

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 12 April 2018 at 1.00 pm

**PRESENT** Rev R Herron (Chair)

Ms Á Andrews	Dr A McMorran
Mr J Craig	Dr I McMorris
Mrs M Culbert	Mr O McMullan
Mr G Doran	Ms S O'Connor
Dr M Dynan	Mr R Pollock
Sir Gerry Loughran	Miss R Rainey
Mr G Lundy	

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr J Collings, Mrs K Scott, Mr J Unsworth, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr T Matchett. Mr S Sands attended in his role as Board Room Apprentice.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Rev A Adams, Mr D Cargo and Mrs B Hale.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2018**

The Board, at its meeting on 29 March 2018, had approved the minutes of the Education Committee held on 8 March with the exception of 8.2 relating to Belfast Special Schools. This matter had been referred back to the Children and Young People's Services Committee for further consideration. Subject to this provision, the minutes\* (E/4/18/3) of the meeting held on 8 March 2018 were agreed on the proposal of Mr Craig and seconded by Dr Dynan.

**4. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**COMMUNITY BALANCE IN INTEGRATED SCHOOLS (7.2)**

It was noted that a paper giving broader information on local demographics would be presented to the Committee at a future date.

**5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

**5.1 ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATION PARTNERS**

The Chair advised that representatives from the Controlled Schools' Support Council would be attending the Committee meeting on 10 May and representatives from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education would be attending the Committee meeting on 14 June.

## **5.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 523 - DRUMLINS INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 535 - ROWANDALE INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Mr Collings said that the Board, at its meeting on 29 March 2018, had considered the two development proposals giving due regard to PEG's revised position on both proposals in line with DE's guidance around the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated and Irish medium education in the pre-school sector. He outlined the concerns raised by Members at the Board meeting around the serious impact of the two proposals on other sectors in the area, particularly the voluntary sector. He said that Members had considered that DE, in its recent correspondence on the pre-school sector, was effectively pre-empting its decision in respect of these proposals irrespective of the Case for Change and without due regard to the rights and responsibilities of all sectors. Members had also been concerned at the Board meeting that DE's guidance on fulfilling the statutory duties to support, encourage and facilitate Integrated and Irish Medium Education as applied to pre-school could lead to the sectorisation of Early Years which traditionally had been non sectoral.

Mr Collings said that the Board, at its meeting on 29 March 2018, had agreed to pause in respect of commenting on the two proposals and to undertake an exercise, in conjunction with CSSC, to develop a strategy for controlled pre-school provision across the region. The Board had also agreed to invite a DE official to attend a meeting of the Board to discuss this matter further.

Mr Collings said that he had discussed this issue with the Head of Legal Services following the Board meeting to convey the views of Board Members. The legal advice was that EA should submit the development proposals to DE, together with its views on the two proposals, in line with Article 79(1)(b) of The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989; the EA view being that it did not support the two development proposals. The final decision with regard to approving or not approving development proposals resided with DE.

Mr Collings said that DE had advised that there was no inconsistency between applying the statutory duty to support and facilitate Integrated and Irish medium education in the pre-school sector with the principles set out in Learning to Learn Policy.

Members acknowledged PEG's role in the area planning process.

Members commented that nursery provision was non-sectoral. Some Members expressed serious concerns that DE's policy was asking the EA to favour Integrated and Irish medium education over other sectors.

A Member said that legislation was already in place, the issue had arisen because clarification had been sought.

It was pointed out that the 1989 Order set out the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated and Irish medium education and give regard to demonstrated parental demand. Mrs Scott advised that PEG had revised its position to support the two proposals on this basis and had added in a qualification to highlight its strong concerns with regard to the potential impact of the additional provisions on existing funded pre-school provision in the area.

A Member referred to the relevance of the Drumragh Judgment on the matter.

The Chair of the Board acknowledged that the Committee would not achieve consensus with regard to the two development proposals.

