

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 10 November 2016 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: Ms S O'Connor (Acting Chairperson)

Rev A Adams	Sr C Hegarty
Mr D Cargo	Sir Gerry Loughran
Mr J Craig	Dr A McMorran
Mrs M Culbert	Mr R Pollock
Dr M Dynan	

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Collings, Ms L Gardiner, Mr R Gilbert, Ms K Scott and Ms L McCall.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms Á Andrews, Fr T Bartlett, Rev R Herron, Dr I McMorris and Miss R Rainey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the requirement to declare interests where appropriate.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2016

The minutes* (E/11/16/3) of the meeting held on 13 October 2016 were agreed on the proposal of Rev Adams and seconded by Sr Hegarty.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

4.1 IRISH MEDIUM WORKSHOP

The Acting Chair thanked Ms Andrews for facilitating the Irish Medium workshop earlier in the day. A note of the workshop would be provided to the Committee at its next meeting.

4.2 COMMITTEE BUSINESS IN DECEMBER

It was agreed to hold a meeting of the Education Committee on 15 December 2016, prior to the Board meeting, in order to enable consideration to be given to Development Proposals.

4.3 INEQUALITIES WORKING GROUP

The next meeting of the Inequalities Working Group would be held on 13 December 2016 at 2.30 pm.

5. BUDGET STRATEGY – FORWARD PLANNING

Mr Collings summarised progress relating to the savings measures discussed by the Committee at its October meeting. A report was provided on the interim staffing structure for the Music Service.

The Committee noted that a further report on savings measures would be provided to the Committee at its next scheduled meeting. This would provide information on the level of savings already identified.

Action: Report on savings measures to be presented to the Committee on 12 January 2017.

6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

6.1 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

6.2 DEPLOYMENT OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE TO SCHOOLS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Mr Collings said that he had engaged with staff in the Education Directorate and with school principals and other stakeholders in order to inform the review of the School Development Service (SDS). He set the context for the review which took account of the Programme for Government, the EA Strategic Plan, the EA budget, policy / statutory obligations and features of an effective school improvement function. He provided an overview of the budgetary challenges and its impact on staffing within the SDS in recent years. Ms Scott reminded Members of statutory obligations, policies and DE's strategies which determined the work programme of the Service.

Ms Gardiner provided an overview of system focused duties within the SDS. These included areas such as Area Planning, Regional Governor training, training for first time principals and vice principals, teacher induction, PQH and emerging leadership, the Key Stage 2/3 Literacy and Numeracy programme, Shared Education, Irish Medium Education, STEM / CEIAG Continual Professional Development, management of Entitlement Framework audit and support for Area Learning Communities, C2K, North / South DE / DES Programme (eg PEACE IV), Community Planning, the Extended Schools' programme, ESAGS tv and EA tv, AMMA centre, the Education Library Service and the Music Service.

An overview of school focused duties was also provided. These included managing and overseeing support programmes for priority schools, monitoring School Development Planning, target setting and SDDs, attending inspection report back meetings and initiating follow-up actions, scrutinising school performance indicators to identify schools in need of support and possible intervention, providing Assessor support for principal / vice-principal appointments in controlled schools, providing general advice for schools and other stakeholders, supporting project initiatives, supporting the Learning Leaders' strategy and supporting schools with first time / acting principals and beginning teachers / teacher tutors.

In looking to the future, Mr Collings said that the school improvement strategy and the services delivering it should be co-constructed with schools. The strategy would clearly define for schools those services which were universal, targeted or specialist and would provide for a model of delivery where a range of providers could be drawn from a variety of sources including the Education Directorate and schools. The strategy would also seek to provide earlier targeted support and intervention.

The Committee noted that schools in formal intervention were prioritised first by the current SDS for individual school support. Ms Gardiner explained that schools which were found satisfactory or were identified with important areas for improvement were then prioritised, followed by schools with first time / acting principals, then followed by schools under stress. The SDS also sought to build capacity in other schools in support of their self-evaluation and school improvement plans.

Ms Gardiner explained the role of the District Teams within the SDS to monitor school performance, manage the provision of support for priority schools and monitor school development planning, target setting and use of SDDs. She also explained the role of the School Improvement Designated Officer who supported schools in the inspection process and with other issues specific to a school.

Members acknowledged staffing capacity issues within the SDS. They highlighted the importance of the SDS being proactive and being able to provide targeted support to a school at an early stage when the school was initially identified as requiring support. Mr Collings said the intention was to explore different models and formalise structures to deploy support to schools in such circumstances.

