

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a city skyline with a diagonal beam of light. The top-right quadrant depicts a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quadrant shows a three-masted sailing ship on wavy water. The bottom-right quadrant features a grizzly bear standing on a rocky outcrop. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto "A NE FOR A".

Agenda Item 3

Minute

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (External) held remotely on Friday 11 December 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Councillors: David Balfour
Jim Blackwood (convener)
Niall Coleman
David Grant
John McLuckie
Ann Ritchie

Officers: Patricia Cassidy, Chief Officer, Health & Social Care Partnership
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Lesley James, Senior Service Manager
Cathy Megarry, Service Manager
Gayle McIntyre, Service Manager
Kerry Drinnan, Service Manager
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Martin Thom, Head of Integration

Also
Attending: Neil Brown, General Manager, Falkirk Community Trust
Lynne Gow, Station Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Lesley O'Hare, Culture and Libraries Manager, Falkirk Community Trust
Brian Robertson Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
David Sharp, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

In accordance with section 43 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Convener had directed that the meeting would be conducted by video conference to allow remote attendance by elected members.

In accordance with section 50A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the public were excluded from this meeting as it was likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be a real and substantial risk to public health due to infection or contamination with coronavirus.

SE10. Apologies

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor Aitchison.

SE11. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Coleman declared a non-financial interest in item SE 14 as a Director of Falkirk Community Trust, but did not consider that this required him to recuse themselves from consideration of the item, having regard to the specific exclusions contained in the Code of Conduct.

SE12. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (External) held on 26 November 2020 was approved.

SE13. Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership

The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer, Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership providing an overview of the performance arrangements together with a summary of performance in 2019/20 of the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

The report provided detail on:-

- Falkirk IJB scrutiny and monitoring arrangements including the Annual Assurance Statements which had been submitted to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) from the Audit Committee, Clinical and Care Governance Committee and the Joint Staff Forum.
- the 2019/20 Annual Audit Report.
- Falkirk Health and Social Care partnership update – including Covid-19 response and mobilisation; Car Home Assurance; Alcohol and Drug Partnership; Falkirk Adult Protection Committee; Financial position; Covid-19 Mobilisation Plan financial return.
- the Annual Performance Report 2019 – 20.
- the Performance Monitoring Report for the period September 2019 to September 2020 which had been submitted to the IJB on 20 November 2020.
- complaints and feedback information in regard to Social Work Adult Services, NHS Forth Valley, the IJB and the SPSO.

The committee sought further information in regard to the Naloxone Programme which was available to all service users and family members –

in particular in regard to the cost of the drug and whether it could be prescribed multiple times. Patricia Cassidy explained that there would be a record of each occasion on which it was used. There was strong evidence that it saved lives and there was a clear cost/benefit in its use. Martin Thom advised that it was used in hospital for patients who had suffered a near fatal overdose and was mainly given to people with chaotic lifestyles. It was a low cost drug and Police Scotland was looking to pilot its use although its usage may be relatively low. Martin Thom undertook to provide the committee with cost details for the drug.

The committee noted that the GP representative had not attended any of the meetings of the IJB Clinical and Care Governance Committee since June 2019 and expressed concern that an element of advice had not been available to the committee as a consequence. Ms Cassidy noted the committee's concerns and agreed to reflect this back to the IJB.

The committee then turned to the quality ratings information for care services and noted that Falkirk sat in the middle of its LGBF peer group of 9 local authorities and, in percentage terms, was nearer to the worst performing areas than the top and was below the national average. Patricia Cassidy acknowledged the assessment and stated that since the data had been published the HSCP had been working hard with care services, especially in care assurance to improve the care provided. Clearly the Covid-19 pandemic had had an effect on the service in the period since the information was published but she assured the committee that this was an area in which there was constant activity – with our own care homes and with independent providers and the dialog and support with care homes in the last months had intensified and feedback from Care Home providers had been positive.

The committee noted that, in regard to performance, 514 beds had been returned, and 312 had been collected. The committee sought further information in regard to why beds had been collected and on the 'recycling' of beds of such beds. Martin Thom explained that, simply, beds were collected when they were no longer needed. Where possible they would be serviced, cleaned and reissued. There was a very high demand for beds – however some were damaged and could not be reused. He undertook to provide information on the proportion that were reused.

The committee turned to the forthcoming Covid-19 vaccination programme and asked whether this would impact on the delivery of core services. Patricia Cassidy confirmed that the HSCP would be supporting the vaccination programme, but it was an extension of the work with care homes – the programme would be rolled out first to care home staff then to residents. There would be a training programme and guidance issued in regard to vaccinating residents and for testing visitors. The pandemic had placed a lot of demands on care home staff over the period and this was one more to deal with. She anticipated that District Nursing staff would be heavily involved in vaccinating older people who were unable to visit vaccination centres.

