

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a city skyline with a diagonal beam of light. The top-right quadrant depicts a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quadrant shows a three-masted sailing ship on wavy water. The bottom-right quadrant features a grizzly bear standing on a rocky outcrop. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto "A NE FOR A".

Agenda Item 3

Minutes

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 7 June 2018 at 9.30 am.

Councillors: David Balfour
Lorna Binnie
Allyson Black
Jim Blackwood
Niall Coleman
Jim Flynn
Lynn Munro
Pat Reid

Officers: Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement
Michelle Duncan, Policy and Research Officer
Rhona Geisler, Director of Development Services
David MacKay, Head of Education
Philip Morgan-Klein, Service Manager, Children's Services
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Stuart Ritchie, Director of Corporate and Housing Services

Also Attending: Ghislaine Tait, Headteacher, Moray Primary School

S7. Appointment of Convener

Council had agreed on 9 May 2018 (ref FC11) that the convenership of the Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Committee (External) would be held by either a member from the Conservative Group and SNP Group. The Scrutiny Committee (External) had appointed Depute Provost Ritchie as its convener on 17 May 2018 (ref SE1). Accordingly, in terms of Council's decision, the convenership was reserved to a member of the Conservative Group.

Nominations were then sought for the position of convener of the Scrutiny Committee and Performance Panel.

Councillor Flynn nominated Councillor Munro.

Decision

The Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Munro as convener of the Scrutiny Committee and of the Performance Panel.

S8. Apologies

No apologies were intimated.

S9. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Flynn declared a non-financial interest in item S12 as a director of Falkirk Community Trust, but did not consider that this required him to recuse himself from consideration of the item, having regard to the specific exclusions contained in the Code of Conduct.

S10. Minutes

Decision

- (a) The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 5 April 2018 was approved; and**
- (b) The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 29 April 2018 was noted.**

S11. Rolling Action Log

A rolling action log detailing the status of actions from the meeting held on 5 April 2018 which had yet to be completed was presented for consideration.

In regard to action 413 (Scrutiny Panels), the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed, in response to a question, that the Scrutiny Panel on fly tipping would meet later that day. It had met on 28 March 2018 and agreed its scope. A meeting scheduled for 9 April 2018 had been arranged but had been postponed following changes to the Council's decision making structure which had meant that 2 of the members, Councillors Bissett and Kerr, were ineligible to serve on the panel. The change in membership of the Executives had also resulted in a delay in establishing the Scrutiny Panel on antisocial behaviour. It was anticipated that this panel would meet to agree the scope of its review before the summer recess.

In regard to action 493 (the role of elected members in engaging in the complaints process) the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed that a workshop for members had taken place on 26 April 2018 and a focus group had been held on 8 May 2018. In response to a question, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed that member attendance had been low and, following a suggestion from committee, undertook to survey members.

Following a question on the time taken to implement a generic enquiries email address, action 392, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed that an email address would be established by 15 June 2018.

Decision

The committee noted the Rolling Action Log.

S12. Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2016/17

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting a summary of the Local Government Benchmarking data from 2016/17.

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF), had replaced Audit Scotland's Statutory Programme Indicators performance information and had been compiled by the Improvement Service. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework data was a national benchmark which compared Scottish Local Authorities with the aim of improving performance in key areas. It consisted of:-

- a suite of common performance indicators, and
- National events which look at areas of service, what are the differences across all Councils with regards to performance and what lessons can be learned from best practice to improve service provision.

The LGBF was a key element of Audit Scotland's statutory performance reporting framework to review Council's focus on improvement. The data relied upon:-

- Councils preparing information and data returns in a consistent way;
- national data sets being statistically significant in each Council area, and
- the Local Finance Return from each Council being consistently prepared.

It contained 75 indicators covering service cost, service delivery and customer satisfaction and included information on Council's priorities and concerns. It showed where there had been improvement or deterioration together with a comparison against Scottish Local Authorities.

The report highlighted and provided commentary on:-

- indicators by Service;
- comparison to the national average for 2016/17;
- Services' position relative to quartiles.

In addition the report provided analysis on:-

- corporate indicators;
- Children's Services performance;
- Corporate and Housing Services performance;
- Development Services performance;
- Adult Social Work performance;
- Falkirk Community Trust performance.

