Agenda Item 5 **The Corporate Plan** 2020-2022 - Enterprise

Falkirk Council

Title: The Corporate Plan 2020-2022 - Enterprise

Meeting: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28 January 2020

Submitted By: Director of Corporate and Housing Services/Acting Director

of Development Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the refocus of the Council's priorities included in the new Corporate Plan covering the period 2020 2022 and approved by Council on 30 September 2020. The new priorities are Communities, Enterprise and Innovation. This report provides performance information on the Enterprise priority of the Corporate Plan for the period December 2019-20. It is noted that in some instances the supply of performance information has been delayed as a result of the Covid-19 situation.
- 1.2 Reports on innovation and communities will follow at future meetings.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee considers the performance of the Council against the priority of Enterprise within the Corporate Plan.

3. Background

- 3.1 Reporting the Corporate Plan as One Council provides an overview of the impact our actions are making and identifies where improvement is required while working towards each of the three priorities.
- 3.2 This is the second report which considers the revised Corporate Plan Priorities, and provides a summary of actions Services have been taking to deliver on our Enterprise priority.
- 3.3 The Enterprise priority relates to the following topics:
 - Investment Zone
 - Economic Recovery
 - Employability
 - Inclusive Growth

- Climate Change
- 3.4 Our Corporate Plan priorities will be delivered through our Council of the Future change programme and business as usual activities. The key Council of the Future projects within the Enterprise priority aim to:
 - Support a sustainable economic recovery,
 - Revitalise our town centres
 - Enable a transition to a low carbon economy
 - Promote sustainable transport
 - Assist people to retrain and
 - Work with young people to develop their skills to access employment.

4. Update

4.1 The summary below provides a brief narrative for the actions being undertaken within each of the Enterprise priorities:

Supporting sustainable economic recovery that benefits everyone

4.2 Economic Recovery

The impact of Covid-19 on the national and local economy continues to be experienced and further effects can be anticipated as its consequences are experienced across all parts of the economy. Actions in response to the pandemic, have been triggered by UK and Scottish Governments and measures are being implemented by partners locally to ensure that businesses and the area's workforce are able to take advantage of the support on offer. Both governments emphasise their intention to 'build back better' post the pandemic with measures being promoted to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive recovery.

Work to finalise the economic recovery plan for the Falkirk economy was completed and agreed by the Council's Executive in September 2020 with a £1.2m financial support package agreed at the November 2020 meeting. The Council and its partners, via the Falkirk Economic Partnership are taking forward the actions detailed to manage the impact of Covid-19 on the area's economy. This work aligns fully with steps being taken to finalise the content of the Investment Zone Growth Deal package which will enable investment in significant infrastructure and related works to help transform the area's economy.

4.3 Business Gateway

The Council is the lead body for management of Business Gateway support for companies to start-up and grow in the Forth Valley area and delivers these services within the Falkirk area. In addition, it has responsibility to deliver enhanced services for business growth and digital support using EU and Scottish Government funding support. From April 2019 until December 2020, the Business Gateway service in Falkirk has helped the formation of 457 businesses. Since the pandemic, Business Gateway has been reactive to

business need and offers the service on-line. The number of interactions carried out increased significantly in relation to Scottish Government Covid-19 grant support. Business Gateway has developed a number of resources that are available on its website and national webinars enabled advisory support to local businesses. Since the pandemic Business Gateway Falkirk advisors, working with Finance Services staff have been instrumental in providing Scottish Government grant support to 2744 businesses in the Falkirk area, totalling £25.9m.

Falkirk Council is the lead local authority for Forth Valley, managing the Business Gateway contracts and an associated EU funded Business Competitiveness Programme since April 2016. Through these programmes we have delivered 356 interventions covering topics such as digital, environmental, finance, leadership and procurement. Additionally, the Council manages the Forth Valley Digital Boost programme with 347 businesses accessing digital expert support. Recently the Scottish Government announced a further £10m of grant support for businesses through the Digital Boost programme which was very quickly oversubscribed hours from going live.

The Council has awarded Falkirk Business Loan support to businesses in the Falkirk area totalling £30,000 covering the period April 2019 – December 2020.

