AGENDA ITEM 3

MINUTE

AGENDA ITEM 3

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FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016 at 9.30 a.m.

COUNCILLORS:

David Alexander
Jim Blackwood
Tom Coleman
Dennis Goldie
Linda Gow
Craig Martin (Convener)
Dr Craig R Martin
Alan Nimmo
Malcolm Nicol
Robert Spears

OFFICERS:

Karen Algie, Head of Human Resources and Business Transformation
Sally Buchanan, Welfare Reform Project Manager
Matthew Farrell, Economic Development Officer
Paul Ferguson, Revenue Manager
Colin Frame, Principal Surveyor (Strategic Projects)
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Joe McElholm, Head of Social Work Adult Services
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services
Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer

EX97. ORDER OF BUSINESS

As the portfolio holder for Economic Development required to leave the meeting to attend a funeral, the Convener varied the order of business from that detailed in the agenda for the meeting. The following items have been recorded in the order that they were taken at the meeting.

EX98. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors G Goldie and Mahoney.

EX99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

EX100. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Executive held on 23 February 2016 was approved.

EX101. FALKIRK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION ON SG16 LISTED BUILDINGS AND UNLISTED PROPERTIES IN CONSERVATION AREAS (FIFTH BATCH)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting a Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance Note for approval.

The Executive authorised, on 25 February 2014 (ref EX46), the preparation of and consultation on 16 Supplementary Guidance Notes referred to in the Local Development Plan. A further Guidance Note on renewable energy was subsequently identified. To date, four 'batches' containing 10 Supplementary Notes have been developed, consulted upon and approved by the Scottish Ministers. Supplementary Guidance Note – SG16 Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas – was now presented for approval.

The report set out the feedback from consultations together with proposed minor amendments.

Decision

The Executive agreed Supplementary Planning Guidance Note SG16 Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas (including modifications in response to consultations as detailed in paragraphs 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the report) and its submission to the Scottish Ministers for final approval.

EX102. GRANGEMOUTH ENERGY PROJECT: NEXT STEPS

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services seeking authority to progress the Grangemouth Energy Project.

The Executive agreed on 13 January 2015 (ref EX109) to progress an energy project for the Grangemouth area which could utilise renewable technologies to deliver sustainable energy cost savings to the industrial complex and potentially the wider area through the development of a district heating scheme.

A business case for the Energy Project was presented as an appendix to the report. The business case set out the work to date and identified a range of energy generating options for the area. This included a cost benefit analysis which identified a district heating network covering the Grangemouth area as the preferred option. This would comprise three distinct heating networks, each based around an assessed demand profile and underpinned by a variety of balanced supply options, with a particular focus on the re-use of waste heat and low carbon solutions. An analysis of each proposed

network – Eastern, Northern and Western indicated that the proposed Northern network was not viable at the current time. The Eastern network was the strongest proposition and although the Western network was not currently viable, the planned introduction of a masterplan for the Falkirk Gateway sites indicated that it could be economically viable as energy demand increased.

The report set out proposed next steps to develop the project. Further bids for funding to Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme and the Scottish Government/EU Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme had been made. It was proposed that the Council participate in the EU supported 'INTERREG' programme, which supports the development of transitional economic development activities which focus on the creation of business support programmes to improve the development of sustainable economic clusters and in identifying international partners.

Councillor D Goldie, seconded by Councillor Dr C R Martin, moved that the Executive:-

(1) notes the terms of the report on the progress of the energy project and the delivery of the Grangemouth Energy Project;

(2) agrees the next steps in developing the project including the preparation of a business case for the Eastern and Western networks through seeking financial support from the Scottish Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme;

(3) agrees to participate in the EU funded INTERREG initiative for the promotion of local energy networks; and

(4) requests officers to report back in due course, with the results of the business case and recommending the next steps.

As an amendment, Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Alexander, moved the terms of the motion with clause (2) replaced by the following:

(2) agrees the next steps in developing the project, including fast tracking the preparation of a business case for the Eastern network through seeking financial support from the Scottish Low Carbon infrastructure Transition programme but not to proceed with a business case for the Western network at this time.

On a division 7 members voted for the motion and 3 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (7) – Councillors Blackwood, D Goldie, Gow, C Martin, C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (3) – Councillors Alexander, Coleman and Spears.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

Councillor Gow joined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.

EX103. FALKIRK TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCING INITIATIVE AND FALKIRK GATEWAY

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services presenting a revised schedule for the implementation of the Falkirk Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) initiative with particular reference to the Falkirk Gateway Project.

The Executive agreed, on 18 June 2013 (ref EX29), to commit to the delivery of the Falkirk TIF initiative. An Infrastructure and Development Plan was developed to take forward each of the projects. Key to this will be a development plan for the eastern entrance to Falkirk and the Gateway site. A preliminary Infrastructure Development Framework has been developed by WSP, an engineering and design consultancy, to assist in the creation of a flagship development at the Eastern entrance to Falkirk.

The report provided an overview of the Framework, highlighting in particular proposals for each of the key sites within the development including Falkirk Gateway, Falkirk Community Stadium, Forth Valley College, and the Helix Park and Kelpies Hub. In addition to an improvement in the road network connecting each of the Gateway sites, a crossing and path network to support cyclists/pedestrians joining between the four key sites was proposed. It was recommended that, as a key element of the TIF programme, further work on design and funding opportunities was undertaken.

The Executive had also agreed, on 9 June 2015 (ref EX23), to develop a business case for an investment model in liaison with key partners Ernst & Young, the Council's TIF advisers, carried out this work and the report summarised the main findings.

The next step suggested for the Gateway site is to initiate market testing but certain preliminary elements need to be in place before that is done. The report gave further information on those elements and updated the TIF Development Programme.

Decision

The Executive agreed:-

(1) to note the update of progress on the Falkirk Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) initiative and the outcome of the Falkirk Gateway Preliminary Development Framework proposals;

(2) to note the proposals for the Crossing outlined in paragraph 4 of the report;

(3) the revised implementation schedule for TIF projects as outlined in appendix 4, to the report, including the commissioning of a drainage and public realm strategy for the Gateway site; and

(4) to progress the actions for delivery of the Gateway development as set out in paragraphs 5 & 6 of the report including initiating discussions with Callander Estates over the terms of a landowners agreement for delivery of the Gateway site.

Councillor D Goldie withdrew from the meeting following consideration of the previous item.

EX104. WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting a revised Workforce Strategy for approval.

The Council's Best Value Audit 2015 Improvement Plan, which had been agreed by Council on 7 October 2015 (ref FC48) following Audit Scotland's Best Value Audit of Falkirk Council, stated that the Council would update its Workforce Strategy and that this would be submitted for approval by 31 March 2016. The revised Strategy was set out as the appendix to the report. It will sit within the Council's strategic planning and management framework and link to the Corporate and Service Plans and to the revenue budget.

Councillor Nicol, seconded by Councillor C Martin, moved that the Executive *agrees the draft Workforce Strategy, as attached as appendix 1 to the report.*

As an amendment, Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Alexander, moved in substitution for the motion, that *officers bring the strategy back to the Executive in a more structured and coherent form.*

On a division 6 members voted for the motion and 3 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (6) – Councillors Blackwood, Gow, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (3) – Councillors Alexander, Coleman and Spears.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

EX105. LOCAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT HUBS

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services proposing the introduction of Local Advice and Support Hubs to deliver frontline customer services.

Following a review of the current frontline service provision it was proposed that three advice hubs covering the East, West and Central populations are introduced with bespoke arrangements for customers to access services through existing facilities within their local areas. The huns would replace the current Once Stop Shop service and would provide services which are more aligned to meeting the needs of customers by establishing specialist services in each 'hub' complemented by additional services across each area on a 'surgery' basis. The refocusing of the face to face service would be accompanied by an increased availability in digital support, in particular online support. A pilot in the East area was proposed. The Hub would be located in the One Stop Shop facility in Grangemouth with outreach provided across the Bo'ness/Grangemouth area with possible locations including Bo'ness Library, Bo'ness Community Education base, Bo'ness Recreation Centre and the Kersiebank Community Project. Additionally payment facilities would be available in 10 local shops in Bo'ness and 12 local shops in Grangemouth.

The report set out the services anticipated to be provided and the financial benefits in introducing Local Advice Hubs.

Councillor Nicol, seconded by Councillor C Martin, moved that the Executive agrees:-

(1) the implementation of a Local Advice and Support Hub pilot based in Grangemouth but covering the east of the District; and

(2) to request a further report detailing arrangements for the central and west area hubs.

As an amendment, Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Alexander, moved in substitution for the motion that the Executive *notes the report and its contradictions and resolves to refer the matter to the Scrutiny Committee for further detailed consideration, including the retention of One Stop Shops.*

On a division, 6 members voted for the motion and 3 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (6) – Councillors Blackwood, Gow, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (3) – Councillors Alexander, Coleman and Spears.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

EX106. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/17

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting a Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 for consideration prior to referral to Council.

In terms of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management, Council is required to agree an annual Treasury Management Strategy. The recommended strategy for 2016/17 was presented. The Strategy set out:-

- the economic and interest rate outlook;
- debt outstanding at 1 April 2016;
- the longer term borrowing requirement for 2016/17;
- borrowing and investment strategies;
- Treasury indicators and treasury management advisers; and
- Elected member and officer training.

The Executive agreed to recommend that Council:-

(1) adopts the Borrowing Strategy for 2016/17 as set out in the report;

(2) adopts the Investment Strategy for 2016/17 and approves the list of "Permitted Investments" as set out in Section 6 of the report; and

(3) approves the Treasury Indicators as set out in Section 7 of the report.

EX107. ACTUARIAL VALUATION OF THE INSURANCE FUND AND STATUS OF MUNICIPAL MUTUAL INSURANCE (MMI)

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing an update on the triennial actuarial valuation of the Insurance Fund and the current position in respect of Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI).

The triennial actuarial valuation of the Insurance Fund had been undertaken by Milliman LLP. The Fund was found to be broadly healthy with a surplus of £0.6m. However, Milliaman did not recommend the release of funds despite the surplus due to the uncertainty facing the Fund.

The valuation set Services' contribution at £1.29m. The budgeted annual provision was £1.21m. It was proposed that the shortfall of £0.08m was provided by the Fund surplus.

An update was also provided in regard to the agreed 'solvent run off' arrangement which had been put in place following MMI entering into administration. MMI's administrators, Ernst & Young, established a levy payment of 15% on all costs paid to date on the Council's behalf by MMI. Council had agreed a levy rate of 30% in recognition that 15% was insufficient and that a second levy was likely. MMI advised in January 2016 that the range of the second levy would be between 15 and 34% with the exact figure known in April 2016. It was recognised that the current MMI provision would require an additional £0.09m and that it could be met from the surplus in the Insurance Fund.

The Executive:-

(1) agreed the use of the Insurance Fund surplus to fund the shortfall in revenue contributions of £0.08m;

(2) agreed the use of the Insurance Fund surplus to fund the shortfall in the Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) provision of £0.09m; and

(3) noted that the MMI provision would need to be increased and that this will be funded from the Insurance Fund.

EX108. POLICE SCOTLAND PROPOSALS TO WITHDRAW THE TRAFFIC WARDENS SERVICE AND DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT – UPDATE REPORT

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Development Services providing an update on Police Scotland's proposals to withdraw the traffic warden service.

The Chief Constable of Police Scotland advised Council in 2013 of his intention to withdraw the traffic warden provision from 28 February 2014. Council agreed on 12 March 2014 (ref FC96) to authorise the Director of Development Services to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Local Area Commander, Police Scotland, to maintain the current service provision. The initial term to 30 June 2015 was

subsequently extended to continue indefinitely unless terminated by any of the involved partners.

Police Scotland had now intimated its intention to terminate the agreement with effect from 31 March 2016.

The Executive, in considering Police Scotland's proposed withdrawal and instructed the Director of Development Services on 19 November 2013 (ref EX92) to prepare a business case to support any application to the Scottish Ministers seeking Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) powers.

An application for DPE powers must demonstrate that the scheme can operate on a financially neutral basis by the end of the first 5 years of operation. A review of existing waiting restrictions was also required in order to satisfy Ministers that the DPE could be properly enforced. The business case will be presented to a future meeting of the Executive in order to determine if application for DPE powers should be pursued.

The Executive agreed:-

(1) to note the terms of the report; and

(2) that the business case to support any application for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Powers is presented as soon as possible upon conclusion of the remaining tasks to allow a decision to be made on whether an application to Scottish Ministers seeking Decimalised Parking Enforcement powers should be pursued.

Councillor Goldie rejoined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.

EX109. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Councillor D Goldie, moved that the Executive *agrees in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and public for items 13(minute reference EX110) and 14(minute reference EX111) on the agenda on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8, 9 and 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the said Act.*

As an amendment, Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Coleman, moved that *item 13 (CCTV Update) should be held in public.*

On a division, 7 members voted for the motion and 3 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (7) – Councillors Blackwood, D Goldie, Gow, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (3) – Councillors Alexander, Coleman and Spears.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

EX110. CCTV UPDATE

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting options for delivery of CCTV provision in the area.

The Executive agreed, on September 2015 (ref EX44) to tender for a 1 year peak time CCTV recording service for the Falkirk Council area.

No tenders had been received for the provision of the service. The report set out three options for future service provision. These were:-

- option 1 – prepare for a recorded service from 1 April 2016;
- option 2 – use the negotiated procedure to attempt to agree a peak time service; and
- option 3 – ceasing the CCTV service.

Councillor Blackwood, seconded by Councillor C Martin, moved that the Executive *agrees to use the negotiated procedure to attempt to agree a peak time service (option 2) failing which to prepare for a recorded service from 1 April 2016 (option 1).*

As an amendment, Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Coleman, moved that the Executive *agrees to use the negotiated procedure to attempt to agree a peak time service (option 2) failing which the matter is brought back to the Executive.*

On a division, 7 members voted for the motion and 3 voted for the amendment, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (7) – Councillors Blackwood, D Goldie, Gow, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (3) – Councillors Alexander, Coleman and Spears.

Decision

The Executive agreed the motion.

EX111. IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS 2015/16

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services recommending that irrecoverable debts in regard to Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments, Non Domestic Rates, Sundry Accounts and Payroll Overpayments are written out of the 2015/16 accounts.

In terms of Financial Regulations, debts not exceeding £5,000 can be written out of the accounts by the Chief Finance Officer. For debts exceeding £5,000 Executive approval is required.

Details were given of debts exceeding £5,000 in regard to Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments, Non Domestic Rates, Sundry Accounts and Payroll Overpayments and approval was sought to write these off.

The Executive agreed: -

(1) that Council Tax debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £74,477.62 as detailed in Appendix A to the report be written out of the Accounts in 2015/16, subject to further recovery action being taken should the opportunity arise;

(2) that Rent debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £21,456.51 as detailed in Appendix B to the report be written out of the Accounts in 2015/16, subject to further recovery action being taken should the opportunity arise;

(3) that Housing Benefit Overpayments in excess of £5,000 totalling £5,718.21 as detailed in Appendix C to the report be written out of the Accounts in 2015/16, subject to further recovery action being taken should the opportunity arise;

(4) that Non-Domestic Rates debts in excess of £5,000 amounting to £917,990.14 as detailed in Appendix D to the report be written off, with an appropriate adjustment to the Rate Income Return for 2015/16, subject to amendments should further information on the debtors concerned become available;

(5) that Sundry Account debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £64,683.86 (Inclusive of VAT) as detailed in Appendix E to the report be written out of the Accounts in 2015/16, subject to further recovery action being taken should the opportunity arise; and

(6) that Temporary Accommodation charges in excess of £5,000 totalling £25,621.70 as detailed in Appendix F to the report be written out of the Accounts in 2015/16, subject to further recovery action being taken should the opportunity arise.

AGENDA ITEM
4

GARDEN AID SERVICES

AGENDA ITEM 4

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: **GARDEN AID SERVICES**
Meeting: **EXECUTIVE**
Date: **26 April 2016**
Author: **DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND HOUSING SERVICES**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Members will be aware of the decision of Falkirk Council on 17 February 2016 to undertake a consultation process on the proposal to stop the provision of the Garden Aid Service. This proposal was part of a range of budget savings agreed by the Council to meet the 2016/17 funding gap of £25m.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the feedback from the consultation process, together with options for the future direction of the Garden Aid Service.

2. BACKGROUND - GARDEN AID SERVICE

2.1 The Garden Aid Service provided by Falkirk Council currently provides support to c5,500 residents aged 65 or over and c500 residents under 65 who have a disability making it difficult for them to maintain their garden. The service is only available in circumstances where there is no-one else residing in the same house aged 16 or over, who could maintain the garden on their behalf.

2.2 The service is provided free of charge to applicants who meet the above criteria. Eligible applicants are provided with grass-cutting services twice per month during the period April to October and a hedge-cutting service twice per year.

2.3 There are currently c6,000 residents in receipt of the service. The service costs a total of c£550,000, funded from the Council's General Fund (£275,000) and HRA (£275,000) respectively.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 In line with the decision of Falkirk Council, consultation was undertaken with all service users (5,908 letters issued) and also with the general public via an on-line survey on the Council's web-site. Views were also sought from the Council's 13 registered Residents and Tenants Organisations (RTO's). The objective of the consultation was to seek feedback on the specific impacts of the proposal to stop the Garden Aid Service and to identify potential alternative arrangements. This consultation has allowed an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment to be prepared in relation to the proposal and thereby enable Members to be advised of the risks, impacts and mitigation prior to taking a decision.

3.2 The feedback from both service users and the on-line survey was structured on the basis of free-form text to allow respondents the greatest opportunity to advise how the proposal will impact on them personally and also comment on the potential alternatives/mitigating actions that could be considered. Examples of alternative approaches used by other Local Authorities were also provided in the covering letter to service users, to help inform comments and feedback. To encourage responses from existing service users, a pre-paid envelope was provided, in addition to a generic email address.

3.3 At the close of the consultation period, a total of 813 responses were received (c13.8% of service users). A summary is included in Appendix 1. A further 150 responses were received via the on-line survey, of which 58 were from current service users. A total of therefore c1,000 responses were received.

3.4 The key themes from the feedback were as follows:

Service Users

- 742 (91%) of responses wanted the Garden Aid Service retained or felt they needed help to maintain their gardens.
- 215 (26%) of responses provided comments on alternatives e.g.: volunteers and Criminal Justice Service support; increasing the qualifying age; use of trusted traders scheme and charging (Appendix 2).
- 112 (14%) of responses provided specific comments and contact details. The majority of these were either requesting details of the "Trusted Traders scheme" or highlighting specific difficulties and concerns due to age or infirmity (Appendix 3).

On-Line Survey Responses

- 118 (79%) of responses wanted the Garden Aid Service retained or felt that support and assistance should be provided, particularly to the most vulnerable (Appendix 4).
- 63 (42%) of responses provided comments on alternative arrangements, with the majority suggesting changes to the criteria, focused on the most in need (36) and also payment(16).

3.5 Where respondents have provided contact details, individual responses will be provided to each, based on the nature of their response and the outcome of Members decision on the future direction of the service.

3.6 One response was received from an RTO, with the feedback consistent with that outlined above. A petition was also received from residents predominantly in the Whitecross area. There were a total of 130 signatories to the petition from 100 households. Of those signing the petition, 35 households are current service recipients. The petition supports the retention of the current Garden Aid Service.

4. SERVICE NEED

4.1 It is clear from the consultation feedback that the service is considered to be a valuable means of support, particularly for those who are elderly, frail and/or disabled. The feedback also highlights that service users want to ensure their gardens are kept tidy but would be unable to do so themselves, without access to support. The current scheme primarily uses age i.e.: over 65 as the primary means of determining eligibility and does not consider the specific needs and circumstances of individual service users who are over 65. The scheme does however consider disability for those under 65.

4.2 Work has been undertaken to determine the extent to which service users are also in receipt of a Community Care service and/or are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. This comparison has allowed information to be gathered in relation to current service users in terms of their specific circumstances and ability to pay. Based on this information, it has been ascertained that there are c1,300 current service users in receipt of support services from Social Work, due to matters such as physical disability; age; Dementia; learning disability; mental health or visual impairment. Of those in receipt of Social Work support, there are c660 service users in receipt of financial support through Council Tax Reduction, which is generally recognised as an indicator of relatively low income.

4.3 The information also shows that of the c660 service users currently in receipt of financial assistance and support from Social Work services, the majority of these are aged 80 and over. It can therefore be broadly concluded that these service users are considered to be most in need, in terms of support need and affordability.

5. FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

5.1 In considering future service delivery options, it is important to re-state the decision made by the Council on 17th February 2016. The Council agreed a reduction in the Corporate and Housing Services budget of £275,000 representing the cost of the Garden Aid Service to the General Fund. The proposal is to make this saving by ending the service but there will be a further decision to be made following the consultation process on whether to proceed with the proposal. If the proposal does not proceed, the savings will need to be identified from elsewhere within the Council's Corporate & Housing General Fund budget, with potentially further consultation and an EPIA to be undertaken.

5.2 There are a range of options available to Members in terms of future service delivery, these are summarised below, together with the implications. In considering the options, it is proposed that no new applicants to the service are considered for 2016/17 and therefore the option appraisal is viewed in terms of existing service users only. This position can thereafter be reviewed at the end of the 2016 season.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
1. Stop provision of Service	Full financial savings delivered to General Fund and HRA. Does not reflect consultation feedback
2. Revise eligibility criteria to reflect support needs and ability to pay i.e.: in receipt of Community Care Support and Council Tax Reduction.	c660 service users identified based on revised eligibility. Savings to General Fund of c£251k. Requirement to find additional £24k savings from the Council's Corporate & Housing Services General Fund budget Additional funding to the IJB required of £66k (General Fund £24k & HRA £42k). Service provided to those assessed as requiring most support, the majority being the most elderly i.e.: over 80 years. Aligns with existing care support arrangements. Provides a single integrated and funded care package through the IJB.
3. Revise eligibility criteria to reflect support needs only i.e.: in receipt of Community Care support.	c1,340 service users identified based on revised eligibility. Savings to General Fund of c£201k. Requirement to find additional £74k savings from the Council's Corporate & Housing Services General Fund budget Additional funding to the IJB required of £134k (General Fund £74k & HRA £60k). Service provided to those assessed as requiring most support, the majority being the most elderly i.e.: over 80 years. Aligns with existing care support arrangements. Provides a single integrated and funded care package through the IJB.
4. Revise eligibility criteria to reflect those over 80 years old (born pre 1936), currently on Garden Aid list.	c3,400 service users identified based on revised eligibility. Savings to General Fund of c£55k. Requirement to find additional £220k savings from the Council's Corporate & Housing Services General Fund budget. Additional funding to the IJB required of £338k (General Fund £220k & HRA £118k).

5. Introduce a chargeable Service	A number of consultation responses highlighted that introducing a charge for the services would be an appropriate option to consider. The current service costs c£115 (13 grass cuts and 2 hedge cuts). In levying a charge, VAT and recovery of administrative costs would require to be added to the cost of the service. An average charge of c£150 per season would therefore be required and would be needed to be paid in advance or via direct debit over the 6 month maintenance season. Full financial savings delivered to General Fund and HRA.
6. Continue the service based on current eligibility criteria	c3,000 owners and c3,000 tenants receiving service. No savings to General Fund and therefore requirement to find additional savings of £275k from other areas within the Council's Corporate & Housing Services General Fund budget. Service not reflective of need.

5.3 It is recognised that stopping the service or changing the current eligibility criteria will have an impact on current service users who may no longer receive a garden maintenance service, the majority of which are over 75 years old. As such, additional arrangements would require to be implemented to help mitigate the impacts, should any changes to the current system be agreed. These measures will help signpost and support current service users, who no longer receive a service, access alternative garden maintenance support systems, via e.g.:

- Promotion of a "Buy with Confidence" Scheme for gardening services
- Promotion of initiatives such as "adopt a garden" to enlist the support of friends, family or neighbours
- Subject to capacity, promote volunteer services
- Provide direct support to Council tenants identified as needing additional support, funded from the Housing Revenue Account e.g.: one-off cuts or low-maintenance garden options. This assessment would be carried out by local housing offices, as part of their Housing Services Estates Management responsibilities and would only be for those tenants currently receiving a Garden Aid Service but no longer eligible if an option other than the current service is agreed by Members. This would help ensure our housing estates are maintained, whilst providing support to tenants considered in most need. Consultation with tenants would be required during the coming year in relation to future service provision.

5.4 A parallel procurement exercise has however been undertaken to identify appropriate contractors, should Members consider an option other than stopping the Service.

5.5 In considering future service delivery options, Members should also be aware that garden aid falls within the remit and responsibility of the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board (IJB). At its meeting on 24 March, the IJB agreed to allow the Council to take the decision on Garden Aid Services following on from the consultation. If the decision of the Executive is to continue with all or some of the existing service, the payment to the IJB would be revised to reflect this and the service would continue until a future decision to the contrary is taken by the IJB.

5.6 Should the Executive decide to change the existing services it is recognised that 2016/17 would be a year of transition. Therefore, it would be proposed that a review be undertaken following the end of the 2016 season. The outcome of that review would thereafter be subject to consideration by the IJB.

6. EQUALITY & POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 In order to understand the impact of the budget saving proposal to stop the Garden Aid Service, an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment is required. The purpose of this process is to understand who will be impacted by the saving proposal and to understand how we can mitigate those impacts.

6.2 The public sector equality duty is made up of a general equality duty supported by specific duties. The general equality duty is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
    - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
    - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
    - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
    - tackle prejudice; and
    - promote understanding.

6.3 The nine "protected characteristics" are age, religious belief and non-belief, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex and sexual orientation.

6.4 Consultation is also a key requirement of any equality and poverty impact assessment process. As outlined in Section 3 above, a consultation exercise has been undertaken with service users and the wider public to identify the potential impact of the proposal and the mitigation measures that could be adopted.

6.5 Given the nature of the service which is directed towards those over 65 or those under that age with a disability, any change to the service will inevitably impact on persons who share the characteristics of age and disability. The assessment also highlights an impact on persons within those groups who are on a low income. Nevertheless, as set out in the budget report to Council, savings require to be made and the garden aid service is recognised as being a discretionary one where alternatives to Council provision exist.

6.6 The assessment of the proposal to stop the service is considered to be of **'medium impact'** because the assessment has been able to identify mitigating actions which will reduce the impact on the equality protected characteristic groups. A medium impact is something that is assessed as having an impact but where action to mitigate some of that impact is available. .While this might not result in the impact being completely alleviated, it is possible to identify actions to help. The EPIA is included in Appendix 5.

6.7 A range of mitigating actions for impacted service users have been identified including:

- signposting alternative service delivery options
- harnessing support through the voluntary sector
- providing additional support to tenants as part of the Council's landlord responsibilities

6.8 Other potential mitigating actions are set out in the options shown in paragraph 5.2.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

7.1 **Consider the consultation feedback and thereafter identify an appropriate future service delivery option.**

..... ……..

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND HOUSING SERVICES

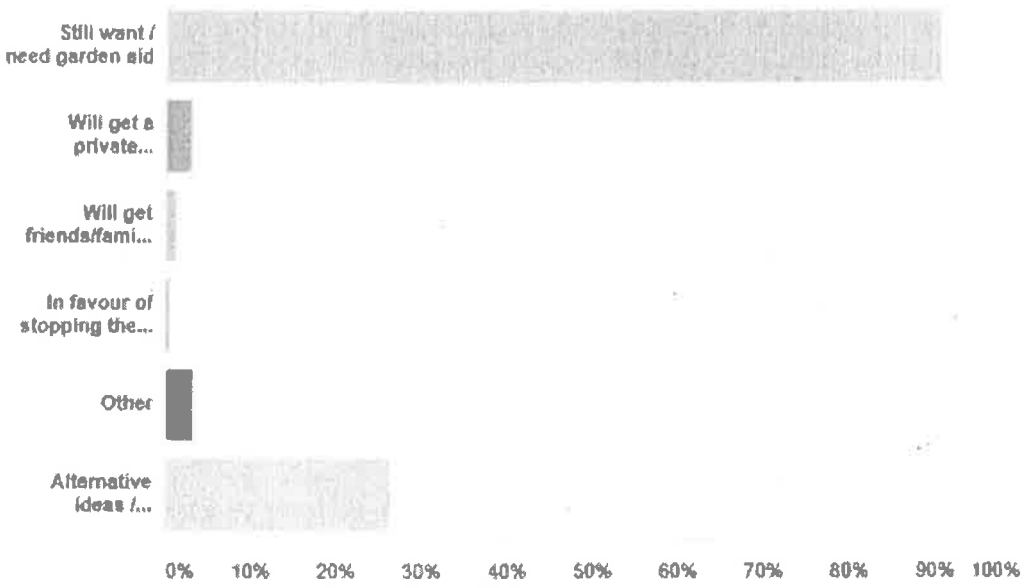
Date: 18 April 2016

Ref: AAB260416 – Garden Aid Service

Contact Officer: David McGhee, ext: 078

Which of the following apply to the response?

Answered: 813 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices		Responses	
Still want / need garden aid		91.27%	742
Will get a private gardener		3.08%	25
Will get friends/family to do it		1.35%	11
In favour of stopping the service		0.49%	4
Other		3.44%	28
Alternative ideas / suggestions (e.g. add to rent, volunteers, criminal justice squad)	Responses	26.45%	215

Total Respondents: 813

Get people on community service to do this. Alternatively, use a "pay as you grow" approach and charge each household a "tiny" amount.
"Lads from Polmont Borstal" could provide the service. This would also provide them with work experience.
a scheme where people would pay so much and the council would subsidize the rest
A small charge is all that is required to off set cost which would be acceptable to most of us as no way can afford private care.
Addressee is elderly, infirm and on a limited income, but is prepared to make an annual payment towards the cost of the service.
Addressee prepared to pay Council a small fee for the service to continue. Alternatively, asks Council to provide a list of recommended local firms, plus schedule of approximate costs for gardening tasks.
Addressee prepared to pay slightly more rent or council tax for service to continue.
Addressee prepared to pay token payment through rent in order for Council to maintain service.
Addressee would consider support arrangements provided by Council, funded as part of rent paid by tenants.
AGAINST ex offenders or volunteers carrying out work
Allandale as a conservation area should be considered differently
An increase in the age limit would be of help to your budget - say an increase from 65 to 75 or 80 years of age.
As a last resort, would suggest that the service is provided to those most in need.
As a suggestion, why do you not consider raising the minimum age to receive this service and incorporate more checks on existing lists.
Ask all those who use it to pay part of what it costs.
Can an arrangement be made to pay having the grass cut.
Can/t afford to pay a gardener therefore garden will be overgrown and in a mess.
Cannot afford to pay a private gardener.
Change qualifying age to 75 or 80
Choices offered are not suitable, criteria service
Communiity Service, make gardens as maintenance free as possible
Continue to provide a service which is based on income: free to those on a low income, but incurring a charge for those on a higher income or on DSA. Another possibility is to continue to provide the service, but cut grass less often.
Continuing the service with a small charge for people like myself,which is more affordable than private gardeners,would be the best solution if the current service cannot continue.
Could be taken as part of rent at £2 per week or equivalent for 12 weeks
Could I suggest that a saving might be made if the age of receiving this free service be raised from 65 years to seventy years for recipitents.
Could you please furnish us with details of your trusted trader scheme
Could you please give me a phone number fot the trusted trader scheme
Council could add say £1 per week to the rentwhich would decrease/eliminate your expenditure. This would avoid the need for the tenant to beg relatives or friends to cut the grass for free.
Council could introduce a nominal fee to maintain this vital service. This would also protect jobs.
council part fund, householder pays remaining cost
Council should tighten up criteria for garden aid, filtering out those fit enough to do their own gardens.

