

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in the Dundonald Office on 14 June 2018 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Mr G Lundy
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
Dr M Dynan	Miss R Rainey
Sir Gerry Loughran	

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr G Boyd, Mr J Collings, Mr M Baker, Mr J Unsworth, Mrs K Scott, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr D Canmore.

Representatives attending from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education: Ms R Marshall, Chief Executive, and Ms C Scott-Wills, Senior Development Officer.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Ms Á Andrews 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. ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATION PARTNERS - NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION (NICIE)

The Chair welcomed Ms Marshall and Ms C Scott-Wills to the meeting.

Mr Baker advised that the Memorandum of Understanding and associated protocol between EA and NICIE were currently being developed.

Ms Marshall gave a presentation** on the role, vision and mission of NICIE, the benefits of integrated education, and the support provided to schools to transform to integrated status. Members noted that currently there were 65 integrated schools across the region serving 22,828 pupils. Of this number, 22 schools had transformed to become controlled integrated primary schools and 5 had transformed to become controlled integrated colleges.

Mr Pollock entered the meeting at 2.35 pm.

Discussion ensued on challenges for schools in certain areas to attract pupils from a minority tradition. This was impacted by the demographics of the local area and increasing numbers of pupils designating as 'other' or 'no religion'. While schools could develop integrative practices, Ms Marshall said that due care was given to the location of any integrated school and the mind-set of parents in that area. She said that school communities could contribute to

changing mind-sets, through shared and integrated education, by being more thoughtful about how integrated they made minority communities feel.

A Member queried NICIE's view on current legislation for integrated education and its vision on expansion. Ms Marshall said that NICIE was content with current legislation. It wished to support existing integrated schools and find approaches to attract more families from minority communities in order to help to create a shared future for all. She considered that diversity was an issue for all schools.

Mr Collings said that the Committee's priority was to ensure high quality educational outcomes for all children and young people. He asked about NICIE's approach where tensions could arise in respect of the sustainability of an integrated school and providing good quality educational outcomes. Ms Marshall said that where challenges were apparent, NICIE would look creatively to keep a provision in an area to enable children and young people to have an integrated experience. Care was taken in planning locations and matching leadership and management.

A Member drew attention to the map showing the location of integrated schools. He commented that the majority of integrated schools were located in urban areas.

Ms Marshall asked EA to support development proposals brought forward by NICIE to facilitate further opportunities for parents to access integrated education for their children and to positively respond to schools which sought to transform to integrated status.

A Member said that historically EA had always supported development proposals presented by NICIE. However, in light of DE guidance in recent months on the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated and Irish medium education, as it applied to the pre-school sector, he said that EA would be undertaking a review of the area planning process in order to identify a model to support all schools which would be robust, fair and legally compliant. This work would be brought forward as part of the next three year strategic plan. He considered there was a need for all organisations to work more collaboratively within area planning in order to minimise challenges within the pre-school sector.

The Chair thanked the NICIE representatives for the presentation and their engagement with the Committee. The guests withdrew from the meeting.

Members commented on the very positive engagement with the NICIE representatives.

Members discussed historical educational provision that had been matched to communities, locations where integrated education had been placed, and opportunities for shared education. They considered that, in reviewing the area planning model, a review should also be undertaken on policy and legislation impacting the process. Furthermore, EA should develop its area planning model which would take account of statistical data provided by other agencies in order to plan for growth of new settlements and shifts in demographics. Mr Boyd said that Ms Long was working with NISRA to procure the support of professional statisticians for EA.

DE's guidance on encouraging and facilitating integrated and Irish medium education as it applied to the pre-school sector was discussed. While Members commented that the guidance had created competing priorities, they drew attention to opportunities that could be developed within the area planning model for shared education. This process would require close collaboration with NICIE and CSSC.

Action: EA's area planning model to be developed to incorporate a review of policy and legislation and to take account of statistical analysis provided by other agencies.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2018

The minutes* (E/6/18/3) of the meeting held on 10 May 2018 were agreed on the proposal of Mr Craig and seconded by Mr Lundy.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 523 - DRUMLINS INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 535 - ROWANDALE INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL (5.1)

Mr Collings said that the Board, at its meeting on 31 May 2018, had agreed an approach to DP No 523 and DP No 535. The Board had agreed to issue a letter to DE to accompany its position on the two development proposals. The letter would emphasise the Board's commitment to supporting integrated education. It would state that the Board had been unable to come to a consensus regarding support or otherwise. There had been a broad level of support among Board Members for the particular position but that this had not been unanimous. The letter would also set out the Board's concerns about the way in which DE was applying criteria to pre-school provision that had not been applied before and the method by which the Board's independent view was being challenged. Mr Collings said that the letter was currently in draft form.

