

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the Coat of Arms of the City of Edinburgh. The crest is a shield divided into four quarters. The top-left quarter shows a castle tower. The top-right quarter shows a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quarter shows a sailing ship on the water. The bottom-right quarter shows a lion passant guardant. Above the shield is a crown with four fleurs-de-lis. A ribbon scrolls across the bottom of the shield with the motto 'AENE FOR A'.

# **Agenda Item 3**

## **Minutes**

Draft

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 13 December 2018 at 11.00 am.**

**Councillors:** David Balfour  
Lorna Binnie  
Allyson Black  
Jim Blackwood  
Niall Coleman  
Lynn Munro (Convener)

**Officers:** Carl Bullough, Head of Environmental Services  
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement  
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager

**S22. Apologies**

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor Reid.

**S23. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

**S24. Minutes**

**Decision**

- (a) The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 September 2018 was approved; and**
- (b) The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 18 October 2018 was noted.**

Following discussion of the minute the committee agreed to consider further, at a later date, the outcomes of the review of looked after children (including the closer to home project); Children's Services' processes for engaging with employees and pupils, and the outcomes to date of the Pupil Equity Fund. The committee therefore requested that reports on each area be submitted in due course to allow scrutiny of each.

## **S25. Rolling Action Log**

A rolling action log detailing the status of actions which had yet to be completed was presented for consideration.

### **Decision**

**The committee noted the Rolling Action Log and agreed to delete actions 412, 413, 447 and 448 from the log.**

## **S26. Report of the Fly Tipping Scrutiny Panel**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting the report and recommendations of the scrutiny panel review of fly tipping.

Councillor Black, as convener of the panel, summarised the work of the panel and highlighted the key recommendations of the panel. Councillor Black thanked the officers who had supported the panel and praised the members of the panel, Councillor Coleman and Patrick for their commitment and contribution to the review. In addition Councillor Black thanked the contribution from community groups, such as Communities along the Carron, Grangemouth Litter Team and partner organisations (Zero Waste Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful) to the panel's work. She also recognised the valuable insight provided by officers from North Ayrshire Council and West Lothian Council who had provided overviews of their respective approaches to dealing with fly tipping.

The panel's recommendations were that:

- the Council undertakes comprehensive review of the cost and charging for fly-tipping to ensure the Council is covering all costs including disposal. This in turn should inform charges for removing fly tipping which should be at full cost recovery and include an additional fine.
- residents, including tenants, are reminded of their obligations to dispose of rubbish and waste appropriately. For tenants this could be achieved through reminders of their tenancy obligations under the housing tenancy agreement, particularly those who live in flats. The issue of supporting tenants needed to be considered along with how we deal with fly tipping in urban areas. This issue to be considered jointly by Development Services and Housing.
- a report is presented to a future Executive on the potential for establishing a trusted trader's scheme taking account of the discussions that took place within the panel.

- officers review access to the civic amenity centre to ensure it was available to those who required to use it, that people could pay, was where appropriate, at the site, that budget options were understood in terms of their consequences on small businesses, people without transport etc.
- officers review enforcement, the fee structure and bulky uplifts policy to encourage public to use this in conjunction with the civic amenity site and report back to the Executive on this in due course. This should include an approach to education, advice and support for community organisations, younger people, tenants including private sector and for small traders.
- Council adopts a 'one Council' approach to fly tipping. This would include utilising My Falkirk as the platform for reporting and managing the service. In addition, it was recommended that there is a review of management of the various elements of service into one designated team and this is reported back to the Executive in due course.
- officers investigate and report back on establishing a freecycle/reuse scheme for items of furniture etc., to be developed in conjunction with the 3rd sector.
- Council reviews its engagement with the communities to enable them to support the Council in tackling fly-tipping and general litter picks.
- there is an update on progress on the recommendations made above to scrutiny committee at six months and then a year following the Executive's consideration of this report.

Councillor Black commended the recommendations highlighting in particular the recommendations that the Council investigate the setting up of a Freecycling scheme for furniture and carpets, and that the Council adopt a 'one Council' approach to tackling Fly Tipping backed by visible enforcement.

Members of the committee thanked the panel for its work and commended the report. The committee then asked a number of questions in regard to the recommendations.

In regard to the process for alerting the Council to instances of fly tipping and the Council's subsequent response to deal with the waste. Carl Bullough, Head of Environmental Services stated that currently there were multiple points of access to the Council and the Council's processes for dealing with waste were not joined up. The Council did work with community groups and offered support and materials. However again this was fragmented.

