

The background of the slide features the Falkirk Council Coat of Arms. It is a shield divided into four quarters. The top-left quarter shows a saltire (X-shaped cross) on a blue field. The top-right quarter shows a stag's head facing left on a red field. The bottom-left quarter shows a sailing ship on a blue field. The bottom-right quarter shows a lion passant guardant on a red field. Above the shield is a crown with four fleurs-de-lis. Below the shield is a ribbon with the motto 'A'NE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 6

Falkirk 2022 Delivering Best Value – Strategic Action Plan Progress

Falkirk Council

Title: Falkirk 2022 Delivering Best Value – Strategic Action Plan Progress
Meeting: Executive
Date: 6 December 2022
Submitted By: Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is the second update this year to the Executive on the [Best Value Strategic Action Plan](#), 'Falkirk 2022 Delivering Best Value', agreed by Falkirk Council in February 2022.

Links to The Council Plan

- 1.2 The work undertaken to deliver the Best Value plan to date, alongside [The Falkirk Plan](#), has been instrumental in the creation of the Council's new vision and priorities, approved by Council in [The Council Plan](#) on 28 September 2022:

Vision: Strong communities where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved		
Priority 1: Supporting stronger & healthier communities	Priority 2: Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities	Priority 3: Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

Notes the progress made with specific Best Value strategic actions between September 2022 – November 2022.

3. Climate Change Implications

- 3.1 The Council's approach to Best Value is key to ensuring that decisions made, have a positive impact on reducing the Council's carbon footprint and supporting the transition towards our organisational 2030 net zero target and Scotland's 2045 net zero target.
- 3.2 This approach is founded in the collaborative leadership work undertaken with Officers and Members and is evidenced in initiatives such as the agreed Capital Programme, Council of the Future Transformation projects and the Council's Performance Management Framework, which includes performance indicators linked to climate change within The Council Plan.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Council has a requirement to fulfil its obligations, as per The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, which places statutory duties on Councils in relation to Best Value and Community Planning.
- 4.2 In line with this and following the Best Value Audit in 2021, Falkirk Council considered the recommendations from the [Best Value Assurance Report](#) and the Accounts Commission Findings ([see report to Falkirk Council 15 February 2022](#)).
- 4.3 On 23 August 2022, the Executive considered an [update report](#) on the Best Value Strategic Action Plan and noted the progress made against specific actions for the period February – August 2022.
- 4.4 The report to the Executive today, provides an update on the Best Value work undertaken from September - November 2022, and, in response to the recent [Report to Members and the Controller of Audit on the 2021/22 Audit](#), contains a sample of case studies to demonstrate the impact of this work so far.

5. Considerations

- 5.1 The Best Value Strategic Action Plan is on track to be fully implemented by March 2023, as per agreed deadlines. The plan concentrates on the following themes to address the recommendations set out in the [Best Value Assurance Report](#):
 - Leadership
 - Transformation
 - Performance
 - Capital
 - Communities
 - Falkirk Community Trust
 - Equalities.
- 5.2 Whilst some of these interlinked themes have reported to Elected Members over recent months on their own merits, this report provides:
 - An overview of progress made against the key actions set out in the Best Value plan (Appendix 1), September - November 2022.
 - Three supplementary case studies (Appendix 2), showing in detail, the progress made on the Capital, Communities and Falkirk Community Trust themes.
- 5.3 Progress on the plan is tracked and reported to the Corporate Management Team on a quarterly basis to ensure that the Council delivers on its commitment to achieve best value. The overall plan is nearly 65% complete, with the Transformation theme now closed, and actions completed within timescales. The remaining themes and actions are scheduled for completion between December 2022 and March 2023 and are on track to do so.

- 5.4 The three supplementary case studies chart the work that has been done on the selected themes to date, with further case studies assessing the impact of the actions to be reported to Elected Members in 2023.
- 5.5 Although the Best Value Strategic Action Plan is due for completion at the end of March 2023, further work will continue beyond this date across all of the key theme areas to enable the delivery of The Council Plan priorities. This will include progressing the work on collaborative leadership to support effective decision making, partnership working with communities, a focus on equalities, and delivering on Council of the Future Transformation projects and Capital Programme.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation and collaboration are central to Council's approach to achieving Best Value. Consultation was undertaken with Elected Members in the development of the Best Value Action Plan. This report provides an opportunity for Elected Members to review the progress made.

7. Implications

Financial

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work undertaken on the Council's Best Value actions has contributed to the development of the [Financial Strategy](#) for the Council.

Resources

- 7.2 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

Legal

- 7.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Risk

- 7.4 The Council will be subject to a further Best Value audit process in 2023. There are significant risks to the Council's reputation if Best Value actions and subsequent changes stemming from these are not implemented, and may impact the Council's ability to deliver on the Council's priorities, redesign services and support effective decision-making to enable this. The Council's corporate risk register will record relevant risks and mitigations in relation to Best Value as appropriate.

Equalities

- 7.5 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. Nevertheless, the Best Value actions in relation to equalities are of fundamental importance in addressing the concerns expressed in the Best Value review and this needs to be an area of ongoing focus for the Council.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 7.6 There are no direct sustainability/environmental impact implications arising from this report.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Executive approves the recommendations in this report and acknowledges the Best Value progress that has been made. The Best Value Strategic Action Plan is due to complete on 31 March 2023 and Elected Members will receive an update following this, with further case study reports to demonstrate the impact of the Best Value work undertaken. As acknowledged by the auditors, and in this report, work in key areas will continue beyond the closure of the Best Value Strategic Action Plan to fully enable the delivery of The Council Plan.

