

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 6 AUGUST 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

Jim Blackwood
Dennis Goldie
Gerry Goldie
Linda Gow
Adrian Mahoney
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Malcolm Nicol
Alan Nimmo

OFFICERS:

Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Marion Reddie, Head of Community Care
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate & Neighbourhood Services
Alan Rodger, Planning and Environment Manager
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

EX38. APOLOGY

Councillor Spears.

EX39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point in the meeting.

EX40. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 18 June 2013 was approved.

EX41. COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Executive on the forthcoming community council elections proposing that a policy development panel be established to undertake a review of community councils following the elections.

The Council's Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils requires quadrennial community council elections. A timetable for the 2013 elections was presented together with the respective compositions of the 23 community councils in the area and a draft Code of Conduct which, it was expected, would be adopted by the community councils post election. Council had requested, in January 2013, a review of the Scheme and the support provided to community councils. It was now proposed that this review be taken forward by a policy development panel.

The Executive noted the timetable and arrangements for the community council elections 2013 and agreed to:-

- 1) establish a 3 member policy development panel for the purpose of reviewing the Scheme of Establishment for community councils and associated support;**
- 2) appoint Councillor C Martin (as convener) and Baillie Paterson to the panel, and to seek a nomination from the opposition for the remaining place;**
- 3) endorse the code of conduct for community councillors for adoption by each community council.**

EX42. THE PUBLIC BODIES (JOINT WORKING) (SCOTLAND) BILL

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Social Work on the implications of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill and presenting proposed responses to two calls for evidence from Government committees.

The Bill sets out a framework to improve the quality and consistency of health and social care services in Scotland, including the integration of local authority services with health care services - 4 models of integration are proposed based on the body corporate model (where functions are delegated to an integration Joint Board) or the Lead Agency model (where the delegated functions can be led by either the Health Board, the local authority or a joint arrangement between both).

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- 1) to note the contents of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill;**
- 2) to note the financial implications arising from the Bill;**

- 3) the responses to the calls for evidence from the Health & Sports Committee and from the Finance Committee of the Scottish Parliament;
- 4) the decision of the Partnership Board to progress the operational priorities outlined in paragraph 5.2 of the report as the most fruitful areas for the development of more integrated approaches, and
- 5) that the Director of Social Work Services would bring forward a detailed option appraisal by the end of 2013, relating to the 4 potential models of integration.

EX43. FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting the Falkirk Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP).

The introduction of a CAMP is a requirement of the Council's Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and a condition of the Heritage Lottery funding for the Council's Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme. The CAMP sets out detailed guidance to property owners, occupiers and their agents on the local and national planning policies and procedures which should be followed when making alterations to land and premises in the conservation area.

Decision

The Executive approved the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan subject to the amendment of the plan to incorporate provision for approved heritage paint colours thereby minimising the need for planning permission to be obtained, and to authorise the Director of Development Services to make that change to the plan and to make such further consequential amendments as required..

EX44. HOUSING ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the Housing Estate Management Policy.

A draft Housing Estate Management Policy had been approved for consultation in February 2012. The draft policy itself had been drawn up following extensive consultation and set out which services would be available to tenants and other residents to ensure that their neighbourhood environments were pleasant and safe places in which to live. The draft policy had been further consulted upon and a revised version was now presented for approval.

Decision

The Executive agreed the Housing Estate Management Policy.

EX45. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN & COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services on progress towards delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and proposing a Strategic Local Programme for 2015-18.

The Council is required to submit to the Scottish Government a Strategic Local Programme (SLP) listing those projects prioritised in its SHIP which could form a three year programme and which could be completed within three years. In total £9.194m had been allocated by the Scottish Government for the period 2012-15. The Government had allocated £5.54m to Falkirk Council SLP for the 2015-18 programme. The report summarised progress made on projects in the 2012–2015 SLP and identified projects for the 2015-18 programme, highlighting proposals for future development of Council house new build.

Decision

The Executive agreed the approach to future development of Council new build as set out in the report and the Strategic Local Programme 2015-18.

EX46. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES POLICIES & SERVICE STANDARDS (INCLUDING CEMETERIES CAPACITY)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services proposing the establishment of a policy development panel to consider the Council's long term approach to the provision of cemetery space and other policies covering the Council's cemeteries and crematoria.

Council had been advised in June 2013 of the remaining capacity of its 9 operational cemeteries and had agreed to the temporary cessation of advanced lair purchases as an immediate measure to manage current capacity and that a policy development panel should be established to consider the provision of cemetery space and other related policies.

Decision

The Executive agreed to:-

- 1) establish a 3 member policy development panel to consider the provision of cemetery space and other policies related to cemeteries and crematoria, and**
- 2) appoint Councillors Dr C R Martin (convener) and Black to the Panel and to seek a nomination from the Opposition for the remaining place.**

EX47. SPEND TO SAVE PROPOSALS

The Executive considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer detailing 3 projects identified by Services for inclusion within the Council's Spend to Save programme together with a proposal by Falkirk Community Trust.

Council had set aside £2m in December 2012 for 'Spend to Save' projects and a further £1.5m in June 2013. To date four schemes had been approved. Details were given of a further 3 schemes identified by Services; Central Park lease buyout; Refreshing the Teaching Profession and Street Lighting; together with a proposal by Falkirk Community Trust to develop a health and fitness suite. Details of the required funding, annual saving together with the anticipated payback period were provided for each project. The report invited the Executive to consider the Refreshing the Teaching Profession, Street Lighting and Trust proposals and confirmed that a further report on the lease buyout proposed would be considered later in the agenda.

A business case had been provided by the Falkirk Community Trust in respect of its proposal and formed an appendix to the report. The Executive agreed that the business case contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and resolved that, to the extent that there required to be discussion on the detail contained therein, it would be taken in private, and the document would not be available to the press or public.

Councillor D Goldie left the meeting at this point..

Having regard to the submission by the Trust, Councillors Gow and Nicol each declared a non-financial interest in the item as Directors of the Trust, but did not consider that this required them to recuse themselves from consideration of it, having had regard to the objective test in the Code of Conduct and the relevant specific exclusion contained in the Code.

Decision

The Executive:-

- 1) continued consideration of the Spend to Save proposal put forward by Falkirk Community Trust to establish a health and fitness suite pending the submission of further detail;
- 2) noted that the proposed Central Boulevard lease proposal would be considered later in the agenda; and
- 3) agreed the inclusion of the Refreshing the Profession and Street Lighting projects as part of the Spend to Save proposals.

EX48. GPS NATIONAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF LIQUID FUEL: OJEU 127585-2013

The Executive considered a report on the establishment of a Framework agreement for the provision of Liquid Fuel.

The current national Framework for the supply of liquid fuel will end on 30 September 2013. A new Framework agreement is being developed by the Government Procurement Service (GPS). This will provide the Council with access to suppliers for the bulk delivery of diesel and fuel. The Framework Agreement will provide for call-off contracts which will be established through competition and will be in place by the end of September.

The total estimated cost of the call-off contract for the period 10 October 2013 – 30 September 2015 would be approximately £4,000,000. Approval was sought to delegate authority to the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services to accept the contracts in order to meet the required timescales.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

- 1) to authorise the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services to enter into the Government Procurement Service Framework and award call-off contracts under the agreement for the provision of liquid fuels at a cost of approximately £4,000,000 for the period 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2015; and
- 2) that the outcome of the call-off process will be reported in the next Information Bulletin.

EX49. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS OVER £350,000 IN VALUE CONTRACT FOR GAS HEATING REPLACEMENT TO COUNCIL HOUSING PROPERTIES IN THE FALKIRK AREA (VAR-7077E PHASE 5)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services advising of her decision to accept a tender for gas heating replacement.

The Council had accepted tenders for gas heating replacement to council houses in September 2012 as part of a Framework agreement and had delegated authority to the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services to award call-off contracts as part of the agreement.

A tender exercise had been undertaken in respect of the third call-off agreement within the Framework. One tender, from McTear Contracts Ltd, had been received with a price of £1,111,825.37 and, following evaluation, had been awarded by the Director of Development Services on the basis that the tender demonstrated best value.

Decision

The decision by the Director of Development Services to accept the tender submitted by McTear Contracts Ltd, Wishaw in the sum of £1,111,825.37 was noted.

EX50. CONTRACT FOR UPGRADING WORKS TO 90 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, SLAMANNAN (FAL-7275)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services seeking authority to award the contract for upgrading 90 residential properties within Slamannan.

Tenders had been issued for upgrading 90 residential properties in Slamannan. The return date had been 25 July 2013. However the evaluation process had yet to be completed and in order to meet the programmed completion date of 28 March 2014 the Director sought authority to award the contract.

Decision

The Executive delegated authority to award the contract for upgrading 90 properties within Slamannan to the Director of Development Services, provided it was within budget and requested that the Director report the outcome of the procurement process to the earliest appropriate meeting following the tender evaluation process.

Councillor Nicol withdrew from the meeting after this item of business.

