

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held on 13 September 2018 at 1.00 pm in Antrim Board Centre

**PRESENT** Rev R Herron (Chair)

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Rev A Adams        | Mr G Lundy      |
| Ms Á Andrews       | Mr N McCausland |
| Mr D Cargo         | Dr A McMorrان   |
| Mr J Craig         | Mr O McMullan   |
| Mrs M Culbert      | Ms S O'Connor   |
| Mr G Doran         | Mr R Pollock    |
| Mrs S Kelly        | Miss R Rainey   |
| Sir Gerry Loughran |                 |

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr J Collings, Mr M Baker, Mrs P Cooney, Mrs K Scott, Mr J Unsworth, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr R Sayers, Mr M McConkey and Mr N Freeburn.

Ms L Mawhinney, Principal of Culnady Primary School, and Mr G McIlwaine, Principal of Ampertaine Primary School attended for part of the meeting.

Ms A Campbell attended in her role as Board Room Apprentice.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Dr M Dynan and Dr I McMorris.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2018**

The minutes\* (E/9/18/3) of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 were agreed on the proposal of Miss Rainey and seconded by Mr Lundy.

**4. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NOS 497, 498 AND 499 - SCOIL AN DROICHID (9.7)**

The Board at its meeting on 9 August 2018 had received a report on the above proposals and had agreed that consultation would recommence on these proposals in September 2018. The Committee noted the position.

**5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 557 - CULNADY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Chair said that the Committee would receive the deputation during the meeting at 2.15 pm.

**6. MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS - BI-ANNUAL TRACKER REPORT**

*Mrs Culbert declared an interest in De La Salle College, Belfast and Mr Lundy declared an interest in St Ronan's College, Lurgan.*

Mr Sayers presented the report\* (FGP/9/18/6.3) setting out the status of controlled and non-controlled major capital works (projects with a value greater than £500k). In response to specific queries, Mr Sayers provided progress reports on certain projects.

Members expressed disappointment with delays in a number of projects. At Members' request, Mr Sayers undertook to refine the document so as to enable Members to track the length of time taken from date of announcement to date of completion.

**Action:** Refine document to enable Members to track the length of time taken from date of announcement to date of completion.

## **7. NI AFFAIRS COMMITTEE - INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION FUNDING IN NORTHERN IRELAND : SUBMISSION**

Miss Bill said that the deadline for submissions to the Inquiry had been extended to 14 September 2018. A report on the structure of the submission document and a high level summary of responses had been provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 4 September. She said that EA's draft submission contained information that had already been taken through Board, Committee and budget workshops. All Members had received a copy of the draft submission earlier in the week for comment and the document now reflected those comments.

The Chair commented that the draft submission was a useful summary document. Members suggested amendments to the document in the style of presenting information. In response to Members' queries, Mr Collings said that officers had engaged with DE on the approach to be taken on both the submissions. DE's submission was a factual high level response. He said that EA's response contained issues raised by school leaders either through school engagement events or at officer level, such as those issues raised at LMS meetings. He said that EA had also engaged with education partners on draft submissions.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Sir Gerry Loughran, the Committee agreed to recommend that, in order to meet the deadline for submissions to the Inquiry, EA's draft submission would be revised to take account of Members' further comments and forwarded in draft to the NI Affairs Committee on 14 September 2018. The final submission would be presented to the Board for approval at its meeting on 27 September 2018.

**Action:** Board to approve final submission at its meeting on 27 September 2018.

## **8. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 557 - CULNADY PRIMARY SCHOOL : DEPUTATION**

Proposal to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr Freeburn provided a background report on Culnady Primary School. This included consideration of options and engagement with the Board of Governors as well as distance to neighbouring schools and rural issues, the educational experiences of the children at the school, and the condition of the accommodation.

The Chair welcomed the deputation to the meeting comprising Ms L Mawhinney, Principal of Culnady Primary School, and Mr G McIlwaine, Principal of Ampertaine Primary School.

Ms Mawhinney and Mr McIlwaine expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address the Committee on behalf of their respective Boards of Governors. Presentations were given outlining the importance of the school within the Culnady community and the consideration given by the Board of Governors of Culnady Primary School to the six criteria within the Sustainable Schools' Policy. On behalf of the two Boards of Governors, the principals requested

the Committee's consideration to a three year plan which sought to take forward a federation of Culnady and Ampertaine Primary Schools, as agreed by both Boards of Governors at a meeting on 5 June 2018, and strengthen rural controlled provision in that area.

A Member received clarification on the views of the two Boards of Governors with regard to arrangements for a federation model.