In response to specific queries raised at the meeting on 10 May 2018, Mrs Scott said that:

- Information on the historical context of pre-school provision had been provided to the Board at its meeting on 31 May 2018.
- Across NI, there were 338 statutory pre-school settings providing 15,378 funded places and 390 non-statutory pre-school settings providing 8,500 places.
- Information on the composition of pre-school settings was unable to be provided.
- DE had not approved development proposals brought forward by CCMS for nursery provision at Holy Cross Girls' Primary School, Belfast in February 2016 and at St Comcille's Primary School, Carrickmore in March 2017. A report on DE's reasons for not approving each nursery provision was provided. In both cases, EA had supported the development proposals in line with PEG's view.

6. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Mr Collings said that EA had submitted proposals for 14 transformation projects to DE's Transformation Programme Board for consideration. Two of these projects related to the core business of the Education Committee. The first related to building capacity in area planning and would seek to increase the pace of change. The second related to raising standards in schools through the creation of multi-disciplinary teams which would provide targeted support to schools. A Member drew attention to the importance of identifying challenges in schools at an early stage. Mr Collings confirmed that the model of support would be underpinned by a risk analysis which would facilitate early intervention.

Mr Boyd said that DE's Transformation Programme Board was meeting on 3 July 2018 and would consider EA's proposed Wave 1 projects in addition to the Wave 1 projects being brought forward by DE.

A Member received clarity on the arrangements being proposed for EA's transformation project on area planning. He pointed out that due regard should be given to the fact that the statutory responsibilities for area planning resided with EA.

7. MUSIC SERVICE - CHARGING (PHASE 1)

The Committee, at its meeting on 12 April 2018, had agreed proposals which would allow for a phased review of the Music Service. Mrs Scott presented a paper* (E/6/18/7) on common charging and remissions which represented the first phase of the review.

Mr Canmore outlined proposals in respect of charges for instrument hire, orchestra / band / ensemble membership, and school based 'whole class' tuition for the 2018/19 academic year, as set out in the paper. He said that at the Music Service workshop held on 26 February 2018 Members had agreed that, in seeking to establish a common charging and remissions policy across the region, consideration could be given to a phased approach to implementing changes in order to minimise any impact, particularly where the charges of the legacy organisations varied considerably.

Members queried the engagement undertaken with schools and families on the proposals. Mrs Scott said that the proposals in the paper had been circulated to schools to allow for consultation and feedback. Members noted the different approaches adopted by legacy organisations in providing school based 'whole class' tuition. They discussed the impact of this proposal on schools in one area in particular where the charges had not been passed on to parents previously.

Mr Canmore outlined the number of instruments hired out to pupils, the proportion of pupils who received 100% remissions for charges and the proportion who received 50% remissions for charges. A Member asked for a copy of this information. This was agreed.

The rationale for the variance in the remissions policy of one office for instrument hire was queried. Mr Canmore said that it was recommended that the remissions policies for each of the five offices would remain unchanged for the 2018/19 academic year. This phasing would enable a considered approach to the development of an EA Music Service remissions policy for the 2019/20 academic year.

Some Members queried the impact of the proposals on families with low income. A Member queried if equality screening had been undertaken. A Member highlighted that the proposals provided for a consistent charging policy across the region for 2018/19. Furthermore, the remissions policies for each office would remain unchanged in 2018/19.

Mrs Culbert left the meeting temporarily at 4.05 pm and re-entered at 4.06 pm.

Mrs Scott said that it was recommended that the remissions policies would not be altered for 2018/19 as a change could impact on the uptake of pupils and the number of tutors required. The remit of the exercise was to provide for a phased change of the charging and remissions policy within existing resources. Any changes to provision would require the Committee's consideration as part of the wider review of the Music Service (phases 2 and 3).

Mrs Culbert and Mr McMullan wished to record that they would not support proposals that could impact on families with low incomes.

On the proposal of Sir Gerry Loughran, seconded by Mr Cargo, the Committee agreed:

- to harmonise instrument hire fees, orchestra / band / ensemble fees, and the hourly rate for school based 'whole class' tuition in accordance with the rates set out in the paper, effective from 1 September 2018, as part of a process to develop a common and consistent charging policy across EA; and

- that all remissions policies would remain unchanged across the five offices for the 2018/19 academic year to enable an EA Music Service remissions policy to be developed for the 2019/20 academic year.