EX51. CONTRACT FOR M9, JUNCTION 6 TO EARLSGATE INTERCHANGE SIGNALISATION (IA0151)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services seeking authority to award the contract for the M9 Junction 6 to Earlsgate Interchange Signalisation. Tenders for this contract had been issued on 12 July 2013.

In order to meet the programme completion date of 31 March 2014 the Director sought authority to award the contract.

Decision

The Executive delegated authority to the Director of Development Services to award the contract for the M9 Junction 6 to Earlsgate Interchange Signalisation, provided it was within budget and requested that the Director reports the outcome of the procurement process to the earliest appropriate meeting following the tender evaluation process.

EX52. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Executive agreed, in terms of s50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the said Act.

EX53. 8 CENTRAL BOULEVARD, CENTRAL PARK, LARBERT

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services proposing the early termination of the lease of a property held by the Council at 8 Central Boulevard, Central Park, Larbert, at a cost of £690,000 to be met from the Council's reserves allocated for Spend to Save initiatives.

Decision

The Executive agreed to the early termination of the Council's current head lease at 8 Central Boulevard, Central Park, Larbert at a cost of £690,000 on the terms set out in the report.

Councillor Nicol rejoined the meeting during this item of business.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

SUBJECT: ADOPTION ALLOWANCES CRITERIA
MEETING: EXECUTIVE
DATE: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013
AUTHOR: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 In February 2012, Members considered a report outlining the Council's Adoption Services Plan. Members approved the plan for submission and asked the Service Director to provide an update on the Adoption Allowances Scheme and shared services work. This report outlines developments since that time, and seeks the approval of Members for the proposed adoption allowances scheme.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Falkirk Council is an Adoption Agency in terms of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978. This allows the Council to:
- Assess and approve prospective adoptive parents
 - Register children requiring permanent substitute care
 - Match prospective adoptive carers with children registered for adoption
- 2.2 Since 2005, Adoption Agencies have also been required to register with the Scottish Commission for Regulation of Care (now the Care Inspectorate). Falkirk Council was granted registration status in November 2005. As such, the Service is subject to annual inspection, and must meet the National Care Standards for Adoption Agencies. These include a requirement for criteria and timescales for assessment of prospective adoptive carers, and for work with children requiring permanent substitute care as well as support for carers, and standards expected of those working in the Adoption Agency.
- 2.3 Nationally there are significant numbers of children waiting for a suitable adoptive placement. Recent years have also seen an increase in the number of Looked After and Accommodated Children - in Falkirk 25% more children were accommodated in 2012 than in 2011, though children are remaining in care for shorter periods. The Looked After and Accommodated population now includes a high proportion of younger children from families where drug misuse is a significant factor. One consequence of this increase in numbers is a higher number of children being registered as requiring permanent substitute care. Adoption orders on 18 young people were granted in 2011 compared to 7 in 2008.

- 2.4 Nationally there are also significant numbers of couples and individuals approved as adoptive carers waiting for children to be placed. Unfortunately, people seeking to adopt are often looking to adopt younger children whose needs are more straight forward, and there is therefore a mismatch between carers waiting for adoption and children waiting to be placed for adoption. A national adoption register was set up by the Scottish Government in April 2011 to facilitate matches of children with carers, to avoid drift in planning for children and to encourage wider sharing of resources. Falkirk Council has registered and uses this service.
- 2.5 Children requiring permanent substitute care have additional care needs. Issues highlighted within the past few years at the Council's Adoption Panel include:
- Children born addicted to drugs due to drug misuse by parents. It is known that such children are more difficult to care for through their early life.
 - Children with health issues such as asthma, cerebral palsy, ADHD and autism who subsequently require additional support and care.
 - Sibling groups, some with health and behavioural difficulties, who may need to remain together, but whose combined needs require an exceptional family.
 - Children with attachment disorders.
- 2.6 Falkirk Council, in line with good practice guidance, work alongside Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils in identifying families for children in our care. A commitment has been made as part of the work around shared services, which will allow the 3 Councils to work to the same criteria and guidance in applications, matching of carers and children, and recruitment.

3 ADOPTION PROCEDURES

- 3.1 In September 2009, the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act came into force. This significantly amended legislation around adoption and other areas of child care law. A report to Members in November 2008 outlined some of these changes. Apart from changes to the legal process in relation to adoption, one significant additional duty on local authorities is to assess for and provide post adoption support to any individual affected by adoption e.g. an adopted child, sibling, birth mother, friend or adoptive family. Regulations and guidance on the new Act became available in June 2010, following which the service began a review of existing procedures and practice. This process has been complex, due to lack of clarity in some areas, and work going on alongside this to develop the proposal for a shared service across Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils.
- 3.2 The Council's adoption criteria were updated in 2008, in the light of new research and in anticipation of changes within the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. These are now in line with the most up to date information in relation to health and children's welfare.
- 3.3 Amended Adoption Procedures are now in draft form. These take account of the new legislation and the decision by Members in 2008 that the Council would seek parents for children rather than children for parents, and therefore would not take on applications from prospective adoptive carers only interested in adopting a child without additional needs under two years of age. Areas covered include:

- Processes for assessment and approval of prospective adoptive carers
- Registration and matching children
- Criteria for set up and legal costs
- Adoption allowances scheme
- Inter country adoption
- Adoption by foster carers

4 ADOPTION ALLOWANCE SCHEME

- 4.1 Falkirk Council has always provided adoption allowances where a prospective adopter could not otherwise adopt a child, or where there are additional expenses associated with the care of a child placed. The Adoption and Children (Scotland) act 2007 and related Adoption and Support (Scotland) Regulations 2009, widens the definition of adoption allowances to cover areas such as set up and legal costs, and makes a clearer link between allowances and additional financial costs. The criteria for allowances within the Act indicates that allowances may be considered where additional costs are indicated, and specifically where a prospective carer could not otherwise adopt a child, and where there are special needs, including those associated with disability, or ethnic origin , or to allow siblings to be placed together.
- 4.2 Falkirk Council's proposed adoption allowance scheme is attached in **Appendix 1**. This proposes:
- Set up costs and legal costs associated with the adoption petition should be covered for all prospective adopters, regardless of personal income. The exception would be that set up costs would not be payable for children under two years of age, unless the family are dependent on benefits or on a low income or meet another criteria.
 - Adoption allowances should be clearly related to additional costs, based on assessed need within the adoption support plan.
 - Allowances would not be payable where the additional costs could reasonably be expected to be met by a universal or other service.
 - Allowances may be periodic e.g. to meet the costs of occasional birth family contact - or regular and for a set period, or longer term
 - Adopters of children under the age of two years would not be eligible for allowances, unless other criteria are met.
 - Siblings would usually attract a regular allowance, to facilitate placement together.
 - All allowances will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.3 It is proposed that eligibility for allowances, with the exception of set up and legal costs, should be means tested. The proposed criteria and thresholds are outlined in the procedures, with a suggested threshold of a gross income excluding benefits, equivalent to circa Band K (£40,160) on the council's salary scale. This ensures that prospective adopters on a low income are supported, and only those with significant income would be above the threshold.

- 4.4 For regular payment e.g. to facilitate a sibling placement the weekly adoption allowance payment proposed is two thirds of the current fostering payment for 5 – 10 year olds of £153.20 week This places the weekly adoption allowance at a level roughly equivalent to child benefit and child tax credit where applicable. This rate will be reviewed annually. Periodic payments will link directly to the additional costs involved.
- 4.5 The circumstances of adoptive families can change over time, and the legislation makes clear that support should continue to families for at least a three year period, and that anyone affected by adoption may request a post adoption support assessment at any point. This along with the annual review of allowances ensures that if assistance is required at a later point in the life of the adoptive family, this can be provided in kind or financially.

5 INTER COUNTRY ADOPTION/RESIDENCE ORDERS

- 5.1 Members will be aware that there are occasions where people wishing to adopt seek to do so from abroad, particularly where they wish to adopt a very young child. Good practice indicates that children are best placed within a family of the same origin and background, but also recognises that where this is not possible, families should be able to provide for the cultural needs of a child.
- 5.2 Adoption from other countries is an expensive process, requiring the prospective adoptive family to have access to significant funds. Processes vary from country to country, but all require as part of this, a home study by the local authority and ratification involvement from the Scottish Government.
- 5.3 Numbers of requests for home study reports are not great, with only a few being undertaken by Falkirk Council in recent years. The service does not have the capacity to undertake this work, which can be in the region of 80 – 90 hours of work, within current resources, and in May 2000 Members agreed that a £3,000 charge be made to allow this work to be undertaken by bringing in sessional staff to do the assessments. This no longer covers the costs of undertaking the work and is not in line with charges by other authorities. It is therefore proposed that the same means test is used as for adoption allowances, with a charge made to the prospective adopters which covers the costs of the assessment based on the hourly rate of pay of those involved – social worker and administration. This is likely to be between £3,000 and £5,000 at current rates.
- 5.4 Charging for inter country adoption is also in line with the Scottish Government approach who have intimated in 2012 that they will be levying a charge of £1,675 to cover admin costs. Scottish Government are applying a means test with no charge for an income under £25k, 50% for an income of £25k to £45k and above that full charge.
- 5.5 Falkirk Council also provide allowances in some circumstances where people have a residence order, and a means test similar to the one outlined above has always been applied to determine eligibility in this situation. It is proposed that the adoption allowance test is therefore applied to residence payments.