Criminal justice squad.
Cut Fireworks Displays and Christmas Decorations
Cut the large wages bill at the Council.
Divert money away from tourism schemes. In the main, these do not benefit the elderly and disabled who use the garden aid service and who are being sidelined.
Does not want offenders to do the work.
Doesn't mind paying a small amount.
employ gardeners and bill people, invoices could be paid at one stop shop
Even if I have to contribute somewhat I would be grateful if something could be done to help me at this late stagein my life and allow me to remain in my house as long as poss-i am 88 years old.
For this summer I will have help with grass cutting but beyond that seems unlikely.
Forced to pay a gardener
Free up additional funds and use the monies put aside for new falkirk council building
Get ex-offenders or people doing Community Service to provide the service.
Happy for work to be carried out by criminal justice squad
Happy to pay a rent top-up for service
Happy to pay for service
Happy to pay for service
Happy to pay for service; Could be combined into "Small Reparis" scheme.
Happy to pay for this service
Happy to pay money towards the service
Help from those in community service as paid by part of the rent as like my house insurance is depending on cost.
Hopefully we can continue to receive this service and will expect to pay a sum,to be advised
Hopes service will continue, even with a small charge.
How much for fee for a trusted trader or unpaid work by offenders.
I am 90 years old and incapable of mowing the large expanse of grass surrounding on 3 sided. I can only rely on your help to put me in touch with a trusted trader or alternatively re-house me.
I am a 86 year old woman living on my own and I have no one to cut my grass,this is causing me a great deal of stress and worry. I would be willing to pay for this service if reasonable.
I am aware you have excellent gardeners in your employ, could these gardners not be used instead of contracts given to firms, not even in Falkirk District
I am happy to pay for this service or for volunteers or offenders.Please do keep this service going and charge us all a sum for the work done.
I am interested in unpaid workers by offenders supervised
Garden Aid Suggestions - Paper
I am prepared to pay a fee
I cannot cut my grass - I am willing to pay extra to have it done

I could perhaps pay a little towards getting it done
i DONT HAVE LOADS OF MONEY BUT WOULD MANAGE TO PAY SOMETHING FOR THIS SERVICE, I DON'T HAVE LOADS OF MONEY BUT WOULD MANAGE TO PAY SOMETHING.
I have always found the Garden Aid scheme a great bonus but would be willing to make a small contribution if the service could continue,thank you.
I have no garden mower for my washing green. I would be willing to pay towards the upkeep of my drying green.
I have no objection to paying a small fee towards the grass cutting.
I personally would pay extra rent for Council Housing Services.
I shall ask someone in my extended family to cut my grass for me. I hope that the Garden Service will keep going for years to come as the old and disabled have done their bit in 2 World wars to give us the freedom we and they enjoy today.
I shall try to arrange for the grass cutting to be done privately.
I sometime get a man to do mine
I suffered a heart attck last year and I was grateful for a neighbour who helped out and hopefully will do so in this year
I think the second alternative you have suggested could be useful as long as it was well supervised.
I would accept help to cut the grass by a volunteer or offenders or the service available by Falkirk Council " Trusted Trade Scheme".
I would be more than willing to accept young offenders, community payback or volunteers support to strim the garden.
I would be very willing to contribute to the cost of continuing the service if that is one of your decisions.
I would be willing to pay a small fee for this to continue but cannot afford anyone private.
I would be willing to pay the council a small nominal fee for continuing this service as I feel that paying a private firm would be too expensive for me.
I would consider option for private service provided by you as stated on page one of this letter
I would feel that Option 1 would apply : - My arranging for the work to be carried out privately at my expense. I would try to arrange a contractor but may have to rely on your Trusted Trader Scheme.
I would have no objections to the work being carried out by unpaid offenders or by voluntary support.
I would however be interested in Option 1 if you can rec people who are reliable and would do a good job
I would not mind paying something, I get pension credit and old age pension.
I would pay for service to allow me to live independently
I would suggest one of two options if the free service is discounted:1. The Council appoints a contractor to cut grass abd impose a monthly fee.2. Make use of the trusted trader scheme mentioned in your letter.
I would suggest that since the Council's finances are so obviously in such a state - one thing that should be definitely cut down is the huge " FIREWORK DISPLAY" which must be extremely EXPENSIVE and not necessary.
I wouldn't object to paying a little towards garden aid.
Ideas given are fair, reducing the service to those who cant pay, can get someone privately but difficulty know who to get and trust as family live so far away
If it has to be paid for then so be it.In some cases I would not have a poroblem with unpaid offenders or volunteering support but it would have to be regular.
If necessary I will pay as my mun will to get our grass cut as not getting her grass cut is causing her to get stressed.
If octogenarians don't fall into such a category, my choice would be the Triusted Trader Scheme.
If the garden aid does close Im quite willing to pay for regular grass cutting,as it is, I pay for hedge cutting once each year.

Garden Aid - Suggestions - Paper

If the Garden Aid scheme could continue I would be more than willing to contribute something towards this scheme.
If the grass cutting is stopped could you help us find somebody to cut the grass. If we have to pay a small amount we would willingly do so.
If you arranged a fee it would be worth it.
In [redacted] adjacent [redacted] all the hedges were removed from properties with able bodied residents and replaced by fencing. Why did that not happen to th[redacted]. I live alone and have no family so I have no one I can call on to help. I propose Garden Aid be given to over 70's and disabled people , not to people who just don't want to do there gardens and charge peolpe who are able and don't do their gardens, that would bring in much needed revenue..
In the absence of garden aid, addressee would opt for "trusted trader scheme". However, she would want to be told the cost before agreeing.
In the circumstances, identifying local people who might provide a modest service at a modest fee could be helpful, not unlike the small repairs run by the council very successfuly.
In the event that the Garden Aid Scheme is discontinued then a Trusted Trader Scheme would be the only other consideration.
Incorporate into small repairs service.
Increase age/change entitlements to free garden aid
Interested in "trusted trader" scheme.
Interested in unpaid offenders and volunteers to maintain garden.
Introduce a small charge
Is prepared to pay if the payment from the rent is reasonable, but needs more information about this.
Is prepared to pay something to the Council for the service to continue.
Is prepared to pay something to the Council for the service to continue.
Is willing to pay for the service
Issue a list of trusted garden services traders to households affected.
It could be cut once a month
Iwould ask if it would be possible to remove all of my hedges and replace with fencing-cutting the work load
Iwould be interested in offenders and volunteering support.
Iwould be most gratful if I could get unpaid work by offenderds or volunteering work.
Iwould be quite prepared to pay for this service.
Iwould be quite willing to consider this provided it was done by a reputable provider and that it was done on a regular 2 week basis and was strimmed.
Iwould have to pay as long as you could supply gardeners
Keep the scheme for those over the age of 80 and/or those already receiving a care package from social services. Also, could a small charge be levied to those who receive the scheme?
Likes second proposal
Make a criteria for the service over the age of 80, paying for the service
Maybe people would be prepared to pay a nominal sum to somehow continue on a restricted basis to maintain the service.
Maybe the matter of age should be considered
more rigorous screening process
Most disappointed

Garden Aid - Suggestions - Paper

Much more restricted provision for those in greatest need & via unpaid work by Offenders or Volunteering support.
My best option would be to have it done privately but this would really depend on the cost.Perhaps the council could have the area slabbed.
My first option would be support arrangements provided by the council for unpaid work by offenders or voluntary support.
My son is going to cut grass for me.Could I have brown bin for gardenas do not have one.
My wife and I have decided to opt for the support provided by Council Housing Services and pay for this via our rent. We know this will mean a higher rent but we have taken this into account.
Paid for service - same rates for all regardless of pension credits etc
Part subsidised service - council/tenant share cost
pay for contractors in the summertime recommended by ouncil
Pay small amount.
Paying a set fee
Paying for the service
Paying privately is out of the question; criminals are not welcome; respectable volunteers are acceptable; support funded through rents "not applicable".
People on garden aid should have council aid
People on the scheme be given the option to pay a fee.
Perhaps a different starting age for assistance of over 80 or 85 could be considered rather than 65 thus giving the most deserving some help in their senior years.
Perhaps a very small charge could be made or all the gardens are going to look terrible.Perhaps volunteers who could carry out this chore would be a better suggestion. I would not feel safe if offenders were given the tasl of cutting the hedge or grass.
Perhaps as mentioned the better option would be for via unpaid work by offenders or those given community service by a court to do the work as long as they are supervised. Total disagreement on Option 3.
Perhaps the age of assistance could be raised to 70 years.
Please consider providing a garden service for the most in need by prioritising perhaps in the following ways : 1.For those with genuine health problems irrespective of age 2.Consider raising the starting age for those without obvious health problems 3.Perhaps a small fee for the service
Posibility of chagring a fee should be considered
Preferred user by age
prepared to pay a fee
Prepared to pay and asked for numbers for gardeners
Prioritise those with greater need and ensure funds are available to those who meet the requirments
Private gardeners too expensive.
raise age limit to over 75s
Raise the age to 70 and in reeipt ot D.L.A, Charage a nominal fee each time as most people only have to use the service twice a year, use unemployed people who who be intrested in learning the watchful eye of a professional, make the trusted trader scheme public knowledge so residents can choose
Raise the age to free cutting service to over 75s
Rather than cut the service completely it would be preferable to pay a small charge or be included in the rent charge.
Reduce frequency of cuts, increase age limit to 65, private tenants pay,

Garden Aid - Suggestions - Paper

Regarding my garden I would appreciate unpaid work by offenders or volunteering support.
Remove the grass and slab the small area on a one-off basis which would be permanent.
Residents should arrange for work to be done privately by a Trusted Trader
Save money by stopping handouts to "scroungers", "druggies" and "anti-social" tenants.
Stagger the cuts & do less often. Also involve Criminal Justice & volunteers for work experience. Would consider a small amount increase in rent.
Suggest you give an option yo pay for this service providing cost was reasonable.
Tenants to make contributions towards the cost
The addressee hopes to be able to pay privately, but says that people with Alzheimers, etc. should continue to receive garden aid.
The service I had during the last summer was terrible, 3 weeks between cuts. Waste of money for the council, the contractors giving a very poor service.
The using of people on community service is a good idea. Who would be responsible for any damage to gardens / plants that might occur due to the fact that these people are not gardeners.What is to stop you charging for garden aid? A seperate charge to those currently receiving garden aid and to any new applicants would be fairer.
There are plenty of unemployed with no intention of working and are on benefits who could do the work and also those on community service.
There is a large hedge between number 11 and 9 if this could be removed it would help a great deal.
To go from a service where those over 65 are able to use the service to absolutely no service seems very extreme. Surely there has to be a system where the most vulnerable eg. those over 80 or with a social care package could still have the service.Iwould not mind making a financial contribution towards the scheme. I would however be very unsure of hiring my own tradesmen as i am vulnerable in our society.This would put your citizens at risk surely something a caring council would not want to do. Surely there must be a way of saving this service for those who really need it and diminish the risk of putting these people like myself at risk from conmen.
To remove hedges and put up a fence, done by volunteers through the council
trader scheme for gardening and other services
Trusted trader (reasonable rates), offenders and volunteering support
Trusted trader scheme
Trusted trader scheme
Trusted Trader Scheme and unpaid work by offenders - would like to know more.
Trusted Trader Scheme put in place.
Trustworthy gardeners
Tursted trader scheme seems interesting. To reach a consensus of agreement might be difficult.
unpaid work by offenders or volunteering support
Unpaid work by offenders or volunteers
Unpaid work by offenders or volunteers
Unpaid work by offenders or volunteers
Unpaid work by offenders or volunteers
unpaid work by offenders or voulunteering support or an affordable charge
unpaid work for offenders or volunteers

Use Criminal Justice squad to carry out work.
Using volunteers or offenders
We are prepared to pay a fair price for garden aid, grass and hedge cuttings removed that day.
We would be interested in the Trader Scheme for gardening and other services, or unpaid work by offenders or volunteering support.
What about a service charge for Garden Aid as other councils do?
What scheme would be available and what would it cost?
When I was manager of football team at Falkirk High,60 volunteer seniors and me to cut grass and hedges of old folks in Falkirk/Bainsford area.The boys came on a sat morn from all districts. Ultimately the bus company fearing accidents with forks etc stopped the buses. I wrote to the council to ask for a hut where tools could be kept etc but this was turned down and the scheme was finished.
Why not try to keep your service and staff going but charge everyone like eg. MECS Service by direct debit. Say £12 or so might cover your cost for the 4/5 minswork (ie.£12 per cut) PLEASE RETAIN THIS 4 WEEKLY SERVICE!
Will get a private contractor dependent on cost
Willing to pay a nominal amount or for a reliable and trusted person to continue carrying out this work
Willing to pay council
Willing to pay for the service
wishing to extend this garden aid offer to non-council tenants as well
Work by offenders if they were very well suprvised. The frequency of grass cutting could perhaps be reduced.
Would agree to pay a small amount or cut grass less often.
Would agree to pay for the service
Would agree to paying a small amount.
Would agree to restricted provision.
Would agree to volunteers or criminal justice squad.
Would be accepting of anyone carrying out the work
Would be grateful for any assistance from voluntary sector
Would be happy to pay a contribution for the service.
Would be prepared to assist with the financial cost if it was on a pro rata basis, meaning that a fixed charge per yard of the hedge and square area of lawn that is needed attended to. Or to replace hedges with fences.
Would be prepared to back, in the first instance, more restricted provision arranged by the Council; in the second instance, support arrangements provided by the Council, funded through rents.
Would be prepared to pay a small amount as on benefit.
Would be willing to pay a small fee and/or see the frequency of the service reduced.
Would be willing to pay a small fee if job was done properly.
Would be willing to pay for the garden aid service if done well.
Would be willing to pay. Would consider volunteers or criminal justice squad.
would consider paying for a reliable reasonable service recommended by us
would like the council to run a charageable servive
Would pay a small amount for the service
Wouldn't mind paying a reasonable fee for this.

Garden Aid - Suggestions - Paper

You should have looked into charging a fixed fee for our hedges and grass cutting as hiring a gardener will cost us quite a lot of money we don't have.

In the event that garden aid service must be stopped: requests Council help to find a service that will do her garden for free or for £5 a month. (But she writes that she won't be able to afford £5 once her ESA benefit is reduced.)

"...if you can send me details of your trusted trader scheme for gardening so we can arrage to have it cut privately."

Mothers address address

"Could you point me in the right direction as to who I would speak to to potentially keep this service going? email 03/03/16 13.52

"I look forward to hearing from you" Refers to Allandale as conservation area and as such should be considered under different criteria. ALso asks if those council employees mowing the common grass areas could cut their grass? March 16 12.06

"Was there meant to be a reply questionnaire enclosed in the letter concerning garden age?" Feb 16 13.05

a. Who would decide who is eligible and who isn't..th have this service terminated/retained by the Council b. What the cost would be to those who are council tenants c. What cost to those who are owner/occupiers. d. When are we likely to know the outcome of these proposed cuts and costs e. What would happen when council tenants/owner occupiers do not maintain their garden or use any of the stated ways in which to keep gardens tidy f. Finally - As from what date would these cuts be implemented

Telephone Number on letter.

Issues with a patch of grass and people walking over it

As my mother is 88 years old and neither my husband or myself is able to do her garden could you please supply us with the details of your trusted trader scheme. Regards Address is mothers: No telephone number on letter.

Asking to be considered to be on a scheme where they get help with the garden, would appreciate this - I look forward to hearing from you.

asks if it would be possible to find out whether the Council has considered making redundant some of its 10 or so staff earning c. £100k a year and redistributing the responsibilities of these staff - thereby saving the garden aid service.

Can I still get her grass cut?

Could you please furnish us with details of your trusted trader scheme.

No telephone number on letter

Could you please give me a phone number for the trusted trader scheme and what it would cost.

Could you please send me the list of the trusty trader scheme for gardening.

No telephone number on letter

Would like to know how to access a trusted trader

Father is 86 sent on his behalf [redacted] When will we know the result
Finds it hard to believe that withdrawing this service with contribute to Falkirk Council saving money - ended email with 'Looking forward to a positive response
why is it the pensioners that are getting penalized. Just because other councils have stopped the service it doesnt mean Falkirk has to.
However if I feel my concerns are not being met can you please give me the name and contact details of my local MP. No telephone number on letter
I am 84 years of age and live on my own with no living relatives. I am on benefits and would find it devastating should you decide to withdraw this service. Look forward to hearing from you. No telephone number on letter.
I am a single person with various medical conditions including diabetic treatment 3 times a week. My mobility is limited. Awaiting your reply. No telephone number or postcode on letter
I am registered blind and I have nobody that can do the garden for me so could you let me know what to do. No telephone number on letter
I had hoped that the people over 80 would still get the service. I for one would be quite willing to pay something towards the cost. I should be pleased to have your advice. No telephone number on letter.
I was getting the benefit DLA. It has now changed to PIP benefit. I am enquiring if I am on PIP benefit will I still qualify for the Garden Aid scheme. I would be most grateful if you could reply back to me. No telephone number on letter
I will be 90 years old in June 2016 with a heart condition (Angina) so I will be unable to cut the grass. I live alone. Please advise how I can get grass cut. [redacted] No telephone number on letter. Can't make out surname. Letter has went out addressed to ' The Occupier'
I would ask you to give me details of your trusted trader scheme which could be to my benefit. No telephone number on letter
I would be grateful if you can please, further advise me if I qualify for any help from Falkirk Council as stated on the bullet points shown in your letter No telephone number on letter
I would be grateful if you could advise me details of the trusted trader scheme for gardening as this would seem to be my only option. No telephone number on letter
I would be grateful if you could keep me updated on providers and scale of charges one might expect. I would be pleased to hear from you before the grass grows under our feet.
I would be grateful if you could supply me with a list of gardeners you rec Telephone number not on letter
I would be obliged if we could have more information, as for the arrangements for gardening work being done by offenders or volunteering support, also support arrangements provided as part of the rent paid by tenants. No telephone number on letter.

Responses Requested - Paper

I would be willing to pay the council a small nominal fee for continuing this service as I feel that paying a private firm would be too expensive for me. I look forward to hearing from you. No telephone number on letter

I would like a reply to this letter as soon as possible as our gardens are in a terrible state after the ones you gave the job to last year. No telephone number on letter.

I would like to know what is available for me as I am on Disability allowance No telephone number on letter

I would suggest that it would be better to review the criteria to qualify for this service i.e. Possible increasing the age and the physical ability for the resident to do the work themselves as some are perfectly able to do so. I would be grateful to hear what the council's decision is regarding the garden aid scheme. No telephone number on letter

If possible looking for information reagarding a trusted trader scheme for gardening

If the grass cutting is stopped could you help us find somebody to cut the grass. Could you please let us know. No telephone number on letter

Is there no possibility that you could continue to cut the grass and charge for carrying this out? No telephone number on letter.

More information please re other services available for funding this

"How will it be decided which tenants can continue to receive support as part of the rent paid? How much will this cost? How often would the service be provided ... We look forward to hearing from you"

Looking for a list of services available through trusty trades.

Looking for a response confirming that her gardening service will continue as she meets all the Councils criteria

Looking to apply for volunteers or offenders to help with her garden

would like to know the cost of trusted traders scheme

Sent by Will charges be made against those unable to cut their grass. Increased penalty charges will surely be a positive incentive for the council to get rid of this service

"Please feel free to come and look at the size of my garden and tell me what I should be able to do"

writes that she is 81, lives alone and would be very sad to lose the service and see her garden unkempt. She would like a reply.

list of approved traders

and his wife are elderly and moving shortly. They ask the Council to let them know if the garden aid service will continue to be provided for a few months and write that, if not, would the Council advise them on what to do.

would like the Council to write back to him once they decide what will happen in future.

is in his 90s and has no one who can help with his garden. He asks the Council to try to arrange someone, and writes that he is prepared to pay.

would like to know when the Council intends to stop the service, and whether it is stopping for everyone. Also, she has no one who can provide the service for her and would like the Council to let her know what to do.

If Council discontinues garden aid service, would like information about the trusted trader scheme.

would like the Council's list of reputable tradesmen who might provide the service. She is elderly and does not want offenders.

sent by daughter Send list of trusted trades to allow us to arrange someone to do the work

sent by daughter Wishes us well in making what can only be some very difficult decisions going foward

would like to know who she can get to cut her hedge.

writes that she looks forward to hearing from the Council.

would like the Council to let her know whether it will offer any alternatives.

Response came from via the Falkirk Council system

Several health problems, no family help locally, overgrown garden.

would like updated on the progress on the decision re keeping garden aid.

asks whether the Council is going to create some form of list for those in greatest need of garden aid and requests that, if so, her name be added to the list. She would like a reply about this.

asks the Council to contact her and advise as to alternatives, or to recommend another scheme which is available for her to use.

would like to be informed of the outcome.

My constituent has asked me to reply on his behalf. My constituent feels that it is not appropriate to cut garden aid entirely and believes that cost of garden aid should be met from HRA for council tenants unable to maintain their garden. My constituent would like to highlight that the ultimate sanction for council tenants that do not maintain their garden is eviction. He feels that this is morally wrong to enforce for those unable to maintain their garden and therefore suggests the above alternative. I would be obliged if you would inform me of your conclusions.

on behalf of

My husband and I are both disabled, we have both to use strollers outside. We don't know of anyone that could help out with grass cutting or hedge. I am sorry to be a burden on use but I do need Garden Aid. You are more than welcome to come out and see us

My partner and I have both had strokes and in our 70's in a disabled house with large garden and not able to maintain it. Please advise us on our selection. No telephone number on letter.

My sister is 86 years of age, has dementia and no family members other than myself living locally, I am 77 years old and feel that the exceptional circumstances that you refer to in this letter apply to my sister. Hope to hear from you in due course.

No telephone number on letter

Parents How should they proceed - timescale for outcome

Perhaps you would be good enough to let me have a list of any service which I could approach for help.

No telephone number on letter.

Please advise me if there is anything that can be done by you to support me? No telephone number on letter

PLease confirm if the fencing will eventually go ahead this year. Will you provide a list of persons who will complete gardening chores as required?

Please let me know if there will be anyone taking over the service No telephone number ion letter

Please let us know if a final end to Garden Aid is decided on. Thanking you in anticipation of your final decision as soon as possible.

No telephone number on letter

Please send me your trusted trades scheme as offered in your letter as this will protect me from being scammed by callers offering to do jobs to which they are unable to do just to rip me off money No telephone number on letter

is this a one off payment of £25 or monthly etc

Resident is dislexic so would prefer to speak to someone either by phone or in person

Responses Requested - Paper

Responded in regards to her fence being put up for her safety. Unsure of what the response is to the enquiry and passed over to the Camelon office.
Sent on behalf of her father and is concerned about the alternative free service options, volunteers and offenders. Would there be supervision of these individuals whilst carrying out the garden maintenance?
Suggestions: Ring fenced to council tenants. That council properties gardens should come under the umbrella remit of those responsible for council parks and open spaces. No telephone number on letter
The impact of the withdrawal of Garden Aid service would for us be devastating. My husband is registered blind. With regard to work being undertaken privately I would be quite willing to consider this provided it was done by a reputable provider and that it was done on a regular 2 week basis and was strimmed. I look forward to hearing from you on the proposals. No telephone number on letter.
Tried previously to hire external contractors and used trusty trades to find them. Find these people unrealiable and expensive. Looking for advice on what the can d
Tusted trader scheme seems interesting, to reach a concensus or agreement might be difficult - your input/suggestions to solve this problem would be appreciated
Wonders if there is a possibility the Council can continue the scheme with the householder contributing an annual fee. Wants to know the reactions to this.
Would consider volunteers or criminal justice squad - can you fill me in on this? Tel no
Would it be possible to send details of how to engage the services of Trusted Trader Scheme. No telephone number on letter
Would like advice on Trusted Traders and how much for the service?
Would like information on Trusted Trader.
Would like information re. the Trusted Trader Scheme.
Would like more information on what is meant by "offenders" carrying out the work
Would like response if the garden aid stops
Would like to be sent details on trader schemes

Comments - Online

6000 folk get the above at a cost of 275000.how can it be 4500 per tennant.no wonder the council are cutting costs.how does it cost 4500 per tennant for 5 minutes work per month.i was told by council there are many complaints about gardeners.fine them for poor service
A good money saving idea.
A much needed service.
Absolutely shocking, I'm writing on behalf of my 75 year old mum, who lives on her own.... She has already looked into having it done privately, as I would struggle to work, look after my own house and garden and hers too. I already do her house and errands. As much as I think using offenders is a good idea... I wouldn't want them near my vulnerable mother. Think she'd rather pay and have the job done properly.
Against it totally I think it should be reduced but to remove it altogether very unwise hedges once a year and grass twice
Agree in part in principal BUT why so late. What are those truly unable supposed to do while new policy is made. Why have front line staff not been more fully informed of the 'consultation process'?
All you do is cut the grass I am 70 and after being told by a person from the council that I had to tidy my garden I had to pay from my pension to have it done. There were two trees in my front garden grown too high but no help was given to trim them although the council did send someone to cut them down. It's not actually Garden 'Aid' its grass cutting only. and soon not even that
Appalled at the idea. My mum is suffering from cancer, is registered disabled and has recently been informed that she may no longer be entitled to get her grass cut and hedges trimmed. Unfortunately there is no one she can rely on locally to look after it for her. I am aware of another three or four pensioners in her Street alone that are in a similar position therefore I am on their side and completely opposed to this service being stopped.
Appalled at the idea. My mum is suffering from cancer, is registered disabled and has recently been informed that she may no longer be entitled to get her grass cut and hedges trimmed. Unfortunately there is no one she can rely on locally to look after it for her. I am aware of another three or four pensioners in her Street alone that are in a similar position therefore I am on their side and completely opposed to this service being stopped.
As a receiver of garden aid I am obviously against the proposal to stop this service and would very much like to see either a monthly service instead of fortnightly and although this would prove an expensive outlay initially, I would like to see the people in receipt of Garden Aid being offered mono blocking for their gardens. The reason being...this would prevent unsightly gardens and it would be a better investment for the future.
as a severely disabled person`i cannot carry out the work required to maintain grass cutting nor can i afford to pay any person to do the work.F.D.C placed me in my house 9 years ago because of my disability and now they are trying to thrust a lawnmower into my hands to do external work to same premises they will have to offer me alternate accomodation without a garden as i will not and cannot pay for a garden i did not want in first place
As being over 65 and a carer for my wife and having arthritis in my legs the withdrawal of the service would be a huge blow. Private arrangements in my experience leaves you open to many of the cowboy providers in the area who charge extortionate rates for poor work. Trusty trades is not exempt from this although they do remove them when found out. If your unlucky you can be one of those affected.
Disastrous. I am a pensioner with no family, asthma, osteo-arthritis of back, hips, knees, ankles, for which I have a doctor's prescription for daily pain management, plus my asthma prescription. I struggled to cut my grass three years ago, and am less able now than then. Paying for someone to cut grass will be equally difficult. And I am by no means alone. Both my immediate neighbours live alone and are no more able to cut grass than I am - that is, none of us are fit. I also know of many in my locality who currently receive garden aid because of age, infirmity, or both.
Disgraceful This service helps so many people who are unable not only because they are over 65 but because they are disabled and unable to do it and many people could not afford to pay privately This Service should be maintained
Disgraceful!

Comments - Online

Disgusting.
do not remove make a charge for this
Either remove it or charge tenants for it. The service should be available to tenants only, no private home owners.
Elderly people with low incomes can not afford to pay someone to keep their garden tidy and will be forced to let grass grow because of lack of private contractors in their area. An alternative should only he used if there are services available in the area. I phoned a number of people in the area to weed my mums garden and no one turned up - i suspect the job was 'too small'.
Elderly people with no additional income or relatives depend on this service.
Firstly has a there been a consultation with the elderly and disabled who already received this service to see if they would be willing to pay a small fee to retain this service ? I think it's terrible that this service is being taken away from elderly and disabled especially. Gardens are going to be even more overgrown than they are at present. How are elderly and disabled meant to maintain gardens , oh yes employ someone ! Have they the means to do this? Probably not at £15 an hour . I really don't think much thought has went into this venture please sit down and do a rethink as areas are going to go down even further than they are at present! Hit the ones who are able to do their gardens and don't ! They have signed a missive which is an agreement and they should be held to it .
Garden aid is a huge help for the commiunty and will affect those who are going to lose it, for the person who is under our care this is a huge deal as he has no one to cut the grass for him and the care company arent able to do so, he wouldnt mind paying for the service if need be, but if he hasnt got anyone to cut his grass then he wouldnt be safe for him to be in his garden as he may trip or fall on the long grass.wich has happened before tahts why we got garden aid last year for him, the council should charge a small fee for those who can afford it, as will will likley have to hire someone we dont know or trust to do his grass, and the person is vunrable so having some one who knows cutting the grass makes him feel safe as he got to know the boys who did it for him, if the conucil is going to do away with it then sending out a list of local people who would be willing to help would be helpful. we called one form the yellow pages who wanted £45.00 a time wich is too step for him, the people who get garden aid paying something towards it is surely an option for the council it would cut back on funding needed. im aware that many people proberly cant afford to have grass cut but then the people who are paying are helping making the budget smaller for council so the people who cant afford could possibly get theirs done for free. regards
Garden Aid is an essential service for the less able in Falkirk. Garden maintenance improves the accessibility of the properties, raises the profile of the area, and helps maintain the mental and physical wellbeing of the residents - by helping to ensure that their outside areas are tidy, well kept and user friendly. Most of the users of Garden Aid would be unable to afford private garden care so their gardens would become unkempt. This would lead to complaints from the local neighbourhood officers, causing severe anxiety issues and greatly impacting the service users mental wellbeing. I think that removing Garden Aid is a short sighted money saving plan. The effect on the service users mental and physical health could lead to increased care needs, putting yet more strain on the council budgets. Proposals that could be considered include: funding a voluntary organisation to take on the Garden Aid scheme; Using community payback offenders to provide the scheme.
Garden aid is not a necessity so I agree it should be cut. Too many people receive garden aid while they have able bodied family members who could do their garden for them.
Garden Aid should be means tested and only given to low income pensioners and low income disabled people where there is no able person residing in the property.
good idea
Good idea for some users but no acceptable for others
Great idea..been a horrific service for the last couple of years anyway
I agree that some fee should be proposed but to stop this will effect many vulnerable people who have no access to help and will not be able to maintain their gardens. In particular those without any supports, frail elderly and people with dementia. This may open the door to many people having strangers turn up at their doors and being conned into payments for poor quality work or being scammed completely and having money and valuables lost.

Comments - Online

I agree with removing the free service, apart from those that are truly vulnerable! Where I stay I know of at least 2 residents who currently do receive this free service. honestly, if they are able to carry bags of shopping and carry out other tasks that are not necessarily easy to do if you are elderly or disabled then why should they receive this free service! I myself am in my 30's and disabled and do not rely on this service, my family help out where they can and simarly these other residents have plenty of younger members of their family who could help.
I am 88, my son lives in Kippen and my daughter has cancer. I have no-one lese who can help me. I cannot afford the big companies that you have mentioned in your letter and do not know what I will do.
I am 90 years old & a council tenant living at [redacted] How do you expect me to cut the grass & hedge of this property? My family, due to their own health issues, are unable to undertake this work. I find it quite preposterous that you expect me, at my age, to do this.
I am 90 years old on my next birthday and I like my place looking as nice as possible and this won't happen if I don't get garden aid. I do the best I can but unable to do anything really. Many places and areas will get very run down if even the basics are not getting done. .
I am 91 years old have poor sight, hard of hearing and basically housebound. I need help with all my basic needs. Is this what public services in the 21st century have been reduced to under the SNP government? If MP's hadn't given themselves an 11% salary increase or maybe MSP's consider a 10% cut in expenses instead of increasing them the money saved could be used to re-instate much needed services for elderly and vulnerable members of society. The cost of a pair of Nicola's shoes could pay to cut the grass of many needy pensioners. These continued cuts to local authority funding merely confirm that the SNP priorities are motivated by self interest and have nothing to do with the basic needs of the people of Scotland or creating a fairer society. The 'haves' win again and the 'havenots' foot the bill!
I am aged 78 and have worked all my life - paid my way in life and am disgusted that FC do not raise rates on an annual basis to maintain the basics - weekly bin collection - garden cutting etc Shame on you for poor management
I am an 80 year old lady living on my own with no one to help with cutting my grass. Money is very tight and I would struggle to pay for this privately
I am not happy that the service is being removed as I am elderly and not in a position to do my own garden and have no one to do this for me. I also do not have the equiptment,I am concerned about the cost from getting my own contractor as i am on a statte benefit,I would be interested in a council run service paid for by myself as i believe this would be a cheaper option
I am too disabled to do the grass at front, only a small 30 x 20 foot square. I am 68 I have all my toes amputated and I fell and have lttle use of my right arm and shoulder. My wife is 66 and even less able than me with oestoathritis
I am writing on my parents behalf. They are both over 80 and unable to do their own garden. There is no one else in the family fit enough to help. In my opinion there are other ways to cut costs. In their small street alone there are two households I know of who are receiving garden aid who have no entitlement to it. This has happened because the houses were sold last year and the new owners have obviously not informed the council. Could there not be more frequent checking of circumstances to avoid this happening? I am sure there would be a lot more discovered. The other thing would be to ask for a contribution to the work which I am sure people would be willing to pay to keep their gardens tidy. If people are disabled or elderly they receive allowances to spend as they wish to make things easier for themselves. It is very difficult to get reliable private gardeners-we have tried and at least the council can be relied on. I am totally against the removal of this service.
I am writing this on behalf of my 87yr old father who is unable to do his garden now, but all his years as a council tenant he has kept his garden neat and tidy. He is never out his house much now and enjoys watching out his window at the garden and with the garden aid at least it was kept maintained. As he lives alone and I work full time it is not easy for me to help in the garden and not always weather permitting at weekends. I really feel there is other ways to make cuts in the council than doing away with this service. Time will tell when people can't afford to pay to have there garden tidy and the council are complaining about gardens being unruly.
I can keep my garden tidy but have nobody to cut my grass I have arthritis in my lower back
I can see no other option.

Comments - Online

I can understand the need to help those with disabilities and it benefits every in the local community to have our local environment well cared for. It's not a greater priority than maintaining education and healthcare provision.
I do not support the removal of Garden Aid. This is a valuable service both to the households in receipt and the wider community, as when gardens are kept well, it helps ensure people co-exist in a society. However, with SG cuts it is vitally important to maintain the widest possible range of services, and I appreciate that this perhaps not top of the priority list it does make sense to keep some provision, at least for those in most need.
I do not think it is fair to remove the garden aid for members in our community who are unable to look after their garden themselves or have no family to step in and keep the garden well kept. If gardens are unkempt visitors to the area will not have a positive view of the district.
I don't think it should be removed for those unable to upkeep their gardens. Especially the elderly who enjoy the garden but not always capable of looking after it themselves. Another point not to do with garden aid, brown bins being emptied once a month is ridiculous, one cut of our lawn and the brown bin is full. Unfair that we care about our garden and how it looks but our brown bin being severely reduced.
I don't think it should be taken away from people who generally need it as I am unable to maintain my garden due being wheelchair-bound and having Cerebal Palsy. Having no service at all is going to cause me so many problem's - when it becomes overgrown & neighbours start complaining at it being unkept & as I live alone & have no family near I have no help it will only add to my health problem's which I already have. I need this service as it is vital. It's illness that is preventing me keeping my garden in good shape - not because am choosing not to do it.
I don't think this is fair on the elderly or disabled people who live alone. Also it could result in people not cutting their hedge or grass and making the community messy.
I feel that it is a vital service for people who cannot maintain their own garden but wish to have there garden looking neat and tidy.
I feel the service should be available for people over the age of 75, this would save money but maintain a critical service for the more vulnerable elderly independent residents.

Comments - Online

I have a Father and father in law who are aged 82 and 84.They are both in receipt of the Councils Garden Aid Scheme. I was surprised to learn from them this week that the council is considering scrapping this scheme. Whilst I realize that financial cuts are unavoidable I would urge the Council to think again about whose services they are cutting. Surely the elderly should be a priority for the Council. Especially I would say those over the age of 80. Would it not be possible to draw up a list of the most needy of those who at present receive Garden Aid? Foe example those who receive additional care packages or those over the age of 80. This would diminish the numbers receiving aid and may make it more viable. Would the council consider asking for a minimal payment say 310 per visit that would be levied against those receiving the aid. This would stop the elderly trying to employ their own tradesmen when many we know are preyed upon by rogue tradesmen at present. Whilst I am local and live close by my Father and Father in law I have just received ill health retirement and am unable to look after their gardens. Having the peace of mind that their garden is neat and tidy saves a lot of anxiety and helps to maintain the sense of independence that our elderly citizens deserve. I would urge the council to think again about scrapping the garden scheme. I would say that it could be trimmed to still look after the most needy in our society. Please think again about the services that need to be cut don't hurt those that need you the most [redacted] I have a Father and father in law who are aged 82 and 84.They are both in receipt of the Councils Garden Aid Scheme. I was surprised to learn from them this week that the council is considering scrapping this scheme. Whilst I realize that financial cuts are unavoidable I would urge the Council to think again about whose services they are cutting. Surely the elderly should be a priority for the Council. Especially I would say those over the age of 80. Would it not be possible to draw up a list of the most needy of those who at present receive Garden Aid? Foe example those who receive additional care packages or those over the age of 80. This would diminish the numbers receiving aid and may make it more viable. Would the council consider asking for a minimal payment say 310 per visit that would be levied against those receiving the aid. This would stop the elderly trying to employ their own tradesmen when many we know are preyed upon by rogue tradesmen at present. Whilst I am local and live close by my Father and Father in law I have just received ill health retirement and am unable to look after their gardens. Having the peace of mind that their garden is neat and tidy saves a lot of anxiety and helps to maintain the sense of independence that our elderly citizens deserve. I would urge the council to think again about scrapping the garden scheme. I would say that it could be trimmed to still look after the most needy in our society. Please think again about the services that need to be cut don't hurt those that need you the most.

I have asked my daughter to fill this in on my behalf.I am 75yr old woman with health problems who relies on garden aid and would ask you to reconsider your budget cuts as most elderly are not in a position to cut their lawns and hedges,what I would like to know is where has the consultation on this matter been as 2 questions hardly qualifies for a consultation exercise when it appears you have already decided it has to be scrapped,surely any legitimate consultation should be more than a 2 week window and no letters should have been sent out to those affected till after the consultation period and surely the consultation should not take place after the decision has been made,have a feeling you are being very underhand here,another point what do you plan to do when those who were on garden aid and cant pay someone to help whats your solution to their over run gardens,i would have looked forward to your response but it seems you have no interest in who is answering these 2 questions as you has asked for no personal information to be provided so have a good feeling this will be lost in cyber space.

I know many people who receive or have received this service and can afford to go on fancy holidays/cruises etc and are therefore well able to pay for this service. Why should I and other council residents be subsidising them. This should be free only to those who are genuinely most in need. And I write this, mindful of the fact that I will also have to consider this, in perhaps, not so many years to come! Perhaps the council could still offer the service at a reasonable annual charge, rather than have elderly residents feeling vulnerable to rogue traders.

I not happy as im an 87 year old pensioner and have broken my hip so i relied on them cutting my grass

I rely on this service throughout the year and not in favour of it being removed

Comments - Online

I think a form of garden aid is needed for those who genuinely need it, not conditions where I fact benign outside in fresh air maintaining the garden even to a simple level would assist mental health. Thourough checks to ensure there is no family/friends to assist (there are families receiving me it with sons/daughters visiting regularly that could be assisting) and restricted criteria to ensure those in most need receive a service (consider not giving people with short term illnesses the service) Without it for those in need estates could become unsightly and unattractive for those living in the area.
I think Falkirk Council should ensure that there is some sort of scheme in place to allow the most vulnerable can access help but do not think it should be open to anyone over the age of 65. Many people over 65 are still perfectly able to manage their own gardens. Also one person in a household on DLA should not mean they are eligible if there are other people living in the house that are able to maintain the garden.
I think free garden aid should continue for people who are unable, by age or infirmity and who have no immediate relatives to assist them. In many cases individuals may alredy have paid £40 to obtain disabled parking permits and this should be seen as contributing towards relevant service provision.
I think it certainly needs to be reviewed, especially for people who have family members who are able to help out. I reported a empty property a while back that was receiving garden aid for a number of years when the house was unoccupied, properties like this where private owned should def be reviewed.
I think it is a shortsighted proposal and should not be progressed. At a cost of £550k you are supporting many elderly residents who have contributed and continue to contribute through their rates. Without garden aid, you will either cause elderly people to live with gardens that potentially cause an eyesore or will cause them to be dangerous to be walked in. Also you may force people on limited financial circumstances to put money they should be using on food or fuel to keep a garden tidy. What will also happen to the people who were employed doing this service? Perhaps a way forward would be to charge a nominal fee eg £5, it might not cover all the costs but it will help to sustain the project. Please do not progress this proposal in its current form.
I think it is a very unthoughful cut, I am 73 year old with bad athertius in my knees thus making it very difficult to cut my own grass, my husband who is also 73 suffers from parkinsons and dementia, has just had a hip replacement and will be getting a knee replacement in due course, there is no way that either of us are in a position to cut our grass, i take pride in my garden and wont let it grow a mess, i have always kept my garden neat and tidy, i hear you get a letter from the council if your garden is a mess so i am sure that you will be issuing a lot of letters as not all elderly people have familly and friends who will be able to cut there grass. My son had a bad accident and has no use of his left arm so i cannot ask him either. I have no one else to ask so my only option is to let it grow and my garden be a mess or pay for a gardener to come out and cut it but i dont feel i should have to do that. I think more consideration should be given over the matter as there will be many pensioners who are in the same situation as me and i just think its very ridiculous.
I think it is terrible if this service is removed, a large number of the elderly rely on this service and cannot afford to pay to get their gardens tidied privately. Therefore it will result in gardens being overgrown in Falkirk housing estates and will Falkirk Council then take costly legal action against the elderly to enforce them to tidy their gardens? .
I think it should be discontinued or should be a paid for service.
I think it should be removed, I know a few who have this service but it's done so badly that they have to pay someone else to do a proper job. It is your choice to live with a garden or not. You have to pay for the service. U wouldn't expect the council to come in and look after ur cat, if u couldn't.
I think it should be still available to the elderly my concern especially when rouge workers pray on the elderly knocking on doors asking them if they need their garden done could put them in a vulnerable position. I am not sure what the council proposals are would the council not be better still maintaining the gardens with a small charge surely the safety of the elderly is important.
I think it should be stopped
I think it should not be removed but be more strictly assessed and only the really infirm or disabled should get it done for free but people should be able to pay for this service if they want to continue getting it.

Comments - Online

I think it will be a big mistake. I have already heard people say they won't do anything about their gardens, just let the grass grow and the hedges as well. The district could end up as a pure eyesore.. There are more and more expenses put on to pensioners and this could be very expensive to those of us who have big gardens. When will we know if this is going to be a definite stoppage of the scheme?
I think it will lead to a lot of overgrown gardens and hedges.
I think it.should be restricted to those in greatest need. My ex next door neighbour gets garden aud and he's never out of his garden doing work. Yet my 85 year old Grandmother get absolutely no help at all... I think that people take advantage of this scheme and it's definitely worth restricting the service.
I think it's a step in the wrong direction. It sets up stress for the elderly and disabled because they become concerned about how their house/garden looks. It brings down the entire neighbourhood. It's a good way of decreasing house/area prices. If the place looks unkempt, it may attract the wrong kind. And finally, the government are on a mission to destroy the elderly and infirm, don't join them, and give us a break!
I think it's absolutely shocking removing this service, my mother is almost 84 yrs old and has Alzheimer's Disease and is no way capable of doing her garden. I am a single working mum and I also look after my mum to so I have no time to take on the task of doing my mums garden when I struggle to find time to do my own garden. Maybe if the council hadn't done gardens for so many folk who pretend they're ill then genuine people like my mum wouldn't get penalised. It's shocking that pensioners will be asked to pay private for this to be done. I am absolutely disgusted with Falkirk Council for doing this!!
I think people should get this type of support from family, friends and neighbours. It's not the councils responsibility.
I think there are a lot of elderly residents with no one to stop this service is a disgrace . can this option of these people who are on community service not cover this ? is it not enough that you spend on extra bins etc that probably do not get used by the majority of households a complete waste of money.....i hopw you are not expecting elderly who are on a tight pension worked all their days to get in someone who will rip them off you should be proving then a list of genuine gardeners willing to do this job at a rate and leave the cowboys out of it.
I think this should only be available to older people and people who are genuinely unable to do this for themselves. If those people have family/friends/neighbours who would be willing to do this then they shouldn't receive it. I know there are people in my street who can do things for themselves and because they don't work as they claim "disability allowance" then they get it when in fact they are benefit frauds and can do it. I have no problem with people getting it done who genuinely can't do it themselves
I think too many people who can either afford to pay, or are in fact fit enough to cut their grass, receive the service. 60 is not considered 'old' nowadays. I will not be eligible to retire from work until 67 so why would I automatically be eligible for a service like this before I retire. Also universal benefits are really a thing of the past; child benefit is even means tested now. What is the difference between young and wealthy and elderly and wealthy?
I would find this a very big loss because of multiple disabilities I am unable to manage my garden I would contribute to my garden aid if it was a decent job as the last one ran over the grass instead of cutting it
If it helps protect other vital services
If it is going to help the budget and save jobs, then I am in favour of stopping garden aid . Especially as the last 3 years the garden aid contractors were a complete waste of money. It would however be helpful perhaps to supply alternative information about gardeners who would only charge a reasonable rate for their services.
If people genuinely need the service, then it should be provided. This must surely be an area where young offenders could be put to work? Let them give something back to society. The only concern there would be that such offenders would become familiar with where vulnerable people were living and could use this knowledge in a criminal way. Perhaps using young offenders in other manual tasks in general public areas would free up time for trustworthy employees to tackle the garden aid work.
if you want to make savings cut councilers expenses.
In my opinion the best solution is in your proposal to have a more restricted provision for those in greatest need. organising help for them via unpaid work doing by offenders or volunteering support.

Comments - Online

It is a useful service to offer those who are unable to maintain their gardens due to age or disabilities. If there needs to be cuts to this service, perhaps it could be means-tested against available income, or Falkirk Council could request a nominal fee for the service.
It is bad enough where Council Tenants do not look after their garden and it is an eyesore and it will be worse doing away with the Garden Aid where the elderly on their own and those who are disabled and are unable to do their garden that you are even considering this. Have you contacted those who receive the Garden Aid regards a consultation and their views on this. Perhaps charging for this service they maybe agreeable to it . I know the Council has to make cut backs but feel it is wrong to do away with the Garden Aid Scheme
It is bad enough where some Council Tenants do not look after their gardens and it will be even worse doing away with the Garden Aid where the elderly who are on their own and unable to do their garden and also those with disabilities. I think it is
It is unacceptable to expect Falkirk Council residents to fund the Garden Aid scheme costing approx £550k each year. Those in receipt of DLA should use this taxpayer funded benefit to cover such costs if required.
It must be kept for all council residents who are unable to keep up their own garden. It can often lead to social complications with neighbours and unnessacery worry and abuse aimed at those unable to do it.
It should be kept as many people don't have the support from family to do their garden. It may help if the contractor actually did their job. Last year my mums garden was hardly done at all and when they did come they left a mess everywhere they were.
It should be means tested. If no family then those with reduced mobility should have council assistance. Could the council set up a volunteer group?
It will result in my garden growing considerably and will become an eyesore. I rely on this due to my old age I am no longer able to maintain my garden despite maintaining it all my life. To see it become very overgrown will be very sad.
It would be a shame to see this stopped but I guess we will have to join the cut backs if it comes to it
It's a disgrace. Many elderly and disabled rely on this service. This includes my Mum and Dad (77 and 79 respectively) who don't keep good health (my mum has had cancer twice and my dad was diagnosed with alzheimers 4 years ago). Without this service, their garden, which they were once proud of, will be left to go to rack and ruin. And calling this one question a "questionnaire" or, even, more ludicrously, a "consultation' is a joke.
its a terrible shame to lose such a valuable and helpfull service in the community, i dont know how im going to manage, as im on my own with my grandson, i gave my lawnmower and hedgers away when i first qualified for garden aid, even if i could afford to replace them, i still dont have anyone to do it for me, its very worrying.
Keep the service, but charge a reasonable fee for it, spread over the whole year. By reasonable I mean affordable and proportionate to the work done.
Maybe you should have put a small charge for grass cutting the same as for MECS
My husband and I will be 86 this year and there is no way we are able to do any gardening work. We gave away our lswnmower and strimmer.
My mother receives garden aid at the moment, she is 90 years old, lives alone and is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. I as her daughter am not able to do it so where do we go from there.?? Would be obliged if you could let me know.
My mother receives garden aid, she lives alone and has a full care package as she is disabled frail and elderly I think the proposal to discontinue the grade aid scheme is disgusting, my mother is in receipt of pension credit and there is no way she can afford to pay a private contractor to cut her grass, her only alternative will be to slab over her grass in her disabled bungalow which again will cost her money she can ill afford, we appreciate the council has to make cuts but why is it always the people who have the least that have to suffer??
My mum and dad (both in their 70s) get garden aid. It has been an unreliable service, not turning up when they were meant to, but turning up to do a reasonable job eventually. I would be sorry to see it cancelled. I think it could be run more efficiently and I would also be happy if there was a charge - eg. £5 for grass cut, £10 for grass and hedge IF the service was more reliable and didn't do front grass and forget to do back grass etc.

Comments - Online

My mum has received garden aid for a few years and it has been really poor, inconsistent frequency and poor quality of grass cutting and she has been caused a lot of stress as a result; the contract was never properly monitored and was probably a waste of public money. However, she is elderly and disabled and does need her grass cut...I do wonder if it couldn't be added to the small-jobs scheme where there is an hourly rate paid. I am also pretty sure that some third sector organisations wouldn't mind providing this on a minimum charge or pay-what-you-can basis; there are lots of employability and training initiatives out there and it could provide employment for people - I am thinking particularly of disabled or learning disabled or people with addictions etc. Maybe the local college would be interested as part of horticulture courses; it could be a social enterprise too and the Council could provide some initial start up support, transport, protective clothing and equipment. I'm not sure elderly or vulnerable people feel safe with Community Payback offenders...and they do need to feel safe. Maybe a bit more thought needs to be given to all of this and it's way to late (and frankly quite insulting) to consult when the decision has been made. There could also be a list of accredited and approved gardeners who would charge a fixed rate so that people still pay but know that they are safe, quality, reputable and complaints could be made/de-registered if poor quality/complaints.
My parents are both disabled and have garden aid. As Falkirk council cannot put proper care in place for them they are adding another job for family to do as well as care for them.
My parents are both disabled and have garden aid. As Falkirk council cannot put proper care in place for them they are adding another job for family to do as well as care for them.
Needed for really elderly or infirm - happy to pay if needed
Needs further work I have a 92 year old mother in law who lives independently but no way can she do her garden
not all over65s could afford to pay for garden work to be done. assistance should be provided to those who receive disability allowance. could begin a neighbourhood scheme for all to help those who need grass cut???
not very happy as at 80 and 84 its far to much for us
Object to the proposal.
On behalf of my 83 year old mother-in-law, widowed & living alone. She called me in a state of concern regarding her letter on garden aid. She is registered partially sighted & has high blood pressure. As with many elderly, garden MUST be tidy & needs help. I am 68 now & unable to assist, as am just out of hospital, struggling after a brain seizure. She has no other relatives to help. To remove this from GOOD tenants who cannot look after a garden, despite pride, is unjust in REAL WORLD. Being a manager for many years, I understand budget issues. However to put OAP's in a state of stress is not the way to go. You need a grading system to determine who needs help and who is free loading and not just carpet bomb the honest citizens of Falkirk. I look forward to hearing that common sence has prevailed amongst the people we elect to look after the interests of decent, honest citizens of our community. Kind regards [redacted] for and bealf of a concerned OAP, council tenant
On behalf of my mother who is 85 yrs old , she is very disappointed that Garden aid service is being discontinued. She is a registered resident in the Falkirk council area and is completely unable to undertake maintenance of her grass and hedge . The alternatives proposed are not really acceptable . 1. Trusted trades scheme : this will obviously result in additional cost to a pensioner with limited income. 2.Unpaid work by offenders : this would be difficult as my mother has recently been subject to a burglary and is feeling extremely vulnerable , obviously the thought of offenders around her house would be extremely stressful for her . We appreciate that the council need to reduce costs and also that the rehabilitation of offenders is a worthwhile use of their time . However you must appreciate residents that at the age of 85 have a slightly different perspective of life. On behalf of my mother [redacted]
Personally, I think this is a good idea. I have a neighbour who receives this privilege and she has 3 big strong men living in extremely close proximity to her. Last year she herself was out cutting apple trees and my view is if she can do that she can push a lawnmower round her garden. This person receives the service of benefits and having her bin put out and I feel this also could be stopped. This information is not submitted with any jealousy as I, thankfully am able to do these things for myself or when the need arises my family will oblige as I feel hers should be doing. There is too much of people thinking LET THE COUNCIL DO IT.
poor.this will lead to old people with gardens that will be untidy and will lead to complaints by other house owners
Rather this was removed than more cuts in education!

Comments - Online

remove it except for the very most needy and infirm.
Remove it. Scheme is abused by so many who dont need it but on it becuse they are entitled to it
Remove it. The money is better spent on more vital services
Service should either be removed or means tested
Shoching
shocked and disappointed that a council are removing such a service that gives help to elderly and disabled what will they do now if they can not afford to pay someone to cut their grass ?
Shocking to take this away from old and disabled and the surrounding areas will be brought down with overgrown gardens.
Should be kept for those who are physically unable to cope. As with Blue Badge scheme medical certificate should be required.
Should be maintained using community payback offenders.
Should be maintained using community payback offenders.
Some people are not able to do their garden themselves, have no family to take it on and cannot afford to employ anyone privately
thanks for your letter re:- garden aid. I would be devastated if this service was axed. I am a widow pensioner on D.L.A. and have no one who could do this for me.I would however, be willing to have a trusted trader (provided the cost was reasonable) I only have a small area of grass at the back, the rest including the front is mono-blocked. I would also be interested in the work by the offenders and volunteering support. Hope you get back to me on this as I don't want to be worrying about what is going to happen
That a lot of oap need it ...and if on low income will not be able to pay some one to do it ....ii bet most of them when able had lovely gardens and took a lot of pride in them...think commite aid should hep out or ...young folk that have no job .. Would let them see what work is about in sted of staying in bed all day .it might motaviet them
That the alternatives posed by the opposition could have been considered. It's scandalous you expect elderly and disabled people to try and maintain gardens. I'd like to find out how much it costs when you have to sort out a completely overgrown garden which poses a risk. Very short sighted .
The scheme has been poorly run the past few years but invaluable to me as I have no family to help. I would be prepared to pay for the service. Private contractors are very difficult to get
The service has been terrible since 2012
There are people who really do require thisservice as they are unable do to age and medical conditiohsthat cannot do their garden. They no family member near at hand who can assist . I come under both catagories. But the system was allowing gardens to be missed ander people abusing the system who were having there garden done but going and doing other peoples which I have heard about.Gardens were also being down were that tenant hadleft or passed but the system was not being updated. If I was ableto do my own garden I would but why not charge a small charge for doing them instead of cutting it out completely as there will be people out there who can afford to pay and some who cannot due to circumstances.
think its terrible
Think they should be checking who should be getting it as4 houses beside me get it and the old people have moved out young people moved in told the team just said name still on list .2 of these people are in nursing homes 1 swapped with her daughter 1 son moved in could save money if checked
This aid cannot just be cut with no proper planned service put in it's place. Cutting the grass/ tidying gardens is part of essential maintenance in my area - without it many older and disabled people's gardens will just go to ruin, spoiling the look of the whole area and causing friction between neighbours. As well as depressing those who live in the houses behind the weeds and tall grass.
This is a vital service to many older and vulnerable adults living in our community. The proposed removal of this service will cause worry and stress to people who rely on this service to maintain their garden/grass and whom may not be able to afford a private arrangment should the service be cut.

Comments - Online

This is unfair on the elderly who are not able to keep ther garden or hedge reasonable tidy why can people on community service not be instructed to do this over the summer months how simple is to cut grass or trim down a overgrown hedge!! Or will you wait till ther grass is knee high and then send out letter telling them to get it sorted causing more stress to them more so if they haven't got immediate family to help them
This should be maintained to ensure gardens of the elderly and disabled are kept in good order for the benefit of all the residents of Falkirk
This would impact badly on elderly people who cannot manage to cut grass, hedges etc. and the cost to them of replacing this service would probably be outwith their financial capability. Perhaps the Council could consider subsidising the service, eg asking people to contribute towards the service instead of suddenly having to face the whole charge. The impact of gardens looking unsightly and spreading weeds would also be detrimental to the district as a whole.
Totally agree it is a non essential service and why give free gardening when the council charges for MECS
Totally agree to remove it
Use community service payback to do this job for people in need.
Utterly atrocious /why do old people have to suffer under this council the people who decide are barely years in council position many older folk like me have worked 50vears or more and they get to decide our future I will seriously think twice about my vote yours trul
Very dissappointing and will result in many elderly people struggling to simply maintain the surrounding of their homes.
Vital for old people with no family for support and neighbours no longer help out like they used to. Introduce a charge but keep the service. What about using people on job seekers allowance but not in work? Contact high schools to see if school children would volunteer. Unkept gardens and hedges will cause old people a great deal of anxiety and make the housing estates look like dumping grounds
What are people to do if they can neither manage their garden themselves or pay for the privilege....if you do away with the aid surely needs to be a plan/assistance/grant in place to assist those in receipt to make their garden as low maintenance as possible before removing the aid.
While we do understand the councils dilemma this will cause us hardship as we are both disabled in receipt of benefit we have no family or friends to help
Why don't you get people who have been given community service by the courts carry out these kind of services?
Why is it the most vonerable and less able who have to be deprived of theyre services not just on this one there needs to be a rethink
Will lead to untidy eyesore gardens when the elderly or disabled can't afford to pay for someone to do their garden. Will also deprive them of the enjoyment of their own outside space.
Would miss it would be prepared to pay a small amount to get my grass cut
Yes I agree give it to the most needy and have it carried out by community service hours
You will see an increase in work for neighbourhood officers to post threatening letters through the doors of vulnerable people's doors as they have no other means of maintaining their garden!

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA)

To be completed by Division / Department / Service / Team Lead

Information

Name of EPIA: Stop Provision of Garden Aid Service	**EPIA Reference No. (if applicable):**
Division / Department / Service / Team Lead: Corporate & Housing Services	**Contact details:** David McGhee

1.0 Identify the main aims and projected outcomes of the proposal / policy / project outline:

The Service currently costs £550,000 and by stopping this service, savings of £275,000 will be made within the Council's General Fund and £275,000 savings within the Council's Housing Revenue Account. The General Fund savings will help to meet the projected Budget gap for 2016/17 of £25m.

Currently a free grass and hedge cutting service is provided to c6,000 residents (owner-occupiers and tenants). Eligibility is based on both age and disability, with residents over 65 eligible for the service and disabled residents between 16 and 65 in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (who do not have someone living with them over 16 who could maintain the garden**)** also eligible for the service. The service is provided irrespective of income or specifically assessed need.

There is no statutory obligation placed on the Council to provide a Garden Aid Service and by stopping the Service, savings can be redirected to help finance the delivery of other priority Council functions.

Finance

2. 0 For budget changes ONLY please include information below:		**Total**	**Benchmark e.g. Scottish Average**
Current spend on this service – (£,000's)	Total	550	Cost of service considered competitive, obtained through a tender exercise.
Reduction / increases to this service budget (£,000's)	Per annum	550	

Is this a change e.g. to introduce a new Charge or Concession	Expected annual income total	0	
	Current cost per person	c£115 excl vat & admin costs	Currently a free service. Costs based on 2016 tendered rates
When will the saving be achieved	Start date for savings	April 2016	
	End date – if any		

Equality Protected Characteristics

3.0 Which individuals / staff are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? (please score)									
Equality protected characteristics	**(A) Age**	**(D) Disability**	**(G) Gender**	**(E) Ethnicity**	**(R) Religion**	**(SO) Sexual**	**(TG) Transgender**	**(P&M) Pregnancy & Maternity**	**(M&CP) Marriage & Civil Partnership**
Insert X where appropriate	**X**	**X**	**X**						

Please summarise the POSITIVE impact for each <u>affected</u> protected characteristic using appropriate initial:	**Please summarise the NEGATIVE impact for each <u>affected</u> protected characteristic using appropriate Initial**	**Please summarise the NEUTRAL impact for each <u>affected</u> protected characteristic using appropriate Initial**
	(A) c5,500 current Service users over 65 will see their free grass and hedge cutting service stop. The majority being over 75 years, with a high proportion being female. **(B)** c500 current Service users in receipt of Disability Living Allowance between the ages of 16 and 65 will see their free grass and hedge cutting service stop.	

Wider inequality issues / cross cutting themes

3.1 Are there any cross cutting themes or poverty indicators which when combined with equality protected characteristics could increase the level of inequality for individuals / groups with protected characteristics.	
Poverty / Inequality indicator **This list is not exclusive. Please add in categories or delete as necessary**	**Description of impact -** *will the proposal / policy / project have an impact on e.g. standard of living covering a person's ability to be independent, to feel safe, to be able to stay well fed, to have a house, to keep warm, to gain skills; to have a job and have access to other basic services to enhance well-being and reduce inequality.*
Wealth, income, poverty and welfare reform	Some current service users may require to now pay for the service, (should they not be able to get someone else to undertake the work for them e.g.: friend or relative). This will have an adverse impact on their finances, the degree will however be dependent upon individual financial circumstances.
Health inequalities; physical / emotional / behavioural	Limited impact but may create some financial worries/concerns for some individuals and could adversely impact on some neighbour relationships.
Physical security; homelessness; criminal justice;	The current service ensures garden areas are regularly maintained by Council contracted providers. A reduction in the maintenance may impact on the aesthetics of the area and lead to some people feeling less safe in their home. Sourcing other service providers may also mean individuals feel more vulnerable from unscrupulous traders.
Social responsibility / caring	Will place a responsibility on other family members and friends to help their older relatives/friends to cut their grass/hedges. – See Below
Influencing ability and participation; literacy / numeracy / language / rural	Potential to increase neighbourhood participation through befriending schemes; adopt a garden schemes etc.

Partners / other Stakeholders

3.2 Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?							
Partners / Stakeholders	**Business**	**Councils**	**Education Sector**	**FIRE**	**NHS**	**Police**	**Third Sector**
Insert X where appropriate:							X
Describe the interest / affect: Potential for third sector involvement in providing services to impacted residents. Increased scope for individual volunteering; training and personal development opportunities via third sector organisations.							

Other interested parties (please list):	**Describe the nature of the relationship / impact:** • There may be an increase in complaints regarding the condition of gardens and possible associated health and safety issues • Estates Management issues may increase due to possible deterioration in the condition of the area.