Mr McMullan proposed that the Board should forward PEG's comments on the two development proposals to DE along with EA's expression of support for both proposals. This proposal was seconded by Dr McMorris.

Mr Craig proposed that the Board should again consider the two development proposals along with a paper setting out options available to the Board to take this matter forward. This proposal was seconded by Sir Gerry Loughran.

Mr McMullan withdrew his proposal.

The Committee agreed that the Board should again consider the two development proposals along with a paper setting out options available to the Board to take this matter forward.

**Action:** *DP Nos 523 and 535 to be presented to the Board at its meeting on 26 April 2018 for consideration along with a paper setting out options available to Members.*

## **6. MUSIC SERVICE - NOTE OF WORKSHOP HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2018**

Mrs Scott presented the note\* (E/4/18/6) of the workshop held on 26 February 2018. She said that Members, at that workshop, had agreed the next steps in the process to restructure the Music Service. The intention was that further proposals would be presented to the Committee in due course on a consistent charging policy and staff contracts and that a refined options paper for an enduring Music Service would be brought forward.

A Member referred to proposals to be presented in respect of a charging policy for the Music Service. He drew attention to the variances in charges across the legacy organisations and asked if consideration could be given to a transition period to allow for a phased approach to the consistent application of charges across the region. This was agreed.

A Member considered that it would be prudent for officers to engage more broadly with Music stakeholders in advance of bringing forward a refined options paper for an enduring Music Service. Mrs Scott took this on board. She outlined engagement that had taken place with stakeholders in recent months.

A Member received confirmation that the proposals being taken forward for an enduring Music Service had been rural proofed.

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed the note of the workshop which set out proposals for a staged review of the Music Service.

**Action:** *Members' comments to be taken on board prior to presenting further proposals.*

## **7. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **C2K EDUCATION NETWORK**

*Mr Sands declared an interest in this item and left the meeting.*

The Committee noted that the current C2K Education Network service was approaching the end of year 6 of operation and that plans were advancing to address the requirement for an additional one year contract extension. This was in addition to the two year extension period up to 31 March 2019 and would provide continuity of the Education Network (ni) service for all grant

aided schools up to 31 March 2020. The rationale for the extension was outlined in the paper\* (E/4/18/7.1).

The Committee noted the timeline to support Lot 8 activities relating to the procurement of a replacement C2k service as set out in the paper. The timeline commenced in February 2018 and was scheduled to conclude by February 2020.

In a presentation\*\*, Mr Matchett outlined the activities within the Lot 8 timeline. This involved the stages to develop and approve a full business case and the consultation process with education stakeholders and schools. He advised that a Project Board had been established comprising key educational stakeholders and would meet on a monthly basis. He referred to various work streams which were being taken forward by the project team. He said that progress reports would be presented to the Committee.

In response to the Chair, Mr Matchett confirmed that it was intended that the new service would cover a five year period, commencing in 2020, with provision for an extension of two years.

A Member queried the mechanism by which schools had been selected for consultation. Mr Matchett said that 30 schools had been selected across all sectors and school types. However, all schools would have the facility to engage in the consultation through an online survey. In response to the Member, Mr Matchett undertook to share the list of schools taking part in the consultation with the Committee.

*Mr McMullan left the meeting temporarily at 2.30 pm.*

Some Members referred to the planned consultation period with schools between April and June. They considered the period April to June was sufficiently challenging in schools that it might impact on schools' engagement in the exercise. In order to secure valuable feedback, they urged that officers would engage with schools sensitively. Mr Matchett outlined the method of engagement with all categories of stakeholders and the approach to be taken with schools based on previous engagement.

A Member asked that information would be provided to the Committee on schools which opted not to take part in the consultation. It was agreed that this information would be provided to the Committee in conjunction with a future report on the outcome of consultation with schools.