Action: Member to receive the analysis provided on the number of instruments hired out to pupils and the proportion of pupils who received remissions for charges.

Mrs Culbert left the meeting at 4.11 pm. Mr Lundy left the meeting temporarily at 4.11 pm and re-entered at 4.12 pm.)

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION

Mr Baker presented the report* (E/6/18/8.1) prepared by Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) on the evaluation of the Irish Medium Education bursary scheme for the years 2009-2017. He referred to challenges facing the sector, particularly around staffing and specialist provision and the need to build professional competences and improve practices through supports which were child focused and provided value for money.

Concern was expressed at the deficiencies outlined in the report. It was pointed out that the report should provide for detailed evidence of the impact of the bursaries on the outcomes of children and young people within the sector.

Mr Baker said that School Development Service sectoral support officers would be working with CnaG, and the Irish Medium Leaders' Group, in the coming year to develop plans to support and resource appropriate professional development within the sector.

Members considered a paper* setting out details of bursaries funded within the scheme in 2017/18. They noted that £45,000 had been set aside within the Education Directorate budget in 2018/19 towards the IME bursary scheme.

A Member commented that £45,000 was inadequate to support the needs of the sector. He considered that a five year funding programme should be provided in order to allow for better management planning. It was pointed out that EA received its budget on an annual basis.

The Committee noted that the SDS sectoral support officers would be working with CnaG and the Irish Medium Leaders' Group to identify appropriate areas to support in a business case for 2018/19 which would contribute towards raising standards for children and young people within the sector.

Mr McMullan left the meeting at 4.34 pm.

8.2 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT AND SCHOOL INSPECTION OUTCOMES - SUMMARY REPORT 2017/18

The Committee noted the report* (E/6/28/8.2) summarising the outcomes for schools which had participated in the inspection process in 2017/18. The report also summarised the school improvement support delivered by the School Development Service to individual schools, clusters of schools and to teachers and leaders, and the evidence of the impact of the support provided.

The Committee noted the significant impact of the ongoing industrial action in schools on the inspection process.

9. AREA PLANNING

9.1 ARDS AND NORTH DOWN - STRATEGIC REVIEW OF CONTROLLED NON-SELECTIVE EDUCATION (JUNE 2018)

Mrs Scott presented a paper* (E/6/18/9.1) giving detailed information on controlled post primary provision within the Ards and North Down area. Particular attention was given to enrolment and growth in the area, post primary sustainability issues including actions currently being taken to address underlying issues, and a risk and benefit analysis of options available to provide for a network of long term sustainable schools in the area to meet the needs of the local population

The Committee noted a letter** dated 1 June 2018 from the chair and vice-chair of the Board of Governors and the principal and vice principal of Movilla High School. A Member sought and received clarity on the information contained in the letter relating to pupils' educational outcomes. Mr Boyd provided a report on the financial position of the school, including the approach to be taken with regard to approving the school's financial plan for 2018/19.

Members welcomed the strategic nature of the paper. It was considered that Option 3 provided for long term sustainability and would ensure that controlled non-selective provision would still be available for pupils in a large urban town.

A Member referred to engagement to date with the affected schools and queried opportunities for a broader solution involving Strangford College. Mrs Scott said that she had met the chair and principal of Strangford College to discuss the issue. They had indicated that although they were not prepared to enter into a shared campus solution, they were open to considering a further increase in enrolment.

A Member queried the process to engage the community in consultation. Mrs Scott said that once the Committee had agreed a preferred option on the way forward, officers would engage with the affected schools to share the strategic report and the Committee's preferred option. The outcome of that engagement would be considered and reported to the Committee at its October meeting. It was anticipated that the request to commence pre-publication consultation with affected schools would also be presented to the Committee at that meeting.

Members were cognisant of the number of pupils attending Movilla High School who had special educational needs. It was agreed that clear communication would be provided to parents and schools on the proposals and on any potential arrangements that related to children with special educational needs.

On the proposal of Mr Cargo, seconded by Sir Gerry Loughran, the Committee agreed to recommend that officers should commence engagement with the affected schools in the Ards and North Down area on the preferred option (model 3) as set out in the paper. The Committee further agreed that, in taking forward the review within the area, where appropriate a suite of proposals would be brought forward together.