4.4 Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

The TIF initiative is investing £67m in infrastructure to help stimulate development on 28 development sites across the Falkirk area. Since the Falkirk TIF project commenced in 2013, the TIF red line development sites have assisted the creation of 76,389sqm of new commercial floorspace, attracting new companies to the area, employing 1,400 people. By 2020, total infrastructure investment was of the order of £10m.

Members will be aware of the significant projects being undertaken/completed through the TIF initiative including:

- The upgrading of the A9/A904 corridor and Westfield Roundabout with construction work expected to commence in financial year 2021/22.
- Signal works at the M6 (Earlsgate) junction.
- Upgrading road network access at Icehouse Brae North

Additionally, discussions are taking place with Scottish Government over the funding of £28.7m required as a contribution to the A801(Avon Gorge) and Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme projects from within the TIF's projected income.

4.5 Falkirk Gateway

The marketing of the Falkirk Gateway sites concluded in 2019 with the appointment of Fintry Estates/Hargreaves as preferred developer. A report will be submitted later in 2021 to the Council's Executive recommending the next steps in the delivery of the project.

4.6 Tourism

In the period since 2009, tourism in Falkirk saw massive growth and its economic impact is significant. In 2019 the value to the economy was just under £137m, however the impact of Covid-19 travel restrictions on visitors nationally to this sector has been substantial. Independent national tourism performance analysis, through the annual 'STEAM' report, shows that from January to June 2020 the economic value of the Falkirk area tourism sector fell 28% below 2009 levels. The rate of contraction was 62% in the first 6 months of 2020 which wiped all sector growth and performance recorded in the last 10 years. This has had devastating results on businesses and employment in the sector. The Council continues to support businesses with funding and training to aid recovery. The table below highlights the significant downturn in Tourism.

Downturn in Falkirk area tourism : January – June 2020				
	2020 v 2019 Interim report	2020v2009	2019v2009	
Economic Impact	-62%	-28%	87%	
Direct Expenditure	-62%	N/A		
Visitor Numbers	-63%	-47%	44%	
Visitor Days	-51%	-38%	28%	
Employment	-43.2%	-27%	27%	

In addition to national business support grants being made available during the pandemic, Falkirk Council's Economic Recovery Plan continues to promote the area to local/national and overseas markets. Since March 2020 the Council has worked closely with a number of new businesses and existing tourism businesses to ensure information is available online and to take advantage of available business support.

Given Falkirk's central location, excellent visitor attractions, and a wide number of rural open spaces this will serve local tourism well when Covid-19 restrictions are finally eased. As a result of previous marketing campaigns, the Falkirk area remains very well known nationally and internationally thanks in part to the Kelpies and the Falkirk Wheel.

Continued social media promotion of the Falkirk area continues and online audiences have grown across all Visitfalkirk, our social media platforms. This has been supported by continued joint marketing and video promotional activity with VisitScotland who remain a key partner in promoting the Falkirk area. These have promoted outdoor activities, as well as promoting local food and drink businesses who have diversified into online and take away deliveries and the promotion of town centre Christmas activities.

To renew growth, continued investment in the area such as the town centre arts centre, Zetland Park investment and improving connectivity between attractions and the town centre will be important. Two opening of two new distilleries will assist with potential for renewed growth. The Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway are investing heavily to upgrade their facilities having recently received a Heritage Lottery Fund award. Proposed activity under the Investment Zone for 'Creating Great Places' will also be key to future recovery.

Use our procurement power to help rebuild the local economy and support sustainable local supply chains

4.7 The Council has recently launched the Procurement Strategy 2020 to 2023. The Strategy sets out its mission statement for procurement as follows:

"By striking a balance between cost, quality and sustainability, we endeavour to achieve value for money and deliver benefits through the implementation and management of contracts."

The Procurement Strategy directs and governs procurement activity across the Council to ensure appropriate and effective spending to deliver:

- Better public services
- Improved social, economic and environmental outcomes in the Falkirk Council area
- A range of local and national policies

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Procurement and Commissioning Unit (PCU) has been working to support services, businesses and providers to sustain critical and essential service provision to our communities. In particular, Procurement is supporting the Health and Social Care Partnership and their providers in their response to Covid-19,

This commitment is being facilitated by:

- Implementation to Homecare providers of fixed payments, to ensure providers are not financially disadvantaged as a consequence of their hours of care reducing due the impact of Covid-19.
- Block booking residential care home beds to ensure supply of bed spaces to meet hospital discharge and ensure these spaces are available to the Partnership.
- Implementation of COSLA's guidance and associated process for sustainability payments to social care providers during Covid-19.
- Establishing a central storage and distribution hub for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to care providers across the Council area and to other Council Services.

The Scottish Government's Economic Recovery Implementation Plan strengthens continued funding and support of the Supplier Development Programme. Supplier relief and support continues to be provided to other businesses and service providers in line with Scottish Government guidance and through the Supplier Development Programme. This includes procurement training and support, prompt and early payment arrangements and payment of additional costs arising from Covid-19, (PPE etc.).

Procurement will play a key role as part of the Council's Economic Recovery Plan going forward. In particular, through the development and expansion of existing engagement channels with local businesses e.g. Falkirk Economic Partnership and Business Gateway, the Council will identify how procurement activity can help support local business recovery. Supply chain and contract tender opportunities, will ensure our businesses are 'tender ready' for registration and submission of valid tenders.

It is also intended to use the TIF initiative; Investment Zone, Employment Training Unit programmes and Council Capital programmes to help restart construction activity within the Council area ensuring local modern apprenticeship, training and supply chain opportunities. This will be a key component of the Investment Zone Growth Deal Inclusive Growth and Wellbeing outputs.

Create strong partnerships that will help drive growth and regeneration

Falkirk Economic Partnership

- 4.8 The Council and partners in the Falkirk Economic Partnership are working closely to progress the delivery of the Investment Zone and Economic Recovery Plan. During the pandemic considerable efforts are being made by partners to assist local businesses and the wider community. This includes:
 - Support from local chemicals plants to produce hand sanitiser, PPE and other products to assist front-line workers, local charities etc. dealing with the crisis
 - Measures by Falkirk BID and other partners to support local retailers to progress online shopping, click and collect, and a local gift card scheme
 - An approach by Forth Valley College to assist in training for conducting virus testing. Forth Valley College also promoted a 'Fuel Change' initiative engaging students in a low carbon technology challenge.
 - Responses by Skills Development Scotland via the PACE, redundancy support initiative responding to local redundancy situations arising as a result of the pandemic.

Seek external sources of investment to support a diverse economy

4.9 Falkirk-Grangemouth Investment Zone

In July 2020, the Council and its partners secured £90m of its £235m in Growth Deal funding from the UK and Scottish Government. In December 2020 a reprofiled outline business case was submitted to the respective governments for consideration. It is hoped that the Council can agree Heads of Terms for this funding in Spring 2021, before developing full business cases shortly afterwards. The Investment Zone will provide investment over a 10 to 15 year period for Innovation and Place based capital infrastructure projects and aims to generate an additional 1,926 jobs and NPV uplift of £803m for the area.

Reimagine our town centres, making them vibrant places to live, meet, eat, shop and do business

4.10 Town Centres

The Council is pursuing a programme of town centre regeneration. Town centres-first is an important place-making principle for each community. During 2019 the Council was awarded £1.98m to assist with delivery of town centre regeneration works in Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness. Proposals have been developed and were approved by the Executive in June 2019 and works are underway to deliver this programme. A further £711k for capital works was awarded in August 2020 and an updated programme for delivery of these works was agreed by the Executive as part of the economic recovery plan.

Work continues with the Revitalising Falkirk town centre partnership to deliver the Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan which is being reported to the Falkirk Economic Partnership and Council to ensure progress is maintained to transform the fortunes of Falkirk town centre.

An action plan is being prepared for Grangemouth as part of the Investment Zone and locality planning initiatives with local communities, industry and education sectors to deliver transformational change for the local town centre.

Support the growth of the low carbon economy to deliver new employment and create a greener environment

4.11 The Northern Connections INTEREG project aims to assist moving the area to a low-carbon economy. The European project involving the Council, along with Scottish Enterprise, has partnered with 21 other European partners to deliver energy efficiency and technological innovation by establishing a 'Living Lab' focused on the Grangemouth area. This project is exploring initiatives such as carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCU/CCS), and forms a key strand of the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zone.

Encourage the use of Electric Vehicles and green transport as well as sources of renewable power for new developments.

4.12 Active Travel and Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Investment The Council successfully secured funding to support the development of public facing EV charging infrastructure, with funding from the EU's Low Carbon Transport Transition programme (£568,000) for the creation of the recently opened solar EV Hub at Falkirk Stadium, which forms a key strand of the A9 electrification route.

In addition, works have progressed on a Charge Place Scotland and Switched on Towns and Cities funded schemes (£355,000 in 2018/19, £175,000 in 2019/20 and £1m between 2019-2021) for public EV chargers). As a result, this will see the provision of public facing EV charging infrastructure increase to 198 public charging devices (42 of which will be rapid charge devices) by mid-2021.

Look to capitalise on the environmental and green benefits that arose during lockdown to ensure we meet our carbon reduction targets

4.13 Climate Change

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Bill has defined emissions reduction targets that are currently amongst the most ambitious in the world. The Council's own net zero target timescale for its direct operations is even more ambitious and enormously challenging, and proposals to achieve the Council's target timescale were reported to the Council's Executive in January 2020.

A cross party Elected Member working group has been established to consider and recommend the most appropriate priorities for climate change action by the Council. By taking action and ensuring that emission reduction targets are fully embedded within the Council's governance and service delivery, the Council will act to limit the consequences of climate change, with the corresponding benefits to the wider community health and wellbeing. A training programme to support and develop Climate Literate Leaders is also proposed.

The Council's top four emission sources are waste management (43%), building energy consumption (40%), vehicle fuel (8%) and street lighting (5%), and initiatives to reduce these will include:

- Producing energy from waste, increasing waste recycling, reuse & composting.
- Building emissions reductions by implementing the strategic property review allied with energy efficiency improvements for retained buildings (such as LED lighting, improved building controls, thermal insulation improvements and low carbon heat solutions)
- Reducing business mileage & decarbonising our vehicle fleets.

4.14 The Council has undertaken a local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) pilot project, which has assessed our current building stock and determined the measures and level of financial commitment required to meet emission reduction strategies and targets. Set out in a 20 year plan, LHEES will be mandatory for local authorities as part of their climate change public body duty reporting. It recognises the Council's role in leading industry and community stakeholders in a programme of projects designed to increase energy efficiency and employ carbon reduction measures across the Council area.

It is acknowledged that efficiency improvements alone will not achieve net zero emissions, and carbon sequestration is considered essential to offset the residual emissions. The Council's Biodiversity Action Plan includes a range of measures to restore peatlands and woodland management & expansion on Council owned land. These represent a hugely important carbon store and restoring and expanding them is a natural form of carbon capture and storage, in addition to being a unique habitat for biodiversity. The Council has progressed a carbon sequestration study to examine further opportunities within the Council's land ownership and building assets.

Help people retrain so they can move quickly from one job to another or from a declining sector to an emerging one

4.15 National Transitions Training Fund

The Council's Employment & Training Unit (ETU) has secured 35 places within the National Transition Training Fund to provide short, sharp certificated training for those individuals who require training to progress into an alternative employment sector. Continued work with Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Qualifications Authority regarding alternative methods of training delivery is ongoing to ensure qualifications can be completed without the need for work based training components to be undertaken. These will provide fast track training opportunities to help participants progress into more sustainable employment. Investment in Employer Recruitment Incentives and in-work training support continues to enhance the offer to participants and employers.

Ensure our most vulnerable can gain the skills needed to secure work in an uncertain job market

4.16 Employment and Training Unit

2020 has been a challenging year for the Council's employability services operated by ETU. The onset of the global pandemic has meant implementing a new way of working for staff, participants, training and support providers. ETU staff have engaged with participants through digital and online resources, telephone calls, video calls and also implemented a new management information system (while working from home).

The impact on local business and the labour market as a whole has meant managing participant expectations. Unemployment rates have increased and the labour market is increasingly competitive. A number of programmes stalled in 2020 as providers furloughed staff and staff have been unable to provide face to face delivery.

Performance has been impacted, however referrals and starts have been sustained (1,094 in the period March to December 2020) and trainees accessed 119 jobs January to December 2020. The results are summarised in the table below.

Fair Start Scotland (Predominately Disability and Health Conditions) Project Search (learning Disabilities) Modern Apprenticeships Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) Fair Start Scotland 328 75 Jobs Sustained 2020 13 week = 57 26 weeks = 59 52 weeks = 49 Further outcomes achieved awaiting employer response and input to system A number of participants disengaged during the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 Progressions Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
(Predominately Disability and Health Conditions) 26 weeks = 59 52 weeks = 49 Further outcomes achieved awaiting employer response and input to system Project Search (learning Disabilities) Project Search (learning Disabilities) 4 A number of participants disengaged during the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Conditions) 26 weeks = 59 52 weeks = 49 Further outcomes achieved awaiting employer response and input to system Project Search (learning Disabilities) 10 4 A number of participants disengaged during the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Further outcomes achieved awaiting employer response and input to system Project Search (learning Disabilities) Project Search (learning Disabilities) In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships In the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained.	
Further outcomes achieved awaiting employer response and input to system Project Search (learning Disabilities) 10 4 A number of participants disengaged during the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (Sector Based Programmes) (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Project Search (learning Disabilities) 10 4 A number of participants disengaged during the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Project Search (learning Disabilities) 10 4 A number of participants disengaged during the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
(learning Disabilities) the initial lockdown with many families fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
fearful of employment due to health issues. Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 28 Employability Fund 115 15 Progressions (Sector Based Programmes) (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	es.
Others did not respond well to digital interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	es.
interactions. Previous years achievement 100% with 90% rate sustained. Modern Apprenticeships 28 28 Employability Fund 115 15 Progressions (Sector Based Programmes) (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Modern Apprenticeships 28 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Modern Apprenticeships 28 28 Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 15 Progressions (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	[
Employability Fund (Sector Based Programmes) 115 (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
(Sector Based Programmes) (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
(Sector Based Programmes) (9 MA) Further Education (College) = 3 Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Stage 2 to 3 = 5 Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
Ability to run programmes has been significantly impacted due to the work base	
significantly impacted due to the work base	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	ased
practical element.	
No One Left Behind & School 97 6 Currently undertaking training - 33	
Transitions	
Parental Employment Support 38 13 week sustained:	
Pre Work Support 22 12 x Early Learning and Childcare Assistants	nts
In Work Poverty 16 3 x Early Learning Modern Apprentices	
26 Weeks Sustained:	
5 x Early Learning Assistants	
3 x Ealy Learning Modern Apprentices	
3 x Health and Social Care	

4.17 Fair Start

Delivery of the national Fair Start service contract has been extended to March 2023 to help unemployed people experiencing barriers to employment to access the labour market. The Council is lead contractor for services across the Forth Valley area. Referrals to the programme have fluctuated due to many potential participants shielding during the lockdown period, however 249 have started on the programme March to December 2020. Measures have been put in place to ensure a variety of digital support and training can be accessed and progress maintained. There have been 61 new job starts from March to December 2020 (25 Falkirk, 22 Stirling & 14 Clackmannanshire) during the period of labour market decline and global pandemic.

4.18 Connecting Scotland

Connecting Scotland's Scottish Government programme providing digital equipment and connections has continued to support ETU participants to engage in employability support. ETU allocated 5 laptops and wifi connection support for participants isolated due to health issues in phase 1 and a further seven in phase 2 with an application submitted for phase 3 currently awaiting an outcome. There remains a need to provide face to face support for those lacking digital knowledge to complete qualifications and apply for jobs and it is hoped that this will arise once lockdown restrictions are eased.

Work with young people to develop training that helps them gain the skills needed for jobs of the future

4.19 Young Persons Guarantee & Kickstart

The Scottish Government has committed £60million of investment to the Young Persons Guarantee, £30million of which has been allocated to local authorities to support young people to secure education, training, employment or work placements. Falkirk Council will utilise its allocation of this funding to support an additional 224 young people and add value to current contracts to ensure a needs based service is provided. This will include staff support, enhanced digital capacity, mental health support, employer recruitment incentives, investment in supported employment and a graduate programme for those experiencing barriers to employment.

