

**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.**