

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 rock. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom contains the motto 'A NE FOR A' in a stylized font.

Agenda Item 3

Minute

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of meeting of the EXECUTIVE held remotely on Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Councillors: David Alexander
Allyson Black
Robert Bissett
Gary Bouse
Joan Coombes
Paul Garner
Nigel Harris
Gordon Hughes
James Kerr
Cecil Meiklejohn (Convener)
Lynn Munro
Alan Nimmo

Officers: Douglas Duff, Acting Director of Development Services
Colin Frame, Principal Surveyor (Strategic Projects)
Jack Frawley, Team Leader – Committee Services
Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive
Jacquie McArthur, Economic Development Officer
Colin Moodie, Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Dot Reid, Roads & Grounds Manager
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

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.

EX48. Apologies

There were no apologies.

EX49. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bissett declared a non-financial interest in item EX56 as Chair of the Bainsford War Memorial Association which may make future bids for funding from Community Choices. Having had regard to the objective test he stated that he considered that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item.

Councillor Garner declared a non-financial interest in item EX56 as a member of Dunipace FC management committee which may make future bids for funding from Community Choices. Having had regard to the objective test he stated that he considered that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item.

EX50. Minutes

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 August 2021 and the minute of the special meeting of the Executive held on 14 September 2021 were approved.

Councillor Kerr joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

EX51. Rolling Action Log

A rolling action log detailing decisions not yet implemented following the previous meeting on 24 August 2021 was provided. Item 569 – Falkirk Business District Improvement Renewal was the subject of a report on the agenda and accordingly fell from the rolling action log.

Decision

The Executive noted the rolling action log.

EX52. Decision Taken Under Delegated Powers

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided details of a decision taken under delegated powers for information. The decision taken under delegated authority during the summer recess was Approval to participate in the Locally Engaged Staff (LES) scheme.

Decision

The Executive noted the decision taken under delegated powers.

EX53. Referral from Audit Committee – Corporate Risk Management Update

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided as an appendix the Corporate Risk Management Update report which had been referred to the Executive by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 20 September 2021.

Decision

The Executive approved the Corporate Risk Dashboard, Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Improvement Plan set out at appendices 1-3 of the Corporate Risk Management Update report.

EX54. Referral from Audit Committee – Risk Management Assurance Policy and Framework

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided as an appendix the Risk Management Assurance Policy and Framework report which had been referred to the Executive by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 20 September 2021.

Decision

The Executive approved the Risk Management Assurance Policy and Guidance, Templates and Training set out at appendices 1 and 2 of the Risk Management Assurance Policy and Framework report.

EX55. Falkirk Business Improvement District Renewal

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Development Services which set out the renewal results in respect of the Falkirk Business Improvement District (BID) renewal ballot for 2021-2026.

The Falkirk BID re-ballot was concluded on 27 August 2021 with 329 votes received from the 662 commercial properties in the BID area. Of the 329 votes, 87% were in favour of the initiative. The BID was enabled to generate approximately £159,930 of investment through levy income per annum over the 5-year term.

The percentage of businesses participating in the re-ballot was 49.7%, a small increase in turnout on the 2016 figure of 47.9%. The total number of 'yes' votes (87%) was an increase of 18% on 2016 figures. The increase in both voter turnout and support for the BID's fourth term would secure additional funding of £800,000 for the town over the next 5 years.

Possible reduction in occupancy rates post pandemic, may affect future leverage of funds. The loss of major retailers such as Debenhams, Marks & Spencer's, Wallis and Dorothy Perkins would have a detrimental effect on levy income over the term of the BID. These issues were being actively considered by the company's Board of Directors.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the success of Falkirk Business Improvement District (BID) for a fourth term from 27 August 2021 to 31 October 2026, and**
- (2) agreed that officers should proceed to work in partnership with Falkirk Towns Ltd on the delivery of its business plan for 2021-26.**

In line with their earlier declarations, Councillors Bissett and Garner left the meeting for the following item.