Chief Executive

Author(s): Rebecca McDonald, Change Manager,
rebecca.mcdonald@falkirk.gov.uk

Date: 6 December 2022

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Detailed Performance Report – Best Value December 2022

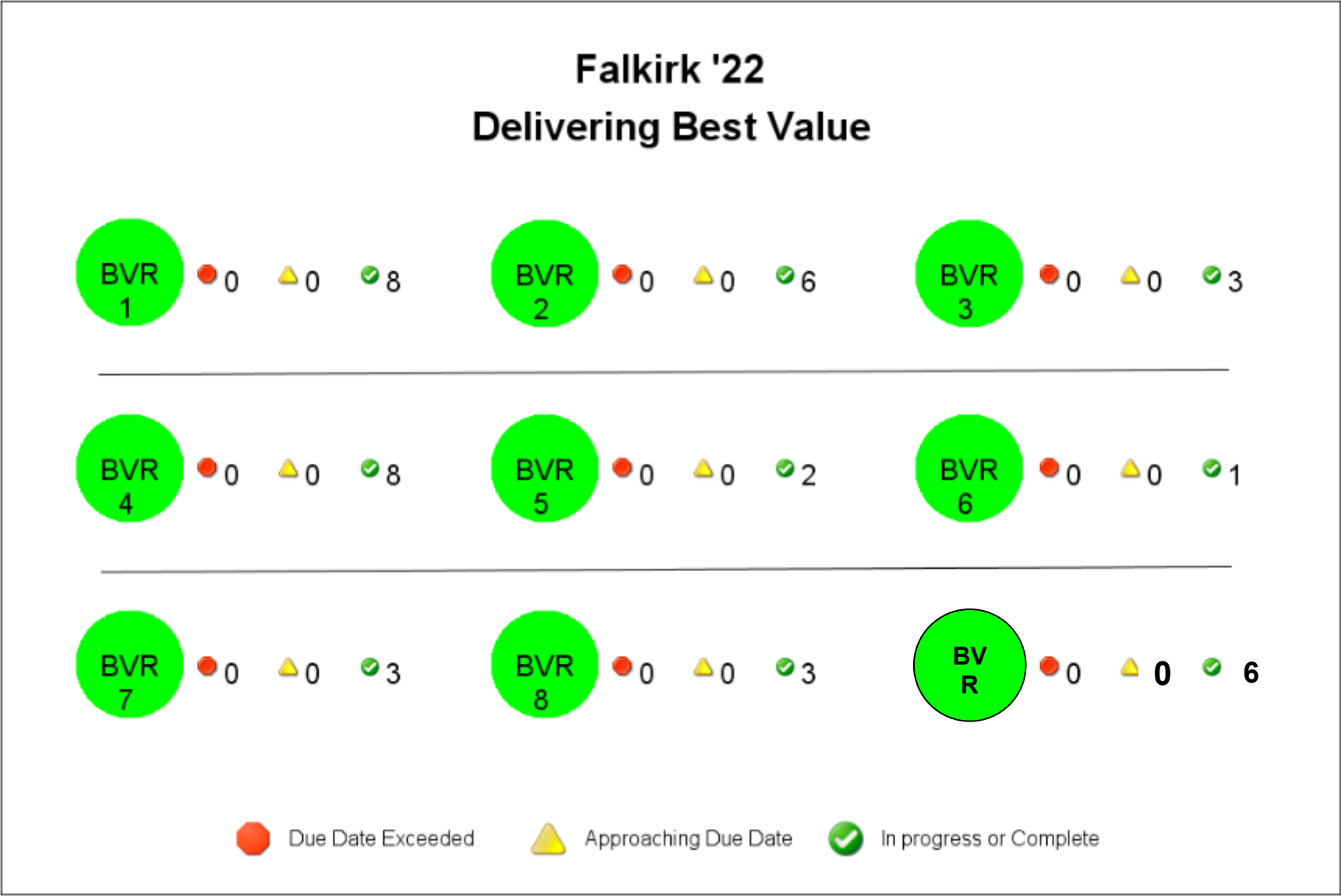
Appendix 2: Case Studies

List of Background Papers:

[Best Value Assurance Report](#)

[Best Value Strategic Action Plan](#)

APPENDIX 1 Detailed Performance Report – Best Value December 2022



LEADERSHIP THEME – Owner: Director of Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services

BVR 1 - Elected members and senior officers need to work more constructively together to lead the council more effectively and decisively.

Action	Deadline	Progress
Ensure a comprehensive induction programme is developed for all Members and ready for implementation	31-May-2022	Action is complete. A comprehensive induction programme and statutory training for Elected Members has been delivered and is now complete.
Develop a cross-Council understanding of what 'collaborative leadership' means for Officers and Elected Members	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. A definition of 'collaborative leadership' has been developed and considered by the Council's Leadership Forum and Corporate Management Team. This is now being used as the baseline on which further development is being planned.
Define what is required by Members and Officers to deliver Best Value	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. A 'frequently asked questions' document has been produced and circulated to Elected Members to define Best Value. Multiple Best Value briefings have taken place with Officers since the time of the Best Value Audit in 2021. Collectively, the work of Elected Members and Council has culminated in the production of The Council Plan, approved by Council on 28 September 2022 alongside the Financial Strategy, which are the core strategic plans that drive Best Value across the organisation. The recent Audit Committee also heard the reinforcement by EY Auditors that it is the responsibility of all elected members to deliver Best Value. Discussions linked to this are being progressed through the Financial Strategy Group.
Develop a new Corporate Plan and supporting Business Plan	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. The approval of The Council Plan with a refreshed vision, set of priorities aligned to the Falkirk Plan, projects, actions and success measures sees the accomplishment of this strategic action. The Council Plan was complemented by the Financial Strategy which strengthens the strategic direction of the Council and embeds the Council's commitment to achieving Best Value.
Implement a programme of collaborative leadership development for Officers and Elected Members. - First phase for officers - Members, with further phases thereafter.	31-Dec-2022	Action is in progress. The 360 feedback process is well underway for chief officers and is due to complete by December 2022. Development activities will be put in place to support chief officer

Action	Deadline	Progress
		<p>development plans and further work will be done in 2023 to roll this out to Service Unit Managers.</p> <p>A range of activities for Elected Members are up and running including fortnightly 'lunch & learn' briefing sessions on operational areas of the Council, more in-depth briefings on strategic issues, specific training on key topics such as media skills and equalities, which will be done jointly with chief officers.</p> <p>A collaborative approach was taken to reviewing and producing the final version of The Council Plan. This resulted in Falkirk Council approving The Council Plan and the associated Financial Strategy. Following on from this, the Financial Strategy Group involving officers and Elected Members is also now up and running and, supported by a Terms of Reference, has a critical role in ensuring that as a Council we are more able to create a shared narrative, to tackle multi-year challenges collaboratively. Further work is now being considered on Member specific activities for 2023.</p>
Define our culture – what does it look and feel like – and embed this across the Council based on the Council values of Responsive, Innovative, Trusted and Ambitious	31-Dec-2022	<p>Action is in progress.</p> <p>A programme of work to support culture change has now been defined. This will be shared with CMT before the end of the year. Some work has started, and a programme of work will be undertaken in 2023.</p>
Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities – Elected Members and Officers – commencing as part of the Member induction process in May 2022 and developing this across the year	31-Mar-2023	<p>Action is in progress.</p> <p>A draft of Elected Member roles and responsibilities is under development following the delivery of the Elected Member induction programme in May / June 2022. Further work is being done to refine this based on the Improvement Service information for Elected Members.</p>
Develop a programme of briefings and activities to ensure strong working relationships amongst Members and with Officers with a sustainable on-going training programme for Members – first phase complete by March 2023 and further phases thereafter	31-Mar-2023	<p>Action is in progress.</p> <p>Lunch & Learn briefings are now in place for both Elected Members and officers. A refreshed programme of these for 2023 is now being developed. A joint development session on equalities is planned for December. A further session on dealing with the media is being arranged.</p>