*Ms O'Connor left the meeting at 2.40 pm.*

Members discussed the quantum of a budget allocation for a new contract whilst acknowledging its scope would be increased on account of the inclusion of nursery schools in the contract. Mr Collings referred to the £17.7m savings projected over the two year extension period of the current contract. He also referred to EA and C2K's engagement in the Public Sector Shared Network (PSSN) replacement project and the need to reflect on the deliverability of this network across the public sector from a value for money perspective. It was noted that the preferred bidder for the PSSN replacement project was due to be announced at the end of May 2018.

A Member said that it was important to communicate with schools on those areas which could not be facilitated within the contract on account of financial considerations. Mr Matchett said that the contract could facilitate optional areas and thus allow opportunity for provision within the life time of the contract.

*Mr McMullan and Mr Sands re-entered the meeting at 2.45 pm.*

**Action:** Committee to receive the list of schools taking part in the consultation for a new service.

## **8. AREA PLANNING**

### **8.1 NURSERY UNIT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL REQUESTS ATTACHED TO A CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL THAT DID NOT PROCEED OR WERE NOT APPROVED**

The Committee noted a paper\* (E/4/18/8.1) advising that 13 nursery unit development proposal requests had been received in the last 18 months. Of this number, 3 had been included in the 2018/19 annual action plan, 3 were under consideration by officers, 6 had not progressed as there was no unmet need in the area and one formal written request was awaited from the school.

*Ms O'Connor re-entered the meeting at 2.50 pm.*

### **8.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 547 - ASHFIELD BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL**

*Dr McMorran declared an interest in this development proposal.*

Proposal to increase its enrolment number from 600 to 750 with an annual phased increase with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/4/18/8.2) for publication and provided a summary of key areas for the Committee's consideration including that, in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the EA had undertaken formal consultation with the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change. This included the rationale for the proposal, the sustainability of the school, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and two responses received to the consultation process. Members considered the draft EA response to the proposal for submission to DE as set out in the Case for Change.

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

### **8.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 545 - BELFAST BOYS' MODEL SCHOOL**

Proposal to increase its admissions number from 151 to 200 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 905 to 1250 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/4/18/8.3) for publication and provided a summary of key areas for the Committee's consideration including that, in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the EA had undertaken formal consultation with the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change. This included the rationale for the proposal, the sustainability of the school and the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality. It noted that no responses had been received to the consultation process. Members considered the draft EA response to the proposal for submission to DE as set out in the Case for Change.

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Mr Craig, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

#### **8.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 546 - BELFAST MODEL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

Proposal to increase its admissions number from 160 to 200 with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 950 to 1250 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/4/18/8.4) for publication and provided a summary of key areas for the Committee's consideration including that, in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the EA had undertaken formal consultation with the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change. This included the rationale for the proposal, the sustainability of the school and the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality. It noted the response received from the Controlled Schools' Support Council and that no responses had been received from schools to the consultation process. Members considered the draft EA response to the proposal for submission to DE as set out in the Case for Change.

On the proposal of Dr McMorrán, seconded by Miss Rainey, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

#### **8.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS - SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES**

The Committee noted that DE had approved the following Development Proposals as set out in the paper\* (E/3/18/8.6):

- DP 508 - Lismore Comprehensive School (to establish two General Learning Support Centres (LSCs), one at Key Stage 3 and one at Key Stage 4, and an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Centre (ASD) for Key Stages 3/4 with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 515 - Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche (to establish a statutory nursery unit to provide 26 part time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DR 517 - Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir (to increase admissions and enrolment numbers from 21 to 26 and 145 to 182 respectively with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 537 - Gaelscoil Bheann Mhadagáin (to increase its admissions and enrolment numbers from 21 to 26 and 145 to 182 respectively with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)

#### **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 10 May 2018.

The meeting ended at 2.52 pm.

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**CHAIRPERSON**

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**DATE**

\* Paper issued with agenda

\*\* Paper tabled