The committee then sought assurance in regard to Care Home staff absence. Patricia Cassidy confirmed that there had been substantial absence, in particular for care at home staff – partly due to track and trace requirements which had affected inhouse staff and those of providers. She explained the management processes that had been developed to manage the absences – such as the daily management ‘huddle’ and the development of a tool to support safe management levels and rebalancing when there were absences. In areas where services had shut down during the lockdown – such as Day Centres - staff had been deployed across the service on a daily basis. Absence had been a challenge but the HSCP had worked closely with Falkirk Council’s corporate management team (who had been able to provide volunteer staff to support the delivery of personal care) and Forth Valley College (to employ students) to look at recruiting staff. This was a constant and ongoing activity.

The committee noted that the number of complaints in regard to Social Work Adult Services since March 2020 had been low and asked if this was due to the pandemic. Patricia Cassidy stated that the reasons were unclear - there had been fewer contacts since March and a number of services had not been running but, she added, staff had remained in contact with service users during the period and had continued to carry out assessments and had looked at alternative options when required. Care at home staff had been out in the community although not all families had wanted home visits. She stated that staff had done a tremendous job in the face of unprecedented challenges and had worked shoulder to shoulder with families. This may have been a reason that there had been fewer complaints.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.




In accordance with his declaration, Councillor Coleman left the meeting at this point and took no part in the scrutiny of the next item.

SE14. Following the Public Pound: Falkirk Community Trust

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing an update of the performance of Falkirk Community Trust (the Trust) during the financial year 2019/20 as part of the Following the Public Pound arrangements.

The Council had provided £10.9m support to the Trust to provide culture, recreation, sports and library services on its behalf.

The Trust’s performance against targets during the period was as follows:-

| Reporting Period | On or above target performance  | | 0% to 10% below target performance  | | 10% or more below target performance  | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| | <i>No. of indicators</i> | <i>% of total</i> | <i>No. of indicators</i> | <i>% of total</i> | <i>No. of indicators</i> | <i>% of total</i> |
| April 2019 to March 2020 (indicators) | 11 | 34% | 10 | 31% | 11 | 34% |

The report set out:-

- The Trust's key year end performance highlights against target
- Areas of performance which had not met target
- Highlights during 2019/20.

The following were also provided as appendices to the report:-

- FCT Annual Report 2019/20
- Financial Reports and Statements for 2019/20
- Report to FCT on performance for 2019/20
- Report to FCT on performance for the period July to September 2020.

The committee noted the overall positive trend in performance and acknowledged the impact on performance towards the end of the reporting period when the impacts of Covid-19 were being felt, and asked for more detail, in particular of the remedies the Trust had to improve performance. It was also suggested that additional comparison data would have been beneficial to members. Mr Brown stated firstly that the Trust was open and transparent in regard to performance information it published. It was appropriate that the Board itself received more detail in regard to performance. He noted that context was important. For example, he cited the performance of the Mariner Centre. Usage was down compared to the previous year. However, it was important to note, however, that the centre had been closed for £1.2m refurbishment during the period, and the upper level had been closed for some time. Similarly, the usage figures for Kinneil Museum had not included visits as part of trips organised by Friends of Kinneil which had not started at the Museum but had included a visit there. In regard to Bo'ness recreation Centre, Mr Brown noted that performance had been impacted by plant issues and also by a negative perception in the community that it had been slated for closure where in fact there had been significant investment in the centre over recent years. The committee thanked Mr Brown for his detailed response which reinforced its view that the contextual information would have been useful.

Following a question Mr Brown confirmed that the Trust had not opened its facilities on 5 July when the Scottish Government had indicated that facilities could re-open after lockdown. There were a number of factors to this Mr Brown explained. Guidance had been issued almost daily and while the Trust had been preparing to open its facilities on that date the Council had

asked it not to do so until its officers had carried out detailed Risk Assessments on the facilities and this had led to a delay in meeting some opening targets. Mr Brown indicated that while he understood the Council's position, he was also sensitive to customers' expectations at the time around the re-opening of facilities. At the time there had also been training needs for staff and in some cases, this took the opening date 3 weeks beyond the 'go' date permitted by the Scottish Government. Nonetheless members of the committee commended the Trust on its speed in resuming services.

Mr Brown explained that the reason for the outstanding pension contributions of £0.19m by Trust employees was due to the timing of the accounts process and this had not been flagged by the Auditor's as an issue in the final Accounts.

The committee noted that customer income had increased by 5% compared to the previous year and that external income of £810k had been secured through grants and fundraising. The committee asked for detail on the income raised and also asked what the Trust was doing to increase the level of external funding received. Mr Brown responded that the grants awarded varied in size (for example £4500 had been awarded by the McRoberts Trust, £2500 from Falkirk Environment Trust, £1174 from Green Scotland together with funding from the Scottish Government for Helix events and the Scottish Book Trust for events. He undertook to provide the committee with a full list. Mr Brown stated that the Trust would apply for whatever funding was available to it in a given year. In response to a further question Mr Brown confirmed that the Trust would look to secure available funding for Mental Health awareness and training. A number of staff had already been trained in mental health awareness and the Trust had a good relationship with the NHS in this regard and cited the Step Forth walking programme and the advice offered within gyms as examples of its focus on health and wellbeing.

In regard to Grangemouth Golf Course the committee noted a drop in rounds played (92% fewer in q4 of 2019/20 compared to 2018/19) and asked if this was due in part to the condition of the course. Mr Brown stated that this was due to Covid-19. He added that maintenance of the course was the responsibility of the Trust. The Trust had been in discussion for 3 years with the Club for the transfer of the course to the club. Income had continued to increase and the number of rounds played had increased year on year. In 2019/20 there had been a downpour which had affected the course and he conceded that the Trust did not have the funding available to fully maintain the course – nevertheless he noted that Bunkered magazine had acknowledged the course as one of the best public courses in Scotland.

Following a question on the performance of the Mariner Centre, as set out in the bar chart provided in the report Mr Brown repeated that while this looked like a 'fail' it needed to be recognised that the centre had undergone a £1.2m refurbishment during the period and had reopened in January. It had then been victim to the pandemic, so it was difficult to assess the impact of the

refurbishment on attendance. He anticipated that the investment would be a success although it may take a couple of years to recover.

Customer income had increased by 5.5% to £8.211m – following a question on the contributing factors to this increase, Mr Brown stated that there had been a 14% increase in income from Health and Fitness activities and investment had shown the Trust's desire to be cutting edge in this area.

The committee noted the move to online ticketing for Falkirk Town Hall, the Hippodrome and various major external events and asked whether the transition had been successful. Mr Brown said that it had. The Trust had withdrawn the ticket service from the Steeple and had invested in online technology such as for ticketing and its online profile. This had been a major benefit during the pandemic. As an example, he said that the Trust had attracted Santa Mrs Claus to Calendar House, and this had been promoted on Facebook. The site had received 3m 'points of interest' from across the world - the 'reach' was pleasing from both a tourism and business point of view.

Decision

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by the Trust in meeting Council priorities.

The committee adjourned at 11.05 a.m. for a short break and reconvened at 11.15 a.m. with all members as per the sederunt, with Councillor Coleman rejoining the meeting.

SE15. Following the Public Pound: Services To Children & Young People – 2019/20 Annual Reporting Statements

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing an update regarding the work of the external organisations that receive funding, providing services to children and young people, and fall within the Following the Public Pound reporting and monitoring arrangements from April 2019 to March 2020.

Funding was provided by Children's Services to external organisations to provide services which could not readily be provided by the Council. As part of the Following the Public Pound arrangements, reporting statements were prepared by the relevant monitoring officer for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee (External).

| Organisation | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Aberlour Early Years Outreach | £159,060 | £159,063 |
| Aberlour Family Support Centre Langlees | £110,937 | £110,937 |

| | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Barnardo's | £500.000 | £500,000 |
| Home-Start Falkirk West | £28,014 | £28,014 |
| NHS Forth Valley CAMHS Clinical Psychologist for Looked After Children | £64,904 | £33,100 |
| NHS Forth Valley Speech & Language Therapy | £465,040 | £465,040 |
| One Parent Families Scotland Falkirk | £82,523 | £82,523 |
| Quarriers Children's Rights Service | £86,200 | £86,200 |
| Transform Forth Valley Time For Us | £38,869 | £38,869 |
| "Who Cares?" Scotland Advocacy Service | £27,970 | £27,960 |
| TOTAL | £1,563,517 | £1,531,706 |

Robert Naylor gave an overview of the report. The committee then considered the monitoring officers' reports.