In response to a question Councillor Black confirmed that the panel had considered the difficulties faced by the Council in engaging with private land owners. However the general recommendation that they adopt a One Council approach to fly tipping encompassed issues concerning private land owners.

The recommendations, Councillor Black stated, pointed officers to areas of concern and provided an opportunity to review all factors. If agreed then service would be tasked with identifying solutions and reporting these back to the Executive. The panel had also recommended that update reports be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

Members discussed the potential to introduce a furniture and carpet Freecycle scheme. Again Councillor Black stated that the panel had proposed this in order to allow further, detailed, consideration. It did not have a fixed idea of a model although it had considered that while supported by the Council any scheme would be run by the voluntary sector. Although there were practical issues, such as health and safety and the viability of such a venture, the committee fully endorsed the proposal.

The committee discussed the recommendation that fees and charges at the Waste Recycling Centres (WRC) be reviewed. There was a balance between the cost of permits for traders, uptake of permits and of fly tipping if the cost was prohibitively expensive. Councillor Black agreed but stressed that it was important that a balance was struck so that traders used the WRC. She highlighted the proposal that the Council consider introducing a 'trusted trader' scheme. This would give the public confidence that waste would be disposed of correctly and could include benefits for the traders.

Members of the committee highlighted examples of community based initiatives, such as litter picks and commended the panel's recommendations that the Council structures itself to engage with and support community groups.

## **Decision**

**Agreed the recommendations from the scrutiny panel review of fly tipping and to refer the recommendations to the Executive.**

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Minute of Meeting of the Performance Panel held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 13 December 2018 at 9.30 am.**

**Core Members:** David Balfour  
Niall Coleman  
Lynn Munro (Convener)  
Pat Reid

**Members Attending:** David Alexander  
Gary Bouse  
David Grant  
Laura Murtagh  
Depute Provost Ann Ritchie

**Officers:** Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology & Improvement  
Lorna Chisholm, Benefits Manager  
Paul Ferguson, Revenue Manager  
Kenny Gillespie, Head of Housing  
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager  
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services

**PP19. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**PP20. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

**PP21. Minute**

**Decision**

**The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 18 October 2018 was approved.**

## **PP22. Meeting Dates 2019**

The panel considered a report by the Director of Corporate & Housing Services setting out a draft meeting timetable and reporting schedule for 2019

### **Decision**

**The panel agreed the timetable and reporting schedule below for 2019:-**

<b>Service Reporting</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>
<b>Development Services</b>	<b>14 February</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>18 April</b>
<b>Corporate &amp; Housing Services</b>	<b>20 June</b>
<b>Development Services</b>	<b>22 August</b>
<b>Children' Services</b>	<b>16 October</b>
<b>Corporate &amp; Housing Services</b>	<b>5 December</b>

## **PP23. Corporate & Housing Services Performance Update April 2018 - October 2018**

The panel considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services setting out a summary of performance for the period April 2018 to October 2018. The Director of Corporate and Housing Services provided an overview of the report.

The report provided information on:-

- significant challenges and changes in Service pressures since the last Performance Panel update, and
- an update on relevant underpinning strategies, i.e. workforce strategy, medium term financial strategy, and digital/technology strategy.

The Director of Corporate and Housing Services provided an update on the following work streams:-

- Equal Pay
- Cyber attacks and Cyber crimes
- Revenue Budget
- GDPR
- Universal Credit

He also gave an update on the following strategies;

- Workforce Strategy
- Council of the Future Change Programme

- Procurement Strategy
- Digital / Technology Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23

Following a question in regard to the digital strand of the Council of the Future project, in regard, in particular, to resilience the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement explained that the Council was, as a priority, refreshing its approach to the security of its technology infrastructure. The work would include developing clear guidance on the security of the network and would look at resilience. In regard to a proposal that technology should be employed, on the occasion of severe weather for example, to enable members and officers to attend committee meetings remotely, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement indicated that this was being explored by both IT. There were, in addition to technological consideration questions around the Council's governance arrangements and duties. The introduction of public Wi-Fi and collaborative technology, such as Microsoft 365, would assist remote attendance at informal meetings but for committee meetings further exploration was required. Members that there were technical, security and cost issues but suggested that any system to support remote attendance need not be perfect but sufficiently robust.

Following a question on the Council's budget gap, the Director of Corporate and Housing Services stated that the detail of the Local Government Finance Settlement was currently being worked through and as such the impact on the gap was not yet known.