Quantitative and / or qualitative evidence

3.3 Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA (this could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements)	
Quantitative evidence:	**Describe type; where accessible and key findings if not covered elsewhere in this assessment**
Social data: Service and workforce equality profile; Census information, Customer / staff survey etc.	Contact was made with all Local Authorities and with responses and information obtained from 11. Two do not provide any service. Of the remaining 9, they either charge or don't provide a service to owners. 4 Local Authorities provide a free service to tenants only.
Environmental data: Research; Geographic / location information; crime rates; crime types;	Service users are all Falkirk Council residents and from all localities within the Council area. 50% of service users c3,000 are Council Tenants and 50% are owner occupiers

Financial data: Procurement / budget; welfare benefits; welfare reform	Approximately 500 service users are in receipt of disability benefit and under 65 years. Around 660 current users in receipt of Council Tax reduction, due to their specific financial circumstances.
Health data: ageing; well-being;	Over 60% of service users are 75 years and above. Around 1,300 (c20%) of current service users receive Social Work support
Qualitative evidence:	Significant contract monitoring and management required to ensure service schedules and quality is maintained. Service delivery impacted by weather conditions
Social - case studies; personal /group feedback / other:	Reference service user consultation below

Best judgement over hard evidence

3.4 (a) Has 'best judgement' been used in place of data/research/ evidence? **YES / NO**	**3.3(b) Who provided the 'best judgement'**	**3.3cWhat gaps in data/information were identified?**
YES	Heads of Service	It is not clear how many residents won't be able to get family or friends to provide assistance. As such, it is not possible to identify how many may require to buy the services for other providers.
3.4(d) Is further research necessary? YES		
Research would be required to be undertaken in relation to the capacity of the third/voluntary sector providing and helping to support "Good neighbour" type initiatives. The impacts of stopping the service would also require to be closely monitored, to help ensure assistance/support is directed to those most requiring help.		

Consultation

4.0 Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to involvement/consultation? If YES - state which individuals and organisations were involved / consulted; what form the involvement / consultation took and outcome.	
Who was involved/consulted: **Please indicate if it was active involvement or consultation**	**List:** Consultation letter issued to c5,900 service users and to 13 Registered Residents and Tenants Organisations Council web-based survey

How was the involvement/consultation carried out? **For other – describe:**	**Focus group**	**Survey**	**Display / exhibitions**	**Users panels**	**Public event**	**Other**
		X				

What were the results from consultation?	**List:** c1,000 responses received (c15% of service users) Over 90% wished service to be retained, particularly for the most vulnerable c25% provided comments on alternative options including changing the eligibility criteria e.g.: increasing the qualifying age; using volunteer support; use of trusted traders scheme or charging

4.1 Has the proposal / policy / project been reviewed / changed as a result of consultation?	**YES (see below)**
4.2 Have the results of the consultation been fed back to the consultees?	**NO**
4.3 Is further consultation recommended	**NO**
4.4 If <u>no</u> consultation has taken place. Please say why:	

Assessment outcome

5.0 Which of the following outcomes best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project?			
No major change required	**Adjust the proposal**	**Continue with the proposal**	**Stop and remove the proposal**
The EPIA demonstrates that the proposal is robust; there is no potential for discrimination and opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	The EPIA identifies some potential impact or missed opportunities. Adjustments can be made to remove barriers / promote opportunities.	The EPIA identifies adverse impact / missed opportunities. Adjustments cannot be identified. **You must set out reasons for continuing with this proposal:**	The proposal demonstrates actual / potential unlawful discrimination. Stop; remove and / or make changes.
The consultation clearly identifies that the service is valued as a support to those in most need. As such, a range of mitigation will be established for those service users impacted e.g.: Signposting alternative service delivery options; harnessing support through the voluntary sector and providing additional support to tenants, as part of the council's land-lord responsibilities. Mitigation measures are detailed below In addition, recognising the consultation feedback, a range of options have been provided for Member consideration including: changing the eligibility to reflect need, from both a financial and Community Care support perspective. Additional options in relation to changing the eligibility criteria to over 80 years and introducing a chargeable service have also been included.			

Mitigating actions to minimise any negative impact

5.1 Have mitigating actions been identified? YES / NO. If YES outline below:				
Issue	**Action**	**Lead officer**	**Evaluation and Review date:**	**Strategic reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Equality Outcomes**
	Communicate extensively alternative service delivery options e.g.: Family/friends; Service providers & Buy with Confidence Scheme	Community Engagement Co-Ordinator	April/May 2016	Co-production
	Liaise with Voluntary Sector regarding possible 3rd Sector voluntary support.	Community Engagement Co-Ordinator	April/May 2016	Co-production and potential social enterprise
	Consider the above, alongside potential to establish a "Good neighbour" scheme.	Community Engagement Co-Ordinator	April/May 2016	Co-production and potential social enterprise
	Have an alternative maintenance service in place for tenants who fail to maintain their gardens.	Housing Manager	April/May 2016	
	Consider scope to amend cyclical maintenance service for tenants to include external areas.	Property & Asset Manager	June 2016	

No mitigating actions

5.2 Where a negative impact on diverse communities has been identified and no mitigation actions have been put forward; what is the justification for continuing with the proposal / policy / project?
Please outline:

EPIA Equality commentary

5.3 Equality commentary		
Comments:	Signature:	
	Date:	

Sign off

5.4 Sign off by Division / Department / Service / Team EPIA assessment officer			
Date of sign off:		Signature:	

5.5 Sign off by Head of Service / Service Director			
Date of sign off:		Signature:	

COMMITTEE / BOARD REPORT IMPLICATIONS SUMMARY

Information from the EPIA must inform any Board / Executive report.

Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment To be completed by Equality Task Group - Internal Equality Check			
Name of EPIA:	**EPIA Reference No. (if applicable):**		
Date - EPIA received by Corporate Policy:			
Division and Service Contact details:			
Date - EPIA returned to Division and Service:			

EPIA INFORMATION

Proposal / Policy / Project outline:	
Service- Project Manager:	**Contact details:**
Corporate Policy – Equality Check:	**Contact details:**

Is the EPIA complete?	**Is there a review date for the proposal / EPIA?**	**Have mitigating actions been identified where adverse impact known?**	**Have the actions been added to the relevant service plan?**
YES / NO	**YES / NO**	**YES / NO**	**YES / NO**

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA	ASSESSMENT FINDINGS – (use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA)
The EPIA has used data; appropriate consultation; identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and review of actions to demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector quality duties.	
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:	**ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS – (use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA)**
The EPIA has not demonstrated use of data; appropriate consultation; identification of mitigating actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties.	

Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project; has justification for continuing without making changes been made. **YES / NO**
If YES – describe:

EPIA - Publication checklist Corporate Policy Team	Passed to Web Team	Estimated date of publication
EPIA publication summary produced		
EPIA published on the website		
Signature on behalf of EPIA equality task group:		
Date:		

AGENDA ITEM
5

DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 2016

AGENDA ITEM 5

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: **DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 2016**
Meeting: **EXECUTIVE**
Date: **26 APRIL 2016**
Author: **DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Under Section 20B of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, planning authorities have to prepare a Development Plan Scheme at least annually. The purpose of the Development Plan Scheme is to set out the authority's programme for preparing and reviewing their Development Plan, and to explain how the authority will go about consulting people and agencies during the preparation of the Plan.

1.2 With the Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP1) adopted in July 2015, the proposed Development Plan Scheme for 2016, which is presented in this report, focuses on the projected programme for the Local Development Plan Review (LDP2).

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME

2.1 A copy of the proposed Development Plan Scheme 2016 is attached as Appendix 1. In summary it:

- explains the development plan framework for the area, and how it is evolving;
- explains the key stages in preparing a local development plan;
- sets out the intended programme for preparing LDP2, and the remaining Supplementary Guidance associated with LDP1;
- describes the progress made to date on LDP2; and
- explains how the Council will involve people and agencies at each stage in the preparation of LDP2 (participation statement).

2.2 Section 3 of the Development Plan Scheme confirms that LDP1 was adopted in July 2015, and is now the operative Development Plan for the area. Reference is also made to the suite of Supplementary Guidance, which is being prepared to accompany LDP1, and will provide additional detailed guidance and interpretation on certain key policies of the plan. Of the 17 Supplementary Guidance Notes, 13 have been approved by the Scottish Government, a further one has been finalised by the Executive and has been referred to the Scottish Government, and the remaining three are being prepared. Meanwhile, work on LDP2 has been commenced in order to ensure that LDP1 will be replaced within the required 5 year timespan.

2.3 Section 4 of the Development Plan Scheme identifies and explains the six main stages in the Local Development Plan process.

2.4 Section 5 sets out the intended timetable for preparing LDP2. Currently, the Pre-Main Issues Report stage is ongoing. The publication of the Main Issues Report is scheduled for October 2016, with the Proposed Plan to be issued in December 2017. These dates have been been put back by a month compared with last year's Development Plan Scheme, to allow extra time for the preparation and approval of the Main Issues Report. Adoption is still programmed for January 2020.

2.5 Section 6 outlines progress made on LDP2 since work commenced in autumn 2015. Consultation on the issues to be considered in LDP2 has been undertaken with elected Members, the public, key agencies, community councils, housebuilders, and other stakeholders through a series of meetings, workshops, training events and surveys. A 'Call for Sites' exercise has been completed, with around 60 submissions received suggesting sites for inclusion in the new plan. A successful youth engagement exercise was undertaken with 80 senior pupils at Larbert High School. Finally, a Facebook page has been established for the Local Development Plan to extend the reach of our communication with the public. A summary report of the outcome of the consultation will be produced shortly.

2.6 As well as consultation, progress has been made on the evidence base for the plan, including the various technical reports which will inform the content of the Main Issues Report.

2.7 Section 7 is the participation statement, which sets out the Council's intentions for consultation and public involvement in the LDP2 process. All the consultation commitments made in relation to the pre-Main Issues Report have now been fulfilled, as described in paragraph 2.6 above.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Legal: The requirement to prepare a Development Plan Scheme is set out in Section 20B the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as inserted by the Planning, etc (Scotland) Act 2006, and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

3.2 Financial: None

3.3 Personnel: None.

3.4 Policy: The Falkirk Local Development Plan, and associated Supplementary Guidance, is the key spatial planning policy document for the Council area.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That the Executive approves the Development Plan Scheme 2016, as attached in Appendix 1.

……..
Director of Development Services

Date: 12 April 2016

Contact officer: Alistair Shaw, Development Plan Co-ordinator, ext 4739

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Appendix 1

Falkirk Council

Development Plan Scheme 2016

April 2016

1. What are Development Plans?

Development Plans are prepared by local authorities to guide the use and development of land within their areas. They contain policies and proposals which indicate where development should or not take place, and provide guidance on topics such as housing, business, shopping, transport and infrastructure, recreation and community facilities, and built and natural heritage. They usually consist of a written document and one or more maps showing where development is proposed and where various policies apply.

Until recently, the Development Plan consisted of Structure Plans and Local Plans. However, these are now being replaced by **Strategic Development Plans (SDPs)** and **Local Development Plans (LDPs)**. SDPs indicate the broad scale and location of future development in each of the four city regions of Scotland. LDPs provide detailed, site-specific policies and proposals. In addition, **Supplementary Guidance (SG)** can be prepared to provide further detailed guidance on particular SDP or LDP policies and proposals.

Only the city regions have both types of plans. Elsewhere, such as in Falkirk, there is just an LDP.

2. What is a Development Plan Scheme?

Planning authorities have to prepare a **Development Plan Scheme** every year. This has to set out the authority's programme for preparing and reviewing its Development Plan and how it will go about consulting people during the preparation of the Plan. This document is Falkirk Council's seventh Development Plan Scheme. It:

- explains the development plan framework within the Falkirk Council area, and how it is evolving;
- explains the keys stages in preparing a LDP;
- sets out the intended programme for preparing its review of the Falkirk LDP (LDP2);
- describes the work done to date on LDP2; and
- explains how the Council will involve people and agencies at each stage in the preparation of LDP2.

3. Development Planning in the Falkirk Council Area

The Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP1)

The **Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP1)** was adopted in July 2015. Its detailed policies and proposals are intended to cover the period up to 2024, although its broader strategy looks forward to 2034.

The content of LDP1 includes:

- **Vision** - a statement of the future we aspire to in 2034.
- **Spatial Strategy** - the scale and location of new housing and economic development, the strategic infrastructure needed to support such growth, and the shape of the green network we hope to develop over the plan period.

- **Settlement Statements** - the implications of the spatial strategy for each settlement area, including a description of how it is expected to change over the plan period and the key proposals affecting it.
- **Supporting Policies** - the detailed policies which we will use to guide and assess development proposals on a day-to-day basis.
- **Appendices** – these include a site schedule which provides detail on each of the proposals included in the plan, guidance on strategic growth areas, a list of supplementary guidance, a monitoring framework and an index of all policies.

Supplementary Guidance

In conjunction with the LDP, the Council is preparing a suite of 17 pieces of Supplementary Guidance to provide further guidance and interpretation on some key policies in the plan. Some of these are revisions of existing non-statutory supplementary planning guidance that we have previously produced, whilst others cover new topics. Formal Supplementary Guidance must have an explicit link to a policy in the plan, be consulted on, and be approved by the Scottish Ministers. It has statutory status and constitutes a part of the Development Plan

We have been preparing and consulting on the Supplementary Guidance in batches since 2014. 13 SGs have so far been approved by the Scottish Government. The remaining 4 SGs will be completed during the course of 2016, and sent to Scottish Government for approval.

Ref.	Title	Status
SG01	Development in the Countryside	Approved July 2015
SG02	Neighbourhood Design	Approved July 2015
SG03	House Extensions and Alterations	Approved July 2015
SG04	Shopfronts	Approved November 2015
SG05	Biodiversity and Development	Approved July 2015
SG06	Trees and Development	Approved July 2015
SG07	Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site	Consultation timescale to be confirmed
SG08	Local Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites	Consultation in May 2016
SG09	Landscape Character and Assessment	Approved July 2015
SG10	Education and New Housing Development	Approved July 2015
SG11	Healthcare and New Housing Development	Approved November 2015
SG12	Affordable Housing	Approved July 2015
SG13	Open Space and New Development	Approved July 2015
SG14	Spatial Framework for Wind Energy Development	Approved July 2015
SG15	Low and Zero Carbon Development	Approved November 2015
SG16	Design Guidance for Listed Buildings and Non-Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas	Finalised March 2016, awaiting Scottish Government approval
SG17	Renewable Energy	Consultation in May 2016

As well as the above statutory guidance, there are a number of supplementary planning guidance notes which will remain non-statutory but will nonetheless be

material considerations in the consideration of planning applications. These include the following:

- You and Your Trees
- Waste and Development
- Flooding& Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- Delivery of Denny Eastern Access Road
- Rosebank Distillery Planning Brief
- Bellsdyke Planning Brief
- Overton Farm Development Brief
- Former RSNH Site Development Brief
- Community Schools Planning Brief
- Carrongrove Mill Planning Brief
- Banknock and Haggs SIRR Development Framework

Monitoring

The Council produces an annual Development Plan Monitoring Report which assesses progress on the implementation of the strategy, policies and proposals in the plan, based on a set of monitoring indicators. It provides information, for example, on population, housing completions and supply, school capacity, employment, business land take up, visitor numbers, transport trends and environmental improvements. The most recent Development Plan Monitoring Report was published in December 2014.

Reviewing the Local Development Plan (LDP2)

Planning authorities are required to review their LDPs every five years. Because of the length of time it takes to prepare plans, we have already started work on the next LDP, i.e. **LDP2**, which will have to be in place by 2020. Our expected timetable for LDP2, and the measures we will undertake to consult people, are included in this Development Plan Scheme at sections 5 and 7.

4. Stages in the Preparation of the Local Development Plan

With the Council having embarked on its second LDP, Figure 1 below is a reminder of the main stages in the preparation of the plan.

Local Development Plans need to undergo **Strategic Environmental Assessment** (SEA). SEA is a process whereby the significant environmental effects of the policies and proposals in the plan, and any reasonable alternatives, are identified. It also sets out measures which might be incorporated into the plan to reduce any negative effects. SEA is a process which is closely integrated with each stage of LDP preparation.

A further statutory process which must be applied to the plan is **Habitats Regulations Appraisal** (HRA). This is a process which assesses any effects which the plan may have on the integrity of European protected nature conservation sites.

Figure 1 Stages in the Local Development Plan Process

STAGE 1 PRE-MAIN ISSUES REPORT

- Early consultation takes place with key agencies, stakeholders and public to scope out the issues that the plan has to address.
- Developers are invited to submit 'expressions of interest' for sites they would like considered for development (the 'Call for Sites').
- Survey material is gathered to provide the evidence base for the Main Issues Report
- SEA scoping takes place.