Kickstart has been funded by the UK Government and is being rolled out and managed by the Department of Works and Pensions nationally. Falkirk Council has joined a regional collaborative with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils to support the application of funded places for micro, small and medium sized businesses locally. The application was submitted in October 2020 and we await the outcome which would see funded places for a six month period for young people across 145 businesses and over 350 places pledged, including a number within local authority departments.

4.20 Project Search

The ETU continues to work in partnership with Forth Valley College, NHS and SERCO to deliver the project search course to young people with learning disabilities in the Falkirk area. Due to the pressures on the NHS, interns have experienced a blended learning model and have been undertaking a variety of internships within the Forth Valley College premises rather than in Forth Valley Hospital. Ten interns continue with their learning to date and will begin to focus on progression routes in 2021.

The Forth Valley Project Search Team were also presented with an award in 2020 due to the rate of sustained employment in the previous group being above 90%, which was a great achievement in the face of such labour market adversity.

5. Performance

- 5.1 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) is a high level benchmarking tool benchmarking tool designed to support senior management and elected members understand performance of their services at a national level and in comparison to other local authorities. The suite of contains indicators on efficiency, output and outcome indicators and has eight years of data. Publication of the LGBF forms part of each council's statutory requirement for public performance reporting and is coordinated by the Improvement Service.
- 5.2 Communities, Enterprise and Innovation will be measured by using the LGBF suite of indicators. The LGBF indicators have long been integrated to service performance monitoring, however, this is the first time we have aligned the LGBF suite to the Corporate Plan in this way.
- 5.3 Appendix 1 contains the proposed format of the indicators, with the indicators for Enterprise included. This is an interim report at this stage as the data for the LGBF indicators for 2019/20 is to be published by the Improvement Service late in February, so in this appendix, there is data for 2018/19. More in depth information and analysis will be reported following the publication of the LGBF 2019/21 suite.

6. Recent Audits & Inspections; Enterprise

- 6.1 During 2020 the following audits have been undertaken:
 - Scottish government assurance audits have been made for the Kelvin Valley
 Falkirk Leader Programme undertaken by the Councils internal audit team –
 Substantial Assurance recorded.
 - Internal audit of delivery of two Scottish Government COVID support grants schemes – Substantial Assurance recorded.

7. Implications

Financial

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Resources

7.2 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Legal

7.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk

7.4 Reporting performance is essential to allow Committee to monitor the Council's progress towards achieving our priorities and delivering services. It allows us to identify where improvement is required and where we are at risk of not achieving best value. Where necessary risk assessments are in place for major Enterprise projects and initiatives being pursued by the Council.

Equalities

7.5 While we report on equalities information as part of our mainstreaming report, we will seek over the coming months to integrate information on equalities in our performance reports.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

7.6 Decisions made on sustainable development and climate change actions are intended to have a significant positive impact on progress towards the Council's net zero carbon emissions targets.

8. Conclusions

8.1 This report provides detailed information on progress made towards the Enterprise priority within the Corporate Plan.

Acting Director of Development Services	Director of Corporate & Housing Services

Authors:

Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate & Housing Services Douglas Duff, Acting Director of Development Services,