6 SHARED SERVICES

- 6.1 As part of the shared services agenda, work has been ongoing in relation to a shared fostering and adoption service across Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils. Agreement was reached in late 2011 that:
- a post adoption service could be provided across the three Councils which would allow development of an effective service which none of the three Councils could provide on their own.
 - Falkirk should be the lead agency for the development of a shared service
 - the procedures and policies of the lead authority would apply across Forth Valley
 - the service is best provided by means of a joint working agreement, with staff remaining employees of their home authority.
 - progression on an incremental basis was the preferred way forward.
- 6.2 Developments in Clackmannanshire and Stirling joining services led to a break in discussions, and work is now beginning again to consider the details of how a shared service could operate. It is intended, with Members approval, to progress a shared post adoption service in the first instance.
- 6.3 While there are no current resource implications to these developments, final proposals may lead to a reconfiguration of how fostering and adoption services are delivered.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Provision of adoption allowances is already contained within the service budget, and an administrative process is already in place in relation to funding for set up and legal costs, and means tests which will be adjusted to meet the new procedures. There are therefore no financial implications in relation to this provision.
- 7.2 Post adoption support over the first three years, and following that for people who require support later in the process is a new requirement which needs to be met within existing resources. Consideration is currently being given to ring fencing existing staff time across the three Councils to create a dedicated post.
- 7.3 The three Councils currently fund by means of small grants, three post adoption support services which provide counselling and group support functions to adopted people. Consideration will be given to whether these services adequately meet the need or if there is scope to redesign support services.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no resource implications for the proposed adoption allowances scheme.
- 8.2 Members will be provided with an update on the shared services work, and the resource implications of this as the work progresses. HR and legal services have worked with staff as part of this work.

- 8.3 An Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken, and this has not raised any equality or poverty issues.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members of Executive:

- 9.1 Agree the revised Adoption Allowances Scheme, and application to inter country adoption and residence allowances;
- 9.2 Agree the amended charging policy for inter country adoption;
- 9.3 Note developments in relation to a shared adoption and fostering service and request the Director of Social Work Services to update Members as the work progresses

Margaret Anderson.

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Margaret Anderson
Director of Social Work Services

Date: 23 August 2013
Contact: Vivien Thomson, Extn No 4034

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

FALKIRK COUNCIL

ADOPTION ALLOWANCE SCHEME

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007

Adoption Support and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009

Where a person was receiving an adoption allowance under the Adoption Allowance (Scotland) Regulations 1996, that person may continue to receive payments as agreed under those Regulations. (Regulation 17)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

An adopted child becomes a full member of their adoptive family. Their adoptive parent may claim any benefits or tax credits in respect of the child and have full parental responsibilities and rights. Advice should be obtained from the Money Advice Service to maximise income from Tax and Benefits.

The payment of Adoption Allowances should therefore be based on need and supplement the income available to the family where this is required to cover additional expenditure to related to the needs of the child.

Adoption Allowances are available for children over the age of 2 years, but may be payable to those under 2 years where other criteria are met.

The payment of allowances is only one part of the overall Adoption Support Service offered by the Council and its partner agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector.

2.0 WHAT CAN AN ALLOWANCE BE PAID FOR?

2.1 Single Payment for Specific Costs

With reference to Regulation 10(2)(e) Falkirk Council will meet the reasonable costs in respect of:

2.1.1 *Legal costs* (including court fees and obtaining certificates) where a prospective adoptive parent instructs a solicitor in pursuance of the child's plan. This must be agreed in advance by the Service Manager and at least two written estimates are required.

2.1.2 *Payment of costs for the purpose of introducing a child to the child's prospective adoptive parents.* This may include travel, reasonable subsistence and accommodation if required. The Placement Co-

ordinator should advise the applicants how to claim these costs (AA 2a or 2b or 2c).

2.1.3 *A “Settling In” grant required to meet the needs of a child.* Falkirk Council may pay up to £750 per child, aged 2 or over, for the purchase of necessary furniture or equipment (see AA 1(b)) from an agreed list of appropriate items). The Placement Co-ordinator should clarify with the prospective adopters and their Supervising Social Worker if such assistance is required either at the Linking or Co-ordination Meeting.

2.1.4 Exceptional Payments: Payment of a Settling In Grant for a child below the age of 2 years may be considered by the Service Manager if the prospective adopters are on Income Support or a low income (i.e. eligible for Tax Credits or Housing Benefit).

2.2 Periodic Payments

2.2.1 Falkirk Council may meet the identified costs for specific expenditure known as “periodic payments”. This may be where there are significant travel costs in maintaining contact with the child’s birth family or a specific expenditure necessary to support the child which is not available from other agencies or services.

These costs should, as far as possible, be identified by the Placement Co-ordinator at the Linking Meeting or Co-ordination Meeting and sent to the Team Manager (Adoption and Fostering) on Form AA 2(a) and claimed by the Adoptive Parents on Form AA 2(b) or (c) as agreed in advance.

2.2.2 Where a regular Adoption Allowance is being paid, (see section 2.3) these payments would be expected to meet any requirement for a periodic assistance. They may be paid in addition to the regular Adoption Allowance at the discretion of the Service Manager.

2.3 Regular Payments

2.3.1 Circumstances in which Regular Adoption Allowances may be paid (Regulation 10)

- Where it is necessary to ensure that the adoptive parent is able to look after the adoptive child.
- Where the child needs special care which requires resources by reason of illness, disability, emotional and behavioural difficulties or the continuing consequences of past abuse or neglect where this is not the responsibility of other agencies or services.

- Where special arrangements incurring financial costs are required to facilitate the placement of a child due to the age or ethnic origin of the child.
- Where the payment of an allowance is necessary to allow the child to be placed with a sibling or a child with whom they previously shared a home.

3 HOW MUCH IS THE ADOPTION ALLOWANCE?

3.1 “Periodic” Allowances

These are generally paid for a specific purpose as detailed in 2.2 above. Costs should be agreed in advance and claimed on Form AA2 (a), (b), (c) as appropriate.

3.2 Regular Allowances: amount payable where an Adoption Allowance has been agreed (subject to Means Test below)

Regular adoption allowances are weekly payments and may be paid either for a time limited period or with a view to supporting a child’s placement throughout their childhood. Such adoption allowances are means tested, and reviewed on an annual basis.

The amount payable is set by the Service Manager and is part of the child’s adoption support plan. The current amount payable is a flat rate of 2/3 of the Age Related Fostering Allowance for a child aged 5 – 10, (the ‘standard rate’) with no deduction for benefits received by the family. This is roughly equivalent to child tax and child benefit levels.

3.3 Means Test:

An Adoption Allowance may be payable where the gross income of the household, excluding any state benefits or Tax credits, is lower than the Local Government Spinal Column 82 circa (Grade K £40,160);

In considering an application it is important to anticipate the household income post placement as often this may reduce while an adoptive parent takes a career break.

4 APPLYING FOR ADOPTION ALLOWANCE

4.1 In anticipation or immediately following placement

The Placement Co-ordinator should ensure that this application (AA 3 and 4) is made at the appropriate time which may be:

- at a Linking Meeting which will take place prior to any Adoption Matching Panel.
- at the Placement Co-ordination Meeting which takes place following the Adoption Matching Panel and ADM agreement to the placement.

4.1.1 Application Process

- The Supervising Social Worker should verify the income of the Adoptive Parents and establish whether they meet the threshold for this to be payable. This should reflect the current income and anticipated income of the family after the child is placed.
- *Adoptive Parents* complete either form AA 2 (expenses) or AA 3 (Regular Allowance) as appropriate, supported by their Supervising Social Worker and send it to the Placement Co-ordinator.
- *Placement Co-ordinator* checks the application and sends it with the Minute of the Linking Meeting; the Matching Panel; and the Co-ordination Meeting as relevant to the Service Manager.
- The *Service Manager* writes within 28 days to the Adoptive Parents, with copies to their Supervising Social Worker, Placement Co-ordinator, child's Social Worker, and finance officer advising of the decision regarding Adoption Allowances. Where an allowance has been approved, form AA5, adoption allowances agreement should be enclosed.
- The *Senior Administrator* will:
 - Send the BACS form to the Adoptive Parents
 - Implement the payment instructions

4.2 Request for an Adoption Allowance as part of an Adoption Support Plan request

Anyone affected by adoption may request an assessment of their post adoption support needs at any stage e.g if a families circumstances or the needs of a child change many years after the adoption. Following such an assessment in relation to a child or adoptive carer, the need for an adoption allowance may in some circumstances be identified.

The payment of an Adoption Allowance is not compensation for any difficulties a child or family may be experiencing, and must be clearly identified as supporting the child and their adoptive parents to meet additional financial need identified in the Adoption Support Plan where this is not the responsibility of another service or agency. The circumstances where these might be considered are:

- The financial circumstances of the parents change (e.g. redundancy, bankruptcy).

