

The background of the slide features the Falkirk Council Coat of Arms. It is a shield divided into four quarters. The top-left quarter shows a saltire (X-shaped cross) on a blue field. The top-right quarter shows a stag's head facing left on a red field. The bottom-left quarter shows a three-masted sailing ship on a blue field. The bottom-right quarter shows a crowned eagle with wings spread on a red field. Above the shield is a crown with four fleurs-de-lis. A ribbon scrolls across the bottom of the shield with the motto 'A'NE FOR A' in white capital letters.

Agenda Item 7

Gaelic Medium Education in Falkirk Schools

Falkirk Council

Title: Gaelic Medium Education in Falkirk Schools
Meeting: Education, Children and Young People Executive
Date: 21 March 2023
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update regarding Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Falkirk and to inform members of our further plans for the development of GME in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 1.2 This proposal, if approved, will assist the service in meeting the Council Plan priority "Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities".

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to agree:-

- (1) note the contents of this report:**
- (2) agree the developments as set out in paragraph 5.2 and 5.3; and**
- (3) agree, that should recommendation (2) above be agreed, that the Director of Children's Service provide a further report to the Education, Children and Young People Executive Committee.**

3. Climate Change Implications

- 3.1 The recommended decisions in themselves do not give rise to any material implications for the Council's climate change targets and obligations.

However, the Council's approach to delivering Best Value and implementing the recommendations set out in the Best Value Assurance Report will impact on the ability of the Council to deploy resources in support of its climate change ambitions and targets.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on education authorities to promote and support GME and Gaelic Learner Education. Statutory guidance stipulates the process authorities must implement to both promote as well as create provision to support the development of Gaelic language and education.

Falkirk was selected by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in September 2022 as an authority area to develop GME. This was following on from our parental engagement survey in 2019 to all parents with 3 years olds, which the results were outlined in our previous report in January 2020. Due to COVID 19, the further engagement events did not take place as planned.

- 4.2. As part of the development, we worked in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant to deliver a Gaelic Medium Education parents information session. This took place online in January 2023. The event was open to all parents to give further information on what GME is, what Falkirk currently offers and what support nationally is available to parents. Parents were also informed of the legislation and application process for GME. 8 members of the public attended the meeting and to date no applications for GME have been made for August 2023. Further engagement with parents is required.

5. Considerations

- 5.1 It is proposed that a further survey with parents of 3 and 4 year olds is conducted to establish if there would be demand for local GME in the Falkirk area commencing either August 2024 or August 2025.
- 5.2 Following that consultation if 5 or more parents express interest in their child accessing GME in P1 from August 2024, we will work closely with the parents, Comann nam Pàrant and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to finalise the application process, as stipulated in the statutory guidance.
- 5.3 Once the application has been completed, we will work with Scottish Government to access capital funds to develop a GME unit within an existing primary school and access funds to support the recruitment of a Gaelic primary teacher.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 If the proposal in paragraph 5.1 above is agreed, we would seek the views of parents with 3 year olds to establish demand for GME starting for new primary 1 pupils in Falkirk from August 2024.

7 Implications

Financial

- 7.1 Capital funding is available from the Scottish Government for the development of a unit/ school. The Scottish Government will also fund the surplus costs for a Gaelic teacher in addition to the per capita budget. Further details will be provided in any further report in the event that it is established that there is a demand for a GME provision in Falkirk.

Resources

- 7.2 Bòrd na Gàidhlig would support Falkirk Council to identify teaching resources required which can be accessed through Stòrlann.

Legal

- 7.3 None

Risk

- 7.4 None

Equalities

- 7.5 An EPIA has been started, which will be completed when the parental engagement events have been taken place. The full EPIA will be presented with the follow up paper to committee.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 7.6 None

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 Further engagement with parents / carers to determine the demand for GME. If demand exists, the service will begin the process of opening a GME unit within an existing Falkirk Council Primary School.

Director of Children's Services

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Appendices

None

List of Background Papers:

None