

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: FALKIRK COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2017
Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL
Date: 26 SEPTEMBER 2012
Author: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents to Members the draft Corporate Plan of the Council for approval. This plan covers the period 2012 -2017.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The new Falkirk Council was elected on 5th May 2012 for a five-year term and will be responsible for leading our communities and shaping the future of service delivery in the area over that period. The Corporate Plan sets the framework for how this will be taken forward, reflecting our communities' vision for our area and translating the Council's values into practical action.
- 2.2 Since its early days, the Council has worked with partner organisations to define and deliver the vision for our area that is set out in the existing Strategic Community Plan. The last decade has been one of success, a time of growth for the area and for the public sector as a whole. The area has seen a marked improvement in the physical environment with new landmark buildings, as well as an increasing aspiration and confidence. We have also seen an unprecedented increase in population, employment and public spending over the last 10 years.
- 2.3 More recently, the global recession has had a significant impact on the environment in which we work, including a major reduction in public spending. Given the challenges this brings, it is timely that Council reviews our approach to improving our local area and addressing the issues that are important to our communities. These are factors which have been taken into account in the preparation of the draft Corporate Plan (attached at Appendix One) and its contents reflect that, acknowledging that our approach to improvement must be flexible to respond to changing circumstances.
- 2.4 It is critically important that the Corporate Plan fully reflects the context within which the Council, our services and importantly our communities are living and working. A Context Statement is attached at Appendix Two. It is essential that we understand the internal and external environment, and that the Corporate Plan responds to those circumstances and clearly states our commitment to achieving the vision and outcomes with the Strategic Community Plan.

- 2.5 The key purpose of the Corporate Plan is to set out the Council's strategic direction, outcomes and priorities for the next five years and articulate how we will corporately address the issues we feel are important, through service delivery and community leadership. The development of the plan has drawn on a number of sources to identify challenges and determine priorities, including the Council's priorities, the priorities within the Strategic Community Plan; national strategic objectives; and the key issues and challenges facing the area over the coming year. These include demographic and socio-economic factors, as well as changes in the profile and expectations of our customers. This context is set out in appendix one of the plan. This sets out some of the information used to assess the future challenges, risks and opportunities. As with any statistical statement, the information presented is constantly being up dated and will be further updated prior to final publication.
- 2.6 Although the Corporate Plan will be a public document, its main purpose is as a working tool for Members and Services of the Council. This means it has to be sharply focused and pertinent to the needs of its key users. The plan will ensure Services are clear about the priorities set by Members and that corporate level budgeting reflects these priorities. It also allows Members to monitor what Services are doing to achieve these priorities and enables Service Plans to be prepared with the confidence that they are reflecting Members' priorities.
- 2.7 In addition to this, the Corporate Plan enables our community planning partners and our communities to see how and what the Council is doing to deliver on the vision for our area and our common objectives, as set out in our Strategic Community Plan. This is particularly critical given the Review of Community Planning and the Single Outcome Agreement currently being undertaken by the Government.
- 2.8 As Members will be aware, new national guidance is currently being developed for Single Outcome Agreements, along with clear guidance on the future role, responsibilities and accountabilities for community planning partners. These Outcome Agreements will set out indicators that will measure progress against specifically agreed national outcomes. Officers have been working with our Community Planning partners to develop a SOA that reflects the local outcomes as set out in the Corporate Plan and the Strategic Community Plan for the area. The Corporate Plan has a key role in the successful delivery of this.

3. FRAMEWORK FOR TAKING FORWARD PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The Council has a very important community leadership role to fulfil. During these very challenging times it is essential that we don't lose our sense of ambition and provide both our citizens and communities with a clear idea how we will tackle the big issues which they face. The Corporate plan therefore must be much more than a list of priorities. We have therefore set out ambitions for the area and its people. Although Council services must deliver on the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan they must be clear on how they can also focus on making a significant contribution to our ambitions.
- 3.2 This Corporate Plan is therefore much clearer in its prioritisation. It takes account of the complexity and diversity of the services we deliver but also reflects our ambitions for our area in meeting the significant challenges we face and in helping realise our strategic vision. Our ambitions encompass:

- Alleviating the causes and affects of poverty and tackling inequalities;
- Ensuring all people in our communities are valued and their contribution to communities is recognised, value and celebrated;
- Stimulating business, growth, jobs and investment;
- Continuing to raise the ambition and aspiration of our children, our citizens, our businesses and our services; and
- Making sure that our communities and citizens come first and we do not plan services for organisational imperatives.

3.3 The Council is committed to working in a manner that is sustainable and has a positive lasting impact. That is why the priorities in this plan take account of:

- Early intervention;
- Prevention;
- Enablement; and
- Service transformation

3.4 The Corporate Plan clearly sets out the Council's priorities in terms of activity over the medium term and also indicates how we are going to achieve those priorities with the resources we have. To achieve this, this Corporate Plan is different in terms of content, process and also influence by:

- Setting the context for all we do collectively and individually;
- Realistically setting out our collective priorities;
- Being driven collectively and individually by Members and Officers;
- Being understood in terms of content and process;
- Utilising the priorities in the Corporate Plan to drive change and influence resource decisions including importantly the budget;
- Being used by services to review their own service plans and thus performance and activities; and
- Clearly articulating for our partners and communities the intentions of the Council with regards to our contribution to achieving our vision for the area.

3.5 We will also look to have particular regard to specific groups of people:

- Older people especially those who are vulnerable;
- Children, especially those who are looked after or who are living in poverty; and
- Young people who are unemployed or in danger of becoming disaffected.

3.6 To achieve the desired impact and realise our local outcomes and ambitions, we need to establish goals, outcomes and specific priorities. These priorities will be delivered in a way that takes account of all of the above. While the priorities and ambitions within the plan are high level, it is recognised they must have some underpinning critical success factors, i.e. local outcomes against which we can measure progress, and these will be part of the reporting framework.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan set out a challenging agenda for the Council for the next five years. It also marks a sea change in the way we have thought about and framed our ambitions and priorities. It sets clear priorities for all our Services and highlights for the first time those areas where we will concentrate our efforts to effect change. Our ability to deliver on these priorities is dependant on a number of factors, which we have taken into account. The Corporate Plan will also meet forthcoming requirements from the national Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements.
- 4.2 We will be reporting to Members over the coming months on the changes to our performance management framework and in particular our Single Outcome Agreement.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 **It is recommended that Members approve the Corporate Plan 2012-2017.**

.....
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: 19 September 2012
Ref: ABK0912FC – Corporate Plan
Contact Name: Fiona Campbell Ext 6004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Council, October 2011, Corporate Plan and SOA update
2. Report to Council, March 2008, Corporate Plan 2008 -2011
3. Report to Council, December 2010, Strategic Community Plan 2010 – 2015.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506004 and ask for Fiona Campbell.