



# **AGENDA ITEM**

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**Delivering Excellence and Equity in  
Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan  
for Scotland**

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**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan for Scotland

**Meeting:** Education Executive

**Date:** 6 September 2016

**Submitted By:** Director of Children's Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Scottish Government's delivery plan for Scottish Education in late June 2016.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 The Education Executive is asked to:

**(1) note the publication of the plan; and**

**(2) request that the Director of Children's Services provides further reports on emerging issues associated with the national plan and its implementation in Falkirk.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Prior to publication of the delivery plan the Education Minister engaged in dialogue and discussion with a number of key stakeholders including trade unions, some teachers, some representatives from SOLACE and ADES, and national politicians.
- 3.2 The plan outlines a number of actions to be taken around three key priorities:
- closing the attainment gap;
  - ensuring we have a curriculum which delivers for our children and teachers; and
  - empowering our teachers, schools and communities to deliver for children and young people.

**4. Considerations**

**Education Scotland will undertake a focused review of demands placed on schools by each local authority in relation to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).**

- 4.1 A team from HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) will visit Falkirk Council on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August and spend the day meeting with groups of teachers, head teacher and union representatives from both primary and secondary schools,

as well as education officers and the Director of Children's Services. They will explore the current expectations and demands placed on colleagues in relation to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Education Scotland will then collate the information gathered from all 32 local authorities and report, with recommendations, to the Depute First Minister by mid-September 2016.

4.2 The anticipated outcomes through implementation of the plan include include:

1. De-cluttering the curriculum;
2. Significantly reducing and condensing the range of guidance; documentation from Education Scotland to streamline the processes;
3. Reduction in assessments with in the broad general education;
4. Increased focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in P1-3; and
5. Reduction of the demands from the SQA in relation to Assessments for National Qualifications.

**The Scottish Government will expect all schools to have clear strategies in place across the curriculum to reduce the gap in literacy skills in P1-3 in school session 2016/17.**

4.3 This is something that schools will have in place already. The issue will be what specifically Education Scotland will expect to see when schools are inspected and/or what work local authorities will be expected to undertake to verify that these strategies are in place. An additional meeting of head teachers took place in June to discuss the implications of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities and give advice on school improvement planning. Further guidance was also sent to schools. An initial scan of the school improvement plans submitted in June, would indicate that schools and clusters have plans to address this within their 2016/17 plans.

**The Scottish Government will use new data that will become available (we will submit our data for P1,4,7 and S2 at the end of August) in October 2016 to identify the attainment gap a school and local authority level – and agree targets to reduce this. School Inspection and self-evaluation will focus more directly on closing the gap from September 2016.**

4.4 The Scottish Government will gather information from all schools for Literacy and Numeracy Levels at P1,4,7 and S2. These submissions are based on school level assessments / teacher judgments. In Falkirk they were 'sense checked' with information available from our Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) testing.

4.5 However it is possible that what is considered Level 2 Literacy in a Falkirk primary school does not correlate with what is deemed Level 2 Literacy in another local authority. This is because within Curriculum for Excellence there has been no national moderation or standardised assessments that ensure we are comparing 'like with like'. Therefore although we will be able to discuss 'the gap' within each and every school it will not be until the introduction (from 2017) of new standardised national assessments that we will be able to compare schools in our area with those in another local authority.

4.6 We are currently working with teachers and schools across the authority to develop a series of progression pathways. These will greatly assist our

consistency of judgement. Our HMle Local Area Officer and a lead Inspector commended this work at a meeting in June. Education Scotland will also be providing further guidance, by October 2016, to enable greater consistency.

**The Scottish Government will launch a Governance Review alongside the Programme for Government in September 2016. This review will examine the system changes required to deliver commitments to empower schools, decentralise management and the support through the encouragement of school clusters and creation of new educational regions. The objective is to devolve decision making and funding to schools and communities. This process will run in parallel with the review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 by the National Parent Forum of Scotland. The Scottish Government will extend to individual schools legal responsibilities that currently sit with local authorities.**

- 4.7 This is the most significant signal of change within the plan. While the precise nature of the Scottish Government's proposals is still to be seen, the broad thrust appears to represent a marked change in the role of education authorities, with more responsibility and decision making shifting to school level together with an as yet undefined role for educational regions, which may be groups of education authorities co-operating together or alternatively a layer of governance sitting between the Scottish Government and education authorities.

It is understood that ADES and COSLA anticipate that they will be involved in discussions with the Scottish Government on the role and make-up of the regions.

A response will be prepared to the consultation on the Governance Review for consideration at a future Education Executive.

**The Scottish Government will support the continuing growth of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in schools by implementing new rights for parents and by providing more resources for teachers and learners, by February 2017**

- 4.8 In the longer term this could have significant implications for Falkirk Council. Currently we have a duty to provide access to GME to those parents who request it. We meet the current demand by placing children within schools in Stirling and North Lanarkshire. If the numbers requesting GME grows across Scotland those authorities that currently operate GME schools or GME classes within schools would soon reach capacity. This would mean that we would need to consider initially having GME classes within our schools and potentially in time having a GME school.

**The plan sets out an increase in early learning and childcare from 600 to 1140 hours by 2020 and (Scottish Government will ensure that) nurseries "in the most disadvantaged areas" will benefit from an additional teacher or degree qualified early learning and childcare professional from August 2018.**

- 4.9 Some early work has been undertaken in Falkirk to establish where there may be capacity to cope with an almost doubling of early learning and childcare. We will need to re-provision classrooms in schools where they are available.

However in many locations we will need to either build additional space or add modular accommodation (where there is sufficient land on school sites). At this stage we are not able to estimate the capital works required or the cost of this. There has, as yet, been no indication of what capital monies will be made available by Scottish Government.

- 4.10 An exercise has been undertaken in consultation with the Scottish Futures Trust that both:
- assesses actual shortfall in early years capacity at existing sites, and
  - considers potential options available to increase early years capacity on site.
- 4.11 The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) has been appointed by the Scottish Government to co-ordinate the planning of any local authority expansion/new build dependent on the data returned. They held an individual meeting with each local authority in August 2016 to ascertain the overall national picture. Capital will be calculated for each local authority on the number of refurbishments, extensions and new build across each local area. The SFT predicts an estimate of 600-800 new builds across Scotland
- 4.12 The increase in hours will require all councils to increase their early learning and childcare workforce by 90%.
- 4.13 At this time we do not have details of plans within local colleges to extend training places so that there are sufficient numbers of qualified staff (all staff need to be registered with SSSC and be qualified to SNCF Level) by 2020.
- 4.14 The Scottish Government has indicated that a blended model of childcare provision will also be available to families, utilising nursery provision, supplemented by periods with childminders to assist with the anticipated capacity issues. The childminders will require to be approved, trained and supported. We are currently exploring a test of change with one of our 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners who already have significant experience in this field, ahead of any required change.
- 4.15 Depending on the final definition of “the most disadvantaged areas” it is anticipated that we will require to recruit further teachers or degree qualified early learning and childcare staff.

**The Scottish Government will extend the funding of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to £750m over the next 5 years. Funding for the Challenge Authorities and Schools will be doubled to £50m per year.**

- 4.16 There are currently nine “Challenge Authorities”. Based on the criteria of the numbers of children living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1& 2 Falkirk is 16<sup>th</sup> on the list. We do have 2 Challenge Schools – Langlees Primary and (from August 2016) Falkirk High School. The funding is £125k for Langlees and £100-150k for Falkirk High (depending on the allocation granted from our bid), for year one.

The overall funding for Challenge authorities and schools has increased from £25m to £50m over the next five years, enabling the scope to be increased to include secondary schools and two additional local authorities. This has brought Falkirk High School into the Attainment Challenge.

- 4.17 Each authority involved with the Attainment Challenge has been allocated a dedicated Attainment Advisor. Our attainment Adviser has been allocated 70 days per year to work collaboratively alongside our staff to support the raising of attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. His key role is to build capacity in our leaders and practitioners by supporting effective self-evaluation, underpinned by robust evidence.
- 4.18 More detail is provided regarding the Scottish Attainment Challenge in a separate report to the Education Executive.

**From financial year 2017/18 £100m raised from council tax reforms will be allocated directly to schools. The allocation will be based on the numbers of children in primary schools and S1-3 who are entitled to free school meals. It is understood that the sums raised will be allocated by the Scottish Government on a national basis.**

- 4.19 In Falkirk free meal entitlement rates (Primary P4-7 16.6%, Secondary 12.60%) are lower than the national average of 17.9% and 14.2% respectively. Our likely share of the £100m would be c £2.9m compared to c £3.2m if distribution was in line with our pupil share % of c 3.2%. This would mean each free meal entitlement entitled pupil (P1 – S3) would attract funding of £1,085 each based on c 2,675 pupils who currently receive free meals entitlement.
- 4.20 In school terms this would mean our smaller primary schools would attract only £5,000 and our larger secondary schools attracting over £100,000.

**The Scottish Government will begin developing proposals for a fair and transparent national funding formula immediately and will listen to the views of teachers, parents, system leaders, local authorities and communities through the Governance Review. The Scottish Government will consult on proposals for a funding formula in March 2017. This will build on the approach being adopted for the Scottish Attainment Challenge, where £100m will go direct to head teachers from April 2017.**

- 4.21 It will be important to establish whether such a formula would include funding for early years education and childcare and funding for children's social work and possibly extend to support staff (ie Support For Learning Assistant's). Officers from Falkirk anticipate being involved in this work via the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) Resources Network.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The Scottish Government will publish a consultation on School Governance in September 2016. It is expected that further consultation will be undertaken by the Scottish Government regarding various aspects of the plan with trade unions, professional associations and with COSLA over the coming months.

## **6. Implications**

## **Financial / Resources**

- 6.1 No detailed financial and resource implications can be provided at this time. In regards to Gaelic Medium Education and Early Learning and Childcare there will be additional revenue and capital costs associated with the delivery plan. Paragraph 4.8 above details the funding we would anticipate from our share of additional funding associated with a national allocation based on FME. Further details will be reported to the Education Executive as further information is provided by the Scottish Government.

## **Legal / Risk**

- 6.2 Further detail on any emerging legal and risk implications will be reported to a future meeting of the Education Executive following the consultation on school governance review signalled by the Scottish Government as referred to in paragraph 4.7 above.

## **Equalities**

- 6.3 The delivery plan details a series of actions that the Scottish Government intends to implement to specifically address issues related to inequality in the Scottish education system and to specifically reduce the attainment gap that has persisted for many years between the most and least socially advantaged groups in society.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The Delivery Plan for Scotland is likely to have considerable implications for the way in which school education is delivered in future across Scotland. The Education executive, at this stage, is invited to consider the report and request further information regarding any section of the plan from the Director of Children's Services.
- 7.2 A copy of: Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – A Delivery Plan for Scotland can be accessed at the following web-link.

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf>

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## **Appendices**

**None**

## **List of Background Papers:**

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- **None**