

FC23. Falkirk Council/Falkirk Community Trust Joint Working in Culture & Sports Provision

Councillor Coleman declared a non-financial interest in item FC23 as a Director of Falkirk Community Trust, but did not consider that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item, having regard to the specific exclusions contained in the Code of Conduct.

Councillor Spears left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive providing an update on the joint working activity between the Council and Falkirk Community Trust (FCT) and proposing a range of measures to sustain and improve culture and sport provision within Falkirk. The report would be used as a framework by the Joint Working Group to develop a five year investment and savings plan. The plan would describe in detail the actions required to complement the Council's Five Year Business Plan and Strategic Property Review (SPR). Including:-

- high level proposals for investment in key Trust managed sites to sustain and develop a high standard of culture and sport provision;
- outline proposals from interested parties willing to contribute to joint or sole management or transfer of existing Trust facilities along with an assessment of deliverability and timescale, and
- specific proposals for asset rationalisation for approval by the Council aligned with its implementation of the SPR.

A Joint Working Group consisting of elected members, representatives from the Trust Board and officers had undertaken work to establish a shared vision and high level outcomes between the Council and the Trust which was reported to Council at its meeting on 5 December 2018. Council agreed the joint vision document and an interim work plan based on 5 core tasks.

The most critical element was to take forward joint medium term business planning to help identify a savings and investment plan for the next five years and this was supported by a Joint Medium Term Business Planning Group consisting of officers from both the Council and the FCT.

Linkages with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Strategic Plan and transformational change programme also shaped the policy context. Successful joint working between the Trust and HSCP was evidenced around the shared strategic agenda. The related resource implications were at an early stage of development, but the commitment and contribution of the HSCP to the programme was of fundamental importance. The work was expected to make a positive contribution to addressing the health improvement plan and assist the Trust in developing its focus for future work in the area.

The conclusions from the Joint Working Group related to:-

- investing in and retaining core Culture and Sport assets that can function with a significantly reduced level of funding from Falkirk Council and meet customer needs;
- focusing on the secondary school estate and investing in these as core community leisure assets;
- encourage community management input where the asset condition is suitable;
- facilities that would no longer be operational in their current form;
- approach to future library provision, and consultation.

Councillor Meiklejohn, seconded by Councillor Garner, moved that Council:-

- (1) acknowledges the positive collaboration that has taken place between the Council and the Trust in this work and welcomes that this is an investment strategy;
- (2) agrees that there is a need to invest in and retain culture, leisure and sport assets that can function with significantly reduced level of funding from Falkirk Council and meet customer needs;
- (3) agrees the investment proposals outlined in this report, with additions as detailed below, to be developed further for inclusion within the Trust business plan to be submitted in November 2019;
- (4) agrees a programme of work to be undertaken to identify adaptation and improvement requirements at secondary schools to facilitate improved community access;
- (5) agrees that specific development proposals are taken forward to identify proposals to enhance community leisure provision and access to Bo'ness Academy;
- (6) agrees that further work be undertaken to assess these proposals in the context of the Council's Capital investment plans;
- (7) notes the proposals to continue to engage with clubs and groups interested in increasing their role in managing assets, including Denny Football Centre and Hall Glen Sports Centre and work with these groups to prepare a forward program;
- (8) agrees to remove Denny Sport Centre from potential closure proposals;
- (9) notes the intention to develop proposals in relation to future library provision, specifically retaining Bo'ness and Grangemouth libraries in a town centre location, recognising their key role to support the 'town centre first' principle and regeneration;
- (10) notes the Trust's Business Plan will be predicated on the delivery of proposals, and

(11) notes no decisions will be made until full business case is presented to council for members to agree.

Councillor Patrick declared the financial interest of a family member in item FC23 as an employee of Falkirk Community Trust but stated that he did not consider that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item, as the interest was so remote that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

Council adjourned at 10.45am and reconvened at 11.05am with all members present as per the sederunt with the exception of Councillor Spears.

Councillor Bissett, seconded by Councillor Nimmo, moved, as an amendment, that Council:-

- (1) agrees to delay any further implementation of these proposals, until full engagement and consultation takes place, with communities, stakeholders and national bodies;
- (2) recognises that some areas will be impacted adversely and the potential cumulative effect on these communities needs further exploration, and
- (3) asks the Chief Executive to bring forward a report by the end of September.

Councillor Bouse declared a non-financial interest in item FC23 as a Director of the Dobbie Hall Trust, but did not consider that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item, having regard to the specific exclusions contained in the Code of Conduct.

At this point Councillor Spears re-joined the meeting.

In terms of Standing Order 22.1, the vote was taken by roll call, there being 26 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (12) –.Depute Provost Ritchie; and Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Binnie, Bouse, Coleman, Collie, Garner, Hughes, Meiklejohn, Murtagh and Spears.

For the amendment (14) – Provost Buchanan; and Councillors Aitchison, Bissett, Black, Blackwood, Coombes, Flynn, Grant, Harris, McLuckie, Munro, Nimmo, Patrick and Reid.

Decision

Council agreed the amendment.