Date: 20 January 2021

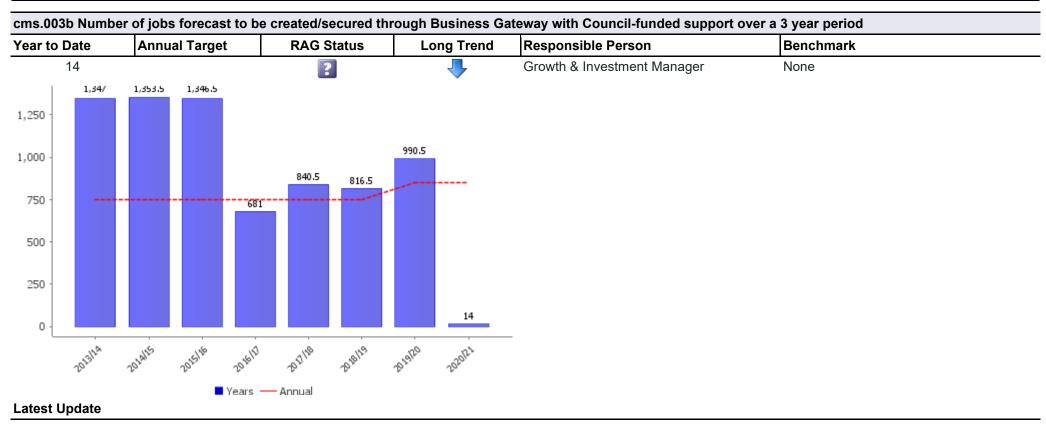
Appendix 1

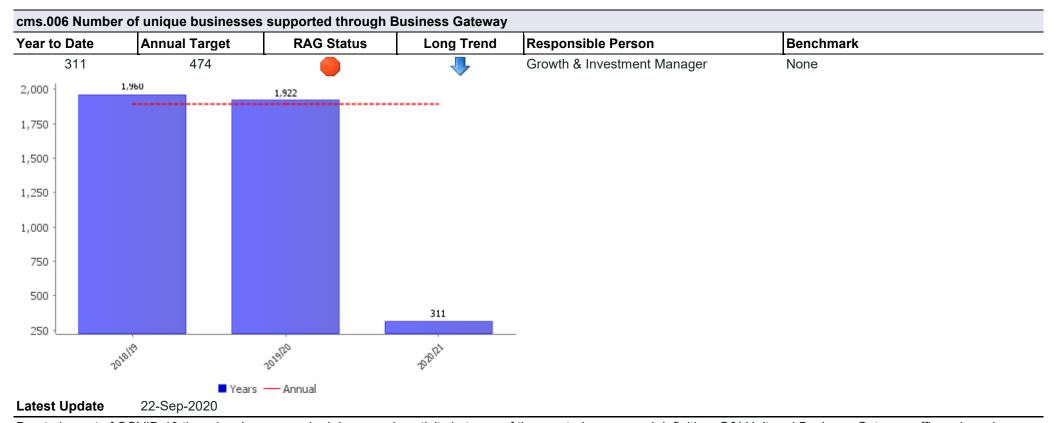
Corporate Plan Performance Indicators – Enterprise January 2021

List of Background Papers:

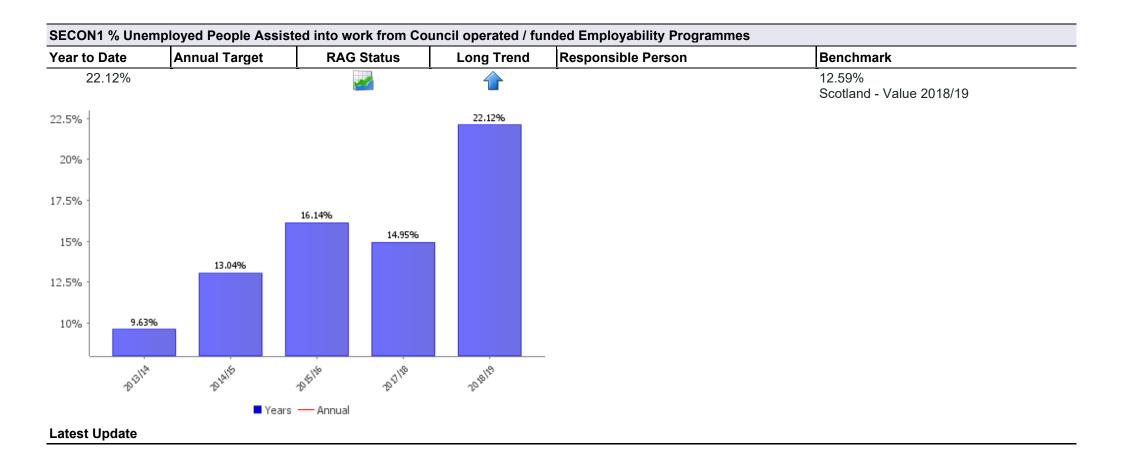
Falkirk Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2022.