The committee first considered the Aberlour Early Years Outreach Project and noted that it provided services in part of the Council area - it did not support for example the Braes area. Members asked whether as a charity which was funded by the Council it should provide a service Council-wide. Robert Naylor confirmed that this was the case - however this was a legacy arrangement, and in fact there were a number of legacy arrangements whereby funding was provided for services across the Council area that focused on specific groupings. It was the Services intention, as part of the Closer to Home project, to move from a funding model to a commissioning model. As part of the project the Service would move to delivering core services and commission services for those areas where there were gaps. Lesley James concurred and added that there were benefits in working with large organisations such as the Aberlour Trust who did have funding from other sources. She recognised the point made by members that the picture was fragmented at the moment in terms of family support for Social Work. Closer to Home would see support that families can access without delay. Cathy Megarry added that the point is to provide urgent assistance. In terms of Aberlour, Falkirk received more funding than most other Local Authorities and the work of Aberlour has been invaluable. The project was easy to access and was targeted at those who most need it. Support was available in the Braes area, but she conceded that overall, the provision was fragmented.

In regard to performance the committee noted that 20 families had not engaged and a further 23 families had had initial assessments but had chosen not to pursue further support and asked if the reasons why this was the case were known. Cathy Megarry stated that the Service would not be aware of the reasons. Members also asked for more information on the benefits of infant massage, which had been taken up by 82 families. Cathy Megarry stated that a benefit of this programme was that it acted as a gateway in many cases and allowed families to access the service and from there to receive wraparound care and support.

The committee noted that the service had begun to recruit volunteers in 2019 to extend the support available to service users and to new users and asked if the programme had been successful. Cathy Megarry stated that she did not know the detail on the outcome but did confirm that a key part of the organisation's strategy was to utilise volunteers as they were cost effective.

The organisation had been awaiting confirmation of additional funding for two Service managers. In response to a question in regard to the funding of the posts, Cathy Megarry confirmed that funding had been applied for from two organisations and that the posts were a joint venture between Children's Services and Aberlour for crisis response services. This was a cost effective way of providing an essential service. Similar ventures had been trialled successfully in Perth & Kinross and the Scottish Borders for example and had reduced the number of children coming into local authority care. This was a good example of the benefits of the Council's longstanding relationship with the organisation.

The committee then turned to the Aberlour Family Support Centre - Langlees project and made the same point as before in regard to Council wide provision. Mr Naylor repeated his response that this was part of the legacy arrangements which would be tidied up by the Closer to Home initiative which would standardise provision through core services and commissioned services.

In regard to the services offered, members asked for more detail on the Art Therapy sessions which were held in partnership with Queen Margaret University. Cathy Megarry advised that this was part of the students' placements and there was no cost - it helped the children express themselves after experiencing trauma and had been beneficial. The relationship was good for both the Council and the students. She added that the family centre had been established in an area of high need but the agreement between the Council and the centre was that it would reach out beyond the Langlees area if there need in other areas. Members responded that there was bound to be a need elsewhere and welcomed the standardised approach described by the Director earlier.

The committee then turned to funding and asked what the impact would be if the Council reduced the funding to the organisation. Cathy Megarry stated that the services would need to be provided and Children's Services would

have to find a way to deliver the services in-house. There were opportunities within Children's Services to realign budgets however these services were vital – they provided less stigmatised settings for families to engage at an early stage and without this there would be an increased need for more intervention at a later stage. However, Children's Services would struggle at the moment to provide the services should the funding be reduced or withdrawn.

The committee next considered the Home-Start Falkirk project. Members noted that the project did not receive significant funding but provide a valuable service. Again, however members noted that it seemed to focus on only some of areas – Denny, Bonnybridge and Banknock. Cathy Megarry confirmed it was a relatively small organisation based in the Denny area but it did take referrals from elsewhere. In fact it was called Home-Start Falkirk West.

The committee then turned to the Clinical Psychology Service for Looked after Children. Members queried the decrease in funding in 2019/20 which was £33,100 compared to the previous year which was £64,904. Gayle McIntyre explained that a clinical psychologist had reduced their hours in the period and this had resulted in reduced costs. She explained that although CAMHS provided specialist services it had been considered that Looked After Children had often significant mental health requirements that were not always met by mainstream mental health services and as a consequence this partnership arrangement had been established with CAHMS. In addition to providing specialist services there was a much reduced waiting time from referral to appointment with this service. She conceded that in the period in which a clinical psychologist had reduced their hours the waiting list had been longer but now that another psychologist had been appointed this had improved. There was a clear early referral process from Social Work to the service, which reduced paperwork and waiting lists.

Members agreed that there were clear benefits in the service provided but asked why it was funded by Children's Services rather than the NHS itself. Robert Naylor stated that there was an ongoing discussion with NHS Forth Valley in regard to the range of services provided by the NHS for children - such as nurses in Schools, Early Years intervention and this included the role of CAHMS. The Scottish Government had provided funding to reduce waiting times. The Service had, as corporate parents, recognised the needs of Looked After Children and had sought to find a way to meet their needs without a 26 week waiting list (for mainstream CAHMS services). The aim of the service is to provide quick and easy access for children who need early support. There was a national debate ongoing about the ways in which NHS and Local Authority resources could be better shared, for example through better joint management arrangements. It was largely a structural issue around the NHS's decision making arrangements which were not localised. As a consequence, Local Authorities end up making local arrangements such as this. There was a clear need for the service he added and that was why the arrangements had been made with NHS CAHMS. Lesley James concurred with the assessment of the national picture and its impact locally.

The point was to support those who were in most need quickly. Arguably the service should be embedded in mainstream CAHMS, but it had been necessary to put the additional service in this way. Members asked, given this, that the NHS did not seem to have a responsibility for Getting It Right For Every Child as the Council did. Mr Naylor stated that the CAHMS target was 18 weeks and the Scottish Government had provided additional funding to the NHS for staff recruitment to reduce the gap. There was a drive to reduce waiting lists nationally. The NHS was, he said, committed to Getting It Right For Every Child

Decision

The Committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by the external providers in meeting the Council's priorities

SE16. Performance Report, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting the local performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

In terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 local senior officers were required to report on performance in regard to the Local Fire and Rescue Plan, and to report on the provision of local services.

The following performance information was appended to the report:-

Local Plan Performance 1 April to 30 September 2020. David Sharp gave a short summary of the key areas of performance over the period which had covered the lockdown period.

Following a question Mr Sharp agreed that a factor in the rise in accidental dwelling fires could be attributed to the larger than normal number of people who were at home during the period as a consequence of lockdown. Conversely, the year to date incidents was less than the same period in 2019/20.

The committee noted that the intended introduction of new legislation in regard to smoke alarms had been delayed by a year. Nonetheless it would require that all dwellings had interlinked smoke alarms and a CO gas detector as standard. The responsibility to meet the new standard would lie with the homeowner and would incur a cost to homeowners to meet the statutory duty. It would also impact on the Fire and Rescue Service and the committee asked if an update could be provided. Brian Robertson confirmed that this requirement had been delayed for a year. The Fire and Rescue Service had fitted smoke alarms for those who were deemed 'high risk' and this would continue. The delay was to allow the community time to understand the requirements and to make arrangements. The Scottish Government had allocated a limited amount of funding to the Fire and

Rescue Service to purchase the devices. However the distribution criteria for these was strict and limited to the high risk groups. It will be the responsibility of owner/occupiers who are not high risk to purchase and fit the alarm systems. He added that for example house sale home reports would in future include whether there was compliance with the new regulations and failure to meet the standards could impact on the sale of a property.

The committee then turned to 'deliberate' fires and expressed concern at the number of incidents – 205 (compared to 215 in the previous comparison period). David Sharp replied that year on year the number was reducing but that the Service continued to work with partners to address problematic areas. Deliberate fires tended to be refuse and this year had seen an increase in wheelie bin fires of 66 for example. Brian Robertson advised that the Service had seen unusual behaviour during the period. As lock down was eased and the weather was good there was a number of deliberate fires and although the Service continued to respond and to educate there were odd behaviours which were attributed to the 'strange times'.

Following a question, Mr Robertson confirmed that the Service continued to work hard to recruit retained firefighters. It was increasingly difficult to attract volunteers and this was an issue that was being looked at nationally within the Service.

The committee then asked for an update on discussions at the national level in regard to expanding the role of firefighters to include the use of defibrillators and in giving CPR. Members noted that the matter had been 'on the table' for at least 3 years with no resolution. David Sharp confirmed that all firefighters were trained to give CPR and to use defibrillators. Successful pilots had been undertaken however the matter sat at a national level. The FBU had opposed the expansion previously – however the Chief Fire Officer was keen to reopen discussions. Brian Robertson gave more detail on the pilot which had focussed on road traffic collisions. There were numerous instances when as first responders firefighters could intervene in cardiac situations. Similarly they are able gain access to buildings more easily than other partners and all staff are trauma trained. He repeated that while crews can and sometimes do carry out these duties they were not formally part of their core duties and nationally the matter was still in discussion. The committee asked that it be kept advised of the discussions as part of the performance report.

Decision

The Committee

- (1) approved the report and acknowledged progress by the organisation in meeting its priorities;**

- (2) requested that the next report include an update on the position in regard to talks on broadening firefighters' role to include CPR/use of defibrillators.**