

EX5. Enabled Communities – renewal following COVID 19

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services about how to build on the empowered and informed community foundation that had emerged during the current situation to fundamentally change the relationship the Council had with its Communities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Council had worked in partnership with a large number of third sector organisations, alongside CVS Falkirk who took a liaison role. Partnership working enabled food, medicines and other essential support to be provided within communities.

During the pandemic there was a different relationship with communities and the third sector that the Service wanted to retain and build on going forward. This would further develop resilience and capacity within communities to address issues alongside the public sector and to support individuals through difficult life experiences. The Carnegie Trust's Building Back Better report encouraged government to take responsibility to use what had been learned not just to repair the immediate damage but to also consider if its economic, social and democratic structures were fit for the future.

During the pandemic the Council behaved as an enabling state by:-

- Stepping back, listening to and supporting community led action;
- Working with already mobilised community organisers and leaders to jointly develop and coordinate community support;
- Not directing how support was developed;
- Working differently with CVS Falkirk to make and maintain connections and communications with communities;
- Providing professional guidance and expertise as needed;
- Providing simple quick access to financial support for the third sector;
- Facilitating a multi-sector Co-ordination Group to solve problems rather than overseeing strategies;
- Creating a valuable information and referral point between public and third sector services.

Community participation was not an activity or an aim of the Falkirk Plan, but a foundational building block and approach that was necessary to achieve positives change. The community engagement work in the third sector would be communicated and co-ordinated through CVS Falkirk.

Information on the development of the Council's Community Choices framework was provided as an appendix to the report.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) recognised the vital role that Communities have undertaken to support people throughout the COVID-19 situation;**
- (2) agreed that the Council should change its ways of working with Falkirk's communities: engaging with communities in a more empowering and collaborative relationship and offering enabling support to build community leadership, and**
- (3) agreed the recommendations set out in regard to Community Choices in appendix 1 to the report, including the framework for implementing Community Choices.**