

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 10.30 AM IN ANTRIM BOARD CENTRE**

**1. PRESENT**

Mrs P Carville  
Dr M Dynan

Sir Gerry Loughran  
Ms S O'Connor

**2. IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr G Boyd, Mr J Collings, Mrs K Scott, Mr D Anderson, Ms P Woods and Mr C McNickle.  
Ms A Galway, Principal, Currie Primary School, Belfast.

**3. OFFICE OF CHAIR**

Mr Boyd informed Members that, in the absence of the Community Use of Schools Committee Chair, it was up to Members present to elect a Member of the Committee to chair the meeting. Mr Boyd asked for nominations.

Mrs Carville proposed Ms O'Connor and this was seconded by Dr Dynan.

As there were no other nominations, Ms O'Connor took the Chair. On behalf of the Board, Ms O'Connor expressed sympathy to the family of Kayden Fleck who had died recently.

**4. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Mrs M Culbert, Sr C Hegarty and Mr E Jardine.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**6. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2017**

The minutes\* (CUOS/2/18/3) of the meeting held on 12 October 2017 were agreed on the proposal of Dr Dynan and seconded by Ms O'Connor. Members noted that two separate projects referenced in the minutes were ongoing, namely, the recruitment of an Education Officer and the delivery of the Department for Communities and Sport NI Pilot Project. It was confirmed that a number of case studies on the community use of schools had been broadcast on EA tv to showcase good practice.

**7. COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS – CASE STUDY CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ms O'Connor welcomed Ms A Galway to the meeting.

*Sir Gerry Loughran entered the meeting at 10.40 am.*

Ms Galway informed Members that Currie Primary School shared the former Mountcollyer High School building with the EA and, following the relocation of the teacher resource centre to

Fortwilliam in 2010, the school had benefitted from a number of additional rooms including a speech and language unit, an intensive support class, a nurture room, a parents room, a crèche room and playgroup facility.

The Committee heard that the school, which is located on an interface, had developed a positive working relationship with the neighbouring Holy Family Primary School. Parents, children and staff from both communities had worked together on shared activities to promote improvements in educational attainment, mental health and reconciliation outcomes.

The Committee noted that, in November 2017, the Department for Communities had conducted a feasibility study and permission had been sought to develop the remaining store rooms in Mountcollyer into a community resource. Ms Galway stated that, subject to the completion of capital works, she hoped to have a full programme available for North Belfast families by September 2018 to include a wraparound provision, a study hub, a four tiered support programme for parents, and a community hub with support services under one roof. Ms Galway highlighted that these provisions would enable Health and Education professionals to work together to deliver lifelong learning opportunities. Further opportunities were noted including the potential for social enterprises and room hire.

A Member enquired about Currie Primary School's relationship with post primary schools in the area and Ms Galway confirmed that good working relationships existed with the local schools, including Belfast Boys' Model School, Belfast Model School for Girls and Hazelwood College. A Member highlighted the importance of the school's relationship with its Board of Governors and Ms Galway stated that the Board of Governors was supportive of the project.

A Member noted that the North Belfast Partnership had ended in February 2017 and queried whether this had affected the school's ability to work in partnership with other schools in North Belfast. Ms Galway stated that the school's project was self-motivated and she referenced other proactive initiatives in the area such as the North Belfast SENCO forum.

The Acting Chair thanked Ms Galway for her presentation and welcomed the invitation to hold the next meeting of the Committee at Currie Primary School. Ms Galway left the meeting and the Committee paid tribute to her efforts to secure funding. The Committee also considered the project in light of the overall budgetary pressures relating to the provision of statutory and non-statutory services. A Member expressed the view that, despite such budgetary pressures, innovation to improve educational outcomes should not be stymied. A discussion ensued on the role of primary schools in local communities and a Member referenced the work of the Department of Finance's Innovation Lab, highlighting that it focused on collaboration to respond to challenges where effective service provision had proved most difficult. The Committee discussed the merits of this collaborative format as a suitable model to frame the thinking around the different roles for schools in the community. It was also noted that this matter should be included on the agenda for the Transformation Programme Board Members' Sub-Group.

**Action:** *Next meeting of the Community use of Schools Committee to be held at Currie Primary School. Officers to meet to consider the format for a workshop on the different roles for schools in the community and to bring this matter to the Transformation Programme Board Members' Sub-Group.*

## **8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **8.1 TREATMENT OF ACCUMULATED REVENUE BY SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE TERMS OF LMS (6.1)**

Mr Anderson provided a discussion paper\* (CUOS/2/18/4.1) on the control and use of private school funds. The Committee considered the legal status of Private School Funds as per the provisions of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. It was noted that a policy statement was required to be in place before a charge could be made and that, when levying charges, schools should ensure that the charge for the specified education purpose did not exceed the actual cost. In light of this, the Committee considered how a school could accumulate a surplus if contributions to a specific purpose, such as a school minibus, should not exceed the defined cost.

The Committee noted that, when requests for funds were made by schools, there was no obligation for parents to make any contributions and pupils should not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents had made a contribution. Mr Anderson outlined various forms of donation income including gifts/donations, benefactions, bequests and legacies and it was noted that whilst private school funds did not form part of the EA's annual accounts they should be disclosed in the school's annual report and accounts.

The Committee considered the income generated from community use and charging for school facilities and it was noted that Article 140 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 enabled schools to make their facilities available for use by the community. Mr Anderson referred to a toolkit which was issued by the Department of Education in 2014. The Committee noted from this guidance that the community use of the school should not be subsidised from the LMS budget and it was further noted that schools should charge for the community use on the basis of full cost recovery. Mr Anderson referred to advice as set out in the Financial Manual for LMS schools which stated that all income from the use of school premises must be credited to the school's LMS budget and therefore be used in line with existing LMS rules. This would preclude unauthorised capital expenditure or local maintenance outside the extant contract. Mr Anderson highlighted existing guidance in other jurisdictions such as Kent Council's Voluntary Fund Guidance which could inform the drafting of guidance on this matter.