STAGE 2 MAIN ISSUES REPORT

- The **Main Issues Report** (MIR) is published and consulted on.
- The MIR contains general proposals for development, together with alternatives.
- This is the main stage of public engagement when the Council has not yet fixed its view on the content of the plan.
- Supporting technical reports are published including a **Monitoring Statement** .
- An **Environmental Report** is published as part of the SEA process.

STAGE 3 PROPOSED PLAN

- The **Proposed Plan** is published and representations invited.
- The Proposed Plan contains a vision, spatial strategy and policies and proposals, and represents the Council's settled view on what should be included in the plan.
- Publicity of the Proposed Plan includes notification to neighbours of sites proposed for development.
- A **Revised Environmental Report** is published as part of the SEA process.
- A Habitats Regulations Appraisal Record is prepared.

STAGE 4 SUBMISSION TO SCOTTISH MINISTERS

- Exceptionally, **Notifiable Modifications** to the Proposed Plan may be made by the Council in response to representations, in which case the plan will be re-advertised for further representations.
- The **Proposed Plan** is submitted to Scottish Ministers along with **Schedule 4** forms for each unresolved issue (summarising the representations, changes sought to the plan and the Council's response) and other documentation required for the Examination.
- A **Proposed Action Programme** is also submitted, setting out how, when and by whom the plan will be implemented.
- The Environmental Report and HRA record are updated if required.

STAGE 5 EXAMINATION

- Scottish Ministers appoint reporters to examine the unresolved issues which have arisen out of the representations.
- The reporters first check to ensure that the Council has conformed with the consultation commitments set out the Development Plan Scheme.
- The reporters may decide to obtain further information by means of inquiry sessions, hearings or written information requests.
- An **Examination Report** will be produced with recommendations on each of the issues which are largely binding on the Council.

STAGE 6 PLAN ADOPTION

- The Council publishes a **Modified Plan**, including all modifications recommended in the Examination Report unless certain exceptional circumstances apply.
- The Council advertises its **intention to adopt** the Modified Plan, and sends it to Scottish Ministers.
- The Council **adopts the plan** 28 days after submission to Scottish Ministers, unless otherwise directed.
- Any modifications not previously subject to SEA are assessed and the HRA Record is updated if required. A **Post Adoption SEA statement** is prepared.
- The **Action Programme** is published within 3 months of adoption.

5. Development Plan Programme

Figure 2 below sets out the timetable for the preparation of LDP2.

Figure 2 Local Development Plan Timetable

LDP2		
Plan Stage	**Date**	**Events**
Stage 1 Pre-Main Issues Report	June 2015 – June 2016	• Compile evidence base (Monitoring Statement, Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, Technical Reports) • Engage with elected members on issues and strategy • Undertake SEA scoping • Carry out pre-MIR consultation
Stage 2 Main Issues Report	October 2016	• Publish Main Issues Report
	October 2016 – January 2017	• Consultation on Main Issues Report
Stage 3 Proposed Plan	December 2017	• Publish Proposed Plan
	December 2017 – January 2018	• Period for representations on Proposed Plan
Stage 4 Submission to Scottish Ministers	August 2018	• Publish any Notifiable Modifications to Proposed Plan (this stage should only be necessary in exceptional circumstances) •
	November 2018	• Submit Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers
Stage 5 Examination	November 2018 – September 2019	• Examination of Proposed Plan
Stage 6 Plan Adoption	September 2019	• Examination Report published
	December 2019	• Modified Plan submitted to Scottish Ministers
	January 2020	• LDP2 adopted

6. Progress on LDP2

Pre-Main Issues Report

The pre-MIR stage of LDP2 is now well-advanced. There are two main elements to this stage, both of which will help to inform the content of the Main Issues Report: consultation on the scope of the plan; and preparation of the evidence base that will underpin the choices and decisions made in LDP2. Progress on each of these is as follows:

Consultation

- **Consultation meetings** have been held with all the key agencies and with representatives of the housebuilding industry;
- Two **Members' workshops** have been held to explore what the key issues might be for LDP2;
- Two **stakeholder workshops** have been held, attended by representatives of agencies and organisations, developers, community councils, infrastructure providers and business;
- An **issues consultation** has been carried out via an online survey and the Council's Citizens' Panel. This has sought people's views on the issues which they think the plan will have to address;
- A **newsletter** has been issued to support the issues consultation;
- A '**Call for Sites' exercise** has been carried out whereby landowners, developers and other parties have put forward sites which they wish to be considered for inclusion as proposals in LDP2. Around 60 submissions have been received and these have been made available to view on the Council's web site;
- A **training event** has been held for community councils to help them understand the process and how they can participate effectively;
- A **youth engagement** exercise has been undertaken with senior pupils in Larbert High School to inform them about the planning process, engage them about placemaking issues, and explore options for change and growth in the local area. The issues consultation survey has also been completed by students from Forth Valley College; and
- An **LDP Facebook page** has been set up to extend the range of our communication on the plan. Regular progress updates are posted on the page

Evidence Base

- The **Housing Need and Demand Assessment** has been prepared in conjunction with Corporate & Housing Services. This will provide the basis for determining future housing supply targets and requirements in the plan;
- An updated **Open Space Audit** has been prepared and the **Draft Open Space Strategy** has been prepared and consulted on;
- A **Scoping Report** as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process has been prepared and circulated to the consultation authorities. This outlines the scope of the SEA;
- A **Monitoring Statement** is being prepared, looking at changes in the local area over the last 5 years; and
- **Technical reports** are being compiled on Housing Requirements and Options, Employment Land, Retailing and Town Centres and the Green Network.

7. Participation Statement: Getting People Involved

General Principles

The success of the Local Development Plan process depends on getting a wide range of stakeholders involved in the process. Many different people and organisations have an interest in the future development of the area and the plan will have an impact on everyone who lives and works here. It is important that they are given the opportunity to provide an input to plan preparation.

The minimum levels of publicity and consultation are set out in legislation. However, planning authorities are expected to go beyond the minimum, and to use a range of consultation techniques to engage with the different groups who may have an interest in the plan. The Council aims to target consultation effectively and ensure that the right people are involved at the right time.

For LDP2, the Council is seeking to learn lessons from the consultation exercises carried out during the preparation of LDP1. It will also be guided by its Principles for Community Involvement which are as follows:

1. PURPOSE : in each situation where we engage with the local community, we will be clear about whether we are informing, consulting or engaging.

2. INVOLVEMENT : we will identify who might be interested in any consultation or engagement and encourage them to be involved. We will also try to overcome any barriers they may face so that no group or individual is excluded.

3. METHODS : we will use the right methods of engagement in each situation and ensure that timescales are long enough for people to participate effectively.

4. INFORMATION : we will share all the information necessary for people to participate and we will use clear, accessible language.

5. WORKING TOGETHER : we will treat all participants with respect and we will expect all participants to treat us and others with respect. We may require people and organisations that represent their communities to show us how they have collected the views of their community.

6. FEEDBACK : we will always explain how people will receive feedback before they participate. We will always try to show how people's views have influenced the outcome.

7. IMPROVEMENT : we will monitor and evaluate our approaches to community involvement so that we can improve over time.

The Council will provide a clear point of contact for raising questions and concerns if it is thought we have not stuck to the principles during a particular consultation. We will do what we can to address concerns if the consultation is still live, and we will try to identify lessons for future work.

Who will we involve?

The Council has been engaging with groups of people and agencies in the preparation of Development Plans for many years, and has built up a list of organisations and individuals who have an interest in the process. This list is constantly being extended and updated. It helps us to target information about the plan on the most relevant people, although our publicity seeks to reach everyone who lives or works in the area.

The main groups which will be involved include:

<u>Public sector</u>

- Scottish Government (including executive agencies of the Government such as Historic Environment Scotland and Transport Scotland)

- Key agencies (bodies specified by Scottish Ministers who have to co-operate with the Council in preparing the development plan, i.e. SNH, SEPA, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, SEStran, NHS Forth Valley)
- Neighbouring local authorities (i.e. Clackmannanshire Council, Fife Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Stirling Council, West Lothian Council)
- Other public sector organisations (e.g. Scottish Canals, Sportscotland, Forestry Commission Scotland)

Private sector
- Landowners
- Developers and housebuilders
- Key local companies and businesses
- Housing associations
- Transport companies (e.g. Network Rail, First Bus, Scotrail)
- Energy and utility companies (e.g. Scottish Power, National Grid)
- Telecommunication companies
- Mineral operators

Other organisations
- Environmental and amenity organisations (e.g. Central Scotland Green Network Trust, RSPB, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Civic Trust)
- Transport organisations (e.g. SUSTRANS)
- Business organisations (e.g. Falkirk BID)

Community Organisations & Representatives
- Community Councils
- Local councillors
- Local MPs and MSPs
- Residents associations and groups
- Local amenity and interest groups
- Churches and faith groups

Individuals

What will we do to get people involved?

Figure 3 indicates the Council's broad intentions for publicity and consultation at each stage of the preparation of LDP2.

Figure 3 Participation Measures at Each Stage of the LDP2 Process

Plan Stage	Actions
Stage 1 Pre-Main Issues Report	**Purpose: To gather information on the issues and sites which people think should be addressed in the plan**
	• Publicise Development Plan Scheme by placing it on the web site **- Completed** • Update customer database **- Completed** • Meet with key agencies **- Completed** • Engage with community councils, including addressing any

	training needs they may have to enable them to participate in the plan process **- Completed** • Carry out a consultation on the issues to be covered in the plan - **Completed** • Invite developers and landowners to submit any sites or proposals which they wish to be considered **- Completed** • Hold workshops involving representatives of different stakeholder groups **- Completed** • Carry out a youth engagement exercise **- Completed** • Consult on the scope of the SEA **- Completed** • Issue Development Plan Newsletter and update web site material to keep stakeholders updated on progress **- Completed** • Explore the potential use of social media as a means of keeping people updated on progress **– Completed and Facebook page set up**
Stage 2 Main Issues Report	**Purpose: The main focus for public consultation on the plan, aimed at getting people's views on preferred and alternative options for future development. The Council has not yet fixed it's view on the content of the plan**
	• 12 week consultation period during which comments can be made on the MIR • Publicise the MIR through adverts, the Council's website, posters in libraries and one stop shops and letters to everyone on the customer database • Notify neighbours of any new preferred sites contained in the MIR • Make the MIR and associated documents available on the website, in libraries and one stop shops • Issue a Development Plan Newsletter which provides a concise summary of the MIR • Hold an LDP 'roadshow' with a staffed exhibition held at locations across the Council area • Hold workshops involving representatives of different stakeholder groups • Hold meetings with community councils where requested
Stage 3 Proposed Plan	**Purpose: To provide an opportunity for formal representations to the Proposed Plan which, at this stage, is the Council's settled view on the policies and proposals it wishes to take forward**
	• 6 week period during which representations can be made to the Proposed Plan • Publicise the Proposed Plan through adverts, the Council's website, posters in libraries and one stop shops and letters to everyone on the customer database • Notify neighbours and owner/occupiers of sites proposed for development • Make the Proposed Plan and associated documents available on

	the website, in libraries and one stop shops • Issue a Development Plan Newsletter which provides a concise summary of the Proposed Plan • Make available a summary of all comments made on the Proposed Plan and the Council's response to them
Stage 4 Submission to Scottish Ministers	**Purpose: To provide an opportunity for formal representations to any notifiable modifications and to keep those who have made representations to the plan informed of progress towards the Examination**
	• Representation period and publicity for notifiable modifications as for the Proposed Plan • Publicise the Submission of the Proposed Plan through adverts, the Council's website, and letters to everyone on the customer database
Stage 5 Examination	**Purpose: To inform those parties with unresolved representations of the Examination process and where information can be found**
	• Notify all parties with unresolved representations of Examination • Make examination documents available for inspection, with key information on the Council's web site
Stage 6 Plan Adoption	**Purpose: To inform all stakeholders of the final stages of the plan process to adoption**
	• Publicise the 'intention to adopt' and adoption of the plan through adverts, the Council's website, and letters to everyone on the customer database

8. Let us know what you think

The Council would welcome comments on this Development Plan Scheme, to help inform how we go about preparing the local development plan and how we involve people in it.

The contact details for sending comments or finding out more about the local development plan are as follows:

Planning & Environment Unit, Development Services, Falkirk Council, Abbotsford House , Davids Loan, Falkirk FK2 7YZ

Telephone: 01342 504720 (Colin Hemfrey)
01324 504739 (Alistair Shaw)

E-mail: ldp@falkirk.gov.uk

Glossary

Action Programme
A document which is prepared alongside a development plan which sets out how the planning authority proposes to implement the plan. This includes a list of actions required to deliver each of the plan's policies and proposals, the name of the party who is to carry out the actions, and the timescale

Adoption
The name for the final step in the Local Development Plan process, when the plan becomes operative, and formally replaces the previous plan.

Development Plan Scheme
A document which planning authorities are required to prepare every year which sets out their programme for preparing and reviewing their Strategic Development Plan or Local Development Plan, and what is likely to be involved at each stage. It must also contain a Participation Statement which states when, how, and with whom consultation on the plan will take place.

Development Plan
A document or documents which guides future development and land use in an area. It may comprise a Strategic Development Plan, Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance. The Development Plan is the basis for planning decision making. Applications for planning permission have to be made in accordance with the Development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Environmental Report
A report which sets out the results of an environmental assessment process, recording the significant environmental effects of a plan or proposal, including alternatives, and identifies measures to help reduce any negative environmental effects.

Examination
The process whereby unresolved issues raised by objections to a plan are subject to scrutiny and adjudication by an independent reporter. They are usually overseen by a team of reporters appointed by Scottish Ministers, who may seek further information by means of inquiry sessions, hearings, or written information requests. Most issues are now dealt with through written submissions. At the end of the process, an Examination Report is published containing the reporters' recommended modifications to the plan, which are largely binding on the planning authority.

Habitats Regulations Appraisal
A process whereby the effect of a policy, project or plan on a European protected nature conservation site is considered. It encompasses preliminary screening of the plan to see what aspects of the plan may have an effect on European sites, and an 'Appropriate Assessment' which considers in detail the likely consequences of the plan on the integrity of the qualifying features of the site.

Local Development Plan (LDP)
A detailed spatial plan for an area which contains a spatial strategy and site specific policies and proposals for future development, represented on a proposals map. Local Development Plans outwith city regions (i.e. where there is no Strategic Development Plan) must also contain a vision statement.

Main Issues Report (MIR)
A document which represents the first formal stage in the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan or Local Development Plan, through which issues are identified and options for future development explored. It is the most important stage for engagement with the public when the planning authority has not yet fixed its view on the content of the plan.

Monitoring Statement
A document which monitors changes in the principal characteristics of an area (physical, economic, social and environmental) and the impact of the policies and proposals of an existing plan. It is prepared at an early stage in plan preparation and is published at the same time as the Main Issues Report.

Policies
Statements that express the planning authority's views on a given topic, or a particular type of area, and provide standards and criteria against which proposals for development will be judged.

Proposals
Sites identified in a plan for a specific development (e.g. housing, business, infrastructure).

Proposed Plan
A document which represents the Council's settled view on what the final content of the plan should be. It is produced after the Main Issues Report, and takes into account the responses to the Main Issues Report.

Schedule 4
A form which is submitted along with the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers prior to the Examination. It contains information on representations received to the plan, the changes sought by those representations, and the planning authority's response to them. A separate Schedule 4 is completed for each unresolved issue. They are used as the basis for the Examination Report.

Strategic Development Plan
A strategic spatial plan which is produced for each of the four city regions in Scotland, and provides a broadly based view on the overall scale and location of future development in each region.

Strategic Environmental Assessment
A process whereby the effects of plans on the environment are identified, and mitigation to reduce negative environment effects is outlines. The findings of the process are detailed in the Environmental Report.

Supplementary Guidance
Documents which provide more detail about the interpretation and implementation of plan policies. Statutory supplementary guidance, which forms part of the development plan, must have a clear reference in the strategic/local development plan, must be subject to consultation, and be approved by Scottish Ministers.