TRANSFORMATION THEME – Owner: Director of Place Services – NOW COMPLETE

BVR 2 - It is crucial that the council makes far greater progress in delivering its transformation programme and in making savings, given the scale of the challenges it faces– NOW COMPLETE

Action	Deadline	Progress
Review the transformation programme and identify elements that are working. Remove the elements that do not significantly add value, find solutions to the barriers that have previously emerged, and create a faster delivery and decision-making framework	30-Jun-2022	Action is complete. Various consultations took place with senior officers involved with the Council of the Future (COTF) change programme to inform the review led by the Director of Place. A comprehensive proposal on significant changes to the COTF programme was presented and agreed at the CMT meeting on 6 June. This included changing COTF to concentrate on driving forward savings proposals, reviewing projects in scope, improving governance, enhancing performance reporting and updating the approach to the Change Fund.
Harness the resources of the PMO (Project Management Office) team and Change Fund to support the priority transformation projects in the Business Plan so there is increased capacity within the Council	30-Jun-2022	Action is complete. The report agreed on 6 June reduced resources within the PMO team to improve the return on investment for the Council and ensured capacity in the team was aligned where the biggest impact could be made.
Review and improve the milestones used to monitor progress within each project to ensure there is clarity of progression and more effective scrutiny	30-June-2022	Action is complete. The parameters for this have been set and will be incorporated for practical application into the Transformation action on: <i>“Review additional areas that are suitable for transformation within the Council. Where appropriate add these to the transformation programme to create a stronger roadmap of how the Council budget gap will be closed”</i> This work will be undertaken in the Autumn in line with the development of the new Council Plan, Finance Strategy and upon the finalisation of the new COTF projects.
Review and strengthen the way these transformation projects are reported to Corporate Management Team and Council	31-Aug-2022	Action is complete. Was resolved by the report agreed by CMT on 6 June.
Develop a new robust Business Plan that is outcome focussed, has realistic timescales linked to the transformation programme, and named responsibility for delivery	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. Now incorporated into Leadership action: “Develop a new Corporate Plan and supporting Business Plan”.

Action	Deadline	Progress
Review additional areas that are suitable for transformation within the Council. Where appropriate add these to the transformation programme to create a stronger roadmap of how the Council budget gap will be closed	30-Sep-2022	<p>Action is complete.</p> <p>The Executive agreed the new governance arrangements for Council of the Future (COTF) on 23 August 2022.</p> <p>The approval of The Council Plan and Financial Plan on 28 September 2022 included a refreshed set of COTF transformation projects based on the project criteria agreed as part of the governance arrangements.</p>

PERFORMANCE THEME – Owner: Director of Children’s Services

BVR 3 - The council should continue to improve its approach to reporting performance to elected members and the public to support more effective scrutiny

Action	Deadline	Progress
After May 2022 Election, we will review and refresh Performance Indicators to reflect what’s in the new Corporate and Business Plans	30-Sep-2022	<p>Action is complete.</p> <p>With the approval of The Council Plan on 28 September 2022, came an agreed Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>Key aspects of this include:</p> <p>A set of success measures that will be reported on at 22/23 year end.</p> <p>Will be subject to annual refresh, as reported in The Council Plan.</p> <p>A cycle of performance management reporting was agreed for quarterly updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services will review Service Plan performance updates, every second quarter - Elected Members, via Scrutiny, will review The Council Plan performance updates every other quarter (mid-year and end of year). <p>In doing this, the nature of performance management and reporting has changed for Falkirk Council, with a more streamlined set of performance indicators, including Local Government Benchmarking indicators, strategically aligned to the work of the Council and ready for measurement and review in a systematic cycle of reporting.</p>

Action	Deadline	Progress
Remove duplication of reporting and make sure all Council reporting is meaningful, clear and simple to understand (including areas such as risk, finance, statutory areas, Council of the Future) and host in Falkirk Performs	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. With the approval of The Council Plan on 28 September 2022, came an agreed Performance Management Framework, as per above action update. The projects, actions and success measures in The Council Plan are focused on delivering on the Council's new vision and priorities to support continuous improvement across all Council areas, linking with partners, with the new Performance Management Framework in place to facilitate effective scrutiny and public performance reporting on progress.
Performance will be reported using Power Bi and do the necessary systems integration work to make this happen. Our performance information will be clear and simple to understand for anyone reading it	31-Dec-2022	Action is in progress. There is a clear focus on ensuring performance information is clear and simple to understand for anyone reading it, using the tools being deployed across the Council, as per the Performance Management Framework approved as part of The Council Plan. And so, this action is on track to meet the deadline set. For note, an improvement project has been initiated to extend the work of the Best Value Performance Actions. This will include managing the impact of the upgrade in 2023 to the Pentana system, currently used for full performance management. Existing customers will not automatically roll over to new product as part of the upgrade. A decision will need to be made on next steps for the Council's performance and risk management system once the specification for the upgraded product is announced. The project will also include a review of resources undertaking performance management across the Council to generate savings.

CAPITAL THEME – Owner: Director of Place Services

BVR 4 - The council needs to better manage its capital programmes to deliver planned projects

Action	Deadline	Progress
Undertake a comprehensive review of the Capital Plan to ensure proposals for delivery in 2022/23 are free of optimism bias and a delivery plan is in place	28-Feb-2022	Action is complete. This work was completed prior to the Capital Budget being agreed in March 2022. The exercise led by the Director of Place and Finance identified a number of projects that needed to be reprofiled into future years in line with expected delivery and means the Capital Plan activity for 2022/23 should be in a more accurate position for reporting purposes.
Review Council-wide governance arrangements for the Capital Programme to ensure there is an effective mechanism for monitoring, intervening and reporting	30-Jun-2022	Action is complete. A new governance proposal was presented and approved by CMT on 25 April 2022. This included the formation of the new Strategic Asset Modernisation Board led by the Director for Place Services in partnership with the Chief Finance Officer. This Board includes senior representation from across the Council, has agreed Terms of Reference, and reports into CMT on a monthly basis. The first meeting of the new monthly Strategic Asset Modernisation Board took place in May 2022.
Identify and develop projects within the Capital Plan that can be accelerated to mitigate against unexpected slippage in the planned programme	31-Jul-2022	Action is complete. Ratified at Strategic Asset Management Board in August.
Create and embed the Invest Falkirk service area to deliver on the major capital programmes of the Council	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. Invest Falkirk now established under Head of Invest Falkirk.
Undertake benchmarking work in high-performing local authorities to learn from good practice	31-Dec-2022	Survey issued to local authorities, feedback recorded, verbal update coming to November SAMB and formal report to December SAMB.
Review the business case development, options appraisal process, and project management of capital projects	31-Dec-2022	In progress
Undertake post-project reviews for completed capital projects in 2022/23 to identify further improvements	28-Feb-2023	In progress
Undertake a review of progress in February 2023 to determine the success of the changes, and if necessary, develop a further action plan for 2023/24	28-Feb-2023	In progress

COMMUNITY THEME – Owner: Head of Housing and Communities

BVR 5 - The council and its community planning partners need to improve how they manage and report their performance management

Action	Deadline	Progress
Implement The Falkirk Plan. Supported by the Community Planning Partnership Board, all Community Planning Partners will play an active role in the delivery of the Falkirk Plan, delivery plans and locality plans	30-Nov-2022	Action is complete. Community Planning Partnership [CPP] Introduction & Learning Session - this session took place in August 2022 at Falkirk High School. The Programme covered a range of topics which focus on roles & responsibilities of the Community Planning Partnership, Community Empowerment in practice, The Falkirk Plan, Locality Planning in Falkirk, together with a networking opportunity across the partnership. Attendees included; CPP Board, all partners, all Elected Members, Falkirk Plan Delivery Group Leads, various partnership groups including: Children & Young People, Community Safety, Community Justice. The CPP Programme of Information & Learning Events for 2023 was agreed at CPP Board 13 October 2022.
Report and communicate updates on the delivery of The Falkirk Plan milestones, with scrutiny and performance management arrangements embedded	31-Dec-2022	Action is in progress. Falkirk Plan Annual Report – Draft of the first Annual report presented to CPP Board 13 Oct 2022. Scheduled for completion publication December 22. Falkirk Community Planning Partnership Website - Work is underway with a local company to develop a stand-alone website for Falkirk Community Planning Partnership. The website is scheduled to go live December.

BVR 6 - The council and its community planning partners urgently need to develop and implement locality plans to allow them to better focus on the needs of local communities

Action	Deadline	Progress
Complete and implement Locality Plans – dates and ownership will be clear	31-Dec-2022	Action is in progress. Grangemouth [February 2022] and Denny, Dunipace & Dennyloanhead [April 2022] Community Action Plans are now published. Denny, Dunipace & Dennyloanhead Community Action Plan was presented to the CPP Board in April 2022, in partnership with a Community Member. A draft Bainsford & Langlees Community Action Plan was presented to CPP Board 13 October 2022. Work is underway to design the delivery and monitoring approach of Community Action Plans. Locality stakeholder groups, with membership from across the partnership continue to meet regularly in all three areas.

BVR 7 - The council and its community planning partners need to embed their new approach to community engagement and empowerment

Action	Deadline	Progress
Embed community engagement and empowerment into our culture and embed into the business plan	31-Dec-2022	Community Engagement OLLE Training Module designed April 22. Scrutiny and governance arrangements being developed. Community Partnership Team made permanent in 22/23 Budget. Member Induction on Communities 11/05/22 and 23/05/22. Community Partnership Team researched involvement of communities in the procurement process.
Enhance approach to community engagement corporately through increased information sharing and coordination of engagement programmes	31-Dec-2022	Cross service Community Empowerment Action Team (CEAT) relaunched, monthly sessions held 720 hours of community engagement planning support provided to 80 projects-April 2022 Cross-service coordination group (including external partner representatives) in Grangemouth area Team offer of engagement planning support to community organisations engaging for Community Choices project development purposes.
Ensure we continue to 'horizon scan' best practice in other organisations and learn from this	31-Dec-2022	Community Partnership Team in contact with 15 Scottish Local Authorities to share learning, best practice and future collaboration. Community Partnership Team regularly attending training sessions, internalising and sharing learnings with colleagues.

FALKIRK COMMUNITY TRUST – Owner: Director of Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services

BVR 8 - The council needs to ensure that it can deliver the benefits envisaged from bringing the services provided by the Falkirk Community Trust in-house by making the difficult decisions required to realise savings

Action	Deadline	Progress
Building on the positive joint work over recent months of the Programme Management Group, ensure that Falkirk Community Trust staff, services, projects and assets are successfully integrated into the Council	30-Apr-2022	Action is complete. Falkirk Community Trust staff, services, projects and assets are successfully integrated into the Council.
Ensure that the potential opportunities and benefits of integration are used as a basis for transformation, by integrating Falkirk Community Trust services into the Council of the Future programme and specifically the Strategic Property Review	30-Sep-2022	Action is complete. The report on the Review of Integrated Services was considered by Council on 27 October 2022. All recommendations were agreed – refer to spotlight case study in Appendix 2.
Reviews of Falkirk Community Trust services, alongside existing services in new integrated structures, identify early opportunities for transformation, service improvement, efficiencies and savings, building on the new skill sets available to the Council	30-Oct-2022	Action is complete. The report on the Review of Integrated Services was considered by Council on 27 October 2022. All recommendations were agreed – refer to spotlight case study in Appendix 2.