A Member referred to the role of the ETI district inspector and the possibility of schools utilising this expertise outside the formal inspection process to provide support and advice. A Member considered that a support model for schools could be developed by the SDS which was similar to the model being designed for special schools. He also said that the EA should seek to bring together the expertise of the SDS and the ETI to create a new support structure. Mr Collings said that EA officers were currently engaging with the ETI to discuss future collaboration and service development.

Members discussed the role of Area Learning Communities and their associated benefits. A Member referred to the model where teaching resources could be shared among schools in a community and said that, in some cases, competing schools could be reticent about sharing these resources.

The Chair of the Board said that she had recently met representatives of the East Belfast Principals' Group. The Group had expressed concerns with regard to the support available to schools from the EA and the proposed organisational structure of the SDS in District Teams. The Group had also indicated that principals across the Region should have more input in designing the new service delivery model of the SDS.

A Member pointed out that the school improvement function also included HR advice and support.

Mr Collings reassured Members that the emerging school improvement strategy and services were being designed in conjunction with principals. He was currently engaging with principals to discuss structures and was aware of their concerns. In a recent round of consultation events, over 300 principals had participated. He said he was also liaising with DE officials in order to create an enabling environment with regard to earmarked funding which could be used to support school improvement.

A Member queried the resource capability of the SDS to review school development plans. She was advised that schools in formal intervention were prioritised along with schools with first time / acting principals and schools in the first year of their school development plan. The Member indicated that guidance should be given to Boards of

Governors in order that they could evaluate the quality of their school development plans. Another Member indicated that guidance in the form of a tool kit should be provided for Governors in all aspects of their work.

A Member said that Boards of Governors were responsible for school development. The school improvement strategy should therefore reflect this and be developed on that basis. Mr Collings agreed and said that the EA was also required to meet statutory, strategic and policy obligations through its school improvement function.

A Member considered that the EA should approach DE to discuss developing a formal mechanism involving DE, ETI and EA to address school improvement issues. Mr Collings confirmed this was being actioned.

The Acting Chair said that a Board Member workshop could be convened to take forward the development of the SDS. It was imperative that officers engaged with school leaderships to discuss areas of concern and to provide clarity on the budgetary challenges facing the EA Block Grant.

The Committee paid tribute to the work carried out by staff in the SDS. A Member said that the Board had a duty of care to the staff in the SDS. The service should be designed to ensure it was realistic, positive and developmental.

***Action:** Director to consider the offer of a Board Member workshop to inform future development of school improvement services, where appropriate.*

6.3 EARLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME REPORT 2015/16

Mrs Scott presented the Induction and Early Professional Development Annual Report for 2015/16* (E/11/16/7.3). The Report gave an overview of support provided to beginning teachers, teachers in the early professional development phase and to teacher tutors.

The Committee noted that the number of beginning teachers securing full time permanent employment in 2015/16 was less than 3% of the total registered, with most newly qualified teachers working as substitute teachers or within short term contracts.

Mrs Scott presented the Report of the Teacher e-Portfolio Working Group for 2015/16* (E/11/16/7.3) which set out outcomes and recommendations of the Working Group on the viability of potential e-portfolio platforms to support teachers' career-long professional learning. The Working Group had taken account of DE's new teacher education strategy, 'Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Development'.

Members noted that the Report supported dissemination of good practice.

7. AREA PLANNING

7.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

7.1.1 Carrickfergus College and Downshire School (to discontinue, facilitating the establishment of a new single non-selective controlled school (1300 pupils) which will initially be on a split site)

Mr Gilbert presented the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.1) which sought to develop a strategic way forward for controlled non-selective schools in Carrickfergus. He advised that

informal consultation had taken place with the Boards of Governors of both schools and both were in agreement with the proposal.

Members expressed concern that the proposal for a split site location initially would mean that the school would incur increasing costs. Mr Gilbert drew attention to the projected deficit position of one of the schools within the ensuing two year period. He outlined accommodation capacity at both sites and said that the possibility of modular accommodation to enable the new school to have a single site could be explored if a Development Proposal was to be approved.

A Member queried whether the Controlled Schools' Support Council had been consulted on this proposal. Mr Gilbert confirmed that informal consultation had taken place within the context of the draft Strategic Area Plan.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Mr Pollock, the Committee agreed to recommend that officers should formally consult on the proposal, as outlined above.

7.1.2 DP 496 - Tullycarnet Primary School (to close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Mr Gilbert presented the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.2) and outlined the discussions that had taken place with the Governors, principal and parents of the school.

On the proposal of Sr Hegarty, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that officers should formally consult on the proposal, as outlined above.

7.1.3 Parkhall Controlled Integrated College (to establish post 16 provision for 130 pupils with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

The Committee had considered this proposal at its meeting on 13 October 2016 and had requested that officers should work with the school in order to present an amended and viable Case for Change.

The Committee considered the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.3). Mr Gilbert drew attention to the amended projected financial plan for the school, as set out in the Case for Change, in the event that the post 16 provision would be progressed.

On the proposal of Dr McMorran, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Authority should publish the Development Proposal and approve the Response* (Appendix 3) for submission to DE.

7.1.4 DP 474 St Colmcille's PS, Carrick (to establish an Irish Medium Nursery Unit)

Mr Gilbert presented the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.4). It was noted that the proposal would not displace pre-school provision in the area.

(Mr Pollock left the meeting temporarily at 3.00 pm.)

On the proposal of Mrs Culbert, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Authority should publish the Development Proposal and approve the Response* (Appendix 1) for submission to DE.

7.1.5 DP 475 An Bradán Feasa (to establish a new Irish Medium Post Primary School in Derry / Londonderry)

Mr Gilbert presented the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.5). He referred to another Development Proposal which was currently being considered by DE for the establishment of an Irish Medium Unit at St Brigid's College, Derry (DP 469). The nearest Irish Medium post primary school was located in Dungiven. He also said that there were four Irish Medium primary schools within the Derry City and Strabane District Council area but there was no Irish Medium post primary school. This meant there was no Irish Medium progression pathway for pupils in the area.

An error in statistical data in the Summary Paper was pointed out.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Authority should publish the Development Proposal and approve the Response* (Appendix 1) for submission to DE.

7.1.6 DP 480 Hazelwood Integrated College (to increase the admission number from 140 to 160 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 850 to 1010)

(Mr Pollock re-entered the meeting at 3.05 pm.)

Mr Gilbert presented the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.6). He said that the school had requested and been granted a temporary variation in admission numbers in recent years. He also advised that the projection in growth in primary school numbers from feeder primary schools in North Belfast was showing that the proposal would not adversely affect other schools in the community and was in line with the draft Strategic Area Plan.

A Member said that he considered that the proposal would impact on schools in the locality.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Sr Hegarty, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Authority should publish the Development Proposal and approve the Response* (Appendix 5) for submission to DE.

7.1.7 DP 482 Lagan College (to increase enrolment from 1200 to 1300 phased over 2 years from September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter, with the admissions number remaining at 200)

Mr Gilbert presented the paper* (E/11/16/8.1.7) and said that the intention of the proposal was to increase the sixth form provision at the school. He referred to the school's historical application and admission numbers as set out in the Case for Change. He also referred to a review carried out in 2015 on post primary provision in East Belfast. The review had concluded that there was sufficient post 16 provision in the area.

A Member queried the consultation process with other schools on this proposal within the East Belfast community. While Appendix 2 provided a report on preliminary consultation, it was noted that schools in the locality would now be formally consulted on the proposal.

A Member requested information on the historical application and admission numbers for Hazelwood Integrated College as was provided for Lagan College.

On the proposal of Mr Pollock, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Authority should publish the Development Proposal and approve the Response* (Appendix 3) for submission to DE which set out the rationale for the EA to not support the proposal.

8.2 DRAFT STRATEGIC AREA PLAN 2017-20 : STRATEGY TO ENGAGE

Five public consultation events were taking place across the Region on the draft Strategic Area Plan 2017-20 to which principals and chairs of Boards of Governors had been invited to attend. Board Members had also been invited to attend along with other sectoral bodies. DE officials would also be attending the various events in order to provide a policy perspective. Mr Gilbert said that a communications plan had been devised on the strategy to engage. The Minister had taken part in a video broadcast on area planning. In addition, a synopsis of the questions asked at the consultation events would be posted on-line subsequent to the events.

Mr Gilbert also outlined forthcoming engagement on the draft Strategic Area Plan with District Councils, the Community Planning Forum, teaching and non-teaching unions, the education advisers of political parties and the NI Parents Forum.

It was agreed that political parties should be informed of the consultation events.

Action: *Inform political parties of the public consultation events on the draft Strategic Area Plan.*

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 15 December 2016.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

* Paper issued with agenda *** Paper tabled