



St Bernadette's PC Meeting re Budget Cuts

Minutes from meeting on 3 December 2018

Attendees: Craig Beer, Marianne Savage, Antoninette Irwin, Debbie O'Donnell, Sarah Clark, Lisa McEleney, Kerry Notarangelo, Clare Kavanagh, Peter Butterly, Edwina Kilpatrick, Bryan Hawthorne, Frances Burke, Michael Gallacher, Katie Sweeney, Joanne Harley, Tony McLaughlin, Vicki Collier, Alan O'Rourke, Lisa Hanley, Lisa Milne, Natalie Masterson, Jenni Jamieson, Kim Ballantine, Lee Ballantine, Evonne Young, Tony Bancewicz, Councillor Gary Bouse

Introduction

Craig thanked everyone for coming along to this meeting that was arranged to discuss the potential budget cuts that have been proposed by Falkirk Council.

There has been a lot of information going around social media which is not quite true based on certain individual's perception on what they have read or have been told. Marianne said that she wanted to separate fact from fiction.

After the facts have been presented there would be a chance to ask questions. If either Craig or Marianne were unable to answer these, Craig said that he was going to a meeting on Tuesday night with Robert Naylor for all the Parent Council Chairs.

Marianne said that all the Headteachers of all the Falkirk Council Primary Schools got together and have made a briefing script to be read out to staff and parents which she then read out at the meeting.

Briefing for staff and parent councils

The Council faces a financial challenge of addressing an estimated budget gap of around £60m from an annual budget of around £360m over the next 5 years. The Council's Executive, within its medium-term financial plan, sets targets for each of the 3 Council Directorates, to address the budget challenge. Children's Services have been tasked to deliver cuts of £5.85m in each of the next 5 financial years – a total of £29.3m.

Following the decision of the Executive to set these targets the Council's Education Executive agreed a cut of £1.8m for the primary school sector and £2.5m for the secondary sector to be delivered from the start of school session 2019/20. Therefore, Headteachers have been instructed by the Director of Children's Services to plan for the cut to be implemented by August 2019. Our share of the cut is £30,400.

Medium Term Financial Plan for St. Bernadette's Primary School

Marianne then put a slide on the smartboard to show what the MTFP – indicative savings for 2019/20. These are the areas of the devolved budget that the Headteachers have been asked to look at for savings.

Ref No	Devolved Teaching Budget	FTE
1	Tackling Disadvantage Allowance (TDA)	0.0
2	Enhanced Provision	0.0
3	Support for Learning	0.3
4	Nursery Teachers	0.4
5	Class Teachers	6.9
6	Approved Discretionary	0.0
7	Music / PE (teachers)	0.6
8	HT	1.0
9	DHT	1.0
10	PT	1.0
	TOTAL TEACHERS	11.2
11	DSM Minimum Management Time	1.5

Ref No	Devolved Support Staff Budget	FTE
12	SFLA Grade B	
13	SFLA Grade D (Block ASN)	
14	SFLA Grade D (Exceptional Hours)	
15	Janitors	
16	Clerical	
	TOTAL SUPPORT STAFF	

Marianne said that these figures were removed as it wasn't appropriate to show them.

Ref No	Other Devolved Budgets	FTE
17	Per Capita	£10,470
18	Supply Teacher Cover	£3,660
19	Staff Development	£1,660
20	School Repairs	£2,000
	TOTAL OTHER	£17,790

Points to note:

- Ref 1 and 2 – don't apply to St. Bernadette's as we don't get either of these.
- Ref 6 – this is for an additional class teacher, not SFLA – this needs to be applied for each year, we haven't but it would be there if needed
- Ref 11 – this is 1 for HT and the other 0.5 is split between DHT and PT
- Ref 17 – works out about £48 per child and this is for everything needed for the school such as pencils, subscriptions and toilet roll
- No teachers will be made redundant but posts may go

Following a discussion at the EYPIP meeting on 29 November 2018, the Headteachers have, as a collective, identified savings totalling 63% of the £1.8m of requesting savings including comprehensive information detailing the associated risks and mitigating factors. Marianne said that the savings included the approved discretionary budget of £300,000 but was unable at this stage to give anymore details as they related directly to people's jobs.

They have also agreed to put forward a proposal to the Chief Executive and the Council to look strategically at a 5-year plan reviewing all aspects of Education with the aim of making transformational changes that will deliver the long-term savings identified. While Headteachers are comfortable with the plan, they welcome parent's ideas and suggestions at this time.

Marianne said that the proposals in place would mean increased workload for the senior leadership teams and other members of staff and it could have an impact on children as they will be losing services of a specific role.

Discussion between all present at the meeting

Marianne and Craig then opened the floor up for any questions.

It was asked what the plan was for the other 37%. Marianne said that they have been told by some Councillors that some of them won't find the 63% acceptable and they may have to look at other services.

It was asked if the Council had set the council tax rates for the year. Marianne said that she has heard that there will be an increase but no decision has yet been made but could be as much as 3% increase as it has been frozen for the past 9 years.

It was asked what's to happen for years 2, 3, 4 and 5. Marianne said that they only found out on 26 October 2018 and the decision was to be made for 19 December so they had to work within these timescales. They need a full 5-year plan going forward.

It was asked about the PT post at St. Bernadette's and whether any saving could be made there. As St. Bernadette's now have over 200 children the minimum senior management leadership is 1 x HT, 1 x DHT and 1 x PT. Marianne said that they have Mrs Black in place until next June and the post has been advertised so there is no saving to be made there.

There was a discussion that if the DHT is spending 3.5 days per week in class, then they are more expensive than a class teacher and the differential in salary could be saved. Marianne said that they have been in this position since September and things have not been taken forward as they should.

It was asked if any consideration has been given to revenue generation from facilities such as the Muga pitch. Marianne said that this wouldn't affect the individual schools but this will hopefully link into the 5-year plan.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Support for Learning Assistants as they have already been cut and the implications of losing any more of these posts would be horrendous. This will put more pressure on the class teachers but Marianne said that in order to bridge the gap it will come back to the leadership team. It was agreed that this would definitely have a negative impact on the children and staff. Craig said that as far as Councillor Meiklejohn is concerned the SFLA will be protected.

Marianne said that they have several parent helper volunteers who come in regularly and they would possibly be looking for more but stressed that they couldn't replace the SFLA.

It was asked if the PEF fund could be used but we are unable to touch that as it comes from the Government and has to be used for specific things.

Next Steps

The plan will be submitted to the Director of Children's Services prior to 19 December and presented to the Education Executive on 29 January 2019. They may accept or reject all or some of what is presented by the Director. Feedback will be received by 6 February 2019. The final decision regarding budget cuts will be taken by the full Council Executive on 27 February 2019. Once the Headteachers have been briefed and instructed by the Director then they will be required to implement the cuts for August 2019.

Marianne said that she is committed to keeping the staff and parents fully informed throughout the process.

Craig and Marianne thanked everyone for coming along to the meeting.