EQUALITIES THEME – Owner: Chief Officer Health & Social Care Partnership

BVR 9 -The council should act to fully embed equalities across the council and comply with statutory requirements

Actions	Deadline	Progress
Refresh existing equalities working group with identified equalities leads for each directorate to complete self-assessment and an improvement plan, in line with best practice, subject to regular review and scrutiny to meet statutory requirements	31-Mar-2022	<p>Action is complete.</p> <p>The refreshed Equalities group has been established and is meeting regularly and is co-chaired by the Chief Officer of Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership and Falkirk Council's Chief Governance Officer.</p> <p>An equalities lead for each directorate has now been appointed as part of the group. A self-assessment has been undertaken against the Audit Scotland Equalities toolkit mapped across to internal suit actions, which is being used to develop the more detailed improvement plan for the Council.</p>
Establish strategic leadership and leadership at all levels across the council.	31-May-2022	<p>Action is complete.</p> <p>An Elected Member champion has now been appointed and meeting between champion and lead officer has taken place with regular follow up agreed.</p> <p>Equalities was a core part of the recent Elected Member induction programme in May / June, with an external partner engaged to support these development sessions.</p>
Develop an ambition to address inequality in every aspect of our work and undertake benchmarking work to learn from good practice in other organisations	30-Sep-2022	<p>Action is complete.</p> <p>The Council has expressed its ambition to embed equalities in every aspect of its work and has actioned this through the ongoing BV plan. The council has nominated an Equalities champion and established the Equalities group with representation from each directorate. The equalities group is learning from other organisations and embedding the Audit Scotland self-assessment toolkit to inform the action plan.</p>
A refreshed approach to equalities practice, including training and performance monitoring	30-Sep-2022	<p>Action is complete.</p> <p>The programme of Equality training is being offered to council staff over the next two months as the basis for embedding consistent equalities practice. The improvement plan based on the self-assessment will provide the framework for performance monitoring. Members of the Equalities group have agreed to participate in the first workshop to pilot the training before wider cross council roll out. Training materials have been prepared and approved by the Group with pilot training session in November.</p>

Develop the vision for Falkirk with reducing inequality at its heart	31-Dec-2022	In progress
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Embed 'equalities first' approach to policy, planning, budget and service redesign.	31-Dec-2022	In progress
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Appendix 2: Case Studies

Case Study 1

Case study name	Best Value Strategic Action
Integrating Trust services back in house.	The council needs to ensure that it can deliver the benefits envisaged from bringing the services provided by the Falkirk Community Trust in-house by making the difficult decisions required to realise savings - completed October 2022.
Aim	
<p>Falkirk Community Trust (FCT) was an arm's length external organisation (ALEO) and registered charity that was established in 2011 by the Council as a limited company by guarantee to deliver Recreation, Sport, Culture and Library Services.</p> <p>On 20 January 2021, Falkirk Council made the decision to bring FCT services and its staff back in-house by 1 April 2022. This would allow a more integrated, streamlined and holistic approach to resources – including community assets and the learning estate - and transformational project work.</p> <p>It would also bring the services under direct democratic accountability, allowing the Council to make decisions for all services in line with agreed priorities as well as help it identify savings and efficiencies as part of a review of posts, work, and structural arrangements.</p>	
What we did	
<p>FCT services and employees were married with the most appropriate Council service to ensure maximum benefit could be realised. Collaborative working between Council and former FCT senior management teams (SMT) ensured a smooth integration of services as follows:</p> <p>Place Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the local, national, and international standing of the Helix Park and Kelpies, the Helix team was retained as a stand-alone team in a new Arts, Culture and Helix service. FCT strategic park responsibilities (Kinneil Estate, Muiravonside Country Park, Callendar Park) became part of the Council's operational parks management and development portfolio within Planning & Greenspace. High maintenance standards within strategic parks remain in place, with operational staff now part of the Grounds Maintenance team. Greenkeeping staff at Grangemouth Golf Course joined the Grounds Maintenance team within the Environment and Operations Unit. 	

- The Falkirk Stadium is now part of Invest Falkirk, with arrangements underway for the Stadium ownership to fully transfer to Falkirk Council during 2022/23.

Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services – formerly Corporate & Housing Services

- Library Services was integrated into Communities
- Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services worked with FCT colleagues on matters impacting all FCT teams including:
 - Communication and engagement with employees and Trade Unions to ensure a smooth TUPE transfer.
 - Trust websites were updated to show services were now Council services, with effect from April.
 - Vehicles and FCT buildings were re-branded, replacing FCT logo and information with Council information
 - Providing Trust employees with Council email addresses and identification badges.

Children's Services

- Bo'ness and Grangemouth Town Halls are now managed by Children's Services as are all sport venues, outdoor activities and community sports hubs.
- Joint meetings with Trust and Service SMT were held to focus on income generation and property management. This has enabled savings of c£280k to be identified and further work is now being done to develop a longer-term Leisure Plan.
- Speaking to sportscotland to provide comfort to all parties that active schools and associated events and programmes would continue seamlessly from the point of transfer.
- The service worked closely with the Scot Govt COVID to comply COVID guidelines that allowed the safe return to sports venues and reinstatement of external evening and weekend lets at High Schools.
- Senior managers from Children's Services visited FCT facilities to meet and greet staff teams prior to the transfer, providing visibility and reassurance.
- Multiple task groups worked hard to take forward legal, operational and practical issues including governance, employees, finance, and marketing.
- These groups focussed on due diligence, the agreements to be concluded between the Council and FCT relating to the transfer, charity considerations with the Scottish Charity Regulator as well as practical implications in the run-up to and following the transfer date to ensure. This work ensured there was limited disruption and a continuation of smooth operation and income generation/collection.

Impact

The Best Value action is complete, with FCT staff, services, projects and assets successfully integrated into the Council. These areas are now an integral part of [The Council Plan](#) and, along with other Council service areas, are subject to Elected Member consideration to deliver on the commitments laid down in the plan.

A report was considered by Council on 27 October 2022 on the [Review of Integrated Services](#). This covered key areas of service delivery including Sport & Leisure, Arts & Heritage, and Library Services, with a focus on transformation and savings.

Sport & Leisure

Current performance of facilities which had reduced during the period of lockdown have been reviewed, including Local Government Benchmarking information. This shows that the cost per visit to Sport & Leisure facilities is currently c50% higher than the average cost per visit across Scotland. Although lockdown will have impacted on the figure, it still demonstrates a real need for change.

Work has been done to ensure the number of users of Sport & Leisure facilities has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Fresh marketing strategies and other opportunities to increase the customer base and footfall have been considered to help facilities operate more commercially.

Several new developments are being introduced to support this work including the introduction of a new electronic booking and point of sale system, enhancement of health and fitness studio facilities within venues, increased promotion of relevant venues for other uses, and a review of facility charges. This work will generate a projected increase in income of c£110k.

Work continues to be undertaken to review the fees and charges of competitors. In the current market these do, however, change quickly and will be responded to in an agile way to ensure fees and charges are competitive and attract and retain new business and customers. Council agreed to delegate the review of fees and charges within Sport & Leisure facilities to the Director of Children's Services on an ongoing basis, provided this does not have a detrimental impact to those who may be in poverty, and the Council's Charges and Concessions policy will apply in these situations.

Customer demand is being assessed to inform the opening hours of venues. Within sports complexes and sports centres, the opening hours were reviewed and amended when they re-opened following the pandemic. Customers are now familiar with the current opening hours which have caused minimal disruption. These revised opening hours will be retained, and further customer engagement will take place to inform the future opening hours of facilities. This will ensure facility opening hours are responsive and reactive to customer demand, making best use of the facilities and reducing costs where customer feedback shows this to be appropriate.

This has enabled the Council to ensure its Sport & Leisure facilities are more cost effective with in-year savings of £140k projected because of the changes already in place.

A five-year Leisure Plan is to be developed by Children's Services in the context of decisions taken in relation to the Strategic Property Review.

Arts & Heritage

In reviewing Arts & Heritage, links with other key projects being progressed by the Council have been considered to ensure all options are aligned. For Arts & Heritage, there is a clear synergy with the HQ & Arts Centre work and saving options totalling c£425k have been identified, linked to changes to the provision of arts & heritage for communities, approved by Council on 28 September 2022.

Libraries

Within the Library Services transferred to Falkirk Council in April 2022, there are eight libraries, a home visiting service, and electronic lending of e-books and audio books.

Libraries are valuable assets to our communities, providing the public with free access to the services they provide. As at March 2022 there were 17,329 active members. In 2021/22 there were 157,049 active visits to the library, and a further 221,775 virtual visits.

Options to redesign the Library Service whilst reducing the budget to run libraries have been identified. It is anticipated that c£425k can be achieved through savings or new income generation. Whilst ambitious it is achievable, as the options are felt to be realistic with the levels of savings/additional income proposed.

What	Annual saving	Financial year	How
Falkirk library/hub colocation	£16.8k	2022/23	This is now implemented. The Hub provides a contribution to library running costs. Saving is operational and will be implemented by the libraries team.
Refresh library ICT systems	£15k	2022/23	This includes moving to Council WIFI, implementing a new Library Management System and cancelling systems that are no longer essential. Saving is operational and will be implemented by the libraries team.
Change stock control system	£5k	2022/23	This will be implemented. Savings achieved through reduced repairs, maintenance and supplier stock processing costs. Saving is operational and will be implemented by the libraries team.
Expand room hire and events in libraries	£8k	2022/23	Community groups using library spaces, author events, kids' activities and parties etc. Work is being done to progress this. Saving is operational and will be implemented by the libraries team.
Review public access PCs	£13k	2023/24	Reduced licensing costs due to reduction in PCs. Saving is operational and will be implemented by the libraries team.

'Coworking hub in libraries – income	£2k	2023/24	<p>Rent space in co-working Hub for a day/week/hour - is intended to regenerate local economies and strengthen communities by supporting young start-ups, digital entrepreneurs, women/parents/carers back into work after career breaks following childcare, people running their own micro-companies etc.</p> <p>Being in a library environment offers benefits including use of print and e-resources, space to network, signposting to agencies like Business Gateway. This would be a distinct space separate from the main public library which would remain free to access for all, in line with statutory requirements for public libraries. It would offer more than a desk, with access to meeting space, basic kitchen facilities and space to collaborate. Fees would be set at an attractive and affordable level. We would trial this approach in one library before rolling out to other areas if successful.</p> <p>The co-working Hub is intended for public use while Council staff would be expected to from the staff areas of the buildings in line with other Council buildings (with no charge)</p> <p>Saving is operational and will be implemented by the libraries team.</p>
Service structure redesign	£335k	2023/24	Redesign service and opening hours to meet community needs.
Placebased colocation of services	£30k	2023/24	Provide other services alongside Library Services
Total	£424.8k		

The savings identified will achieve £45k in 2022/23 (recurring) and a further £380k in 2023/24 (also recurring). Further work is now being done to ensure delivery of the savings and to confirm the final value.

The final two options relate to the delivery structure, opening hours and location of libraries. There may be more cost effective and efficient ways to deliver the Library Services. It is essential that we consider the best options to ensure we deliver what our communities need. To achieve this, it is proposed that we work with communities to develop a five-year strategic action plan for the Library Service, which will show how the service will help deliver the outcomes of the Falkirk Plan and 'Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy'.

We will engage with our communities on what they need and want from Library Services. This will inform the development of the five-year plan, and the options we have available to deliver on the proposed savings set out above. This engagement will include those who do not currently use Library Services, as well as those who do. We will also consult with Library Services employees on the service redesign and its implications for service structures and roles.

We will work with other Council services, partner organisations and communities on options for place-based co-location of services, where appropriate. This will take account of the Council's strategic ambitions contained within the Strategic Property Review and Town Centre Regeneration strategy.

Savings

The budget presented to Members in March 2022 committed officers to achieving £750k of savings from the review of integrated services. Work has now been done by all Directors to identify options to achieve these savings.

Whilst not all recurring savings can be achieved in 2022/23 due to the workforce and community implications, the proposals do provide for the full £750k of savings, plus additional savings, to be achieved in 2023/24, subject to Member approval.

Next steps

A project plan is in place to take forward the work outlined in the [Review of Integrated Services](#) and will be monitored through the Council of the Future governance framework and reported to elected members at key decision points.

Case Study 2

Case study name	Best Value Strategic Action
Better with Capital	The council needs to better manage its capital programmes to deliver planned projects - on track for completion 28 February 2023.
Aim	

- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Capital Plan to ensure proposals for delivery in 2022/23 are free of optimism bias and a delivery plan is in place. **Completed February 2022.**
- Review Council-wide governance arrangements for the Capital Programme to ensure there is an effective mechanism for monitoring, intervening and reporting. **Completed June 2022.**
- Identify and develop projects within the Capital Plan that can be accelerated to mitigate against unexpected slippage in the planned programme. **Completed July 2022.**
- Create and embed the Invest Falkirk service area to deliver on the major capital programmes of the Council. **Completed September 2022.**
- Undertake benchmarking work in high-performing local authorities to learn from good practice. **Completed October 2022.**
- Review the business case development, options appraisal process, and project management of capital projects. **Due December 2022.**
- Undertake post-project reviews for completed capital projects in 2022/23 to identify further improvements. **Due February 2023.**
- Undertake a review of progress in February 2023 to determine the success of the changes, and if necessary, develop a further action plan for 2023/24. **Due February 2023.**

What we did

The 2022/23 budget for the General Fund Capital Programme is part of a five-year plan. Against the backdrop of ongoing concerns on the impact of COVID-19, Brexit, inflation and interest rate rises on delivery and affordability of the capital programme, a comprehensive review of the Capital Plan was undertaken to ensure proposals for delivery in 2022/23 were free of optimism bias.

This included a review of Council-wide governance arrangements for the Capital Programme which were subsequently changed to ensure there is an effective mechanism for monitoring, intervening, reporting and:

- Identifying and developing projects within the Capital Plan that can be accelerated to mitigate against unexpected slippage in the planned programme.
- Creating and embedding the Invest Falkirk service area to deliver on the major capital programmes of the Council.
- Undertaking benchmarking work in high-performing local authorities to learn from good practice.
- Reviewing the business case development, options appraisal process, and project management of capital projects.
- The review also considered: -
- The alignment of the Capital Programme to the Council's vision and priorities.
- The financial pressures facing the Council. All borrowing leads to a revenue cost which could lead to service reductions.
- The assumption that the General Capital Grant will continue to be directed towards the rolling programmes that support delivery of universal services. Whilst there may be scope to review how the funding is allocated across projects, Services have continued to emphasise how important this funding is to the delivery of services.

- The Growth Deal includes a commitment to the investment of £45m – all of which is to be met from borrowing. The commitment of the £45m investment allows the Council to draw down £6m of funding linked to an Arts Centre. The remaining Growth Deal funding is not dependent on this investment.
- The Scottish Government is inviting bids for phase three of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) which aims to support improvement to the condition of the school estate, the delivery of wider Government objectives and sustainable estate planning. Falkirk Council is one of nine Scottish Local Authorities that has not yet secured funding through LEIP to date. Any Council bid would be fully funded by borrowing in the first instance with up to 50% of the capital cost repaid over a 25-year period in revenue funding. This would be a borrowing cost which isn't currently factored into the revenue budget.

The Strategic Asset Modernisation Board is the main governance board in place to oversee the Capital Programme. Established in May 2022, the board is fully functional and is chaired by the Director of Place, given the Directorate's key role in the delivery of the Council's Capital Plan and provides clear leadership at CMT level. It also means that the Director can ensure that corrective action is identified and embedded within his service areas.

The Deputy Chair is the Council's Chief Finance Officer, acknowledging the key role that Finance play in the development and monitoring of the Capital Plan. The Board includes senior representatives from all relevant services with standing invitations to the Chief Executive and other Directors with the acknowledgement that representation would typically be provided by Chief Officers and Managers.

Impact

The review process and subsequent collaborative engagement with Elected Members resulted in Council approving the Capital Programme on 27 September 2022. The Capital Programme includes:

Vision: Strong communities where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved			
P R O J	Priority 1: Supporting stronger & healthier communities	Priority 2: Promoting opportunities & educational attainment & reducing inequalities	Priority 3: Supporting a thriving economy and green transition
	Intermediate Care Facilities (£3.5m) & Day Centres (£1.4m) Community Choices (£2.9m)	Learning Estate Investment Programme* Connected Falkirk (£4.7m)	Growth Deal HQ & Arts Centre (£39m) Vehicle Replacement Programme (£7.5m)

E C T S	Sports Facilities & Pavilions (£2.2m)	All schools fund and other school improvement projects*** (£17.2m)	Energy Efficiency & Carbon Footprint Improvements (£10.4m)
	Culture & Leisure Facilities (£3.6m)	changing Facilities Toilets (£1.4m)	Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme+ (£10.7m)
	Denny to Falkirk Footpath/Cyclepath** (£5.8m)	Off-gas Area Networks (£2.8m)	Denny Eastern Access Road (£5.5m) Town Centre Regeneration Grant (£1.7m) New cremators (environmental impact) (£1.8m)

* This project is not currently funded in the Capital Programme but see LEIP bullet below.

+ Included in the Programme to Scheme Notification Stage, pending confirmation of funding arrangements from Scottish Government

** £4.5m is Grant Funded

*** £3.9m funded from Planning Obligations

Projects which don't appear in the list above but that are essential to the ongoing provision of universal services, include:

- Structural maintenance of roads, bridges and street lighting
- ICT investment to support service delivery across the Council

Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP)

At its core, the purpose of the Programme is to improve the condition of the school estate and benefit 50,000 pupils nationwide to learn in condition A/B schools. The Programme aims to support sustainable estate planning with clear investment and maintenance strategies.

The Scottish Government has invited submissions for Phase 3 of LEIP by 31 October 2022. The LEIP funding model is predicated on Local Authorities achieving specified outcomes through their project, covering areas including condition, energy, jobs, connectivity, and internal environment.

The funding provided is revenue over a 25-year period and the Council therefore has to front-fund the investment. Dependent on the outcomes achieved, the Council can anticipate funding of up to 50% of the Capital cost over the 25-year period.

To submit a bid, the Council must confirm that funding has been identified to support the project.

Children's Services and Place Services are jointly developing a bid to be submitted to the Scottish Government for funding as part of Phase 3 of the innovative LEIP project. This funding bid will outline an exciting proposal to extend Carrongrange High School to become a 5 -18 campus that supports pupils with severe and complex support needs.

The final elements and costings for this project are currently being finalised, however, it is expected that the current cost is likely to be in region of £23m.

Whilst a maximum of 50% funding is available for this project it is dependent on any new project achieving set outcomes. Following agreement at COSLA Leaders Meeting on 26 August 2022, there are now five agreed outcome targets to achieve, which cover condition, energy efficiency, digital connectivity, economic growth and embodied carbon.

Due to this, a prudent financial planning approach has been taken which assume c40% of funding. The Council has currently identified £13.9m which could be used to front fund this project. The remaining £9.1m could be borrowed, based on the future funding stream that would be associated with the project.

Next steps

- Review the business case development, options appraisal process, and project management of capital projects. **Due December 2022.**
- Undertake post-project reviews for completed capital projects in 2022/23 to identify further improvements. **Due February 2023.**
- Undertake a review of progress in February 2023 to determine the success of the changes and, if necessary, develop a further action plan for 2023/24. **Due February 2023.**
- For the LEIP, the detailed bid will be presented to a specially convened meeting of the Education, Children and Young People Executive for approval before submission to the Scottish Government. If the bid is not successful, further proposals will be brought to Elected Members on the use of the funding.

Case Study 3

Case study name	Best Value Strategic Actions
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Getting it right with communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council and its community planning partners need to improve how they manage and report their performance management. • The council and its community planning partners urgently need to develop and implement locality plans to allow them to better focus on the needs of local communities. • The council and its community planning partners need to embed their new approach to community engagement and empowerment. <p>The Best Value Actions for the Community theme are on track for completion 31 December 2022.</p>
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Background									
<p>The Community Empowerment [Scotland] Act 2015, details specific duties in relation to identifying, reporting, and publishing progress on local priorities. Falkirk CPP is accountable to the public for the delivery of the outcomes in the Falkirk Plan and for sharing progress in this area in an annual report.</p> <p>Locality Planning is outlined in the Community Empowerment [Scotland] Act 2015 as a way for Community Planning Partners to tackle inequality in a targeted and cohesive manner for communities facing disadvantage. It allows local people to participate in service planning for their own communities and allows public services to make better use of their resources by working together. Localities are the administrative structure that Community Planning Partnerships [CPP] use to plan, co-produce and deliver services with local communities.</p> <p>In 2018, Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership agreed to organise, plan and monitor their organisation's work across three localities, Falkirk West, Central and East.</p> <p>Within each of these localities, community action planning took place at local levels where evidence of deep inequality existed:</p>									
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>CPP Community Action Plans</th><th>Date Completed</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Grangemouth</td><td>February 2022</td></tr> <tr> <td>Denny, Dunipace & Dennyloanhead</td><td>April 2022</td></tr> <tr> <td>Bainsford & Langlees</td><td>October 2022</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		CPP Community Action Plans	Date Completed	Grangemouth	February 2022	Denny, Dunipace & Dennyloanhead	April 2022	Bainsford & Langlees	October 2022
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In October 2022 the CPP Board agreed the proposal to move to a ward-based localities model from 2023, increasing from 3 to 9 localities. The CPP will develop a programme to work with communities to develop plans at a local level.

The first draft of the Falkirk Plan Annual Report was presented to the CPP Board on 11th October 2022. Feedback is being gathered from the partnership, the indicator dashboard is being completed and design support is being secured from the partnership to publish a final report.

Theme 1 of the Falkirk Plan outlines how the CPP intends to work alongside local communities to reduce inequalities. The development and implementation of locality plans is the vehicle where we make agreements with local communities on the actions to take this forward. In addition, this group oversee the reports from the local CLD Partnership Action Plan in December.

The Council continues to develop and embed an enabling and empowering approach to working with communities. The Council made a decision to make a permanent investment in the Community Partnership Team in April 2022 to take forward this action and has continued this commitment with community focuses actions and monitoring in the New Corporate plan.

Aim

These actions aim to meet the Community Empowerment [Scotland] Act 2015 duties in relation to building our relationship with communities as partners, managing and reporting performance and locality planning:

- Implement The Falkirk Plan, all Community Planning Partners will play an active role in the delivery of the Falkirk Plan, delivery plans and locality plans
- Report and communicate updates on the delivery of The Falkirk Plan themes, with scrutiny and performance management arrangements embedded
- Complete and implement Locality Plans – dates and ownership will be clear
- Embed community engagement and empowerment into our culture and embed into the business plan
- Ensure we continue to ‘horizon scan’ best practice in other organisations and learn from this
- Building on the positive joint work over recent months of the Programme Management Group, ensure that Falkirk Community Trust staff, services, projects and assets are successfully integrated into the Council
- Ensure that the potential opportunities and benefits of integration are used as a basis for transformation, by integrating Falkirk Community Trust services into the Council of the Future programme and specifically the Strategic Property Review

- Reviews of Falkirk Community Trust services, alongside existing services in new integrated structures, identify early opportunities for transformation, service improvement, efficiencies and savings, building on the new skill sets available to the Council

What we did

[The Falkirk Plan 2021 - 2030](#) was jointly developed by community planning partners, based on research and what communities have told us are the issues that are most important to them.

This has allowed progress to be made on the Best Value Communities Actions, including:

Performance Reporting:

- The Falkirk Plan is published
- Falkirk Plan first Annual Report is published [Dec 2022]
- Falkirk CPP Website is live [Dec 2022]
- Regular reporting on Falkirk Plan progress is embedded
- Progress on the CPP Improvement Plan is regularly reported to the CPP Board
- Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Introduction & Learning Event held on 11 August 2022
- Programme of CPP Information and Learning Events in place for 2023

Locality Planning:

- [Grangemouth Locality Plan](#) published 24 February 2022
- [Denny, Dunipace and Dennyloanhead \[DDD\] Locality Plan](#) published April 2022
- Bainsford and Langlees Locality Plan finalised October 2022
- Community Action Plan groups meeting regularly in Grangemouth, Denny, Dunipace & Dennyloanhead, Bainsford & Langlees
- Outcome Co-ordination & Locality and Place Planning Groups meeting bi-monthly
- Locality structure moved to ward based and, increasing from 3 to 9 localities from 2023 onwards
- Co-designed engagement and facilitation training in partnership with Health and Social Care Partnership, delivered in August and September
- First Ward Based Community Engagement Summary drafted
- Intranet Hub content drafted
- 1,000 hours of support for colleagues on community engagement
- Community Partnership Team in contact with 15 Scottish Local Authorities to share learning, best practice and future collaboration.
- CPP Officers participate in National Participatory Budget Officers Network

Working with Communities- The Communities Team have:

- Established a cross Council Community Empowerment Working Group
- Reviewed the Participation and Engagement Strategy 2018-2024
- Codesigned the brief for a new collaborative community engagement and Participatory Budgeting platform to be procured
- Provided over 1,000 hours of support to colleagues to plan and delivery better quality engagement
- Developed and piloted facilitation training
- Worked with relevant Council colleagues to improve asset transfer process

From the 1st of October, the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Capacity Building Team and the Community Halls and Centres staff have moved from Education to Transformation, Communities and Corporate services, consolidating the skills and resources required to empower communities within one Communities team.

Impact
<p>The Best Value actions are almost complete and are on track for December 2022.</p> <p>Feedback from the CPP Learning Event held in August was captured from attendees. Overall feedback was positive with 91% of people who responded stating that information received leading up to the session was Excellent or Good and 100% of respondents describing the session as satisfactory, good or excellent. Attendees suggested topics for future information and learning sessions.</p> <p>Community Asset Transfers are progressing with renewed pace.</p>
Next steps
<p>A full calendar of events for 2023 has been planned with Board Meetings and Learning Events alternating each month. A survey of participants will be conducted after each Learning Event in 2023 in order to continue to drive the structure and content going forward.</p> <p>The Communities team will make recommendations on the findings of its reviews and seek approval to implement further changes and support to the process, systems and approaches that guide us in our work with community partners.</p>