Hippodrome and the cost of family events the committee discussed performance issues. In response to a question on library provision, Mr Brown confirmed that use of libraries was increasing. Conversely he confirmed that uptake on the Kelpies tours had decreased compared to the previous year. This had been anticipated however, with an understanding that the tour would be, for many, a onetime experience. Overall income at the Helix had increased with income of approximately £1m generated from the visitor centre. In regard to the Kelpies, the Trust was working with Scottish Canals to develop joint ventures at the Kelpies.

The committee noted that the Trust had secured £1m from external sources. However, given that one of the reasons for establishing the Trust was that an ALEO would be better able to attract funding, members asked if the Trust planned to attract more in 2019/20. Mr Brown stated that each year the Trust constantly attracted £850,000 to £1m from external sources. He stated that the external funders themselves faced financial constraints and as such, the aim of the Trust was to generate income.

The committee discussed the plans for the Trust to stage a professional pantomime at Falkirk Town Hall in 2018 and sought assurance that where amateur local groups had been inconvenienced, suitable alternative arrangements had been put in place. The committee also sought similar assurance in regard to Stenhousemuir Gymnastic Club. The committee then discussed the Trust's plan for the Kinneil Estate and Kinneil House in particular. Ms O'Hare confirmed that there was a master plan in place in regard to developing Kinneil Estate. She stated that significant funding with regard to developing Kinneil House into a tourist attraction for public use. Any projects would require significant capital investment. In regard to the Estate, Historic Environment Scotland had secured significant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £500,000, £400,000 of which would be used for projects along the Antonine Wall.

The committee then highlighted local issues in Bo'ness and Grangemouth which Mr Brown undertook to look at.

Members noted the recent improvement programmes at the Mariner Centre and asked Mr Brown to detail future investment plans at Bo'ness Recreation Centre. In response, Mr Brown referred to recent improvement work in regard to the pitches, flood lights and chimney and in response to a suggestion that it had not received its 'share' of funding citing the Mariner Centre Soft Play Project.

Mr Brown stated that the Mariner Centre was in the better location for a higher return of investment and that pro rata, Bo'ness Recreation Centre received its fair share of maintenance funding. It did however require significant investment in plant and equipment.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by the Trust in meeting Council's priorities.**