

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 12 January 2017 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chairperson)

Rev A Adams	Sir Gerry Loughran
Mr D Cargo	Dr A McMorrán
Mr J Craig	Ms S O'Connor
Dr M Dynan	Mr R Pollock
Sr C Hegarty	Miss R Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Collings, Ms L Gardiner, Ms K Scott, Mr J Unsworth, Mr M McConkey and Ms L McCall.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms Á Andrews, Mrs M Culbert, Dr I McMorris and Ms N Toman.

The Chair advised that DE had received notification from the Catholic Trustees of Fr T Bartlett's resignation from the Authority.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2016

The minutes* (E/1/17/3) of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 were agreed on the proposal of Sr Hegarty and seconded by Miss Rainey.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

4.1 VISIT OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTITIONERS AND POLICY MAKERS FROM LOS ANGELES

Educational practitioners and policymakers from Los Angeles were visiting Northern Ireland as part of a bilateral exchange to explore best practices in school collaboration, comparative strategies for school improvement and supports for special and inclusive education. Members were invited to an event on 17 January 2017 in Belfast to meet the educational visitors from Los Angeles which would be hosted by the American Consulate General in Belfast.

4.2 TEACHERS' PAY NEGOTIATIONS – UPDATE

Mr Collings provided a report on current industrial actions being taken by the main Teaching Unions in Northern Ireland in relation to teachers' pay. He advised that the Authority had issued guidance to schools on this matter. He also advised that a further

meeting of the Joint Negotiating Council, which negotiated terms and conditions of service for all teachers, was meeting the following day.

A Member received clarification that teachers would engage with the Education Training Inspectorate on follow up inspections during the period of industrial action.

5. BUDGET MONITORING - UPDATE

Mr Collings advised that the review of the School Development Service continued and further voluntary exit applications were being considered. Efficiency savings continued to be examined line by line. He reported that work was ongoing to review implications of decommissioning the STEM module and, as such, this measure would not therefore generate savings in the current financial year and would require further review.

Mr Collings said that Members, at the budget workshop on 24 November 2016, had noted that the projected savings for the Music Service would not be realised. He said that, as a result of actions taken by Members at the budget workshop, efficiency savings in the amount of £300k had been effected. He reminded Members that while work progressed on the Music Service's interim structure, officers were also working on a future service delivery model for Members' consideration.

6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

6.1 INSPECTION

6.1.1 Inspection Findings - September to December 2016

The Committee noted the summary of published inspection findings for September to December 2016, including a breakdown of findings by phase and management type and an analysis of performance of schools which had experienced follow-up inspections where the original inspection had been satisfactory or less than satisfactory.

A Member requested information on the average timeframe for a school to remain in formal intervention. He considered that a report on schools in the formal intervention programme would be a useful tool for Members to understand the issues impacting on schools, the length of time schools remained in formal intervention and the effectiveness of the strategies and supports provided by the School Development Service to assist a school in exiting the programme. Another Member pointed out that changes in the curriculum impacted on the turnaround time for schools to exit the programme.

It was pointed out that the vast majority of schools exited the programme between 18-24 months.

***Action:** Report on schools exiting the formal intervention programme to be provided to the Committee.*

6.1.2 Letter from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) dated 9 December 2016

(Mr Craig declared an interest in this matter.)

The Committee noted the letter* (E/1/17/7.2) setting out the rationale for the changes to the range of inspection models and the areas in which changes would occur. These related to Sustaining Improvement Inspection, the Monitoring Inspection, Full Inspections, and the Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework. It was noted that no change was being made to Follow-up Inspections.

A Member queried the process by which a school would receive a Follow-up inspection when it had been inspected within the framework of the previous criteria. Mrs Gardiner advised that the Follow-up inspection would examine how the school had addressed specific issues identified in the initial inspection. If there was evidence of other areas requiring improvement, as observed in the Follow-up inspection, those areas would be highlighted in the report. She confirmed that the entire Inspection Team was now charged to give regard to care and welfare within the new arrangements.

A Member queried if the Authority had any role within the inspection framework on consistency of inspection findings across schools. Mr Collings said the Authority had no remit in this area. He confirmed that the criteria around how judgements were made within the inspection framework had not changed.

6.1.3 Chief Inspector's Report 2014 - 2016

A Member pointed out that the CYPS Committee, at its meeting earlier in the day, had agreed that the Chief Inspector should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss her Report and strategies to drive improvement forward.

The Committee considered the Chief Inspector's Report* (E/1/17/7.3). Members discussed the role of the ETI and the EA in the inspection process and the relationship between these two bodies. A Member pointed out that the role of the district inspector should be to advise and support as well as monitor schools. Mrs Gardiner clarified the respective roles of the district inspector and School Development Service staff during the inspection process in priority schools. She advised that the role of the School Development Service was defined in the DE policy document 'Every School a Good School'.

Members discussed issues relating to the inconsistency of judgements of district inspectors within the inspection framework and the inconsistent strategic messages being presented by various bodies in terms of the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Members noted the language used in some areas within the Chief Inspector's Report and the manner in which the Report made reference to general statements based on inspection findings taken from a small number of schools in some phases which were not selected in any scientific way. It was pointed out that it would be more helpful if the Report provided year on year comparisons.

It was suggested that the Report should be discussed with the Minister and the Permanent Secretary. The Chair of the Board indicated that the new Permanent Secretary had been invited to attend the Board training day on 23 January 2017 and the matter could be raised on that occasion.

Members discussed the terminology of 'underachievement' and the challenges associated with setting measures and targets for cohorts of pupils which were

unachievable. Concerns were expressed that the curriculum did not provide sufficient flexibility for pupils and that schools faced significant challenges with regard to endeavouring to adhere to the Entitlement Framework at Key Stage 4 and post 16 provision. Members queried their remit to drive forward change with regard to the Entitlement Framework and measurement of underachievement. A Member commented that schools should be given autonomy to deliver the curriculum appropriate to the needs of the children and young people attending their own schools. Mr Collings said that there was currently no evidence base to provide information on the impact of the Entitlement Framework in terms of outcomes for children and young people. He confirmed that he was currently discussing issues relating to the Entitlement Framework and measurement of underachievement with DE colleagues. Mrs Scott commented that the new Permanent Secretary would have a wealth of experience with regard to the interface between schools and the further education sector.

A Member highlighted that the two initiatives on Disseminating Good Practice and the DSC Signature Project on Literacy and Numeracy had made significant and positive contributions to schools. However, both initiatives had been terminated by DE.

A Member pointed out that the Chief Inspector's Report had highlighted challenges in relation to the relatively low quality of STEM teaching in some areas and deficiencies within the EOTAS provision.

It was agreed that Mr Collings would draw up a document which identified the key issues raised by Members in response to the Chief Inspector's Report. This document would be circulated to Members by email in the first instance in order to initiate discussion with the Permanent Secretary on 23 January 2017 and, subsequently, for further development and discussion with DE colleagues.

***Action:** Key issues identified in response to the Chief Inspector's Report to be circulated to Members.*

(During discussion of this item, Miss Rainey left the meeting temporarily at 2.27 pm and re-entered at 2.30 pm.)

6.2 INEQUALITIES WORKING GROUP : PROGRESS REPORT

The note* (E/1/17/7.2) of the workshop held on 13 December 2016 was noted. Members, at the next meeting of the Working Group on 23 January 2017, would give consideration to the submission to the Assembly Committee's Inquiry into Educational Underachievement.

6.3 PROGRESS REPORT FOR DE's PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT BOARD AND GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW MEETING - DECEMBER 2016

Mr Collings presented the report* (E/1/17/7.3) setting out the Education Directorate's 18 objectives which corresponded to DE's 5 corporate aims. The Committee noted that 17 of the 18 objectives were on track for achievement. The remaining objective related to the development and implementation of a professional development strategy for school staff other than teachers. It was noted that current priority was being given to teaching staff.

The Chair advised that an updated progress report would be presented to the Committee each term.

7. IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION – NOTE OF WORKSHOP HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2016

It was agreed that this matter would be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

8. AREA PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Mr McConkey explained that Development Proposals 470, 471 and 472 related to proposals presented by CCMS and were interlinked as part of the area solution. He said that the DPs aligned with the proposals published previously in the Area Plan and as set out within the guidance for the draft Strategic Area Plan 2017-20.

8.1 DP 470 - Anamar Primary School (to close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/1/17/9.1) 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 responses received to the consultation process. Members also considered the comments as set out in the draft EA Response to the Department of Education.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mr Craig, the Committee approved the Response* (Appendix E) for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

8.2 DP 471 St Patrick's Primary School, Crossmaglen (to increase the capacity number from 350 to 476 pupils, this would permit an increase in the admissions number from 50 to 68 pupils with effective from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/1/17/9.2) 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 responses received to the consultation process. Members also considered the comments as set out in the draft EA Response to the Department of Education.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mr Craig, the Committee approved the Response* (Appendix E) for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

8.3 DP 472 Clonalig Primary School (to increase the capacity number from 168 to 203 pupils, this would permit an increase in the admissions number from 24 to 29 pupils with effective from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/1/17/9.3) 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, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and responses received to the consultation process. Members also considered the comments as set out in the draft EA Response to the Department of Education.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mr Craig, the Committee approved the Response* (Appendix E) for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

8.4 Development Proposal – Outcome

The Committee noted the DE letter* (E/1/17/9.1) advising that the Minister had approved the part-time nursery unit (26 places) at Cranmore Integrated Primary School (DP 473).

8.5 Draft Strategic Area Plan 2017-20

Mr McConkey said that the Board, at its meeting on 26 January 2017, would receive an analysis of the responses to the consultation on the draft Strategic Area Plan which had ended on 12 December 2016. He provided a summary of the total responses received to the consultation by school category.

Mr McConkey said that the Board, at its January meeting, would also receive the draft Annual Action Plan for 2017/18. He said that the local area planning groups, comprising representatives from all sectors, were working collaboratively to progress area solutions. In addition, the Strategic Investment Board modelling programme was being used. While this was currently in draft format, officers were reviewing the modelling programme and Queen's University was working on the second element of the programme.

9. COMMUNITY PLANNING

Mr Collings outlined the Authority's obligations to Community Planning as set out in the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014. The statutory partners, including the EA and CCMS, were required to identify long term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of each District Council area. Mr Collings said that each Strategic Partnership would draw up Community Plans and these would be presented to the Committee for endorsement. He presented a letter* (E/1/17/10) which had issued on 14 December 2016 to the Chief Executives of the 11 District Councils attaching a paper on how the EA and CCMS would fulfil their responsibilities and make a full contribution to community planning at Local Strategic Partnership level.

Members noted the proposed representation of EA officers at meetings of Strategic Community Planning Partnerships and recognised the challenges of EA representation at both strategic and local meetings. A Member received confirmation that an EA officer would be identified for the

three remaining District Council Strategic Partnerships. However, it was acknowledged that attendance at the Local Strategic Partnership meetings would remain a challenge. The Chair of the Board said that she had highlighted, at NILGA level, the Authority's capacity issues with regard to meeting the needs and expectations of 11 District Councils at local level. Mr Collings said that EA officers would be required to provide consistency in their approaches to all District Councils.

A Member commented that the EA had a wider statutory remit than CCMS and EA officers should endeavour to be active and proactive at Community Planning meetings in respect of the wide range of services provided by the Authority. Mr Collings confirmed that representation at local level could also be facilitated by officers from the Youth Service and the Operations and Estates Directorate.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 9 February 2017.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

* Paper issued with agenda *** Paper tabled