The panel then discussed the roll out of Universal Credit. The Director confirmed, in response to a question, that there had been an increase in debt since the introduction of full service Universal Credit in March 2018. This had not been unexpected and staff had sought to make individual contact with individuals to support them manage their debt. There were approximately 170 cases attributable to Universal Credit.

Members praised the publication of the Council's first Annual Procurement Report, for 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2018, on the Council's website. Members sought assurance that local suppliers were able to tender for the delivery of supplies and services. The Director confirmed that guidance required, in the case of Quick Quotes, that at least one local supplier was considered as part of the procurement process. Mr Ritchie explained that the Service hosted a buyer's event twice a year to promote Falkirk Council and the wider local government family. He acknowledged that Scotland Excel supported the use of local suppliers where appropriate.

The panel then considered the performance statement, appendix 2.

In regard to action 02.04.CHS17 (prioritise disadvantaged communities when it comes to designing and delivering services) and the progress made in regard to the introduction of advice Hubs, the Head of Policy, Technology



and Improvement gave feedback on dialogue with the staff at the Stenhousemuir One Stop Shop on its closure and on the outreach structure which would be implemented. In addition Ms Campbell summarised the discussion with service users on their preferred local Services for outreach. There had been discussion with staff on the closure but following comments that anxiety remained amongst some staff Ms Campbell undertook to ensure that information was cascaded to all employees.

Ms Campbell also undertook to provide all elected members with an update on where discussions were in regard to the introduction of the three hubs and outreach provision.

In regard to 02.06.CHS17 (define basic standards of living) members highlighted that the work was behind target. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement responded that this was because a refreshed Anti Poverty Strategy had yet to be finalised. It was anticipated that this would be delivered shortly as work on the definition of 'standard of living' had now been completed.

The panel sought an update on the status of 05.01.CHS (review our approach to CCTV, safer streets etc.), in particular in regard to the provision of CCTV. The Director explained that 2 pieces of work were ongoing in regard to CCTV. Locally, the Council was in dialogue with Police Scotland in regard to local provision and how this would be funded, nationally. The Scottish Government was leading discussion on the future provision of CCTV and how the provision of digital CCTV recording would be funded.

In regard to the status of 06.01.CHS17 (develop a common approach to co-production that supports service redesign) the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement explained that work was behind the original schedule. Ms Campbell explained that while the original timetable had been realistic factors such as the Local Governance Review, which hadn't been announced at the time, had impacted on work streams and consequently the work was behind the original schedule.

The Director explained, in response to a comment on the information provided in regard to 10.01.CHS17 (rejuvenate our town centres honouring that they are both attractive and resilient to challenges and change) that the detail would be included in the Development Services performance statement and the information within the report reflected Corporate and Housing Service's contribution to the work streams.

The panel returned to the introduction of Universal Credit. Members highlighted that often poverty was hidden and that this was caused to some extent by a perceived stigma attached to being in poverty. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement concurred and summarised the various work streams aimed at identifying and reaching out to the hard to reach within our communities.

In response to a question on funding for the home energy scheme, the Head of Housing confirmed that the funding had been specifically allocated for private housing. As the uptake had been less than anticipated officers would investigate whether the funding could be utilised for council housing although this was unlikely. At the same time officers would look to persuade private homeowners to take advantage of the funding.

In regard a suggestion that the uptake of 43% in Combined Heating and Power scheme the Head of Housing noted that this was similar to the uptake for a previous scheme.

In regard to 11.01CHS17 (develop a younger people's housing plan) the Head of Housing provided an update on the work to date noting that a review of service provisions was underway. In regard to older people, Mr Gillespie summarised joint work with other Council services and the Integration Joint Board to provide dementia friendly accommodation.

The panel then considered the performance information measured against important indicators (appendix 3)

Following a question on absence within the Building Maintenance Division the Head of Housing stated that only a very low percentage was due to accidents and undertook to provide information to members.

In regard to indicator GGV6 (a) Gross Rent Arrears - members drew a link between arrears and the introduction of Universal Credit and questioned whether this had led to an increase in rent arrears.

The panel discussed GGV6 – percentage of rent cost through properties being empty during the last year. Currently this was 1.07% against a target of 0.9%. The Head of Housing explained that in part this was due to an increase in low demand property. In addition there had been an increase in the number of repairs required in void properties which impacts on the let of the property. The figure also reflected seasonal demand, and would flatten to year end.

## **Decision**

**The Performance Panel noted the performance of Corporate and Housing Services over the period April 2018 – October 2018.**