Action: *Model 3 agreed as the preferred option.*

9.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 565 - BALLYKELLY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to decrease the admission number from 84 to 46 with an annual phased decrease in the enrolment number from 586 to 322 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/6/18/9.2) which set out the rationale for moving forward with a decrease in admissions and enrolment numbers.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper. They acknowledged the importance of 'right sizing' the approved enrolment number to the actual enrolment number.

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that the EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

9.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 566 - LONDONDERRY MODEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to decrease the admission number from 54 to 42 with an annual phased decrease in the enrolment number from 380 to 294 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/6/18/9.3) which set out the rationale for moving forward with a decrease in admissions and enrolment numbers.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper. They acknowledged the importance of 'right sizing' the approved enrolment number to the actual enrolment number.

On the proposal of Sir Gerry Loughran, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that the EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

9.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NOS 548, 549, 550 AND 552

The following proposals to be read in conjunction with each other:

- DP 548 Castlewellan Primary School
- DP 549 Annsborough Integrated Primary School
With a view to facilitating the establishment of a new controlled integrated primary school, the proposals are to discontinue these schools with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter
- DP 550 - Proposal to establish a new controlled integrated primary school with an enrolment number of 86 and admissions number of 12 with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter
- DP 552 - Proposal to establish a new learning support centre to cater for a maximum of 10 pupils at the new controlled integrated primary school in Castlewellan with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/6/18/9.4) 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 two schools, the consideration given to rural needs, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and responses received to the consultation.

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed to publish the Development Proposals.

9.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 554 - PRIORY INTEGRATED COLLEGE

Proposal to increase its enrolment number from 500 to 600 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/6/18/9.5) 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 to the consultation process.

Members considered the draft EA response to the proposal for submission to DE as set out in the Case for Change.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

9.6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 559 - GAELSCOIL NA MBEANN

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

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/6/18/9.6) 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 impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and the two responses received to the consultation. They noted PEG's support for the establishment of the nursery unit. Members considered the draft EA response to the proposal for submission to DE as set out in the Case for Change. A Member commented that the provision would require careful financial management.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

9.7 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NOS 497, 498 AND 499

The following proposals to be read in conjunction with each other:

- DP 497 Scoil an Droichid
Proposal to transfer from voluntary status to controlled status with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter
- DP 498 - Proposal to relocate Scoil an Droichid and Nursery Unit provision with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter
The Ulidia Resource Centre site (Somerset Street, Belfast, BT7 2GS) has been identified in a DE business case as the preferred option for relocation

- DP 499 - Proposal to establish an Autism Specific Disorder (ASD) Class at Key Stage 1 and a General Learning Support Centre (LSC) at Key Stage 2 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/5/18/9.7) 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 proposals.

Members considered the Case for Change. This included the rationale for the proposals, the DE business case and the feasibility study, and the impact of the proposals on schools in the locality. Members noted that all responses received to the consultation had been supportive of the proposals. Mrs Scott outlined the due diligence exercise that had been carried out on the proposed transfer of the school from voluntary to controlled status. This exercise had impacted on the 12 month timeframe for consultation as set out in DE's guidance on publication of development proposals. Mrs Scott referred to an issue involving indemnification. In response to a Member's query, Mr Boyd said that DE was providing indemnity to the school and, in turn, indemnity was provided to EA.

A Member queried proposed arrangements around the preferred option for relocation. Mr Boyd advised that the intention was to provide for a new capital build on the Ulidia site with access via a preferred entrance.

The Committee noted that consideration had been given to the outcome of the due diligence exercise to transfer the school from voluntary to controlled status and that this exercise had impacted on the timeframe as set out in DE's guidance on publication of a development proposal. On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposals.

9.8 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS - SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

The Committee noted that the following Development Proposals as set out in the paper* (E/6/18/9.8) had been approved by DE as follows:

- DP 518 - Oakwood Integrated Primary School
A statutory nursery unit to be established to provide 26 part time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter
- DP 538 - Gaelscoil na hFal
To increase its admissions and enrolment numbers from 41 to 28 and 290 to 196 respectively with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.

10. BOARD ROOM APPRENTICE

The Chair thanked Mr Sands for his contributions to the Committee over the course of the previous year and, on behalf of the Committee, wished him every success in his career.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 13 September 2018.

The meeting ended at 5.22 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

* Paper issued with agenda

** Paper tabled