

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 14 April 2016 at 1.00 pm.

PRESENT: Rev R Herron (Chairperson)

Rev A Adams	Mrs D McDonald
Ms A Andrews	Dr A McMorrان
Fr T Bartlett	Dr I McMorris
Mr D Cargo	Ms S O'Connor
Dr M Dynan	Mr R Pollock
Sr C Hegarty	Miss R Rainey
Sir Gerry Loughran	Ms N Toman

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr G Boyd, Mr J Collings, Mr R Gilbert, Mrs C Duffield, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr M Baker.

Ms A Tohill (DE official) attended for part of the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Duffield to the meeting.

1. APOLOGY

An apology was received from Mrs M Culbert.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Fr Bartlett declared an interest in Development Proposals No 440, 441, 443 and 444.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2016

A Member stated that it was her understanding that the Irish Medium working group referred to in minute 10 had not been established at the invite of the Minister. Also, she believed that the group had not been required to present its report to the Minister within the timeframe indicated. Subject to clarification of these matters, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016 were agreed on the proposal of Dr Dynan and seconded by Miss Rainey.

***Action:** Clarification to be sought on the establishment of the Irish Medium working group and the timeframe for its report to the Minister.*

4. MATTER ARISING

IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION (10)

Members received clarification that the Authority's duties with regard to the Irish Medium sector, as set out within the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Article 89), was to "encourage and facilitate the development of both integrated and Irish Medium education" within the overall

aim of enabling every young person to achieve his or her potential at each stage of his or her development through the provision of a world leading education service.

Mr Collings drew attention to the Board's prior agreement to establish a working group to review inequalities in education as set out in the Equality Commission's Draft Statement. He suggested that if a working group on Irish Medium education was established, it would be important to avoid duplication with the broader inequalities working group and to make efficient use of both Member and officer time. He also advised that the Assistant Senior Education Officer with responsibilities for Irish Medium and he were meeting the Board Member to discuss this and the issues facing the Irish Medium sector. A subsequent report on the outcome of this meeting would be provided to the Committee.

The Chair said that a presentation would be provided to the Committee on Irish Medium in due course.

Actions: *Report on outcome of meeting with Member in respect of issues within the Irish Medium sector to be provided to the Committee; presentation to be provided to the Committee in due course on the Irish Medium sector.*

5. STRULE SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS - MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (5.2)

The Committee agreed to consider this matter as the next item of business to accommodate the attendance of the DE official.

The Chair declared an interest as he served on the Strule Main Campus Phase 2 Project Board and was a member of the Board of Governors of Omagh Academy. Dr Dynan declared an interest as he was a member of the Edmund Rice Schools' Trust (NI) Ltd.

Mr Collings advised that the Memorandum of Agreement* (E/4/16/8.2), now presented, had been amended to take account of issues raised by consultees. It had also been forwarded to the Boards of Governors of the three controlled schools, to CCMS and to the three Trustee groupings for final consideration in order to obtain a final sign off by the end of April.

Ms Tohill said that the Memorandum of Agreement incorporated arrangements for the ownership, governance and management of the Campus. It set out advice on the potential tax, accounting and budgeting implications. She advised that DE would lease to each school authority, through a 990 year lease, its core school site. DE would also lease, through a 999 year lease, the entire site to the company subject to the leases of each school authority. It was noted that lease arrangements for shared facilities within the Campus would be a decision for the company in the context of community use of school premises.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Mr Cargo, the Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the revised Memorandum of Agreement.

Ms Tohill left the meeting.

6. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

COMMITTEE MEETING IN MAY

DE had advised that the Assembly election on 5 May would mean that the political members on the Board would cease to hold office on 5 May until the appointments process was complete by 17 May.

Members discussed the Committee's business to be conducted during May. It was agreed that a meeting would not be held on 12 May and that a Committee meeting could be convened on either, or both 3 and 17 May to accommodate submission dates for particular papers. Mr Gilbert received confirmation that the paper in respect of the PEACE IV programme could be circulated to Committee Members just prior to the meeting on 17 May due to the work required in compiling the final bid for this initiative.