The Chair thanked the deputation for their presentation and the two principals withdrew from the meeting.

The Committee acknowledged that the two principals had clearly stated that they were attending to represent the views of their respective Boards of Governors. However, it was considered that schools should be advised that, when seeking to address Members at future Board or Committee meetings, representation from the Board of Governors should accompany the principal.

The Development Proposal would be considered later in the meeting (minute 10.2).

*Mr Lundy left the meeting temporarily at 2.54 pm.*

## **9. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **9.1 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE - TIERS 4 AND 5 STRUCTURE AND ROLES**

Mr Baker presented the paper\* (E/9/18/8.1) setting out the organisational structure of the School Development Service (SDS) and the roles and responsibilities of officers at tiers 4 and 5.

*Mr Lundy re-entered the meeting at 2.58 pm. Dr McMorran left the meeting at this time.*

A Member queried the number of School Improvement Professionals (SIPs) that would directly interface with schools. Mr Baker advised that the process to recruit 36 SIPs was taking place and a number of SIPs might be recruited on secondment from schools. The current SDS model of support to schools was to create a sustainable interdependent network of professionals, partnerships and clusters. All SIPs would interface directly with schools to facilitate collaboration and improve capacity in the school system.

The Committee noted the paper.

*Dr McMorran re-entered the meeting at 3.01 pm.*

### **9.2 JCQ GCE EXAM RESULTS - 2018**

The Committee noted CCEA press releases\* (E/9/18/8.2) on pupils' results at GCSE and GCE A Level in 2018 based on provisional figures provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications. The outcomes showed that students in NI continued to make steady improvements in GCSE outcomes with STEM subjects remaining popular. The information also showed continued steady and strong performance by students in GCE A Level examinations with males out-performing females at A\* grade for the first time.

Mrs Cooney said that the results did not capture equivalencies at Key Stages 4, 5 and 6. A more detailed analysis of pupils' results at GCSE and GCE A Level would be presented to the Committee at a later date.

Members paid tribute to pupils' achievements. It was agreed that Mr Collings would write to school leaders to congratulate them on their achievements.

**Actions:** *An analysis of pupils' results at GCSE and GCE A Level to be presented to the Committee at a future meeting; and letter to issue to school leaders to congratulate them on the GCSE and GCE A Level results.*

## 10. AREA PLANNING

### 10.1 INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW ON AREA PLANNING : REPORT DATED MAY 2018

Mrs Scott presented the report\* setting out the scope of the review, the audit objectives, and key findings. The Committee noted that the overall audit opinion was satisfactory. The report had noted that overall there was an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control and that, while some residual risk had been identified, this should not significantly impact on the achievement of objectives. The report had also set out that there was significant evidence of good project control and appropriate involvement of the various levels of governance throughout the completion of the work to develop an Area Plan.

A Member welcomed the findings in the audit report.

A Member highlighted the importance of officers working effectively with District Councils to ensure that EA's Area Plan accurately reflected potential growths in specific geographical areas.

*Mr McMullan left the meeting temporarily at 3.09 pm.*

The Chair of the Board said that she had met NILGA to discuss partnership working and the need to overlay planning information with education needs.

*Mr McMullan re-entered the meeting at 3.11 pm.*

A Member said that District Councils were embarking on a programme of work in respect of planning zones. It was therefore timely that EA officers would actively engage with Council planning officers on education needs. A Member said that, in endeavouring to anticipate future demand, EA should refine its area planning process further to draw distinction between social housing and housing brought forward by a developer.

Mr Collings said EA would be in a better position to provide more robust data in its Strategic Area Plan for the period 2020-2023 as a result of a closer working relationship with District Councils. Mr McConkey advised that EA's lead officer for community planning had taken up post in July 2018. He drew attention to partnership working between the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and District Councils and said that EA would also be able to work with SIB to avail of information in this way. Mrs Scott said that Area Planning Development Officers, in working alongside School Improvement Professionals, would play a key role in community planning through linkages with District Councils.

*Mr McMullan left the meeting at 3.25 pm.*

**Action:** *EA's area planning process to be refined (to be incorporated into the review of the process to be taken forward in preparation for the next three year strategic plan - as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2018).*

### 10.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 557 - CULNADY PRIMARY SCHOOL (Continued)

Proposal to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/9/18/9.2) 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, 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, current sustainability of the school, consideration given to rural needs, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality, and responses received to the consultation.

Members discussed the engagement to date on the options in the Case for Change with the local community including the exploration given to the option of federation, the educational experiences of the children and young people at the school, and the regard given to rural issues.

*Mrs Culbert and Mr Doran left the meeting at 3.34 pm and Ms Andrews left the meeting at 3.35 pm.*

On the proposal of Sir Gerry Loughran, seconded by Ms O'Connor, the Committee agreed to publish the Development Proposal.

A Member suggested that EA should engage with the Department for Communities and Mid Ulster District Council with a view to ensuring that assets could be fully utilised for the benefit of the community.

Mr McConkey said that the Governor Training Programme for 2018/19 had been adapted to provide training to Governors on the Sustainable Schools' Policy (SSP). This training would assist Boards of Governors to self-evaluate their own position through the criteria and indicators set out in the SSP.

Mr McConkey reported on a recent meeting involving the Permanent Secretary and officers of EA and Mid Ulster District Council to discuss rural issues.

### **10.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 560 - BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Proposal to increase the admissions number with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number with effect from 1 Sept 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/9/18/9.3) 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. It was noted that the proposal would mean an increase in the school from a six class base to a seven class base.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Mr Craig, the Committee agreed to publish the Development Proposal.

### **10.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 562 - BELLARENA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Proposal to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/9/18/9.4) 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, 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, current sustainability of the school, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and responses received to the consultation. Members also discussed the educational

experiences of the children at the school, the exploration given to various options, and consideration given to rural needs.

Members commented that it was important that DE should define a strategically important school.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed to publish the Development Proposal.

#### **10.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 563 - BRIDGE INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Proposal to establish a single pre-school nursery unit with 26 part time places with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/9/18/9.5) 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 within the consultation process. In light of DE's guidance on the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated education in the pre-school sector, PEG had supported the proposal on the basis of demonstrated parental demand as evidenced by overall enrolment trends for the school and the year 1 intake over a number of years. Members also noted that PEG had expressed strong concerns that the additional provision could potentially displace existing funded pre-school provision in the area. PEG had also stated that the proposal had potential to increase the uptake of younger children into statutory nursery settings with a consequent increased cost on public funds and it had potential to impact on existing cross community provision in respect of the duty to promote, encourage and facilitate.

The Committee noted that in June 2017 DE had not approved Development Proposal No 487 to establish a single part time nursery unit at Bridge Integrated Primary School. DE had stated in June 2017 that while it had been mindful of its duties to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, the data on enrolments and demand had not provided sufficient evidence for a need for additional pre-school provision in the area and consequently the proposal had potential to displace current good quality provision.

Members considered EA's draft response to the proposal as set out in the summary paper. It was recommended that EA would concur with PEG's assessment in light of DE's guidance around the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Integrated education in the pre-school sector and that it would also support PEG's strong concerns around the additional provision.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Miss Rainey, the Committee agreed to recommend the response for submission to DE subject to an amendment that EA noted DE's decision in June 2017 and the terms of DE's decision on the proposal to establish a single part time nursery unit at the school. The Committee agreed to publish the Development Proposal.

## **10.6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NOS 548, 549, 550 AND 552 - CASTLEWELLAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ANNSBOROUGH INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

At its meeting on 9 August 2018, the Board had agreed that the Committee should reconsider the above proposals.

Mrs Scott presented a position paper\* (E/9/18/9.6) and drew attention to a revision in the admission and enrolment numbers for Castlewellan Primary School. She added that the potential size of the proposed new integrated school would impact on the proposal to establish a new learning support centre at the new school.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that EA would not progress Development Proposal Nos 548, 549, 550 and 552 and that officers would commence a process of re-engagement with the two schools to discuss alternative options.

## **10.7 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 571 - ERGANAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Proposal to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/9/18/9.7) which set out the rationale in respect of the request to commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

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

The Committee noted that the following Development Proposals as set out in the paper\* (E/9/18/9.8) had been subject to Judicial Review proceedings:

- DP 312 - Clintyclay Primary School - proposal to close with effect from 31 August 2015 or as soon as possible thereafter. DE had decided not to approve the Development Proposal.
- DP 315 - Clintyclay Primary School - proposal that the school acquires grant maintained integrated status with effect from 1 September 2015 or as soon as possible thereafter. DE had decided not to approve the Development Proposal. DE had stated that should the Board of Governors wish to bring forward a new DP for transformation, a case would need to be made in the context of the recent transformation guidance and with an updated evidence base.

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

The next meeting would be held on 11 October 2018.

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm.

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**CHAIRPERSON**

\* Paper issued with agenda

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**DATE**

\*\* Paper tabled