The respective performance information relating to Adult Social Work and Falkirk Community Trust was presented but would be considered by the Scrutiny Committee (External) as part of its scrutiny of the Integration Joint Board and Falkirk Community Trust.

In response to a question in regard to indicators Env 1-7, the Director of Development Services undertook to provide ward level breakdowns where these were available.

Members questioned whether the introduction of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) had had a positive impact on indicators CHN 6 and 7 (percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 and level 6 respectively). The Head of Education stated that the information provided was for 2016/17 and as such, the impact of PEF would not be relevant as it was introduced in 2017/18. However, he did expect that it would impact positively in subsequent years' performance. The indicators did not describe the range of qualifications available to pupils. The data was limited to attainment of Highers. The Service was currently collating information on the wider range of qualifications available, in particular to the lowest attaining groups.

Members sought detail on the factors leading to an increase in CHN 22 (percentage of child protection pre-registrations within 18 months) which had risen from 6.9% to 14.2%. The Head of Education stated that this was the first time that this data set had been reported nationally and the Service was currently analysing the factors which contributed to Falkirk Council's ranking of 30 out of 32. The review would include benchmarking with family groups in other Local Authorities in order to identify where improvements could be made.

In response to a question on preschool costs (CH3) members sought information on why costs were higher than Scottish average and whether this was due to the non-statutory provision provided by Falkirk Council which other Local Authorities did not provide. The Head of Education confirmed that this was the case. The Council provided baby provision in some nurseries. This was more expensive to provide than nursery provision and as a consequence the overall cost as measured by the indicator was higher than that recorded by many Authorities.

During discussion, members questioned the quantity of data provided and whether the collection and analysis of performance information in fact encroached on the delivery of services. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement reflected that the intent of performance information was to drive improvement in the provision of services. It allowed the Council to not only look at how well it performed but also to look at the services it provides and question whether some functions should be provided, or provided at the same cost. As an example, the Director of Development Services cited the cost of planning (ECON 2) indicator. While it was the case that there was an inconsistency in the methodology used by Councils to calculate this indicator, it showed Falkirk's cost was higher than most Local Authorities. This had led to questions by the Scrutiny Committee and a review of the process within the

Service. At the same time, there was recognition within the Scottish Government that there was inconsistency across the country and as part of the introduction of the Planning Bill, a review had been established. This would drive consistency and improvement in the planning services of Local Authorities.

The committee noted that the percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women (Corp 3b) was below the Scottish average and that Falkirk Council ranked 24 out of 32. Members asked why the pay gap still existed. The Director of Corporate and Housing Services explained that this was based on a complicated formula and it was likely that a number of Councils had similar performance with only slight variation between higher ranked Councils and Falkirk. Nonetheless in regard to equal pay claims, it was the case that of those pay claims which remain to be settled, the majority were at the lower end of the pay scale and tended to be jobs which were traditionally performed by women.

Members sought background to the samples used for indicators CHN 10 (percentage of adults satisfied with local schools). In particular, members asked whether the figure was 77% of respondents or 77% of the population and whether the survey was restricted to parents. The Head of Education explained that as the information was drawn from household surveys, he could not confirm the sample size and how many were parents of pupils. He undertook to provide background information to members before the next meeting.

In regard to indicator CHN 11 (percentage of pupils entering positive destinations), which was below the national average, members asked for the definition of a "positive destination". The Head of Education explained that this was a challenging indicator and the performance was lower than expected. The positive destinations captured were employment or college/university. However, within each category there were fluctuations, for example, pupils who go to college/university but then drop out or go into work but leave to go to college/university. The Service was focussed on providing the right pathways for pupils and for engagement to start not at S4/S5, but at an earlier stage. It was necessary to challenge the traditional pathways and there was positive engagement with Forth Valley College to develop pathways to work. It was key to provide the right tools to make pupils employable and the Head of Education cited examples of the ongoing work with industry to ensure that pupils had the right mix of skills and qualifications to allow them to move into work and further education.

Members then focussed on those indicators for which the Council was in the bottom quartile nationally and sought assurance that Services had strategies in place to review and drive improvement. The Director of Development Services responded that, in regard to ENV 4c (percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment), a report would be submitted to Council. In regard to indicator ENV 7a (percentage of adults satisfied with waste collection) 77% were satisfied, yet data showed that there was a very low rate of missed bin collections. The response may reflect

dissatisfaction with the separation of bins or collection frequency. The Service would analyse the information.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) Audit Scotland's increased focus on the use of these indicators as a means to drive improvement;**
- (2) the 2016/17 Local Government Benchmarking Framework data for Falkirk Council and Falkirk Community Trust;**
- (3) the indicators improving and deteriorating from 2010/11 to 2016/17;**
- (4) the indicators that compare better and worse than the national average;**
- (5) the indicators that are in the top and bottom quartiles, and**
- (6) the progress with benchmarking family group meetings.**

S13. Summary of Local Government in Scotland Challenges and Performance 2018

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services summarising the key messages of the Accounts Commission's report on "Local Government in Scotland – Challenges and Performance 2018".

A report by the Accounts Commission had identified the key challenges facing Scottish Local Government in 2018 and set out key messages for Local Authorities.

The challenges include:-

- The impact of Brexit;
- The review of local governance aimed at providing people with more say in local decision making; and
- A reduction in real terms of 9.6% in Council revenue funding from the Scottish Government since 2010/11.

The Accounts Commission set out Authorities' response to the challenges and concluded with three key messages. These were:-

- Councils' increasing use of reserves to support forecasted funding gaps,

- Workforce reduction and the need for robust workforce planning to ensure Councils have the right people with the right training and skills to deliver their priorities, and
- The vital need for transformational change in response to reductions in funding.

The Accounts Commission had recognised that Councils had faced a significant challenge to reduce spend, deliver services differently and work with their community. Notably the financial and population pressures would continue and consequently, the need for effective leadership and effective planning remained key. The report set out a number of recommendations:-

- Looking to the future:
 - continue to improve understanding on how the landscape within which their council operates may change, by considering its demographics, the public spending environment and policy changes;
 - use this information to inform council priorities;
 - develop long-term financial and scenario planning that takes these factors into account and considers the impact on all their services and their users; and
 - consider how to make the most of new technology, for example streamlining processes and communicating differently with service users.
- Work with communities - so that they are actively involved in decision-making, know the effect decisions are expected to have on services and communities and see the impact of community empowerment.
- Focus on the delivery of priority outcomes through:
 - working with communities to understand their needs;
 - establishing effective cross-party relationships to work together and make the sometimes difficult decisions needed to achieve the council's priorities; and
 - clearly linking budgets to plans and outcomes.
- Establish robust change strategies and developing realistic plans for transforming services, which incorporate:
 - effective leadership and good governance arrangements;
 - robust options appraisal;
 - strong financial management; and
 - properly scoped and resourced plans.

- Ensure change strategies are supported by:
 - realistic savings plans with long-term implications and mitigation against unintended impact on other services and communities;
 - effective workforce planning to retain and recruit people with the right skills to deliver sustainable future services;
 - income generation plans; and
 - workforce and member support, training and development.
- Evaluate and report on:
 - the impact that significant budget reductions, savings, workforce changes and service redesign are expected to have and have had on service delivery and quality; and
 - using the data collected and monitored to report publicly on the quality of services, as well as user satisfaction with those services.

Falkirk Council was well placed to meet the challenges. The Corporate Plan set out clear priorities that guide what services are working to achieve but also set out how the Council expects to change how it delivers its services. The Corporate Plan was underpinned by the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the transformation programme Council of the Future and also the Council's emerging customer strategy which incorporated Council's approach to digital services and technology.

In response to a question on participatory budgeting, the Director of Corporate and Housing Services gave examples of pilot initiatives in the Braes, Bo'ness and Grangemouth areas. The 18/19 budget had included £100k to allow projects to be developed which would be appraised and which could lead to further options being developed. Nationally, Authorities had taken differing approaches to participatory budgeting and it was prudent to review options before agreeing our preferred methodology.

The committee discussed the reductions in budgets since 2010/11 and the need, given the significant decrease, to transform services. In response to a question on the impact of reducing budgets and the particular demographics of the area on the provision of Social Work Adult Services, the Director of Corporate and Housing Services stated that the transformation of key service provision was vital. It was imperative that services focussed on prevention and that low cost provision was identified. The Head of Education concurred, noting however that the majority of services provided were statutory so the challenge was not to stop delivering services but to deliver the right service at the right time at the right cost. He cited examples where early intervention was key – it was necessary to change processes to align resources to meet the challenges and meet the needs of children and of their families. It was a significant challenge but would in time yield savings.

The Head of Education gave examples when the introduction of portable devices had improved service delivery. Innovation was key – for example, he cited the Living Well Falkirk project which, through the use of technology, led to fewer people coming in person to the social work service. In doing so, this allowed the service to focus its resources on areas of need. This had resulted in improved services but had also reduced costs. In regard to “pump priming”, the Director of Corporate and Housing Services confirmed that the budget included £700k to pump prime projects which would drive the Council of the Future projects.

The committee discussed the use of reserves to support funding gaps. The Accounts Commission had noted an increasing use of reserves by Local Authorities to bridge gaps stating that this was “not a way to sustain year on year services”. The Director of Corporate and Housing Services concurred. However, he explained that the report did not provide context as to the reasons why reserves had been used in other Authorities. The Council had a reserves strategy and considered that the public understood the rationale for maintaining reserves.

In response to a question, the Director of Corporate and Housing Services stated that it was not necessarily the case that an aging, less mobile population would in itself be expensive. Health was the key factor which highlighted the need for early intervention strategies to prevent people from requiring NHS and Council support.

The committee discussed the budget cuts to Local Authorities since 2010/11, highlighting that central Government, whether Scottish or Westminster Governments, had not faced similar levels of budget reductions.

The committee highlighted the absence rates, particularly within Social Work Adult Services and sought information on the measures in place to address absenteeism. The Head of Education stated that the levels were higher than desirable and that the Service followed procedures for absence management. There were specific factors however which should be acknowledged – these included the workforce age profile and the demands of the job. For example, in care homes where the workforce was older, there was a requirement to lift and bend and so the instances of musculo-skeletal absences would be higher. The Director of Corporate and Housing Services stated that information on absence management within Social Work Adult Services had been provided to the Joint Consultative Committee. That committee had requested a comparison with both public and private sector providers, however the majority of private sector providers had been unwilling to provide the information. In comparison with other Local Authorities, the absence rates were broadly the same. It was the case that absence rates would be different depending on the working environments and Social Work was particularly challenging. In recognition, Services had different absence targets – within Social Work, it was around 6% not 4% which was the Council average.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the key messages within the Challenges and Performance report, and**
- (2) the recommendations provided by the Accounts Commission.**

Councillor Reid withdrew from the meeting following consideration of the previous item.

S14. Participation Strategy Update

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing an update on progress made in response to a scrutiny panel review of participation and presenting ethical guidelines on community engagement.

Following a scrutiny panel review of the implementation of the Council's participation strategy in 2015, the Executive had agreed on 9 June 2015 (ref EX18) a set of actions including:-

- review the role, remit and membership of the Corporate Participation Group.;
- develop a robust process for local community planning which sets out a defined process for the production of plans
- develop a defined reporting framework for local community plans to ensure that reports on them are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee and then the Executive, prior to submission to the Community Planning Leadership Board;
- promote Have Your Say, the Plan for Local Involvement, and the principles set out within it more effectively, internally to Members and officers, and externally to communities and partner organisations;
- ensure appropriate training is put in place for officers to enable them to implement the principles set out in the plan, for example Plain English training, training in survey design etc.;
- record all consultation activity in a corporate database of consultation activities, drawing on Service Plans, Community Planning, to avoid duplication of consultation/engagement. The effectiveness and accessibility of the current database will also be reviewed;

- provide information to the public/specific stakeholders prior to and after they have informed, consulted or engaged with communities, including feedback. There should also be a clear process for advising Members about consultations that are taking place and feeding the results back to them;
- provide more information on consultations, community engagement and Local Community Planning in the consultation section of the Council's website;
- explore different digital means of engaging with local and thematic communities. This could include the potential for using a bespoke online consultation platform such as Citizen Space. It would also include a review of how the Council's use of social media platforms could be expanded to support its engagement activities;
- ensure that appropriate methods are used to effectively consult and/or engage with hard-to-reach groups and consideration will be given to specific training on consulting and/or engaging hard-to-reach groups; and
- consider the impact of the Community Empowerment Bill and the Council's response to this in August 2015.

The Executive had asked that update reports are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.

An overview of progress made in the context of developments since then, significantly, the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act, Council's Corporate Plan and National Standards for community engagement.

Details were given of work in regard to:-

- Youth Engagement;
- Locality Planning;
- Winter weather;
- A review of the Participation Strategy;
- The Citizens' Panel;
- Communications and social media;
- A review of the Corporate Participation Group; and
- The introduction of an ethical guide to community engagement.

In response to a question on how the views of the community on service provision are collected, analysed and for what use, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement stated that a wide range of information was collected, from a wide range of sources, which was broken down by Service to a Locality level. Through analysis of variations in responses, officers can identify areas where the Council was performing well and where there was room for improvement. The information could be used to drive change and

further improvement. Information was sought on what is important to the community. This was analysed and the analysis and proposed response was reflected back to the community i.e you said X, is this a correct interpretation of what you want, if so this is what we will do. Collaboration was important. Once the Council understands what a community wants, it was crucial that Council worked in collaboration with the community to deliver the service. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement explained that this process was in use within Children's Services at school level with young people.

Members sought further information on the process. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement explained that new information was collected and used to review work done so far and inform new work. The process would continually evolve.

In regard to engaging with young people, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement stated that young people were keen to work with the Council. However, it was clear from dialogue that young people did not support the introduction of a Youth Council. They looked for different ways of engaging – for example through social media and specific issues. A report setting out proposals for youth engagement would be considered by the Executive on 12 June 2018.

In response to a question on the Citizens' Panel, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed that while it was pleasing that 167 young people were involved, it was hoped that following the review of the participation strategy, the ways in which the Council engages with young people would widen and would involve more young people. In clarification, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement confirmed that young people ranged from 12-25 and that in itself this covered a wide range of characteristics. Not all identified as "youths". In response to a question, the Head of Education confirmed that Children's Services engage with those younger than 12.

The committee discussed the surveys undertaken as part of the review of the participation strategy and asked whether the make up (in terms of equalities) of the respondents was known. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement stated that it had been asked for as part of each survey, with exception of the youth survey, but not all respondents had provided the information. In the case of the youth survey, representative groups had been contacted for equality monitoring purposes.

Decision

The committee noted that officers would:-

- (1) establish a Citizen Space user group to encourage better cross-service communication and collaboration; provide training opportunities; and ensure a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation;**

- (2) develop a process by which services monitor and evaluate engagement activities as so to effectively measure progress and improvement to the Council's approach to community engagement;**
- (3) develop a set of ethical guidelines for community engagement to support officers;**
- (4) continue to offer training opportunities to staff conducting community engagement, and**
- (5) conduct a public consultation to review the Council's participation expired at the end of 2018.**

S15. Education Scotland Inspection Report and Action Plan – Slamannan Primary School and Heathrigg Nursery

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services presenting the findings of Education Scotland's inspection of Slamannan Primary School and Heathrigg Nursery together with the action plan to address the key findings of the recommendation.

Following its inspection of Slamannan Primary and Heathrigg Nursery in January 2018, Education Scotland had issued its inspection report together with a detailed summary of findings.

The inspection identified areas of strength, however, areas for improvement were identified. Of the 4 quality indicators measured – 2 (leadership of change and raising attainment and achievement) had been evaluated as weak.

Areas for improvement included:-

- to develop more effective strategic leadership and self-evaluation approaches which lead to improved outcomes for all children across the nursery and primary school. This should include a focus on continuing to develop effective partnerships, with parents and the local community, which will enhance and support children's learning.
- to improve learning and teaching across the school, ensuring an appropriate level of pace, challenge and differentiation. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps.
- to review the approaches that support children's learning across the school. In doing this, the school needed to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment for children requiring additional support in their learning.

- to raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data, and robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement.

In addressing the findings the priority of Children's Services was to establish a strong and consistent leadership team. Ms Ghislaine Tait, Head Teacher of Moray Primary School had been appointed acting Head Teacher.

Other actions had included:-

- within the school the Principal Teacher and the Early Years Officer have been given additional temporary responsibility arrangements as Acting Depute Headteacher and Acting Senior Early Years Officer respectively with their new remits clearly focussed on the development areas identified in the inspection.
- to further increase the capacity of the Senior Leadership Team to address the improvements required, the Service and School Improvement Team had temporary seconded a centrally based education officer to provide additional support. This would give quality and consistency over the course of the improvement journey and was supernumerary to the core staffing allocation.
- the Team Manager had been working with, and would continue to work with, the Head Teacher and the Leadership Team on a direct and intensive basis to effect change. This work had involved regular review and evaluation of the action plan, to challenge and drive the improvements from the authority perspective.
- the Team Manager provided regular updates to the Service Manager and Head of Service on continuous planning and progress to date.

In response to questions from the committee Ms Tait summarised the key priorities of the action plan. This focussed on 3 key areas - raising the attainment in reading, improving staff morale and assessing support needs for each child. Ms Tait highlighted successes thus far, noting that there had been no staff absences since she joined the school.

Members commended the work undertaken by Ms Tait and colleagues within Children's Services but nonetheless expressed concern that the lack of leadership, identified in the inspection, had been able to occur without Children's Services being aware. The Head of Education stated at the time Children's Services was in flux and a number of key staff posts had been unfilled, in particular within the Quality Assurance Unit. The Service had been aware, but unable to react to, early indications that there was an issue within the school. The situation at the school had been much worse than Children's Services had been aware of. The Service recognised the need to learn wider lessons but importantly to provide support to the school and

pupils, which have been significantly affected. The Service had reacted positively since the inspection but was still unpicking the lessons.

Members stated that the pupils, who had been let down, were the priority and sought assurance that they would be able to catch up. In response Ms Tait said that they could although whether all would could not be answered. She explained the work carried out and processes which had been put in place to support progress. This had included additional support assessments, staff meetings, pupil progress meetings. She identified the need for staff to plan – where are the pupils and what pace of teaching is required – and to hold progress meetings 3 times a year to ensure that progress was adequately monitored. There was a need to develop staff capacity. Children's Services had provided an acting principal teacher as an additional member of staff who would work alongside class teachers to observe and give advice to upskill class teachers. In addition Ms Tait anticipated further additional staff joining – for example two additional support needs (ASN) teachers for numeracy and literacy.

She also summarised the work with pupils which had included a literacy recovery programme. The majority of pupils had made good grades and would move from the programme. Those who progressed more slowly would be provided with additional support.

Following a question, the Head of Education expanded on the additional resources put in place to support the teaching staff. He cited the teacher transfer programme which had been in place for approximately 2 years and which allowed teachers to move from or into a given school. In terms of additional support, he reiterated that the acting principal teacher had strong experience of supporting teaching capacity. This resource would be in place for approximately 2 years. In addition the school could tap into resources at Sealock House. Members acknowledged and welcomed the support and additional resources but sought assurance that a similar situation would not arise in other schools. The Head of Education stated that intelligence suggested that the situation would not occur elsewhere. He repeated that resources were in place at the centre, which was not the case as the issues at Slamannan and Heathrigg had developed.

Ms Tait expanded on the teaching resources. Two teachers would join the school to replace 2 who had moved on. This in itself would change the dynamic of the establishment. In regard to class allocation, Ms Tait stated that staff had been asked to identify their preferences. This had allowed her to deploy staff according to their strengths and preferences.

In response to a question on whether support would be in place for those pupils who had been affected and who were now transferring to the secondary stage, Ms Tait stated that support would be in place at Falkirk High School to ensure that the correct support was in place. It was, she considered, an inspiring learning place.

Members asked whether the school had been able to utilise Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to address issues relating to attainment. Ms Tait confirmed that £53k PEF had been used to appoint time from the Family Support Service, buying programmes for literacy recovery, to buy external staff development for teachers. PEF would be used in 2019/2020, to continue inclusion work from the Pupil Support Service, to improve attendance and to support families with home school learning. She intended to build on resources which support learning and teaching. It was not a case of buying in resources, but rather what was important was how the staff teach and how resources are used.

Members repeated that it was regrettable that the issues within the school had not been picked up earlier by the centre. Lessons would need to be learned and a repeat elsewhere must be avoided. The Head of Education stated that the Service was committed to learning the lessons. Members asked that, after the conclusion of the inspection follow-up, a progress report is brought back to committee.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the findings of Education Scotland's inspection of Slamannan Primary School and Heathrigg Nursery and associated action plan, and**
- (2) that the Director of Children's Services will monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement contained in the inspection report and report back to the committee.**

Councillor Reid rejoined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.