

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2015 at 10.30 AM.

COUNCILLORS:

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

**REPRESENTATIVES
OF RELIGIOUS
BODIES:**

Margaret Coutts
Rev Michael Rollo

CO-OPTEES:

Helena Barton, (Pupil Representative)
Mike Ablett (Parent Representative)
Margaret Smith (Teacher Representative)

OFFICERS:

Danny Cairney, Accountancy Services Manager
Gary Greenhorn, Head of Educational Support and Resources
Mark Meechan, Community Learning and Development Manager
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Anne Pearson, Head of Educational Support and Improvement
Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer
Richard Teed, Senior Forward Planning Officer

EE1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Hector Cairns (Religious Representative) and Fiona Craig (Teacher Representative).

EE2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

EE3. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of meeting of the Education Executive held on 3 February 2015 was approved.

EE4. EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Education Executive considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer on the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Youth Ambassadors team as pupil representatives on the Education Executive.

The Education Executive had agreed in 3 February 2015 (ref EE42) to replace the Falkirk Council Pupil Council with a Youth Ambassador programme and that the Chair and Vice Chair of the new programme would become the pupil representatives on the Education Executive.

The updated report advised that the Youth Ambassadors at their first meeting had appointed pupils from Larbert and Braes High Schools as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Youth Ambassadors team.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed the appointment of Helena Barton (Larbert High School) and Jonathan Barclay (Braes High School) as the two pupil representative members for a period of two years with immediate effect.

EE5. FUTURE ROLE, PURPOSE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ATTENDANCE PANEL

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing information on (a) the current resources for the operation of Attendance Panels; (b) an assessment of their impact and effectiveness, and (c) recommending changes to the way in which the Education Service dealt with attendance in future.

Attendance Panels were established in August 2005 by the former Education and Leisure Committee. This created a two stage process allowing cases to be dealt with at an earlier stage by the Panels and enabling the Attendance Committee to focus on those referrals where prosecution was a probable outcome.

Arrangements and measures, including the rolling out of an automated call system (Groupcall) and a revised Service Circular 29, had improved secondary school attendance in 2006/7 and there was a rise in attendance from 89.9% in 2006/7 to 91.8% in 2013/14. This rise, however, could not be solely attributed to the operation of the Panels.

Panels were currently held approximately 3 times per school session and were chaired by a Team or Service Manager. Most referrals came from secondary schools and in particular at S3. There were fewer referrals from primary schools.

Over a school session the total Education staff time supporting Panels represented approximately 122 hours. This was not considered to be best value in contributing to increasing young people's potential and school attendance.

Panels had been introduced in conjunction with other measures at a time when Education Services was required to focus on improving attendance as part of the Raising Attainment Strategy. Over the past 7 years the model has not changed significantly to take into account current thinking which reflects the Scottish Government's advice on attendance in schools and 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) approaches.

The analysis over the past 2 years evidenced the limited impact Attendance Panels had on improving attendance. The diminishing human resources from central teams also impacted on the capacity for the Panels to be sustainable and effective.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed that:-

- (1) Attendance Panels be removed from the attendance circular and staged process;**
- (2) a 'pathways' checklist for schools be incorporated into the revision of Service Circular 29: Non Attendance and Truancy to ensure a consistent approach;**
- (3) schools make Attendance Committee referrals to the Service and school improvement division for scrutiny which will either refer back to the school in cases where there is scope for further supportive action or refer to the Attendance Committee; and**
- (4) an updated report be submitted to a future meeting later in the year on the pattern of attendance following the removal of the Panels.**

Councillor G Goldie entered the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

EE6. FALKIRK COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD) ACTION PLAN

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which detailed the progress in the development of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Action Plan in accordance with the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

The Education Executive had on 11 November 2014 (ref EE32) (a) noted the key policy goals as set out in the Regulations and the new Guidance; (b) endorsed the CLD Action Plan, and (c) agreed to receive a further update report detailing the progress made in developing the Plan.

The Regulations placed two obligations on the Council being (i) to ensure that the need for CLD provision within the Council area is assessed, and (ii) to publish a 3 year plan by 1 September 2015 setting out what CLD provision the Council will make, how it will co-ordinate provision with other providers, what action the other providers intend to take during the period of the Plan and what needs will be unmet.

The updated report detailed progress in the development of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Action Plan and set out proposals for partners to work on a collaborative basis within the Falkirk Council area.

Decision

The Education Executive:-

- (1) noted the progress of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Action Plan; and**
- (2) requested that a further report be submitted with the draft Action Plan to next meeting in June 2015.**

EE7. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing the background to the review of the early learning and childcare admission policy and the proposed changes to the current policy.

The Education Executive had agreed on 3 February 2015 (ref EE39) that a review of the Early Years Admission Policy be undertaken to consider making provision for reserved places in nursery schools attached to primary schools for children from the local catchment area by (a) introducing a reserved place policy (similar to that for primary and secondary schools), and (b) setting appropriate tolerance levels that allow nursery class operational capacity to be increased to meet the catchment area demand but not to exceed the set physical capacity of the building..

The report proposed changes to the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy and recommended (i) the setting and application of tolerance levels for increasing nursery class capacity, and (ii) the annual review and publishing of operational capacity levels and reserved places for nurseries.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed:-

- (1) that the Early Years Admissions Policy be changed as set out in section 3 and Appendix 1 of the report;**

- (2) that Education Services set and apply tolerance levels for increasing nursery class capacity as set out in section 4 of the report, and
- (3) that the operational capacity levels and reserved places for nurseries be reviewed and published annually in the Council's Information Bulletin alongside the reserved places for primary and secondary schools.

EE8. REVIEW OF INCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS - POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services on the establishment of a Policy Development Panel on the review of inclusion and additional support needs.

The Education Executive had agreed on 11 November 2014 (ref EE30) as part of its consideration of the key principles of inclusive education, that Education Services progress the review of inclusion and additional support needs and that an updated report to be submitted to a future meeting on the detail and progress of the review.

The updated report set out the details of the wide-ranging review, the prospective new policy approaches and service provision and recommended the establishment of a Policy Development Panel to oversee the review.

Decision

The Education Executive agreed:-

- (1) the establishment of a 5 member policy development panel to oversee the review with 3 places reserved for members of the Administration and 2 from the Opposition, the panel to be chaired by Councillor Nimmo with the remaining nominations to be intimated to the Chief Governance Officer; and
- (2) that the panel make recommendations to the Education Executive on any significant changes to service provision or policy.