- The family need financial support to prevent a disruption of the placement.
- For a periodic payment for a specific purpose (e.g. contact arrangements, or where the needs of a child require a longer than anticipated period of adoption leave) (Section 2.2)
- Any other matter identified in the Adoption Support Plan.

An adoption allowance will not be paid where the services or needs of a child or family could reasonably be expected to be covered by mainstream services.

4.2.1 The Co-ordinator of the Adoption Support Plan should arrange to support the adopters in applying for an Adoption Allowance.

The Adoptive Parent should :

- Complete the application form AA 2 or AA3
- Complete the Financial Assessment (AA 4)

The Co-ordinator, Adoption Support, should :

- Send the above application with a copy of the Adoption Support Plan and any other relevant material to the Service Manager.

The Service Manager should:

- Consider the application.
- Follow the procedure in 4.1.1.

4.3 Foster Carers who apply to adopt a child (Regulation 11)

Where it is agreed as part of the Child's Plan that the child should be placed by Falkirk Council acting as an adoption agency, with their existing foster carers, the Council may pay the equivalent of the Fostering Fee and Allowance as an Adoption Allowance. This may be for a period of up to two years but may be paid beyond that in exceptional circumstances (Form AA3(b), for example where there is hardship or the criteria for allowance for non-carers is met.

The Team Manager (Adoption and Fostering) should ensure that if the foster carers wish to apply for an Adoption Allowance that this is done using Form AA 3(b) at the an early point in the planning process. The application should be sent to the Service Manager for consideration.

On receipt of the Form AA 3(b) the Service Manager, as with other adoption allowance requests, should make their decision within 28 days (unless further information is required) in which case a timescale should be indicated. The Service Manager should send their decision in writing to the applicant with a copy to the Team Manager (Adoption and Fostering), the foster carers' Supervising Social Worker, the child's social worker and finance officer.

The decision on whether to pay an allowance is at the discretion of the Service Manager and will be based on the criteria relating to the payment of adoption allowances detailed above.

Foster Carers in these circumstances would continue to receive full Fostering Fees and Allowances in respect of the child until the Adoption Order is granted.

As with all Adoption Allowances those payments will be subject to annual review.

4.4 Adoption Allowance: Process when Foster Carer adopts a child they fostered

When the Adoption Order in favour of the foster carer is granted the Supervising Social Worker for the carer must write to the Service Manager, copy to the finance officer, advising of the date the Adoption Order was granted and, where Adoption Allowances have been agreed, confirming that the financial circumstances of the carer have not changed since allowances were agreed, and requesting that this payment commence and fostering allowances cease. The Minute of the Adoption Matching Panel and the agreement to pay adoption allowances should be attached.

5 REVIEW OF ADOPTION ALLOWANCE

All Adoption Allowance Agreements must be reviewed annually. This will take place around March/April of each year.

The Finance Officer/Service Manager will:

- Send the Review letter (AA6a) and the Adoption Allowance Review Form AA6 (b) to all those in receipt of allowances
- On receipt of the completed form, advise the adoptive parents of any changes to the Adoption Allowance, including amounts payable and address other aspects of the agreement (e.g. time limited payments).

The Adoptive Parents:

- Must complete the Annual Review Form (AA6) and return it to the Service Manager within 28 days.

• NON-RETURN OF ANNUAL REVIEW FORM

Where the Annual Review has not been returned within the 28 day period above, the Service Manager should send a reminder AA6(c). Should this not be returned within a further 28 days, the Service Manager may suspend payment of the allowance by writing to the Adoptive Parents, and inviting them to contact the Service Manager to discuss their circumstances.

The Service Manager should make a final decision with regards to payment of allowances within three months of the initial request for the Annual Review and advise the Adoptive Parents of this, taking into account any submissions made by them.

7.0 APPEALS

Appeals against a decision regarding Adoption Allowances should first be raised in writing with the Service Manager explaining the reason for the appeal.

The Service Manager should review the decision, confirm the outcome of the appeal and the reasons for the decision in writing to the applicant and advise the applicant that they may appeal this decision to the Head of Service,

The applicant then may, within 28 days of receipt of the service manages decision, appeal the decision to the Head of Service who should consider it and come to a final a decision within 28 days.

8.0 COMPLAINTS

Falkirk Council Social Work Services wish to resolve any difficulties as quickly as possible. Any complaints relating to adoption allowances should be raised with the appropriate line manager who would always attempt to resolve the matter where possible at local level.

Where this is not successful, Falkirk Council Social Work Services has a formal complaints procedure, details of which are available from local offices and from the council web site.. As Falkirk Council are also a registered Adoption Agency, complaints may additionally be also be made to the Care inspectorate.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANCE WITH
TRANSPORT POLICY AND PROPOSED CHANGES**
MEETING: EXECUTIVE
DATE: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013
AUTHOR: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Social Work Service has been undertaking a review of current arrangements for the provision of transport to service users in order to ensure that our arrangements are efficient, effective and financially sustainable. This report sets out proposals for a Social Work Transport Policy and members are asked to consider taking these proposals to the next stage of formal consultation with service users who may be affected.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Social Work Services provides transport through a variety of ways and for a range of purposes to a cross section of service users. Transport, in itself, is not deemed to be a Social Work Service. Therefore, careful consideration requires to be given to providing transport assistance. This should only happen, following an assessment of need and as part of a care plan, when the service user has no access to more appropriate means of transport (e.g. access to DLA mobility component, bus pass or public transport).
- 2.2. Social Work Services operates within a defined allocated budget and is accountable for use of this budget, which includes spending the money we have in the most effective and efficient ways and ensuring the Service does not incur unnecessary expenses.
- 2.3. In the current economic climate, and to ensure that scarce resources are appropriately targeted, a draft policy and guidance has been developed which would provide criteria to assist staff to make robust decisions in determining if transport assistance is to be provided for service users based on need.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1. The requirement of the Service to carry out assessments and provide Children & Families, Criminal Justice and Community Care Services is set out within a legislative framework and local policies and procedures.
- 3.2. The legislative framework, in particular section 87 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, gives local authorities a significant degree of discretion in charging for residential social work services subject to some restrictions where the service is imposed on a compulsory basis.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1. The proposals are governed by the overarching principle to ensure that all service users are encouraged and assisted as far as possible to travel independently and to make optimum use of mainstream transport options, including public transport. This is consistent with local and national strategies to promote independence and re-ablement.
- 4.2. The proposed policy and procedures are based on the following.
 - The Service will assess the service user's requirements for assistance with transport in relation to accessing a service they have been assessed as requiring.
 - The Service will only provide assistance with transport where it is clear that such assistance is **essential** in enabling the service user to access a service;
 - All assistance with transport will be provided in the most cost effective way possible.
 - Where service users are in receipt of state benefits (in money or kind) that are provided for the express purpose of aiding mobility, the Service has an expectation that the individual will utilize these to access services they require.
 - Any assessment for assistance or actual assistance will be provided in a fair, transparent and consistent way.
- 4.3. It therefore does not automatically follow that an individual assessed as requiring a Social Work Service will also receive assistance with transport. Whether a service is directly provided, or commissioned, any assessment for transport provision would be undertaken as part of the assessed need and be included in the resulting care plan, if appropriate.
- 4.4. We are therefore proposing to develop specific eligibility criteria for assistance with transport, as follows:-
 - The service user must have been assessed as eligible to receive a Social Work Service.
 - The assessment will require to take into account whether the service users is in receipt of state benefits (in cash or kind) that are provided for the express purpose of aiding mobility.
 - The assessment of need has demonstrated that assistance with transport is essential to enable the service user to access the service.
 - It must be demonstrated that all other reasonable transport options have been explored.
- 4.5. Also it is proposed that where transport is provided, charges should be levied where reasonable and in accordance with what the legislation allows.

5. POTENTIAL IMPACT

- 5.1. An equality and poverty impact assessment (EPIA) has been completed and will be reviewed in light of the consultation responses.
- 5.2. Currently there are no strict criteria applied to the provision of transport and no service users pay for transport; accordingly, the implementation of any of the proposals is likely to lead to a reduction of provision and/or an increase in cost for existing service users. The group with a protected characteristic most likely to be adversely affected are those who are disabled, for example, by the proposal to reconsider the current practice of service users in receipt of benefits specifically for assistance with transport (e.g. DLA with higher rate of mobility component or mobility car) being provided with transport to attend either adult day centres or activity schemes for children for example. The impact in this case can be mitigated by the fact that the benefit is available to pay for transport. More broadly, the impact on disabled people can be mitigated by ensuring that service provision is focused on people with the greatest mobility needs.
- 5.3. If these proposals are progressed, they would affect all age groups and population groups outlined in the EPIA without any significant differential impact other than noted above, as well as all wards across Falkirk Council. There is also a potential impact on the third sector, for example, on increased pressure on organisations like “Dial a Journey”.
- 5.4. The withdrawal of transport for people in receipt of benefits specifically designed to pay for this and/or the possibility of charging all service users for the provision of transport is likely to be less popular than the current arrangements. However the proposed changes are striving to equalise service as well as to ensure that services are sustainable in the future.
- 5.5. Proposals would potentially impact on all Social Work service users, the majority of whom are on low incomes or benefits. However the charging arrangements attached to these proposals can be tailored to ensure that people in receipt of specified benefits would be exempt and that there would either be a means testing formula thereafter or fixed charge. If agreed a more detailed, level of detail would be subject to a future report to Members, following the consultation exercise with service users..
- 5.6. The consultation would also require to consider whether the proposals would be likely to impact on the decisions that service users make about accessing services.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. At this stage there has been no discussion with HR; Finance or Unison regarding these proposals. However given the significant proposed change to practice, it is recognized that there will be a need to enter into a wide ranging consultation with service users, staff, HR, Unions and other stakeholders
- 6.2. There would not appear to be any legal impediment to proceeding with these proposals, other than the issues outlined under paragraph 3.3.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. In summary, as a service, we have concerns regarding how sustainable current arrangements are in the current economic climate and for this reason have developed proposals which, if approved in principle by members, would be subject to consultation.
- 7.2. The detail of any consultation would have to be carefully considered to ensure we were asking questions regarding what impact this might have on service users and if and how this might be mitigated.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 **Note the content of this report and the proposed changes to the provision of assistance with transport related to the assessed need for Social Work Services.**
- 8.2 **Agree that the Social Work Service should undertake a wide consultation with all groups outlined in 6.1.**
- 8.3 **Request the Director of Social Work Services to bring back final proposals following the consultation period.**

.....
Margaret Anderson
Director of Social Work Services
23 August 2013.

Contact Officer: Kathy McCarroll Head of Service Children & Families/Criminal Justice
Extn 4033

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STRATEGY
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the development of a Social Enterprise strategy for the Falkirk Council area in order to bring together and strengthen the support we currently offer to an important emerging sector.

2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

- 2.1** A detailed proposal outlining the purpose, context, definitions and timescales for developing a social enterprise strategy is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2** The paper sets out the local, national and international context in which social enterprises are now developing and provides some definitions. It discusses the ways in which social enterprises add value, in particular in relation to social, economic, employment and environmental outcomes.
- Social enterprises are non-profit distributing businesses that have a “social mission” as their primary purpose.
 - Their aims and mission are often closely aligned to aspects of Falkirk’s strategic community plan and they have the potential to make a significant contribution to its development and that of the Single Outcome Agreement.
 - There has been relatively little sector development in Falkirk and a strategy is necessary to provide a mechanism for promoting the development of sustainable social enterprises that could fill gaps in the market, allow the local area to benefit from the added value offered by social enterprises and help to reduce grant dependency.
- 2.3** Falkirk Council currently provides some support to social enterprises through the mechanisms available to all businesses or third sector organisations operating within the area, primarily through Business Gateway.
- Support and advice to start-up businesses and to those that wish to grow and improve
 - Workshops and events, 1-to-1 advice, access to Scottish Enterprise or Just Enterprise programmes and support, web audits, and links with professional organisations.

- 2.4 A strategy would help to co-ordinate this work, and identify ways in which support could be better targeted in order to meet the specific needs of the sector.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 3.1 Approve the proposal outlined in appendix 1 to develop a social enterprise strategy.

.....
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 27 August 2013

Ref: ABB0913SW

Contact Name: Sally Wainwright

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506011 and ask for Sally Wainwright.

The Need for a Social Enterprise Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper discusses the possibility of developing a social enterprise strategy for the Falkirk Council area. This paper was developed by Council officers, social enterprises and the 3rd sector interface provided by CVS Falkirk & District. It recommends that Falkirk Council, in collaboration with CVS Falkirk & District, takes the lead on developing a social enterprise strategy, to be developed in partnership with the social enterprise sector.

2. National and Local Context

- 2.1. Falkirk Council, like all local authorities, is facing significant budget challenges due to reductions in Government funding and the continuing effects of the recession. At the same time demand for services continues to grow and diversify. This results from the area's continuing growth, due to a combination of demographic and economic issues. We also face significant challenges arising from the implementation of Welfare Reform.
- 2.2. In June 2013, there were 4,223 unemployed people in the Falkirk Council area, accounting for 4.2% of the working-age population. This is a higher rate of unemployment than Scotland (3.8%) or the UK (3.5%). The number of local unemployed 18-24 year olds was also higher (8.2%) than in Scotland (7.0%) or the UK (6.2%).
- 2.3. The draft Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) places more emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The SOA also highlights the need to rebalance and reform service provision to encourage greater independence and self-management, as, for example, in our draft Strategic Commissioning Plan for Older People 2013-16. These issues require both the more efficient delivery of existing services and also the provision of different types of services, often at an earlier stage. This together with other aspects of public sector reform, arising from the key findings of the Christie Commission, require Local Authorities to take a fresh look at the best way to deliver future public services and be innovative and creative in who should provide them. These drivers provide opportunities, particularly for the not for profit sector, which includes social enterprise, to become more involved in the delivery of public services.
- 2.4. At its meeting on 22 March 2012 the Community Planning Partnership Leadership Board considered a report proposing the development of a Falkirk Social Enterprise Action Plan and agreed to receive this for approval at a future meeting. This proposal is to take that work forward.
- 2.5. The Scottish Government has put in place a programme of business support for social enterprises through a business support organisation, Just Enterprise. It will deliver a programme of work that promotes the ongoing growth and sustainability of an enterprising third sector in Scotland. It is intended to ensure that:
 - third sector organisations across Scotland (including those that are equalities-led) grow in financial resilience and sustainability;
 - enterprising third sector organisations operate as effective, and / or growing businesses;
 - third sector organisations win more contracts, including with the public sector;

- the response of the third sector to public sector application of Community Benefit clauses and the public-social partnership model is strengthened and maximised;
 - new social enterprises and social entrepreneurs are supported to become established and grow; and
 - third sector leadership is enhanced to support business development and sustainability.
- 2.6. Such investment and work will place third sector organisations, including social enterprises in a much better place to get more directly involved in the delivery of public services, should appropriate opportunities arise..
- 2.7. The 2013 UK budget included a commitment to introduce tax relief for social enterprises. Para 1.135 of the budget “red book” says:

Social enterprises play an important role in growing the economy, reforming public services and promoting social justice. The Government will introduce a new tax relief to encourage private investment in social enterprise. The tax relief will complement the Government’s other recent measures to help social enterprises access the capital they need, such as the launch in 2012 of Big Society Capital. The Government will consult formally on the details of the relief by summer 2013 and the relief will be introduced in Finance Bill 2014.

- 2.8. There is no legal definition of social enterprise. However, in 2011 the European Commission produced an EU definition:

‘Social enterprise’ means an enterprise whose primary objective is to achieve social impact rather than generate profit for owners and stakeholders. It operates in the market through the production of goods and services in an entrepreneurial and innovative way, and uses surpluses mainly to achieve social goals. It is managed in an accountable and transparent way, in particular by involving workers, customers and stakeholders affected by its business activity.

3. Definitions – What is a Social Enterprise?

- 3.1. There are estimated to be around 64,000 social enterprises in the UK, contributing an estimated £24bn to the economy. This includes about 3,000 social enterprises in Scotland, with a combined turnover of £2-2.5bn p.a. although the number in Falkirk is not known at present.
- 3.2. Social enterprises are businesses that operate on a not for profit basis but also secure other community related benefits. They are trading organisations whose primary purpose is social, economic or environmental. In order to achieve these objectives, they aim to be financially independent, profit-making organisations whose surpluses are used to further their social mission. Their constitution *must* include an “asset lock” which ensures that all surplus and residual assets are invested for the organisation’s social purpose.
- 3.3. Some social enterprises start up without any requirement for grant funding. Others grow from existing third sector organisations which increasingly take on trading activities or which set up a social enterprise trading arm. New social enterprises may initially request grants to help with start up or core running costs, but in those cases the intention is always to become financially independent through trading activities, service level agreements etc.
- 3.4. It is therefore important not merely to consider social enterprises as small organisations which require ongoing grant funding to survive. Successful social enterprises may not

always be thought of in terms of the “social enterprise” label. Taking this wider definition into account, local social enterprises include Grangemouth Carers, and Paragon Housing Association.

3.5. Social Enterprise Scotland provides a concise definition:

Social enterprises are independent businesses that exist specifically for social and/or environmental purposes. Social enterprises trade in all markets, selling goods and services to individual consumers, local authorities, government and private businesses. Social enterprises exist to make a profit just like any private sector business. However, profits or surpluses are always reinvested into their social and environmental purposes.

3.6. The central characteristics of social enterprises were identified in 2010 by SENSCOT in conjunction with the Scottish social enterprise community. This widely accepted definition includes 5 key criteria. They are, in brief:

- Criterion 1 – Social Enterprises have social, economic and/or environmental objectives. They must be able to demonstrate their social mission.
- Criterion 2 - Social Enterprises are trading businesses aspiring to financial independence. This is demonstrated by earning at least 50% of their income from trading.
- Criterion 3 – Social Enterprises have an ‘asset lock’ on both trading surplus and residual assets. Whether or not it is a charity, all of a social enterprise’s distributable profit is reinvested for the purpose of its social mission.
- Criterion 4 – Social Enterprises cannot be the subsidiary of a public sector body. They must be constitutionally separate from any public body, but may be the trading subsidiary of a charity.
- Criterion 5 – Social Enterprises are driven by values – both in mission and business practices.

4. Social Enterprise Services

- 4.1. Social enterprises can exist in all economic sectors. They can be any size from a couple of staff in a start up organisation to an established organisation with hundreds of employees.
- 4.2. New and established local social enterprises cover a wide range of services including adult and child care, tourism, environmental and recycling services, art, catering and housing. Elsewhere, social enterprises include The Big Issue, The Eden Project, Jamie Oliver’s restaurant 15, and GTS Solutions CIC, which is a Scottish private security company.

5. Constitutional Arrangements

- 5.1. A wide range of constitutional arrangements are possible so long as the constitution includes an asset lock. Common constitutions used by social enterprises include Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Community Interest Company, Company Limited by Guarantee, Development Trust, Co-operative and Housing Association.

- 5.2. Social enterprises should not be confused with other types of organisations which use these legal formats, such as a public sector arms-length company. They also differ from private sector businesses that choose to operate in an ethical way but equally could choose to stop doing so. Although social enterprises may be charitable, they are distinct from charities that do not trade (or trade very little) as they need to make a profit and be financially sustainable in order to meet their social and environmental objectives.

6. How Can Social Enterprises Benefit Falkirk?

- 6.1. Social enterprises offer a unique combination, creating both financial and social capital. As sustainable *businesses* they have an ability to lever in additional investment or funding from a wide range of organisations in order to meet local needs. They can gain business support from other organisations such as Just Enterprise, and they generally have a good understanding of the impact of their business on their community.
- 6.2. Unlike charities and voluntary organisations they are (or are aiming to have) financial independence rather than requiring on-going annual grants to enable them to deliver their services. The asset lock on social enterprises means that all profits are reinvested in the community. Money generated by social enterprises can have a local multiplier effect, particularly when employees live and spend their money in the same area, and the enterprise uses local suppliers.
- 6.3. As *social organisations*, social enterprises also provide added value in addition to their impact as local businesses. Social enterprises can play a key role in building social capital and community cohesion through their service provision, employment, training and mentoring, and contribution to community development activities. They often have a strong local focus, with roots in the local community. Their social mission is likely to address questions of local disadvantage or environmental issues. Many have a focus on employability and training or social inclusion. Examples of how social enterprises elsewhere add value include:
- 6.4. **Clean Close Company** in Dundee achieves several of those objectives. It was set up in 2005 to help regenerate an area of Dundee, initially employing a manager and 2 trainees. It provides vocational and employability training for local unemployed people. It offers a range of cleaning services from close cleaning and house clearances to grounds maintenance and graffiti removal. It also has a subsidiary, Clean Carpet Company which cleans and recycles old and donated carpets, and makes them available at a very low cost to people referred by the council's Homeless Unit. In 2010/11 it employed 26 people and its income of £336,000 was entirely generated through its trading activities.
- 6.5. **Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus (DACB)** is a social enterprise focusing on reducing social exclusion through the provision of high quality community transport delivery and support services to people who are elderly, disabled, rurally or socially excluded in the Buchan Area. It was established in 1993 since then has grown into a major provider of local transport services, providing over 50,000 passenger journeys in 2009/10. Their services now include a shopping service, community use, alternative patient transport to and from hospital, evening transport and Peterhead Shopmobility.
- 6.6. Buchan DACB has a subsidiary company, also a social enterprise, **DAB Plus C.I.C.** which provides a wide range of driver training for individuals and fleets throughout North East Scotland.

- 6.7. In 2010 Buchan Development Partnership carried out a Social Return on Investment evaluation of the shopping service for elderly and less-abled users. It found that “for every £1 that was invested in the DACB Shopping Service, £3.03 was returned in social added value.” In addition, the service

makes a real difference to the lives and wellbeing of their clients and stakeholders, giving true added social value to an investment.

Social changes that were identified included:

- *As a result of DACB shopping service clients feel happier*
- *As a result of DACB shopping service clients feel they benefit from greater social interaction*
- *As a result of DACB shopping service staff feel more secure in their work and happier with what they are contributing to others*
- *As a result of DACB shopping service travel escorts feel more valued*

- 6.8. **Community Ventures Limited (CVL)** is a Middlesbrough based charity, with 6 subsidiary social enterprises. They provide employment for local people and gift all profits to CVL. The funds are used by CVL to provide a range of services for local communities including Community Alarms provided free to vulnerable residents; Community On-Line Centre, that provides free broadband internet use; and the European Centre of Excellence for Social Enterprise which is a one-stop shop for potential social enterprises seeking advice and support.

- 6.9. The largest of CVL’s social enterprises is **Complete Security (Europe)**, (CSEL), which provides security services. It employs 70 local people, and has commercial contracts with both public sector organisations and private sector clients. CSEL currently has a turnover of £1.2 million per annum.

- 6.10. Social enterprises therefore have the potential to make a significant contribution to social and economic regeneration. In 2007 the Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy identified that social enterprise can make an important contribution to sustainable economic growth. The EU’s structural funding programmes – for supporting social and economic restructuring – are expected to have a specific priority to support social businesses from 2014.

- 6.11. Social enterprises, can secure significant benefits to the local community and economy, contributing to a fairer economy and society, fostering social and environmental innovation and providing employment and training opportunities within disadvantaged communities and for the most marginalised members of society.

- 6.12. Social enterprises are more likely to start up and thrive in areas which provide a suitable environment for them. A social enterprise strategy would therefore lead to increased benefits within the Falkirk council area.

7. How Can Social Enterprises Contribute to Achieving Falkirk’s Strategic Community Plan?

- 7.1. The social and environmental focus of social enterprises means that their aims and mission are often closely aligned to aspects of Falkirk’s strategic community plan.

- 7.2. The development of new and expanding businesses, which provide training and employment opportunities whilst creating both social value and economic return are core aspects of all social enterprises. They therefore have the potential to make a significant impact on *Growing Businesses & Prosperous People*.
- 7.3. **Recyke-a-Bike** provides an example of a successful social enterprise that contributes to many of the outcomes and priorities of the strategic plan. Recyke-a-Bike has been operating in the Falkirk Local Authority Area since 2008. It currently has four trainees based here and a further two from the Denny area are employed in its Stirling base. Its annual turnover is now £420,000 of which £140,000 is within Falkirk, where it is looking to expand and has just opened a retail outlet. Its aims and activities contribute to strategic planning outcomes in a number of ways. Some examples include:
- Protection of the environment through the recycling of bicycles and promotion of cycling;
 - Collection, repair and reuse of unwanted bikes which reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and carbon emissions caused by the production of new bikes
 - Promotion of cycling for commuting, including outreach services at the employers' location
- 7.4. Enhancing employment opportunities through direct employment and the delivery of employability skills training:
- Get Ready for Work cycle maintenance training programme;
 - Get Ready for Work Recycling Operations SVQ;
 - Community Jobs Scotland Employment training Programme;
 - Employability skills placements; and
 - Volunteering opportunities.
- 7.5. Promotion of cycling as an healthy, worthwhile and environmentally friendly activity, and its sustainability through cycle skill and bike maintenance skill training:
- Provision of low cost reconditioned bikes
 - Cycle hire scheme
 - Bike maintenance courses
 - Bikeability (cycle skills training) in schools
 - Bike repair service
- 7.6. Examples of social enterprises contributing to other Strategic Community Plan themes include:

Young People Who Are Confident and Successful

- 7.7. **First 4 Kids** is a social enterprise that is part of the Falkirk Out of School Care Network. It provides childcare in 11 schools for children from 15 schools throughout the Falkirk area, and runs before-school, after-school and holiday sessions. It currently has 460 children registered. In 2012-13 it had an income of £356,000 of which over 97% came from trading. First 4 Kids employs 3 full-time staff and 40 part-time play staff. It is currently piloting a scheme to offer free sessions to children with additional play needs.

- 7.8. **Forth Valley Language Support** is a social enterprise and Community Interest Company (CIC) offering interpreting and translation services. All profits go to support the work of the Central Scotland Regional Equality Council. Its clients include Forth Valley Health Board, HM YOI Polmont, local housing associations, 3rd sector organisations, and private businesses, enabling individuals to fully participate in a range of service provision. It employs 1.5 members of staff and has 101 sessional translators on its books, who translate over 40 languages. The service provided 307 sessions in 2012, of which approximately 80% were to unique service users. All its income comes from trading activities.