Action: *Convene meetings of Education Committee on either, or both 3 and 17 May in conjunction with other meetings being held on those days.*

7. STAFFING : INTERIM STRUCTURE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mr Collings presented a paper* (E/4/16/6) setting out interim management arrangements for the Education Directorate. The intention was to develop a 'steady state' organisational structure, in consultation with the school community, by January 2017. He acknowledged the challenges with this timeframe which would require consultation with staff, stakeholders and trade unions. He emphasised that the paper did not reflect the final structure; rather it represented an update on interim arrangements which would inform discussions going forward as the Directorate moved to a steady state.

Members referred to services which had not transferred into the new Education Directorate, in particular 'Elective Home Education', 'Extended Schools' and 'Suspension and Expulsions'. It was pointed out that services such as these had been managed as part of a very different structure within the former education and library boards. Elective Home Education and Extended Schools would now fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate as part of the additional supports around mainstream education. A Member considered that Extended Schools should form part of the mainstream structure of schools. He also stated that pupils who elected to be educated at home would also require linkages with schools in respect of registering for school examinations. Mr Collings said that the Education Directorate would work closely with the Children and Young People's Directorate in these areas and others to ensure a smooth transition and to provide supports as appropriate.

Members highlighted the importance of providing clear guidance to schools and Boards of Governors on the Education Directorate staffing structure. They also wished that clear information would be given to schools on the staffing supports within local offices. The Chair stated that the role of communications was critical in providing information to schools on all Directorate structures. Mr Boyd said that the Chair of the Board, along with the newly appointed Senior Management Team, would be engaging in roadshows over the coming months to meet staff. Arrangements would also be made to facilitate meetings with schools to enable principals to meet and discuss issues with the new team. The Authority would also communicate more proactively with the wider community on the new structures. He said that consideration would be given to facilitating fora whereby officers could engage and consult with principals collectively on various matters.

Mr Collings said that the interim structure reflected regional responsibilities and those responsibilities operating at a local level within the School Development Service. A Member emphasised the importance of the Assistant Senior Education Officers giving priority to improving educational outcomes and monitoring school performances. It was also pointed out that the Authority should strive to ensure that schools would not receive any diminution of service during the interim stage.

It was noted that the updated interim structure did not make explicit reference to the Integrated sector. This was noted by Mr Collings.

The Committee noted that the Authority would become responsible for the funding arrangements to the Voluntary Grammar and the Grant Maintained Integrated Sectors with effect from 1 April 2017.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ISSUES

8.1 LEARNING LEADERS – A STRATEGY FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Mr Collings presented DE's strategy document* (E/4/16/7.1) and a paper* setting out the main features of the strategy and the Education Authority's proposed response. The strategy focused on a teacher professional learning framework, development and dissemination of good practice, building professional learning communities, building leadership capacity and engagement with practitioners and other stakeholders.

Mr Gilbert pointed out that the stakeholder group, which had been established to inform development of the strategy, had included officers from the former education and library boards and the Regional Training Unit. Inputs had also been provided by the teaching unions and the teacher training institutions. It was also noted that the references to revised teacher competencies in the document had been developed in conjunction with the GTCNI.

Members welcomed the strategy and its overarching aim which was to empower the teaching profession to strengthen its professionalism and expertise to meet the challenging educational needs of young people. The Committee noted the Authority's responsibilities to provide leadership in the development and implementation of a regional framework for professional learning for teachers and school leaders.

Concerns were expressed in relation to budgetary reductions in recent years and the resulting challenges to support and fund teacher professional development. Members queried the implementation of the strategy, in particular, if any resource would be made available by DE to support the policy commitments contained within the document and the monitoring and evaluation arrangements of those commitments.

A Member queried the role of PQH within the strategy document. It was noted that this area was under review. It was pointed out that the strategy sought to strengthen leadership capacity in schools as well as developing teacher competencies. A Member considered that PRSD should be linked into the strategy. Mr Gilbert stated that discussions were ongoing with GTCNI with regard to PRSD in order to engage teachers in up to date professional development. A Member referred to concerns raised in relation to the inspection process and queried whether this process would be reviewed.

