



AGENDA ITEM

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**SCHOOL/CAMPUS BASED
POLICE OFFICERS**

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: SCHOOL/CAMPUS BASED POLICE OFFICERS
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 29 MARCH 2016
Author: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this is to seek Education Executive approval to extend the provision of school or campus based Police Officers to all of our 8 secondary schools.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During 2007/8 and 2008/9, Police Officers were located initially in Larbert High School and then later within Denny High School as part of an innovative pilot project.
- 2.2 On 21st August 2012, Education Committee agreed to extend this provision to a further 3 secondary schools; Braes, Falkirk and Grangemouth, thus providing a Police Officer in 5 secondary schools at that time.

3. CURRENT POSITION/NEW PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Recent discussions with Police Scotland have concluded with a proposal to provide a further 3 school based Police Officers to allow all of our 8 mainstream secondary schools to have their own school based officer. Police Scotland have proposed that the additional cost of 1 officer is funded by the Council and that they will fund the other 2 posts.
- 3.2 Following discussions with the Secondary Headteachers, they have unanimously welcomed this proposal based on the success of the current provision and if approved, would give all 8 secondary schools a full-time Police Officer based in each school.

4. RECOGNISED BENEFITS OF HAVING SCHOOL BASED POLICE OFFICERS

- 4.1 Some of the benefits of having School Based Police Officers which have been reported both at a national and local level are shown in Appendix 1.

5. OBJECTIVES, ROLE AND OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL BASED POLICE OFFICERS

5.1 The objectives of the initiative are to:

- develop and build upon the existing relationship between Police Scotland and the secondary high schools, with particular emphasis on improving relationships between the Police and pupils in associated schools in the community;
- reduce fear of crime amongst pupils, teachers and other members of the school community through the building of relationships and effective partnership and communication;
- assist in the development and support of restorative practices;
- assist in reducing anti-social behaviour and youth crime by young people;
- reduce victimisation of the young people in the area;
- reduce crime, bullying and truancy within the area.

5.2 The role of the school based officer is to:

- assist in reducing anti-social behaviour and youth crime, including offending by and victimisation of, young people within the cluster community;
- assist in promoting a positive image of Police Scotland with young people in the area through the establishment of positive partnerships;
- assist in educating members of the school community about the consequences of actions and the potential for positive citizenship;
- participate in multi-agency initiatives to improve the learning environment within the high schools.

5.3 The outcomes for the initiative are identified as:

- reduction in the number of exclusion incidents and numbers of pupils being excluded from school;
- reduction in the level of anti-social behaviour in schools and the community;
- reduction in staff illness and absence;
- improved ethos within schools;
- reduction in bullying within schools and the community;
- increase in restorative processes;
- joined-up, inter-agency early intervention.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Currently Children's Services pay c£35,000 per annum to Police Scotland for 1 Police Officer with Police Scotland funding the other 4. This cost is shared between the current 5 secondary schools who have a school based Police Officer and the Service itself.

6.2 This new proposal for an additional 3 school based Police Officers means that:

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Police Scotland will pay for: | 6 officers |
| • Children's Services will pay for: | 2 officers |
| Total | 8 officers |

- 6.3 If approved the Secondary Headteachers have agreed to share the revised overall cost of c£84,000 (for 2 Police Officers) between all the schools and Children's Services. As with the £35,000 initial cost, the additional costs of £49,000 will be met from schools own devolved budgets and from Children's Services revenue budget.

7. EQUALITY MATTERS

- 7.1 This proposal would allow all 8 secondary schools to benefit from having a full-time Police Officer based in each school.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Education Executive:

- (i) approves extension to the school based Police Officers as outlined in Section 3, at an additional cost to Children's Services of c£49,000 per annum (as detailed in Section 5); and
- (ii) agrees that the Director of Children's Services reviews the operation and outcomes from the deployment of a Police Officer in all 8 secondary schools, in conjunction with the Headteachers at the end of the 2015/16 term.

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DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Date: 16 March 2016

Contact Officer: Gary Greenhorn, ext 6683

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

SCHOOL BASED POLICE OFFICERS - RECOGNISED BENEFITS

Academic Research (2010 Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos/Mori 'Evaluation of Campus Police officers in Scottish Schools, and Scottish Institute of Policing Research SIPR review in 2013) into School Based Officers has recognised the many benefits of the role, as does the recent Review of Children's Services in Falkirk. The benefits of the role include the following:-

- (i) **Single point of contact for young people**
Providing long term support to vulnerable pupils who lack support and a good role model at home. Providing the means for young people to directly access policing services to report incidents, or seek advice.
- (ii) **Single point of contact for parents.**
Parents often contact the school based officer directly for advice, support or to report incidents. Parents value the continuity this approach brings knowing the school based police officer has knowledge of their child, issues in the school, or issues in the community and can deal with incidents quickly.
- (iii) **Single point of contact for Education.**
The daily sharing of information regarding the vulnerabilities/safety of young people in the school and at home is an essential partnership. On a daily basis incidents are discussed and risk assessed. These can be one off incidents, or long term monitoring of situations. There are a number of current cases involving young people who are either victims of serious crime or perpetrators of serious crime. These pupils are managed in school by the senior leadership team and the school based police officer to ensure their safety and the safety of the other school pupils. Police Scotland is represented at multi agency meetings for these pupils by the school based officer.

The school based officer also provides support to the cluster primaries when required in order to improve transition and maintain continuity.
- (iv) **(Single point of contact for Social Work.**
Information is shared by the school based officer regarding developments in current cases to ensure there is a joined up approach to dealing with the welfare of young people under social work care. Sometimes on a daily basis there is contact between the school based police officer and social work providing up to date information regarding pupil welfare. Joint home visits are carried out when appropriate.
- (v) **Single point of contact for local businesses.**
The school based officer is contacted directly whenever there are any issues with the pupils from the school. The school based officer is the obvious point of contact for local businesses that are experiencing problems with young people. Antisocial behaviour around their premises at weekends is reduced because young people know they can easily be

identified by the school based officer.

(vi) **Restorative work.**

Restorative work with young people to avoid situations becoming more serious or criminal can be one of the largest areas of work for a school based officer. Diffusing situations in school avoids them becoming an issue in the community leading to further work for the police. Equally incidents which occur in the community need to be dealt with when pupils return to school to avoid situations escalating.

(vii) **Keeping young people out of trouble.**

This is key objective of the role. By building good relationships with pupils, especially those from deprived backgrounds, it is hoped that they take on board the advice and direction provided by the school based police officer and stay out of trouble and avoid criminal convictions. The long term benefits are huge. The building of good relationships is essential. Attending school trips and extra-curricular activities with some of the most vulnerable children helps to build trust and develop a good relationship. Experiencing the police out of uniform and in a less formal environment breaks down any barriers.

(viii) **Identifying vulnerable children.**

(ix) **Maintaining order.**

Maintaining order in school and in the community is an important part of the role.

(x) **Multi agency meetings.**

Representing the police at multi agency meetings. School based officers often have a greater knowledge of the young person being discussed and are best placed to represent the police at multi agency meetings.

(xi) **Education/Prevention,**

School based officers provide pupils with inputs into a variety of topics on a one to one basis or to larger groups of pupils. The topics include Internet safety, Domestic Violence, Sexual Exploitation, Drugs, Alcohol, Antisocial Behaviour and Mentors in Violence prevention, amongst others. In the age of social media, problems with cyber bullying, sending explicit messages and engaging in risky behaviour online takes up a large amount of a school based officer's time.

The most recent report (SIPR 2013) states that 'the number of campus Officers should be expanded to cover every (high) school in Scotland. Falkirk Council and Forth Valley Division, Police Scotland have the opportunity to make that commitment through this proposed partnership which should deliver real benefits to the young people in Falkirk in the future.