EX56. Community Choices

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which sought approval for changes to Community Choices following the completion of the first phase of the Small Grants and Place Based Capital programmes.

Based on an evaluation of Phase 1, two changes were proposed for the next phase:-

- Create a Falkirk Wide category
- Limit total project funding at 60% of total ward/category allocation

Phase 1 Capital funding was allocated across the 9 wards, with votes cast on a ward basis. Whilst this benefitted small local organisations it disadvantaged larger organisations that operated across more than one ward or communities of interest. It was therefore proposed that a 10th Falkirk wide category was included in Phase 2.

People received three votes to cast in their ward. They would be able to cast 1 of these votes in the 'Falkirk Wide' category. To fund this, 10% would be taken off the total allocation which equated to £200,000, leaving £1,800,000 to be distributed across wards by child poverty rates.

In Phase 1, several larger applications were received which requested most of the available funding. If successful, this would have significantly limited funding for other projects. A cap would ensure a wider distribution of the funds across a ward. As each ward had a different allocation of funding, a limit of not more than 60% of each ward's total allocation was proposed.

Councillor Meiklejohn, seconded by Councillor Hughes, moved that the Executive agrees to:-

- (1) the creation of a Falkirk wide project category within the Capital Programme;
- (2) reduce each ward's capital funding allocation by 10% to fund the Falkirk wide category, and
- (3) limit Capital applications at 60% of a ward's total allocation.

The Executive adjourned at 11.20am and reconvened at 11.30am with all members present as per the sederunt with the exception of Councillors Bissett and Garner.

As an amendment, Councillor Coombes, seconded by Councillor Black, moved the terms of the motion subject to clause 3 being amended to read:-

- (3) limit Capital applications at 50% of a ward's total allocation.

In terms of Standing order 22.1, the vote was taken by roll call, there being 10 members present with voting as undernoted:-

For the motion (7) – Councillors Alexander, Bouse, Harris, Hughes, Kerr, Meiklejohn and Munro.

For the amendment (3) – Councillors Black, Coombes and Nimmo.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- (1) the creation of a Falkirk wide project category within the Capital Programme.**
- (2) reduce each ward's capital funding allocation by 10% to fund the Falkirk wide category.**
- (3) limit Capital applications at 60% of a ward's total allocation.**

Councillors Bissett and Garner rejoined the meeting following conclusion of the previous item.

EX57. Denny Town Centre Regeneration – Update Report

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Development Services which provided an update on the status of the Denny town centre regeneration project including the outcome of a recent marketing exercise for the Phase 2 site.

The Executive previously approved the marketing of both Phases 2 and 3 development sites with Syme Properties subsequently appointed as the Council's marketing agents.

The Phase 2 site was considered as a possible future town centre location for a community leisure and well-being facility. The SPR Implementation Plan identified that there should be options for future leisure provision in Denny town centre/High school and Banknock area to align with expansion of housing development and demand. It was proposed that, as part of the agreed Implementation Plan, officers would undertake the development of an options appraisal and business case to engage and establish community leisure requirements, including the location and viability of a facility.

To progress existing developer interest, a closing date for offers was placed on the Phase 2 site in July 2021 to include provision of part of the Phase 2 site to be set aside for a future community leisure consideration. One offer was received from Magnus Beresford Ltd for acquisition of the site at £100,000 to develop a new 7,500sqft Co-op retail unit.

The Council's external marketing agent and the District Valuer had provided reports reviewing the offer received and confirmed the proposed sale represented best value to the Council on the current market, location, site size and configuration. The Co-op's developer had offered to create a small community garden adjacent to the new store which would accommodate projection equipment for a digital display on the gable of the Phase 1 block.

The Executive adjourned at 12.20pm and reconvened at 12.30pm with all members present as per the sederunt.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the progress of the Denny town centre regeneration project;**
- (2) agreed to dispose of the Phase 2 site to Magnus Beresford Ltd at a price of £100,000 for the development of a 7,500sqft Co-op retail unit, subject to the exclusion of land to continue in Council ownership as a possible future location for a community leisure facility, and**
- (3) agreed the £100,000 generated from the sale of land would be allocated towards funding of a community leisure facility as above if appraisal results were positive. And directed the service to undertake the options appraisal and business case as soon as practicably possible.**

EX58. Council of the Future – Digital Communities Project

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on the Council of the Future - Digital Communities Project.

A number of the project milestones and actions had been completed and achievements to date included:-

- Engagement undertaken with communities to determine how they could be supported to improve online accessibility;
- 1428 packages of devices/connectivity and support had been provided across the Falkirk area;
- 714 households provided with funding to support them to stay connected during Covid restrictions
- 75 people would receive intensive additional support to get online, delivered by AbilityNet and supported by the Health and Social Care Partnership and Community Learning and Development team;
- Options to support provision of connectivity in Council homes was being explored;
- Digitally disadvantaged school pupils struggling for access to technology were identified and a total of 1,500 devices and 600 unlimited data connectivity packs were supplied to support their education;
- Connectivity for the Foundry in place;
- Back up generator for the Foundry in place;
- 1,318 laptops and 1,838 monitors provided to employees to enable effective working from home, and
- Automation of processes for applying for free school meals and clothing grants, benefits processing and reporting of Anti-Social Behaviour.

In the next phase of the project there would be work would be undertaken to ensure appropriate connectivity for the employees in Falkirk Stadium. There would be enhancement of online service delivery, linking in with the CCTV, MyFalkirk and Automation projects. Through this project there would be improvement of the digital services for and with communities. Key to this was a move towards self-serve, where possible, recognising that some members of communities, would still require face to face support.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) noted the scope of the Digital Communities project;**
- (2) noted the progress made to date and the next steps detailed in section 4 of the report;**

- (3) agreed the objective of moving more services online, using self-serve functionality where appropriate, and promoting this option, with the recognition that some citizens would still require direct support from officers;**
- (4) agreed the savings target set out in paragraph 4.7 of the report and asked the project team to identify further savings as this project develops, and**
- (5) noted the bid that would be made for capital funding to support the work of the project as part of the 2022/23 capital program.**

EX59. Exclusion of Public

The Executive resolved in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and public for the following items of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7 of the said Act.

EX60. Framework Agreement for the Short Term Hire of Operated Plant (DEV/058/21)

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Development Services which sought the award of a Framework Agreement for the Short Term Hire of Operated Plant following a request from a member of the Executive that the award be subject to Executive consideration.

Decision

The Executive agreed to award the Framework Agreement for the Short Term Hire of Operated Plant (DEV/058/21) and approved the appointment of the Framework contractors as listed in Appendix 1 to the report, at a total estimated value of £6,500,000.

EX61. Framework Agreement for Fleet Vehicle Parts (C/N: SXL/07-20)

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Development Services which sought approval to participate in the Scotland Excel Framework Agreement for Fleet Vehicle Parts following a request from a member of the Executive that the matter be subject to Executive consideration.

Decision

The Executive agreed to the participation of the Council in the Scotland Excel Framework Agreement for Fleet Vehicle Parts (SXL/07-20) with suppliers as listed at Appendix A to the report and at a total estimated value of £1,500,000.

The Executive adjourned at 1.10pm and reconvened at 1.35pm with all members present as per the sederunt.

EX62. Falkirk Gateway Update Report

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Development Services which provided an update on the progress of the Falkirk Gateway project including the progress of work with the developers on establishing a Development Agreement for the site.

This item is exempt from publication on the grounds that it would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The Executive adjourned at 2.20pm and reconvened at 2.45pm with all members present as per the sederunt.

Decision

The Executive agreed to continue the item to the next meeting.