

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of special meeting of the EXECUTIVE held on Tuesday 8 February 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Officers: Karen Algie, Head of People, Technology and Transformation
Malcolm Bennie, Director of Place Services
Jack Frawley, Team Leader – Committee Services
Kenny Gillespie, Head of Housing & Communities
Sara Lacey, Head of Social Work Children’s Services
Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive
Colin Moodie, Chief Governance Officer
Mari-Claire Morgan, Energy & Climate Change Co-ordinator
Robert Naylor, Director of Children’s Services
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer
Jillian Thomson, Chief Finance Officer – Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership

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.

EX107. Tributes to former Councillor Pat McCafferty OBE

Pat McCafferty OBE, the Independent member for the Dundas Ward in Grangemouth until 2007, had passed away on Saturday 5 February 2022. Councillor Meiklejohn led the Executive in tribute and expressed that the Council’s thoughts were with his family and friends.

EX108. Apologies

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor Alexander.

EX109. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

EX110. 2022/23 Budget Update

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided information on further, 'wave 2', budget savings options. The report also provided an update on additional budget related information, notably the recent announcement of additional funding.

On 27 January the Cabinet Secretary had announced £120m of additional funding for Local Government. Falkirk's share of this was expected to be £3.5m. The Cabinet Secretary's letter regarding the additional funding made it clear that it was for Councils to determine how the extra funding was used. There was, however, a steer from the Cabinet Secretary that the extra funding should be used to avoid inflation bursting increases particularly in relation to Council Tax.

An updated Budget Gap, taking account of updated information on energy costs, of c£29m had been generated, albeit mitigated by the additional funding. However, significant financial challenges also lay beyond 22/23 and in particular financial year 23/24. It was important that a multi-year and strategic view was taken.

It had previously been recognised that Services needed to identify a further suite of savings options for Council to consider. Detail on these additional savings options was provided in an appendix to the report.

As part of community participation, online Budget Conversations for all wards had taken place in January 2022. Participants had shared some important insights and thoughtful suggestions. Further, there was a public survey, which ran from 12 January to 28 January 2022. 356 people completed the survey.

Representations continued to be made to the Scottish Government by COSLA, arguing for further improvement to the Settlement and in particular with reference to the Employers' National Insurance increase.

Decision

The Executive noted the report and its implications for the Council's Budget position.