FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: INTRODUCTION OF A 33 PERIOD WEEK ACROSS ALL

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

Date: 28 May 2013

Author: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2013, Education Committee agreed to:

- implement a timetabling model based on a 33 period week for all Falkirk secondary schools from August 2014 which can give rise to 27.5 hours schooling for pupils and 22.5 hours contact time for teaching staff;
- consult parents, pupils, teachers, Forth Valley College and teachers' trade unions on the detail of the implementation; and
- submit a further report to Education Committee.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to report back on the results of the consultation with recommendations for future action.

2. BACKGROUND/CURRENT PRACTICE

- 2.1 At present all secondary schools in Falkirk operate a 30 period week. Under the 2001 national agreement on teachers' salaries and conditions of service, teachers can be allocated a maximum of 22.5 hours class contact each week. While this is the norm in primary schools, a 30 period structure means that this maximum cannot currently be realised in the secondary sector.
- 2.2 This is inefficient because it creates time that cannot be allocated to teachers that could be better used to enhance the curriculum.
- 2.3 A 33 period week of 50 minute periods can provide the exact class contact of 22.5 hours (27 periods) for teachers. Consequently, a number of authorities across Scotland have, in recent years, implemented a 33 period week as it allows for greater timetabling efficiency and better use of the available staff resources to deliver the curriculum.
- 2.4 The introduction of the 33 period week would mean that:
 - the number of teaching periods available are maximised;

- schools will be provided with an opportunity to utilise additional teaching time available for implementing the entitlements of the Curriculum for Excellence such as by providing more inter-disciplinary learning, co-operative teaching and support for learning, as well as further developing opportunities for personal achievement, the Broad General Education in S1-3 and the Senior Phase in S4-6;
- the model will enable schools to sustain a broad curriculum through, for example, the range of Advanced Higher and Intermediate level courses available in the senior school;
- the model will also allow for the delivery of 2 periods of physical education.
- 2.5 In the current financial environment the continued use of a 30 period week is no longer sustainable when a more efficient model is available that will assist schools in better meeting the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.
- 2.6 A 33 period week timetabling structure does mean, however, that there is a differential in the number of periods per day across the week. It was therefore agreed that each secondary school should develop and consult on the detailed structure of the teaching day and week that best meets its needs and plans for implementing Curriculum for Excellence within the overall parameters set by the Council.

3. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 3.1 Responses and agreed models from individual schools are available as background papers for members' perusal and will be included in the Members' Bulletin.
- 3.2 Discussions with pupils and staff were largely conducted within the schools but parents were contacted via a letter from the Director (Appendix 1). There was a small number of written responses as indicated below:

| School | Responses | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| Bo'ness Academy | 2 | |
| Braes High School | 2 | |
| Denny High School | 3 | |
| Falkirk High School | 51 | |
| Graeme High School | 4 | |
| Grangemouth High School | 14 | |
| Larbert High School | 9 | |
| St Mungo's High School | 6 | |
| Total | 91 | |

- 3.3 The main issues raised by parents, staff and pupils were:
 - transport implications
 - possible reduced lunch hours and the potential impact on clubs and lunchtime activities
 - some longer days
 - potential issues for working parents and childcare
 - some earlier starts to the day
 - variations in finishing times during the week

- potential for younger children to become tired with some longer afternoons
- danger of confusion over timings
- concerns over the potential impact on first-line guidance.
- 3.4 Schools have made adjustments wherever possible within the overall framework of a 33 Period Week to meet the concerns raised by pupils, parents and staff.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 There is broad acceptance of the proposed changes to the existing model of the school week with a move to the 33 Period Week. Very few objections were received from pupils, parents or staff and most of these will be addressed in the implementation of the new model.

5. EQUALITY AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Equality: None. Proposals are within contractual agreements for teachers and
 - others staff.
- 5.2 Financial Staff Costs No additional staff costs would result from this proposal.

 Transport Costs Discussions with the Transport Planning Unit indicate there will be additional costs for school transport of up to £135K which can be met from within the existing transport budget. It is expected to negate, over the next three years, the majority of these additional costs with efficiencies realised from operating standardised consortia arrangements with Forth Valley College.

<u>General</u> – we fully anticipate that wider business and secondary school sector efficiencies will accrue once the 33 period week has been adopted and embedded within all secondary schools.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Education Executive notes the feedback from the consultation on the models developed in Falkirk secondary schools for the introduction of a 33 period week from August 2014.

Director of Education

Date: 16 May 2013

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS