

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 13 April 2017 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chairperson)

Rev A Adams	Dr I McMorris
Ms Á Andrews	Ms S O'Connor
Dr M Dynan	Mr R Pollock
Sir Gerry Loughran	Miss R Rainey

Mr D Cargo, Mr J Craig, Mrs M Culbert, Mr G Doran, Mr E Jardine, Dr A McMorran, Mr O McMullan and Ms N Toman attended.

The Chair welcomed new and returning political members to the meeting.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr G Boyd, Mr J Collings, Mrs L Gardiner, Mrs K Scott, Mr J Unsworth, Mr T Matchett, Mr M McConkey and Ms L McCall.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

All Board Members had been invited to attend the Education Committee, in particular for consideration of the items relating to area planning and the workshop on the Education and Training Inspectorate. The Committee agreed to take agenda items in the following order.

2. AREA PLANNING

2.1 AREA PLANNING DOCUMENTATION - PUBLICATION

(Dr Dynan declared an interest in a school in the West Belfast area.)

The Board at its meeting on 30 March 2017 had delegated authority to the Education Committee to consider, on its behalf, the issue of publishing the area planning documentation.

Members had received with their agenda the Strategic Area Plan 2017-20, the Annual Action Plan 2017-18, DE letters dated 2 and 20 March 2017, and advice dated 27 March 2017 from the EA Solicitor. Members had subsequently received a letter from the Permanent Secretary dated 10 April 2017. This letter had set out that the Permanent Secretary was satisfied that the current absence of a Minister did not prevent the EA from approving the publication of the Area Plan and the Annual Action Plan. The Permanent Secretary had also stated that he saw no reason why both documents should not be published as soon as possible in order to comply with the decision of the former Minister.

Mr Collings presented a paper* (E/4/17/8.1.1) which summarised key actions and decisions taken to approve the area planning documentation and the consideration given to publishing these documents.

A Member referred to correspondence received recently by a member of the Area Planning Working Group in respect of proposals for increases in admission and enrolment numbers. He queried whether this information was relevant for consideration by the Committee and whether there were any outstanding issues relating to the Annual Action Plan.

Mr McConkey confirmed that there were no proposals to change the agreed Annual Action Plan for 2017/18. The Area Planning Steering Group, at its February meeting, had discussed the ongoing DE review of capacity in all primary schools. As DE had authority to make changes to admission and enrolment numbers without the need for a Development Proposal, it had been agreed not to consider requests for changes to admissions and enrolments in year 1 on account of the current capacity review which was due to be completed by Summer 2017. He confirmed that increases in admissions and enrolments would be considered within the Annual Action Plan for year 2. He believed that the correspondence referred to was in respect of a proposed change to a draft letter that would issue to schools to accompany the area planning documentation. Members of the Area Planning Working Group had been asked to comment on the draft letter.

(Ms Andrews left the meeting temporarily at 1.16 pm.)

A Member, who had been stood down during the election period in March, said that she had some areas that she wished to have clarified in relation to the Annual Action Plan. These areas related to duties around Shared Education and Irish Medium, and consultations in respect of Special Education. It was agreed that the Member would set out the issues in writing to Mr Collings and would receive a full response.

The Chair said that both the Strategic Area Plan and the Annual Action Plan had already been approved by the Board.

(Ms Andrews re-entered the meeting at 1.20 pm.)

Mr McConkey said that CnaG had contributed fully in the area planning process and had agreed the Strategic Plan and the Annual Action Plan. CnaG had indicated that it had further proposals that would be taken forward in year 2.

A Member commented that the documentation should reflect the implications of Brexit. Another Member suggested that the Finance and General Purposes Committee could consider those financial implications and the Education Committee could review the practical out-workings of Brexit. The Chair of the Board said that the Finance and General Purposes Committee could receive an assessment of European funding streams. She said that the Board had already approved the area planning documentation. The Board had a duty to engage with its stakeholders on the Annual Action Plan and in accordance with the agreed area planning cycle. She did not wish to delay engagement any further.

A Member sought and received clarity on an issue raised at the March Committee meeting concerning seeking counsel advice on the appropriateness of publishing the area planning documentation.

A Member said that he regarded the Permanent Secretary's letter of 10 April as a direction for the EA to proceed to publish. On the proposal of Sir Gerry Loughran,

seconded by Dr McMorris, the Committee agreed to publish the Strategic Area Plan 2017-20 and the Annual Action Plan 2017-18.

2.2 COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN PLAN

Mr McConkey presented the communications campaign plan for area planning* (E/4/17/8.1.2) which sought to ensure effective engagement with all stakeholders. The plan set out to ensure that stakeholders understood the consultation process and what was meant by key issues and actions. Mr McConkey said that EA officers had worked with CCMS officers to agree the detail in the plan.

The Committee received specific detail on the engagement which would be undertaken in respect of:

- (i) schools where actions were not being carried forward into 2017/18;
- (ii) schools where sustainability had been identified (programme stream 1);
- (iii) schools which required a development proposal for other reasons (programme stream 2); and
- (iv) all other schools.

Mr McConkey outlined arrangements for engagement with the Area Planning Steering Group, consultation respondents, District Councils, political parties, Trade Unions, and the national / local media.

Members commended the plan and noted the capacity required to manage its implementation.

The Committee agreed to recommend that the plan should be amended to reflect that:

- schools involved in programme stream 2 would receive face to face meetings between EA officers and the principal and chair of the Board of Governors;
- in advance of publication, engagement would take place with the political parties to alert their educational representatives to the key issues and strategic themes;
- as the Annual Action Plan reflected the position at the date of publication, the plan should be flexible to allow for addressing issues during the year, for example pre-school education (which was non-statutory and therefore not addressed within the Sustainable Schools Policy). This flexibility would be detailed in the document; and
- the Strategic Area Plan would give appropriate cognisance to the individuals / groups who had responded to the consultation on proposals in respect of special education provision.

Mr McConkey confirmed that in all cases where a change to current provision would be proposed, a Development Proposal would be carried out which would include full consultation.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee agreed to recommend the adoption of the communications campaign plan relating to area planning, subject to the amendments agreed above.

The Committee noted that the EA website was being developed to support the publication of the Strategic Area Plan 2017-20 and Annual Action Plan 2017-18.

Actions: as set out in the bullet points above.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE – WORKSHOP ON ETI FRAMEWORK

Mr Collings gave a presentation on the processes underpinning the inspection framework.

The Committee received copies of support materials** that had been taken from the ETI website on self-evaluation and inspection guidance.

Members discussed the inspection process, the terminology used in the inspection framework, the consistency of judgements used by district inspectors, the relationship of the ETI with the wider Education community, and significant pressures on school staff and Governors.

Members were of the view that the inspection model should be a school improvement model which would provide for dissemination of good practice. They considered that the process should be supportive, allow for genuine building of relationships between stakeholders and promote pastoral care within schools. They also considered that inspections should form part of a day and daily process. It was highlighted that a school improvement model should incorporate competences, pastoral care, a complaints procedure and inspection outcomes.

It was agreed that the working group, comprising Ms O'Connor, Ms Andrews, Dr McMorrان, Mr Pollock and Miss Rainey in conjunction with Mr Collings, would compile a draft document to share with all Board Members in advance of the April Board meeting.

(During the presentation, Ms Toman left the meeting at 1.48 pm and re-entered at 1.55 pm and Mr Jardine left the meeting at 2.42 pm.)

4. APOLOGY

An apology was received from Sr C Hegarty.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Ms Toman declared an interest in DP 508 (Lismore Comprehensive) as she was a past pupil of the school.

6. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2017

The minutes* (E/2/17/3) of the meeting held on 9 March 2017 were agreed on the proposal of Miss Rainey and seconded by Dr Dynan.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

7.1 MINUTES OF MEETINGS - PROCEDURE FOR PRESENTING MINUTES (3)

Members concurred with the current process whereby committee minutes, incorporating recommendations, would be presented to the subsequent Board meeting for approval. The minutes would also be presented to that committee at its next meeting for consideration of content and accuracy. It was noted that Members could at either stage point out issues of accuracy in the minutes.

7.2 IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOL LEADERS' WORKING GROUP - REPORT (5.1)

The Chair reported that the workshop on Irish medium education would be held on 8 June 2017.

A Member commented that some of the recommendations in the Report had significant resource implications. She queried if the workshop would seek to address those issues given the current financial climate. Mr Collings outlined the focus of the workshop which would incorporate EA's statutory duties for Irish medium education. He also said that he would be presenting proposals to the Committee later in the meeting on the restructuring of the Education Directorate.

7.3 COMMUNITY PLANNING (6)

A Member referred to the importance of ensuring that Community Plans reflected adequately all educational matters. He said that Councils should be requested to present their Plans to the Authority to an agreed timeframe.

A Member acknowledged that effective Community Plans required the input and expertise of all the statutory partners. He requested that, should EA officers be challenged to sustain active participation in this process, this matter would be revisited by the Committee. This was agreed.

***Action:** Report back to Committee where active participation in the Community Planning process becomes challenging.*

8. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Committee agreed to hold its September meeting at the Strule Shared Education Campus.

9. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

9.1 ICT MANAGED SERVICES TO SCHOOLS - LOT 8 PROJECT PROCUREMENT

Mr Collings presented a paper* (E/4/17/6.1) setting out the current arrangements for ICT infrastructure and services to schools through C2k and proposed arrangements for the future procurement of these services. Members were reminded that the five year contract which had commenced in 2012 had been extended for two years from April 2017. From April 2019 a new contract was required to be in place.

Members noted a high level outline* of the three stages of the process (project start up, project initiation and procurement) and a paper* setting out the proposed governance arrangements.

Members raised queries in respect of the contract's capability to equip schools in a rapidly changing technological world, the cost of the C2k contract, monitoring and evaluating C2k services, the expertise of officers to make judgements on schools' needs, the use of ipads in schools, and the proposed governance structure.

Mr Matchett advised that education stakeholders, including key EA officers, identified the specific requirements to ensure that schools continued to have access to suitable, fit for purpose ICT equipment and supports. C2k had developed a Senior User Forum which was held twice every school term for all school leaders. The Forum provided an

opportunity for schools to discuss issues and to have face to face sessions with C2k officers. Minutes were produced which set out the issues raised at the Forum and the associated action points. He said that C2k would shortly commence its annual customer satisfaction survey which was an online tool designed to enable schools to evaluate the service and provide confidential feedback. He also advised that C2k had developed an Innovation Forum. He undertook to provide the productivity report and deliverables from this Forum to the Committee.

Mr Matchett said that C2k officers had not seen evidence of schools disconnecting with the service as a result of the uptake in usage of ipads. He said that ipads were not provided to schools as part of the service; however ipads were facilitated in terms of teaching and learning through the C2k network. He advised that teachers had been provided with refreshed portable devices approximately 18 months ago as part of the contract. As part of the support arrangements, C2k officers would discuss with schools their needs and the types of technologies available to achieve objectives. A Member said that, in designing the needs of a school, consideration would require to be given to the availability of broadband across the Region.

Mr Collings said that while C2k funding had previously been earmarked, it was now incorporated into the EA Block Grant. He said that Members should give consideration to the project oversight arrangements.

(Ms Toman left the meeting temporarily at 3.16 pm.)

A Member commented on the substantial investment in C2k by the former Education and Library Boards and the EA. He considered that Board Members should either sit on the ICT Programme Management Board or that the project oversight arrangements should be allocated to a Committee of the Board.

The Chair pointed out that the project oversight arrangements should take account of other education partners.

On the proposal of Dr McMorris, seconded by Rev Adams, it was agreed to recommend that the project governance arrangements (Lot 8) would be amended to reflect the requirement of the Education Committee to give scrutiny and oversight to the project procurement.

(Ms Toman re-entered the meeting at 3.29 pm.)

Action: Amend project governance arrangements (Lot 8) to reflect the requirement of the Education Committee to give scrutiny and oversight to the project procurement; and provide the productivity report and deliverables of the Innovation Forum to Members.

9.2 RESTRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – NEXT STEPS FOR THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

(Mrs Gardiner, Mrs Scott, Mr Unsworth, Mr McConkey and Mr Matchett withdrew from the meeting. Mr Craig left the meeting at 3.29 pm. Mrs Culbert and Ms Toman left the meeting temporarily at 3.29 pm.)

Mr Collings gave a presentation* on the proposed structure for the School Development Service (SDS) which accompanied a paper* (E/4/17/6.2) setting out the proposals in detail. Members also received a chart** summarising the staffing structure.

Mr Collings said that the interim structure of the SDS had been agreed by the Board in early 2016. He highlighted the role of the SDS, the challenges associated with developing functional areas to offer services that were regional, efficient, consistent and accessible in local contexts. He outlined the process of engagement with stakeholders to develop the proposed model of delivery and structure. He said that staff would be informed of the proposals at the end of April following which there would be a period of further informal and formal consultation. He pointed out that functional leaders and managers would be involved in identifying priorities for inclusion in the 2017/18 Business Plan.

(During the presentation, Ms Toman re-entered the meeting at 3.34 pm and Mrs Culbert re-entered at 3.37 pm. Ms Toman left the meeting at 3.40 pm.)

Mr Collings said that all existing post holders could be accommodated in the new structure. While the structure would provide for promotional opportunities, all posts had been costed within the existing budget. He stated that a communications strategy would be developed which would identify the engagement that would be undertaken with all stakeholders.

Members highlighted the importance of providing clear points of contact for all stakeholders. Mr Collings said that the intention was to have this information with schools to enable the new arrangements to commence in September 2017.

Members raised queries in respect of the District Council configuration, the current staffing level, and staff on Soulbury salary scales. Mr Collings advised that three Assistant Directors would each lead a school improvement team based on distinct geographical localities aligned to District Council boundaries. An outline of the staff within each of these teams was provided. A Member received confirmation that two School Improvement Professionals had been identified to provide sectoral support across the Region. Members urged that neutral names be allocated to the three geographical areas. An outline of the staffing structure under the guidance of the Assistant Director for Regional Development was also provided.

Mr Collings said that the current complement of staff was approximately 133. He outlined advice provided by HR officers in respect of existing NJC and Soulbury staff. He also outlined the arrangements with regard to the application submitted in respect of PEACE IV for Shared Education. The success of this bid would add to the number of officers within the SDS to assist with support to schools in that area. A Member highlighted the potential impact of Brexit on future PEACE IV funding streams.

(During the discussion, Mr McMullan left the meeting at 3.55 pm and Mr Doran left at 3.56 pm.)

A Member emphasised the importance of continuing to engage with schools, including the ETI, on the structure of the SDS and proposed models to deliver services.

Members acknowledged the generic nature of the job description for the post of Assistant Director and suggested that these officers could be rotated within the various teams after a given period of time.

10. COMMUNITY PLANNING

Mr Collings presented the responses* (E/4/17/7.1) to the Community Plans for each of the 11 District Councils. He said that the responses had been drafted in conjunction with CCMS

officers and were consistent with the policy framework within which the EA operated and proposed Programme for Government targets.

Members acknowledged capacity issues to populate local strategic partnerships. They considered that educational representation was necessary to provide assurance on the quality of educational issues as set out in the Community Plan. This matter had also been discussed earlier in the meeting under minute 7.3.

Mr Collings said that officer representation at strategic partnership level would be discussed further with the Committee.

The Chair of the Board referred to the letter to issue to the 11 District Councils to accompany the EA's response to the Community Plan. She said that the Authority should make reference in that letter to the Strategic Area Plan 2017-20 and the Annual Action Plan 2017-18. It was agreed that both these documents would be circulated to each of the 11 District Councils.

A Member received confirmation that the responses would be amended to read "The Education Authority and the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools acknowledge the work and extent of consultation that has informed the draft Community Plans within each of the District Councils."

Action: *The Strategic Area Plan 2017-20 and the Annual Action Plan 2017-18 to be issued to the 11 District Councils to accompany the EA response to their Community Plans.*

11. AREA PLANNING (Continued)

11.1 Development Proposal No 503 - Christian Brothers' School (to facilitate the establishment of a new Catholic 11-19 co-educational post-primary school with an enrolment number of 1000 and admission number of 150 to Year 8 [being in effect an amalgamation of Christian Brothers' School, Corpus Christi College and St Rose's Dominican College], it is proposed that Christian Brothers' School should discontinue with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Development Proposal No 504 - Corpus Christi College (to facilitate the establishment of a new Catholic 11-19 co-educational post-primary school with an enrolment number of 1000 and admission number of 150 to Year 8 [being in effect an amalgamation of Christian Brothers' School, Corpus Christi College and St Rose's Dominican College], it is proposed that Corpus Christi College discontinue with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Development Proposal No 505 - St Rose's Dominican College (to facilitate the establishment of a new Catholic 11-19 co-educational post-primary school with an enrolment number of 1000 and admission number of 150 to Year 8 [being in effect an amalgamation of Christian Brothers' School, Corpus Christi College and St Rose's Dominican College], it is proposed that St Rose's Dominican College discontinue with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Each proposal to be read in conjunction with each other and predicated upon DE approval for Development Proposal No 507 - St Louise's College (minute no 11.2).

Development Proposal No 506 - Proposal to establish a new Catholic 11-19 Co-educational Post Primary School in West Belfast (a new Catholic 11-19 co-educational

post-primary school with an enrolment number of 1000 and admission number of 150 to Year 8 [being in effect an amalgamation of Christian Brothers' School, Corpus Christi College and St Rose's Dominican College] to be established with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)

This proposal is linked to and predicated upon DE approval for Development Proposals Nos 503, 504, 505 and 507.

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/17/8.2.1) 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, sustainability issues and the impact of the proposals on all schools in the locality. It was noted that no responses had been received to the consultation process. Members 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 Rev Adams, the Committee approved the Response* (Appendix D) for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

(Ms Andrews and Mrs Culbert left the meeting at 4.25 pm.)

11.2 Development Proposal No 507 - St Louise's College (to reduce the admission number from 356 to 220 and the enrolment number from 2280 to 1500 and become co-educational with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter)

This proposal is linked to and dependent upon Development Proposals Nos 503, 504, 505 and 506 (minute no 11.1).

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/17/8.2.2) 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 and the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality. It was noted that only one response had been received to the consultation process which was from the Board of Governors and stakeholders of St Louise's College and had set out their support to the proposal. 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 Miss Rainey, the Committee approved the Response* (Appendix D) for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

11.3 Development Proposal No 508 - Lismore Comprehensive (to establish two learning Support Centres with the addition of an Autism Specific Learning Support Centre with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/17/8.2.3) 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. He outlined the consideration given by officers, in conjunction with CCMS, to the location of suitable settings for specialist provision following the Minister's approval to close Drumcree College and to open a Key Stage 3 school on the site of Drumcree College (Development Proposals Nos 428 and 429). This consideration included engagement with parents. Mr McConkey advised that a Learning Support Centre at Key Stages 3 / 4 was not a model preferred by the EA for future delivery of education in terms of integration. He said that the proposal took account of meeting the increasing demand for specific provision in the wider Craigavon area at post primary level.

Members considered the Case for Change. This included the rationale for the proposal, sustainability issues, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and the two responses received to the consultation process which set out objections to the proposal. Mr McConkey highlighted a legal issue which was being considered by the EA Solicitors.

Members also considered the comments as set out in the draft EA Response to the Department of Education.

A Member queried if the new Autism unit would cater for all sections of the community. Mr McConkey advised that places would be offered based on the particular needs of pupils.

It was acknowledged that the closure of the provisions at Drumcree College could attract media attention.

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

11.4 Development Proposal No 474 - St Colmcille's Primary School (to establish a single pre-school Irish medium nursery unit with 26 part-time places at St Colmcille's Primary School, Carrickmore with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

The Committee noted the paper* (E/4/17/8.2.4) advising that the Minister on 2 March 2017 had not approved this Development Proposal as it was deemed that there was already sufficient Irish medium provision in the nursery sector in this area.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 11 May 2017.

The meeting ended at 4.55 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

* Paper issued with agenda *** Paper tabled