



Agenda Item 3

Minute

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of meeting of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Tuesday 26 March 2019 at 9.30 am.

COUNCILLORS: David Alexander
Robert Bissett
Fiona Collie
Joan Coombes
Nigel Harris
Adanna McCue
Cecil Meiklejohn (Convener)
Laura Murtagh
Alan Nimmo
John Patrick
Pat Reid

**REPRESENTATIVES
OF RELIGIOUS
BODIES:** Maureen Harkins

CO-OPTEES: Karen Procek, Parent Representative
Merle Stevenson, Parent Representative

OFFICERS: Ashley Cupples, Early Years Pedagogue
Tracey Fox, Data Project Officer
Arlene Fraser, Committee Services Officer
Gary Greenhorn, Head of Planning and Resources
Sara Lacey, Head of Social Work Children's Services
Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive
David Mackay, Head of Education
Colin Moodie, Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Gemma Paterson, Early Years Pedagogue
Karen Thomson, Childcare Provision Co-ordinator
Vivien Thomson, Service Manager

EE54. Apologies

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Flynn; Rev Michael Rollo, Church Representative; John Chalmers and Fiona Craig, Teacher Representatives; Alice Dunn and Aaron Laurie, Pupil Representatives.

EE55. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

EE56. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Education Executive held on 29 January 2019 was approved.

EE57. Rolling Action Log

A rolling action log detailing decisions not yet implemented following the previous meeting on 29 January 2019 was provided. Items 436 – Motion Family Cap; 442 – Specialist Education and Social Behavioural Needs for Primary and Secondary School Pupils; and 444 - SQA Attainment in Falkirk Secondary Schools 2017/18, were subject of reports on the agenda and accordingly fell from the action log.

Decision

The Education Executive noted the rolling action log.

Councillor Coombes entered the meeting during discussion of the following item.

EE58. Education Executive Membership

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services seeking the appointment of non-elected members to the Education Executive.

The selection processes for the nomination of one teacher from the serving staff of schools, and one parent representative chosen by Falkirk Area Parent Forum, was detailed in the report.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed to appoint, until the next Local Government Elections:-

- (1) John Chalmers, Bonnybridge Primary School as the primary schools teacher representative on the Education Executive; and**
- (2) Merle Stevenson as a parent representative on the Education Executive.**

EE59. Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) – Attainment in Falkirk in 2017-18

Tracey Fox, Data Project Officer, Children's Services gave a presentation on the Scottish Qualifications and Measures.

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services advising on the attainment of young people leaving Falkirk Council's secondary schools in 2017/18, therefore, focused solely on point of exit data.

The performance information for Falkirk Council secondary schools is benchmarked against the national average, Virtual Comparator (VC) and where available, against the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative, comprising of Falkirk, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and West Lothian Councils. The VC is made up of pupils from other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the pupils in Falkirk Council schools.

The report set out the progress schools are making towards the delivery of the Council's priorities contained in the Educational Division Improvement Priorities 2018-19.

The data included attainment in literacy and numeracy as well as leaver destination information for senior pupils exiting their education, variously at the end of S4, S5 and S6.

Decision

The Education Executive:-

- (1) noted Falkirk Council secondary school leavers' results for 2017-18;**
- (2) noted the positive progress made by Falkirk Council pupils across a range of attainment measures, and**
- (3) requested that the Director of Children's Services continue to engage with schools on tracking and monitoring pupil's progress, and with partners in planning for positive leaver destinations.**

In terms of Standing Order 35.1(ii), the Convener ruled that there had been a material change in circumstances since the decision of Council to set instrumental music tuition fees, at the meeting on 27 February 2019. This decision was taken prior to the COSLA guidance on "Instrumental Music Tuition" being considered.

EE60. Instrumental Music Tuition Fees

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing recent guidance issued by COSLA regarding "Instrumental Music Tuition", which included recommendations for charges and concessions. The COSLA Guidance paper was appended to the report.

The report set out the background to the guidance which aims to support local authorities on their decision making of instrumental music services and approaches to charging. Due to the timing of its publication, there was no time to consider the guidance prior to the Council's budget meeting.

Children's Services currently apply two level of charges, full and concessionary. The fee levels, set as part of the 2019/20 budget paper, are £160 (full) and £50 (concessionary). The concessionary charge applies to those pupils who qualify for free school meals. Charges apply for pupils selecting to receive individual or group tuition in a particular instrument or genre, and not to those studying for their SQA music examination.

COSLA guidance and recommendation is that there should be no charge for students who have entitlement to free school meals. The estimated loss of income to this proposal would be c.£6k per annum.

Decision

The Education Executive:-

- (1) noted the report and the COSLA Guidance, set out in Appendix 1;**
- (2) agreed that from 1 April 2019, no charge for instrumental music tuition would be made for those pupils who are entitled to free school meals, and**
- (3) instructed the Director of Children's Services to undertake a wider review of the current charges in line with the Improvement Service findings as outlined in section 4.3(ii) of the report.**

EE61. Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) – 2020 Expansion Plan Update

Ashley Cupples and Gemma Paterson, Early Years Pedagogues gave a presentation on Marvellous Mealtimes in Falkirk, which had been developed in Bowhouse and Nethermains Primary Schools' Early Learning Centres.

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing an update on the ELC expansion plans and progress, together with details of new proposals that support the ELC expansion and implementation plans.

Significant work had been undertaken to develop designs and access ELC options for Kinglass Social Work Office, Callendar Business Park Nursery, Inchlair Nursery School, Woodburn Day Nursery and Victoria Primary school; and the projects at Hallglen ELC and Kinnaird ELC.

The projects identified in Phases 2 & 3 were all currently “on track” as planned. A further 3 establishments had been proposed to accelerate and bring “on stream” earlier than previously planned and within the resources available.

Children’s Services have identified proposals which will provide support to partner provider nurseries in phasing in the implementation of 1140 hours; to ensure that their staff and their premises meet the necessary requirements, and to offer increased packages that will provide additional flexibility for parents.

Information was provided on how Children’s Services propose to meet the challenges around providing those children accessing 1140 hrs, with a meal at lunchtime and the proposal for additional funding, to allow existing charges for nursery snacks to cease, from August 2019.

Children’s Services plan to review and expand the ELC workforce to ensure there is a diverse, gender/age balance workforce, and to create opportunities for “on the job” training programmes. It is estimated that an additional 75fte posts will be recruited by August 2019.

Decision

The Education Executive:-

- (1) noted the overall content of the updated progress report;**
- (2) agreed to the proposals detailed in Section 4.3 to accelerate a further 3 projects;**
- (3) agreed to the proposals in Section 4.4 (ii) to accelerate and support the implementation of 1140 hours across our Partner Provider Nurseries;**
- (4) agreed to the proposals detailed in Section 4.5 to review and consider options around meal provision in our ELC establishments;**
- (5) noted the provision of additional funding as detailed in Section 4.8 and request that the Director of Children’s Services provide details on the funding bid at the next meeting;**
- (6) agreed to the proposals to recruit additional staff as detailed in Section 4.8, and**
- (7) noted the updated financial information showing new commitments in Section 6.**

Merle Stevenson left the meeting after consideration of the previous item of business.

EE62. Report on the Consultation on the Proposed Mothballing of Bothkennar and Limerigg Primary Schools

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing details on the recent informal consultations undertaken on the proposed mothballing of Bothkennar and Limerigg Primary Schools and the recommendations on the way forward.

The Education Executive had agreed the criteria and parameters for schools to be considered for mothballing on 4 September 2018 (ref EE32). Management actions to be taken when schools were considered for mothballing had also been previously agreed.

The School Census for 2018/19 identified two schools that fell within the agreed parameters to be considered for mothballing, namely Bothkennar and Limerigg Primary Schools.

The report set out details of the informal consultation processes undertaken with affected parents and other families who reside within the defined catchment areas, and the responses received. There were no objections to either school being mothballed.

Decision

The Education Executive:-

- (1) noted the responses from the recent consultations;**
- (2) agreed that Limerigg and Bothkennar Primary Schools should be mothballed from August 2019, and that pupils attending these schools transfer automatically to Slamannan and Beancross Primary Schools, and**
- (3) authorised the Director of Children's Services to put measures in place to support pupils transferring to the alternative catchment schools during the current school session if that is requested.**

Councillor Harris left the meeting during consideration of the previous item and re-joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

EE63. Renaming of 'Mariner Support Service' and 'Oxgang School and Support Service' to Inclusion and Wellbeing Service 3-18: Report on Feedback from the Informal Naming Consultation

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing feedback on the consultation with children, young people,

parents and staff, together with the outcome of the preferred name for the new school.

The Education Executive had agreed to progress with the informal consultation regarding the proposal on 4 September 2018 (ref EE26).

Following the consultation carried out between 1 October 2018 and 21 December 2018, the responses received indicated that the preference was to combine both Oxbang School and Support Service and Mariner Support Service into a single service with the name of "Inclusion and Wellbeing Service 3-18".

Decision

The Education Executive:-

- (1) noted the progress report on the rename, and**
- (2) agreed that the combined service be called "Inclusion and Wellbeing Service 3-18" in accordance with the preference expressed by parents, pupils and staff.**

EE64. Foster Carer Recruitment

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services outlining proposals to support a significant increase in the number of local foster carers, in line with the Children's Service's Closer to Home Strategy.

Information was provided on the need to recruit additional foster carers to meet the need for placements for Falkirk children who require alternative family care, and which should be provided, as close to home as possible.

At present, the number of local children requiring foster placements outweighs the placements available from Council foster carers. This results in the Council purchasing placements from external agencies, the costs of which, are significantly more than the internal provision, and are often outwith the Council area.

To meet demand for placements and the goals of the Closer to Home Strategy, work on a dedicated and competitive recruitment focus and marketing strategy is currently being developed.

Details of the Council's existing foster carer Payment for Skills Scheme and proposals for an increase in the payments, was set out in the report.

Decision

The Education Executive approved the proposed changes to the existing Falkirk Council foster carer Payment for Skills scheme and staffing structure as detailed at paragraphs 4.6 and 6.1 to attract local people to foster for the Council.

EE65. Child Tax, Universal Credit

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing an update on the guidance being provided to Social Workers, Housing and Finance staff who may receive a request to validate a benefit support application for a child conceived without consent.

Falkirk Council has developed guidance for staff in Housing, Finance and Social Work Services to ensure that staff are aware of the process of obtaining benefits for children conceived without consent and understand the process of verification. The guidance also highlights the specialist support services which are available to help people affected by this issue. The guidance was appended to the report.

Decision

The Education Executive noted the guidance provided to Social Work and relevant Housing and Finance staff.