8. Why Do We Need a Social Enterprise Strategy?

- 8.1. There has been relatively little sector development in Falkirk and a strategy is necessary to provide a mechanism for promoting the development of sustainable social enterprises that could fill gaps in the market, whilst also achieving social, environmental and economic aims. Our approach has also been very fragmented and as a result of a lack of cohesion has perhaps not realised its full potential or contribution. A social enterprise strategy would allow the local area to benefit from the added value offered by social enterprises and help to reduce grant dependency.
- 8.2. Specifically, the development of a strategy would provide an opportunity to identify appropriate criteria for intervention and support by the Council. It would:
- co-ordinate efforts across the Council and the sector;
 - take account of the diverse needs of social enterprises at different stages in their development;
 - help to ensure that Falkirk can gain maximum benefit from the potential of social enterprises;
 - take into account national developments such as the introduction of self-directed support and the proposed community empowerment and renewal bill / asset transfer etc;
 - ensure that the Falkirk council area optimises benefit from the tax breaks being considered by the UK Government and the EU's forthcoming structural funding programme;
- 8.3. There are essentially two separate routes into becoming a social enterprise. The first is to create a start up enterprise where the social mission is built into the business plan from the start. Secondly, existing organisations currently dependent on grant funding (e.g. community groups, 3rd sector organisations) may decide to take a more enterprising approach and gradually increase the proportion of their income earned from trading, with the intention of becoming financially self-sufficient.
- 8.4. Although the formal definition of a social enterprise is an organisation that earns at least 50% of its income from trading activities, the reality is that many organisations take some time to achieve that status. A well established 3rd sector organisation may need support to move away from 100% grant funding towards becoming financially self-sufficient, whereas a start up social enterprise may derive a high proportion of its income from trading but require support on governance, organisational and management issues.

- 8.5. Our strategy should take account of both development routes into social enterprise and ensure that appropriate support is available for each. It would provide a link to national programmes, and support organisations to become more sustainable and to build in a degree of resilience to help cope with any setbacks.
- 8.6. The social enterprise sector impacts on many different areas of the Council's work, including procurement, community learning and development, social work, business support and economic development. A strategy would raise awareness of the benefits and potential of social enterprises, and help to embed support for them across the Council. It would facilitate a co-ordinated approach and targeted investment of time and resources by the Council.
- 8.7. There are limited opportunities for additional resources in the present climate, but a greater commitment to social enterprise throughout the Council could ensure that existing resources are redirected to social enterprises as appropriate. A strategy would also be able to highlight the procurement opportunities that might be available to social enterprises and help to ensure that they are well positioned to take advantage of them.
- 8.8. The external funding function within Corporate and Neighbourhood Services may also be helpful in identifying additional sources of funding for social enterprises.
- 8.9. The social enterprise sector itself (including the interface, CVS) should also take some responsibility for its own development. A strategy would also be able to identify wider areas of ownership and responsibility and draw in resources from within the social enterprise sector and its support networks. For example, it could encourage information sharing, promote the development of a social enterprise market, and garner support from agencies such as Social Enterprise Network Scotland, Just Enterprise etc.
- 8.10. Experience elsewhere suggests that a strategy can bring significant benefits to the local social enterprise sector.

9. Opportunities for Social Enterprise

- 9.1. A social enterprise strategy would help to develop an environment that helps to foster the development of such enterprises. Many of these organisations will not require any more specific support from the Council than would be available to any new organisation through Business Gateway. They will also be able to access additional supports through First Port, Just Enterprise and other sector specific organisations.
- 9.2. In addition to this however, the Council may wish to promote or support the development of specific social enterprises where there has been a market failure to provide a service for which there is an identifiable need, or where they could provide additional benefits for the public purse. The need for such services will emerge over time, and will be subject to other market and socio-economic factors. However, a quick trawl within the Council has suggested a number of areas of work where a social enterprise could fill a perceived market gap, or increase value for money. The examples range from those that would require substantial service level agreements to others which would be predominantly self-funding.
- 9.3. A Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI), which is especially important in light of welfare reform. CDFIs lend money to individuals (as well as businesses or other social enterprises) who struggle to get finance from high street banks and loan companies.

They help deprived communities by offering loans and support at an affordable rate to people who cannot access credit elsewhere. This idea is already being pursued internally.

- The provision of respite care for people with mental health issues
- A grounds maintenance / factoring service
- A carpet recycling service
- A home improvement service, carrying out tasks such as energy efficiency measures, safety audits etc.
- Delivering some or all of the Garden Aid scheme through a social enterprise which would provide increased training and business development opportunities.

10. Development of A Strategy

- 10.1. It is proposed to set up a small strategy development group, consisting of 6 or 7 individuals representing social enterprises, the Council and CVS. This group would undertake the bulk of the work, led by Business Development and Corporate and Neighbourhood Services.
- 10.2. The biggest challenge for the Council will be to get buy-in from essential departments (including procurement, community learning and development, social work, business support and economic development) especially as not all of them will be full members of the strategy group. Similarly, within the sector the challenge will be to involve a wide range of organisations, including those who do not currently participate in existing structures such as the Falkirk Social Enterprise Forum.
- 10.3. In addition, there may be an opportunity to include interested community planning partners, although this would not be essential for at least the first phase of a strategy.
- 10.4. The strategy group would undertake a range of consultations with other organisations. It is likely that there would be a 2-stage process. In the first stage, the strategy group would draft an outline strategy for discussion, and consult through a range of internal and external mechanisms (focus groups, electronic questionnaire etc). This would include establishing the sector's own strategic priorities as well as identifying the implications for different Council services. The second stage would be to develop a full strategy and invite comments prior to finalising it.

11. Timescale & Conclusion

- 11.1. There are a number of factors to be taken into account when estimating the time required for the development of a strategy. In particular, there is a need to include two rounds of external consultation, and to establish what different Council departments are able to commit.
- 11.2. A period of 12 months is likely to be necessary.
- 11.3. This paper demonstrates the need for a more cohesive approach to be taken to enable the development of a vibrant and sustainable social enterprise sector in the Falkirk Council area. The development of a local social enterprise strategy in partnership with the sector and other key stakeholders would help to facilitate this.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: BIG LOTTERY FUNDING – SUPPORTING WELFARE REFORM
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 “Support and Connect” is part of the BIG Lottery’s “Investing in Communities” portfolio. It is a £10 million fund that aims to improve the support available locally for people experiencing hardship and material need, particularly in relation to the impact of Welfare Reform measures. It encourages projects that enhance welfare and financial advice services through organisations working together more effectively so that services can provide more effective support and people in hardship have better access to services that can help them.

2. PROJECT PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Falkirk Council and Falkirk Citizens Advice Bureau worked together to develop a bid to fund a partnership between the three local Citizen Advice Bureaux and Falkirk Council to provide a quick response approach to people in need of advice and assistance who have been directly impacted by welfare reform. The project will place particular emphasis on rural areas and areas affected by deprivation. Falkirk CAB is the project lead.
- 2.2 The aim of the project is to provide a front line face-to-face service across Falkirk. Staff will:
- Carry out a holistic benefit assessment, identify potential benefit entitlement to maximise income and assist with the completion of benefit application forms;
 - Identify options and solutions to meet the person’s needs and work closely with other agencies to ensure that further assistance is accessed, where appropriate; and
 - Offer advice on appeal rights, identify suitable cases for progression to appeal and prepare appeal paperwork including seeking supporting medical evidence.
- 2.3 Importantly, this project will provide an early screening service for those refused benefits to determine whether a decision to progress an appeal is the best solution and will provide earlier access to other, support services than can currently be provided.
- 2.4 A steering group has been established to oversee the project implementation with representatives from the three local CABs, Social Work Community Advice (Welfare Benefits) Team and Corporate Policy. The first meeting of the steering group was on 31 July 2013.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 We were advised in August that the project was approved. It will therefore run from September/October 2013 – March 2015. The total project has a value of £349,489.75. We asked BIG for a contribution of £334,489.75 (the maximum funding per application was £335,000). The steering group is requesting that the shortfall in funding (£15,000) is funded via the Fairer Falkirk Fund.
- 3.2 The project will have a Senior Project Officer, 4 Welfare Benefit Officers and one Admin Officer, which will be recruited to as soon as possible. These posts will be employed by Falkirk CAB.
- 3.3 The majority of appointments for service will be organised locally, within existing Council and CABx premises but the project is currently looking at low cost, basic, accommodation such as a meeting room to hold six people. The overall budget for the project is tight and the steering group is also asking each of the partners to identify any funding in kind that may be available for IT/Telephone services, equipment, and furniture and printing/stationary.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Executive are asked to:

- 4.1 **Agree that the £15,000 project shortfall is met from the Fairer Falkirk Fund.**

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 17 September 2013

Ref: ABB0913LM– Big Lottery Funding

Contact Name: Fiona Campbell – Ext: 6004

Background Papers

Nil

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: FINANCIAL CAPABILITY AND INCLUSION
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 At its meeting on 25 June 2013, Council agreed:

- to consider the introduction of credit union account facilities for all secondary school pupils about to leave full time education and;
- to seek clarification and further information in relation to school credit union facilities currently within our schools and from Glasgow City Council on its credit union.

1.2 This followed information on an initiative being taken by Glasgow City Council that will see the Council give £10 to every child starting secondary school, to open a credit union savings account.

1.3 This report outlines the background to this initiative, provides Members with the context within which Glasgow City Council made this decision and advises Members on the local context in this regard.

2. GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL – PAYDAY LENDING SOUNDING BOARD

2.1 Glasgow City Council has the largest credit union membership of any city in the UK. From a membership of 3% of the population in 2001, membership has grown significantly to 22% in 2010. This equates to over 135,000 members across 34 credit unions, with a financial asset portfolio in excess of £183m. The 34 Credit Unions in Glasgow range in size and how they are run i.e. by volunteers or by staff. In the Falkirk Council area we have 4 Credit Unions, the largest being Falkirk and District Credit Union.

2.2 It was agreed by Glasgow City Council, following a report into Pay Day Lending that all pupils entering their first year in secondary schools be given the opportunity to open juvenile credit union savings accounts with a donation of £10 per pupil. Schools are being matched with local Credit Unions and accounts are being opened on a phased basis, depending on the capacity of the schools and the local Credit Unions to manage the process. There is an expectation that accounts will be opened at the local Credit Union branch with payments made into the branch as opposed to establishing Credit Union collection points in schools. This is in recognition of the capacity issues this presents for both schools and individual Credit Unions.

- 2.3 The report on Pay Day Loan, was developed by Glasgow City Council's Sounding Board. This is a cross party group established to examine pay day lending and its impact on the citizens of Glasgow. The Group acted very much like a policy development or scrutiny panel, taking on board evidence from a range of organisations and experts. The report to Glasgow City Council on this can be found at

<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=62786>

The main Sounding Board's work resulted in an extensive report to Glasgow City Council's Executive which included recommendations beyond the one discussed at Council in June. These include:

Changing Behaviour

- Provide all pupils entering their first year in secondary schools the opportunity to open a juvenile credit union savings account with a donation of £10 per pupil;
- Extend the financial capability apprentices' scheme to carry out preventative financial capability work in schools;
- Actively promote the services, ethos and value of the credit unions;
- Promote Glasgow Advice and Information Network (GAIN); and affordable credit alternatives such as Scot cash in all relevant Council correspondence.

Regulation & Constraint

- Campaign for planning restrictions to limit payday loan outlets in the City;
- Seek to restrict the size and content of payday outlet window advertising;
- Block access to payday and short term lending websites from council computers and encourage community planning partners to do so;
- Support vigorous enforcement action by Trading Standards to ensure compliance with regulation; and
- Investigate the co-location of gambling establishments and payday loan outlets.

Promotion & Prevention

- Work with parties, beginning with the Church of Scotland, to support alternative not for profit loan funds;
- Support existing credit unions and Scotcash website development to mimic key customer factors of simplicity, speed and cost;
- Develop a marketing campaign to promote affordable alternatives; and
- Identify and support approaches to speed up screening and availability of loan appointments at Scotcash and credit unions.

Influence & Evidence

- Lobby UK Government for an end to the use of Continuous Payment Authority for any loans under a 26 week term;
- Lobby UK Government promoting the necessity of a real time database and for restrictions in the number of individual short term loans held at any one time;

- Develop data collection systems for GAIN members that will interrogate and collate payday and non standard loan data; and
 - Ask Strathclyde Pension Fund to consider not investing directly in any payday and short term lender.
- 2.4** For information, GAIN is a network of organisations working across Glasgow that give free, confidential and impartial advice. GAIN includes voluntary agencies, Citizens Advice Bureaux, legal, housing and independent money advice agencies. GAIN organisations provide free advice on a wide range of financial issues including debt, money management, benefits advice, and housing issues as well as providing free legal advice. The GAIN Helpline is a free phone helpline for people living and/or working in Glasgow and has advisers who will give people initial advice (including a full benefit check if appropriate) and refer on to a GAIN agency for more in depth advice if required.
- 2.5** Scotcash is an independent company, set up to help the citizens of Glasgow gain access to financial services which, due to either their past or current situation, they have been unable to access. Scotcash is more than just another loans company; they offer a range of services and products such as Affordable Loans, Saving Accounts, White Goods Packages, Basic Bank Accounts and Money Advice. Members will recall Officers have been reviewing the feasibility of offering such a service in the Falkirk Council area. Discussions are currently underway with officers in other Councils to agree a way forward on this.
- 2.6** From the above information, it is important to see the credit union initiative as one small part of a more fundamental approach to dealing with non-standard lending.

3. FALKIRK COUNCIL APPROACH

- 3.1** Falkirk and District Credit Union was formed in 2008 when 3 of the existing 5 credit unions operating in the Falkirk area amalgamated. The common bond is “anyone who resides in or is employed in the Falkirk Council area.” In 2008 it had 1000 members. When it started the service only covered approximately 30% of the Falkirk Council area and its stated objective was to assist Credit Unions to expand and open branches throughout the Council area. Membership currently stands at 1433 adult members and 346 junior members.
- 3.2** The F&D Credit Union have 4 collection points in schools and there are 134 savers across the 4 schools.
- Bonnybridge Primary
 - Grangemouth High
 - Victoria Primary
 - Westquarter Primary
- 3.3** Although adult members pay a yearly membership fee, membership for under 16’s is free.
- 3.4** In order to be able to provide a wider range of services and support in the community Falkirk and District Credit Union needs to grow, both in terms of number of savers and borrowers. This will take time and must be planned properly. The Credit Union importantly must be sustainable and therefore must ensure it has a proper business plan in place.

- 3.5 Falkirk Council is committed to working with all Credit Unions in the Falkirk Council area to encourage their growth and development. To facilitate this we are in the process of recruiting a Credit Union and Financial inclusion development worker who will work with the Credit Unions to look at their business models and support their growth.
- 3.6 Corporate and Neighbourhood Services have undertaken a feasibility study in partnership with a number of other councils to identify demand or need for low cost credit in the Falkirk Council area. This work will be taken forward by the Credit Union and Financial inclusion worker. This officer will look at increasing the provision of other financial services like Scotcash or Moneyline so that people living and working in the Falkirk Council area have a range of alternatives to non traditional lending, in addition to working with the Credit Unions on the services that they can offer.
- 3.7 Alongside this, Council has also agreed to appoint a financial capability development worker who will work to develop our services that will help make sure our citizens understand how much or little money they have and that the decisions and choices they make about money are right for them and their family. It is anticipated that this worker will work closely with CLD so that people with poor literacy and numeracy skills can get support and help they need.
- 3.8 The actions that Glasgow Council have identified are one way of addressing the issue that pay-day loan companies present, however we have to make sure that the actions that Falkirk Council take meet our communities' needs and fit with our area's priorities. The new development officers however do give us capacity to look more comprehensively at what we can do to address the issues of non-standardised lending, debt and financial management including looking at the work Glasgow City Council has undertaken in this regard. It is hoped that in the coming months we will present a more comprehensive report to Members on specific actions we would recommend be taken to address these critical issues.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 4.1 **Note the information contained in this report; and**
- 4.2 **Ask officers to present a further report to the Executive on financial inclusion initiatives in due course.**

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 27 August 2013
Ref: ABB0913LG – 17.9.13
Contact Name: Linda Gilliland – Ext: 6045

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

2. Report to Glasgow City Council: Payday Lending Sounding Board

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506045 and ask for Linda Gilliland.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS OVER £350,000 IN VALUE
CONTRACT FOR UPGRADING WORKS TO 90 RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTIES, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, SLAMANNAN (FAL-7275)**
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will recall the decision of the Executive of 6 August 2013 to authorise acceptance of the tender in respect of the upgrading works to 90 residential properties at various locations in Slamannan, and to report on the outcome.

2. TENDERS RECEIVED

- 2.1 A tender was received by the due date of 25 July 2013 and opened at 2.20pm on the same day in accordance with Standing Order 11 relating to contracts.
- 2.2 The tendered price was compared with bill of quantity rates for work of a similar nature, priced in competition viz, external weather envelope, Duncairn Avenue, Thorndale Gardens, Castlehill Crescent, Timmins Place (DEN-7132) in the sum of £343,851.59 accepted in December 2012. Allowing adjustment for inflation etc, the tendered price compared favourably with the rates within the benchmark contract.
- 2.3 The tender received from Corporate & Neighbourhood Services, The Forum, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk FK1 1XR is in the sum of £1,342,496.17 and pro rata, represents best value for the Council.
- 2.4 The tender can be contained within the block expenditure figure for external fabric improvements, identified in the Housing Investment 3 Year Programme 2013/2015.

3. ACTION TAKEN

Members note that in terms of the decision of the Executive Committee of the 6 August 2013, I have accepted the tender submitted by Corporate & Neighbourhood Services, The Forum, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk FK1 1XR in the sum of £1,342,496.17 in respect of upgrading works to 90 residential properties, various locations, Slamannan.

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Director of Development Services
08/08/2013

Contact Officer: Robin Millard, Ext. 4868

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. *Tender documents
2. *Tender Report

*Item not for publication on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.