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Dr McMorris, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Authority's responsibilities, as set out in the strategy, should form part of the EA Business Plan and that the implementation plan should take account of the costs to the EA of taking forward the strategy. Mr Collings should, following an analysis of the costings associated with translating the strategy into a programme of work, discuss the matter with DE officials with a view to accessing financial support if available. A report on this matter would be provided to the Committee in due course.

Actions: *The Authority's responsibilities, as set out in the strategy, to be included in the EA Business Plan; implementation plan to take account of the costs to the EA of taking forward the strategy; and Mr Collings to discuss matter with DE officials with a view to accessing financial support if available.*

8.2 INSPECTION OUTCOMES – OVERVIEW FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2016

The Committee noted a report* (E/4/16/7.2) giving the outcome of inspections at 55 schools in the last quarter.

Members discussed the format of the report. It was agreed that future reports on inspection outcomes should provide an analysis of particular outcomes of inspection. For example focus should be given to the quality of teaching and learning and on leadership and management.

Members requested that Mr Collings should approach the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) on the revised wording used to summarise the overall effectiveness of a school following an inspection. Members considered that the language used was not user friendly.

A Member requested that the Committee should receive the latest version of the Chief Inspector's Report in order that Members might be alerted to the key challenges in education and training and the trends emerging in learning experiences in the classroom as raised by the Chief Inspector. This was agreed.

A Member referred to possible linkages between educational underperformance and schools in surplus budgetary positions. It was agreed that a report on this matter would be presented to the Committee in due course.

A Member drew attention to a report considered by the Assembly's Education Committee which had referenced the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments, the ETI and the School Development Service (SDS). He pointed out that currently the three services were disconnected. It was therefore important to ensure that the SDS developed closely in line with the school inspection process.

Mr Collings advised that DE / ETI would be consulting on a revised inspection framework in the Autumn with a view to introducing a new framework in January 2017. It was agreed that Mr Collings should now liaise with DE to relay Members' concerns regarding the language used by ETI to summarise the overall effectiveness of inspection outcomes.

Actions: *Future reports on inspection outcomes to provide an analysis of particular outcomes of inspection; Chief Inspector's Report to be presented to the Committee; report on budgetary position of schools linked into educational underperformance to be presented to the Committee; and Mr Collings to approach DE with regard to the language used in summarising inspection outcomes.*

9. SHARED EDUCATION

DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE SHARED EDUCATION SIGNATURE PROJECT

(Ms Toman left the meeting temporarily at 2.47 pm.)

The Committee noted the progress report* (E/4/16/8.1) setting out a summary of activities as at 31 March 2016. To date, 395 schools were currently taking part in the project through 3 application cohorts. Mr Gilbert advised that the core objective was to enable partnerships to become sustainable. It was noted that a capacity building strategy had been drawn up to provide a framework to support teachers and school leaders to develop the skills, competences and confidence to embed effective practice in Shared Education. This strategy was currently in the process of consultation.

Mr Gilbert reported that the project had been extended for a further year.

(Ms Toman re-entered the meeting at 2.51 pm.)

Members discussed the monitoring data provided for term 1 as set out in the paper. They acknowledged the significant activity which was taking place across the 37 partnerships during this term.

It was noted that the Shared Education Bill was awaiting Royal Assent. Mr Gilbert advised that schools which were not yet participating in shared education activities would soon be approached to become involved.

10. AREA PLANNING

10.1 AREA PLAN

Mr Gilbert said that the Area Plan, formerly developed by the legacy education and library boards, was required to be submitted to DE by 31 July 2016 with the intention that DE would consult on the Area Plan in October.

Mr Gilbert advised that the Authority was responsible, in conjunction with all other sectoral bodies, to develop a collective strategic plan on an area basis for the primary, post-primary and special sectors.

A Member pointed out that the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Committee was still required to give consideration to the matter concerning pre-school provision for children with special educational needs in September. A Member queried the Authority's position on consultation and a possible judicial review with regard to pre-school provision. She asked that this matter be clarified at the CYPS Committee meeting.

The Chair referred to the responsibilities of District Councils to engage with the Authority as a statutory partner in community planning.