The Acting Chair thanked Mr Anderson for his presentation. The Committee considered the issue of auditing Private School Funds and noted that this was the responsibility of Boards of Governors. It was further noted that when private funds were held under the auspices of a PTA then that PTA must be listed as a registered charity and therefore would be required to report annually to the Charity Commission on its finances, resources and activities.

Members said that there was no evidence of mis-management of Private School Funds; however, it was imperative that private finances should be managed appropriately. They also supported the idea of empowering schools to use Private School Funds for educational outcomes.

A distinction was made between funds raised from the community use of the school and Private School Funds and Members agreed that clarity was required around the use of private funds and the safeguarding of public funds. Members wished to emphasise that schools should not in any way be discouraged from holding Private School Funds or from encouraging community use of school premises and that there should be no suggestion that the EA was in any way seeking to take control over Private School Funds. Officers

considered that comprehensive guidance would be welcome and would provide greater clarity to schools over compliance with the correct processes.

**Action:** Officers to draft comprehensive guidance for all schools on the management and control of Private School Funds.

## **8.2 TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR TEACHING AND NON TEACHING STAFF WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (6.2)**

Ms Woods updated the Committee on training for teaching and non-teaching staff who worked with children with special educational needs. Ms Woods confirmed that a range of courses relating to safety had been made available to staff including: an introduction to planning for effective behaviour management; reasonable force/safe handling; risk assessment, risk management and positive handling plans; positive behaviour management; solution circle training; and team teach.

## **8.3 FINAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY CAMPUS (6.1)**

Mr Collings updated the Committee on considerations around the Finaghy Primary School Campus proposals. He said that the EA was not in a position to grant permission for the school's request for an additional community building, including the establishment of a company limited by guarantee to oversee a community facility permission as the project was not within the parameters of CUOS guidance and indeed legal advice.

The Committee noted that officers would continue to develop a framework to support arrangements to facilitate community use of schools.

A Member expressed concern that the decision deflated ambition and the Committee received assurances that work was ongoing with the school to identify how it could utilise its generated revenue for the benefit of the school community.

## **9. PROJECTS FOR APPROVAL**

### **9.1 THE BOOST PROGRAMME AND FOREST SCHOOLS' PROGRAMME**

Mrs Scott presented two projects as outlined in the paper\* (CUOS/2/18/7.1). Mrs Scott informed the Committee that the Public Health Agency had approached the Education Authority to act as a conduit for two projects that would bring added benefits to children and young people.

The Committee noted that £48,000 had been allocated for the delivery of the BOOST programme to improve aspirations and engagement in Rathcoole and Monkstown through a Family Learning Programme. This aimed to enhance parents' capacity to understand and support improvement in their children's literacy and numeracy; improve children's attainment; and strengthen parents and children's relationships with schools.

The Committee noted that £15,000 had been allocated for the delivery of the Forest Schools' Programme to enable teachers and youth leaders to deliver outdoor learning using innovative and inspiration techniques.

On the proposal of Mrs Carville, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should proceed with the projects as outlined in the paper.

## **9.2 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY COUNCIL PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECTS**

Mrs Scott presented three projects as outlined in the paper\* (CUOS/2/18/7.2). Mrs Scott informed the Committee that engagement had commenced with Antrim and Newtownabbey Council to develop funded projects in Whitehouse Primary School (£25,000), Hollybank Primary School (£20,000) and Kings Park Primary School (£20,000). These projects aimed to provide funding for enhanced community engagement and provision of additional resources to include walking trails, outdoor classrooms, poly-tunnels and a feasibility study to explore the possibility of sports pitches. The Committee noted that the EA was not required to fund any aspect, but would be the conduit for the funding to schools.

The Committee noted that the projects were an outworking of Community Planning and a discussion took place on opportunities to work with Councils to develop projects further.

On the proposal of Dr Dynan, seconded by Mrs Carville, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should proceed with the projects as outlined in the paper.

## **10. PROJECTS FOR NOTING**

### **10.1 ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY COUNCIL AND PEACE IV PROJECT**

Mrs Scott presented a paper\* (CUOS/2/18/8.1) and informed the Committee that Antrim and Newtownabbey Council had secured PEACE IV funding of £430,000, and together with a capital investment of £1.17m from the Council, a total of £1.6m had been made available to construct a 3G shared pitch between Antrim Grammar School and Parkhall Integrated College on the site of Antrim Grammar School.

The Committee noted that work was ongoing with the Council to consider a draft licence agreement that would ensure that maintenance costs would be shared.

The Committee noted the paper.

### **10.2 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SPORT NI UPDATE**

Mrs Scott presented a paper\* (CUOS/2/18/8.2) and informed the Committee that discussions had been ongoing with the Department for Communities in relation to the need to adopt a more collaborative approach to the funding of sports facilities throughout Northern Ireland which could utilise the schools' estate.

The Committee noted the revised funding for each project as follows: floodlighting at Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) pitch, Waringstown Primary School, £99,350; MUGA pitch surface upgrade, St Mary's Primary School Pomeroy, £158,925; floodlighting at MUGA pitch, Parkhall Integrated College, £135,000; and refurbishment of a play area, Hillcroft Special School, £23,725.

The Committee noted the paper.

## **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 10 May 2018.

The meeting ended at 12.49 pm.

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Chair

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Date

\*Paper circulated with the agenda