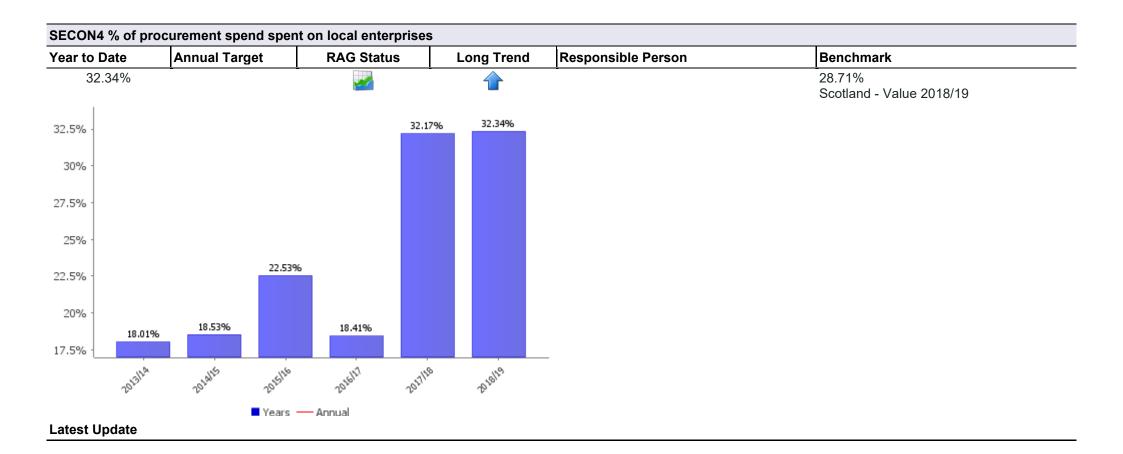
Enterprise - Help businesses to thrive and make Falkirk more prosperous

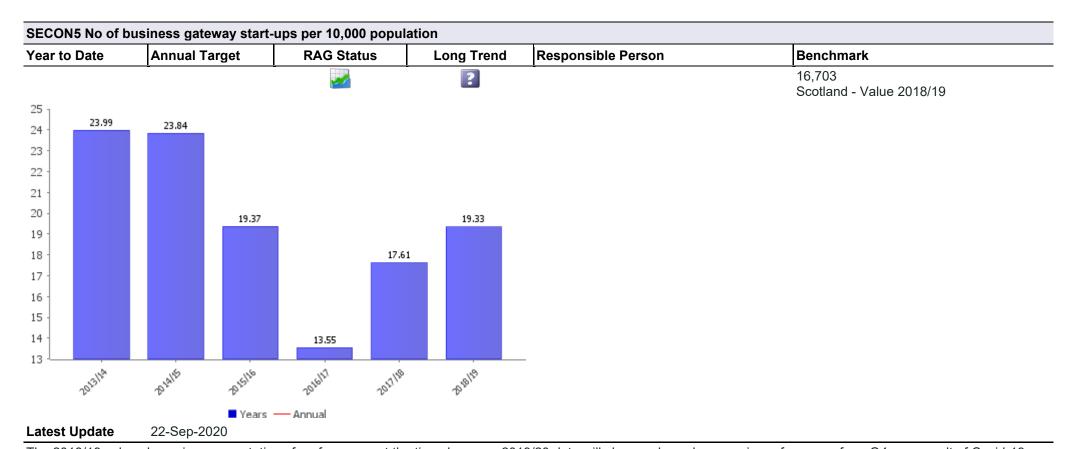




Due to impact of COVID-19 there has been a marked decrease in activity in terms of the quarterly measured definition. G&I Unit and Business Gateway officers have been significantly engaged in supporting businesses through national and local COVID-19 support measures and this data is being analysed for those businesses who have not previously received prior support and will be reported in Q2. All sectors remain extremely volatile and support measures dynamic as the economy and businesses respond to lockdown measures.







The 2018/19 value shown is representative of performance at the time, however 2019/20 data will show a sharp decrease in performance from Q4 as a result of Covid-19 and this anticipated to continue into 2020/21. This is likely to be reflected nationally.