Action: *Clarify issue raised by Member at CYPS Committee meeting.*

10.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PATHWAY

Mr Gilbert presented papers* which set out pathways for the consideration of Development Proposals for both the controlled and non-controlled sectors. The papers had been drawn up in consultation with the EA Solicitors.

A Member suggested that the paper should specifically reference engagement with the Controlled Schools' Support Council, in addition to relevant stakeholders, when consulting on proposals for controlled schools. This was agreed.

It was pointed out that the formal consultation process with controlled schools included Boards of Governors, staff employed at schools and the parents of registered pupils. It was agreed that the two pathway papers would be forwarded to key partners, for their information, and posted on the Authority's website.

The Chair said that the Authority had a duty to ensure that the information presented in all Development Proposals was clear and complete prior to their consideration by the Committee. Mr Gilbert said that EA officers liaised with officers from other sectoral bodies to ensure clarity and quality in the information presented in Development Proposals.

Actions: *Share amended pathways paper with key partners and post on website.*

10.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 460 – ALTAYESKEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, DRAPERSTOWN

The Committee considered the draft response* (E/4/16/9). It was pointed out that the potential to spend more than one hour each day in travelling time to and from school was in fact an impact of the closure of the school. Subject to this amendment, the Committee agreed to recommend that the letter be approved, on the proposal of Dr Dynan, seconded by Rev Adams.

(Mrs McDonald left the meeting at 3.25 pm.)

10.4 Development Proposal Outcomes

The Committee noted papers** (E/4/16/9.2 and 9.3) advising that the Minister had approved the following Development Proposals:

- DP 403 Bocombra Primary School (to increase the approved enrolment number from 300 to 320 with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 405 Ballymacash Primary School (to increase the admission number from 54 to 58 and the enrolment number to 406 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 406 Harmony Hill Primary School (to increase the admission number from 84 to 87 and the enrolment number to 609 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 408 Largymore Primary School (to decrease the admission number from 33 to 28 and the enrolment number to 196 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 409 Lisburn Central Primary School (to decrease the enrolment number to 203 with an admission of 29 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 411 West Winds Primary School (to decrease the enrolment number from 232 to 203 and the current admission figure of 29 to remain from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 412 Castle Gardens Primary School (to decrease the admission number from 87 to 58 and the enrolment number to 406 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 413 Londonderry Primary School, Newtownards (to increase the admission number from 53 to 58 and the enrolment number to 406 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 423 Killyleagh Primary School (to transform to controlled integrated status from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 428 Drumcree College (to close from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)

- DP 429 Drumcree College (to open a Key Stage 3 school on the site of Drumcree College, beginning 1 September 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 430 Seagoe Primary School (to increase the approved enrolment from 249 to 313. This would permit the school to increase its admission number from 36 to 45 with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 440 Little Flower Girls' School (to discontinue with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 441 St Patrick's College (to discontinue with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)
- DP 443 Mercy College (to increase the admission number from 110 to 115 and the enrolment number from 650 to 750 and become co-educational from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

(Fr Bartlett declared an interest in Development Proposals 440, 441, 443 and 444.)

A Member acknowledged the challenges associated with transporting pupils to this school.

A Member suggested that the regional transport policy should be reviewed particularly with regard to distances being travelled to schools within the various sectors in the greater Belfast area.

- DP 444 Edmund Rice College (to increase the enrolment number to 750 and the admissions number of 115 to year 8 and become co-educational on 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter)

(Dr Dynan declared an interest in this Development Proposal.)

The Committee noted the papers* advising that the Minister had approved the following Development Proposals with modifications. The Development Proposals would therefore read as follows:

- DP 442 A new Catholic 11-19 co-educational post-primary to be established with an enrolment number of 1300 and an admission number of 195 to year 8 (being in effect an amalgamation of St Patrick's College and Little Flower Girls' School) with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- DP 445 To increase Strangford Integrated College's admission number from 80 to 110 in year 8. This would occur through an annual phased increase in the College's enrolment number up to 670, starting from September 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter.

A Member queried the removal of the sixth form provision from this Development Proposal. Mr Gilbert clarified the mechanism by which modifications were progressed through DE.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Convene meetings on either, or both 3 and 17 May as discussed earlier in the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE