

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 9 June 2016 at 1.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Rev R Herron (Chairperson)

Rev A Adams	Dr M Dynan
Ms A Andrews	Sr C Hegarty
Fr T Bartlett	Sir Gerry Loughran
Mr D Cargo	Dr I McMorris
Mr J Craig	Ms S O'Connor
Mrs M Culbert	Miss R Rainey

The Chair welcomed the returning political appointees, Mr D Cargo and Mrs M Culbert. He also welcomed Mr J Craig to the Authority and to his first meeting of the Education Committee.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr J Collings, Mr R Gilbert and Ms L McCall.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Dr A McMorran, Mr R Pollock and Ms N Toman.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair and Dr Dynan declared an interest in the agenda item concerning Strule Shared Education Campus and Ms Andrews declared an interest in the agenda item concerning Development Proposal No 469 – proposal to establish an Irish Medium Unit at St Brigid's College, Derry.

**3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2016 were agreed on the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Dr Dynan.

**4. MATTER ARISING**

**4.1 IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION (4)**

The Chair reported that a workshop would be facilitated in early Autumn concerning Irish Medium education.

**4.2 AGENDA ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION (5)**

An overview of business items for the 2016/17 academic year would be presented to the Committee at its September meeting.

## 5. SCHEME FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to including functions within the Scheme which related to the implementation of the Learning Leaders' professional development strategy for teachers and school leaders, developing the non-teaching workforce for all schools including special schools, and school governor development.

A Member suggested that the Scheme should define more clearly the responsibilities of the various services within the Education Directorate. Some Members considered that the Scheme should remain strategic to provide for a broad remit. It was agreed that the EA Solicitors should be asked to review the Scheme, along with the Schemes for other EA Committees, to ensure that style and content were satisfactory.

Mr Collings undertook to prepare a document for Members' information in support of the Scheme which would provide greater clarity on the responsibilities of the Education Committee.

On the proposal of Dr McMorris, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that the additional functions, detailed above, should be incorporated into the Scheme and that the EA Solicitors should be asked to review the content of all Committee Schemes.

**Actions:** *Incorporate additional functions into Scheme; seek legal advice on all EA Committee Schemes; and prepare document, in support of the Scheme, as an aid for Members which provides greater clarity on the responsibilities of the Education Committee.*

## 6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 6.1 KEY INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION - WORKING GROUP

Mr Collings presented the paper\* (E/6/16/7.1) setting out the role of the Working Group, its draft terms of reference and proposals for its membership and frequency of meetings.

Discussion ensued on the membership of the Working Group. It was agreed that the draft terms of reference would be issued to all Board Members to ensure that any Member interested in serving on the Working Group could so indicate by 30 June 2016.

On the proposal of Sr Hegarty, seconded by Mrs Culbert, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board approve the role and the terms of reference of the Working Group as set out in the paper.

**Action:** *Circulate draft Terms of Reference to all Board Members and seek interest from Members to serve on the Working Group.*

### 6.2 GOVERNOR TRAINING

Mr Collings presented the paper\* (E/6/16/7.2) setting out the recruitment and selection training to be provided to school governors in June 2016 and the proposed training programme for 2016/17. It was noted that the 2016/17 programme would be finalised over the summer period and schools would be informed of the programme by September 2016.

The Committee praised the work and commitment given by governors in supporting schools in a voluntary capacity.

It was noted that a small regional governor support team had been created within the School Development Service which would have responsibility for ensuring that governor support and training needs were met.

Members raised queries in relation to the supports available to governors, capacity of training courses, specific training tailored to governors, patterns of attendees, audit checklists completed by governors, communications to governors, and the satisfaction level of governors with regard to the training provided.

Mr Gilbert advised that the training programme for 2016/17 included areas which had been identified through a governor training needs audit carried out in 2015/16 and those areas which carried statutory responsibilities. All governor training was carefully evaluated and care was taken to ensure that training was consistently presented across the Region. All relevant services within the Authority worked together to ensure that robust training was provided in areas of particular need. Where courses were oversubscribed, arrangements would be made to provide for additional courses. Since the establishment of the Authority, governors had the flexibility to attend courses in different areas of the Region. Records were kept against each governor's attendance at training courses in light of various statutory responsibilities. Training courses were in the main well attended by governors and their satisfaction rate was generally above 95%. Mr Gilbert said that governors could also access supports online. The smart phone app was an aid to governors to access information quickly. In addition, training and refresher training was also accessible through EA TV. All these supports were available to schools in all sectors.

While Members acknowledged that the principal, as secretary to the Board of Governors, managed the flow of communication, they considered the benefits of governors being able to receive communications via other methods, eg on-line or through various group networks. Mr Gilbert said that the governor website could be revisited. Mr Collings undertook to examine further the issue concerning communication with all governors.

A Member requested that specific budgetary training should be given to Finance Committees of Boards of Governors. It was noted that this was one of the recommendations being considered by the Working Group on School Surpluses and Deficits.

Members discussed the information held by the Authority on governor attendance, satisfaction levels and strategic information concerning governor development and school performance. It was suggested that governors should receive training on educational issues in order that they might have a fuller understanding in areas such as improving educational outcomes and monitoring performance in schools. Members noted various challenges for the EA, particularly the importance of maintaining close relationships with schools and governors across the Region. Mr Collings undertook to present information to the Committee on an evaluation of governor development across all schools.

Members noted that many governors were unaware of the smart phone app. It was agreed that a further communication should issue to schools / governors highlighting its role as a tool to access information quickly.

**Actions:** *Examine further the issue concerning communication with Governors and report back to Committee in due course; present information to the Committee on an evaluation*

*of governor development across all schools; issue a further communication to schools / governors to advise of the smart phone app.*

## **7. SHARED EDUCATION**

### **7.1 STRULE SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS**

Mr Collings reported that the addendum to the Business Case for the Strule project had been approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel. He also reported that the Memorandum of Agreement had been signed by all relevant authorities.

### **7.2 YOUTH PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVE**

An update was provided on the Co-operation Ireland initiative entitled 'Amazing the Space' which would involve 3,500 young people from a range of schools coming together on International Peace Day (21 September 2016) to take part in the project.

The Committee noted the supports being made available for the event through C2K, EA TV and Transport. It also noted that communications would issue to schools to raise awareness of the peace initiative and to encourage participation and commitment to the aims of the project.

## **8. AREA PLANNING**

### **8.1 COMMUNITY PLANNING**

The Authority's responsibilities to participate in community planning were set out in the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014. Members noted that the Authority was required to identify appropriate officers to participate in the governance arrangements for community planning in each of the 11 District Council areas. The intention was that each Council would establish Strategic Partnerships, which would meet three times per year, and further operational groups which would present recommendations to the Strategic Partnerships.

Members noted these meetings would require a significant staffing resource particularly at a senior level within the EA. Consideration was given to the recommendations in the paper\* (E/6/16/9.1) which was to coordinate with the EA's education partners and agree a process by which a senior educational representative from one of the sectors could attend each of the Strategic Partnership meetings and report back to the various partners.

A Member said that as CCMS was also a statutory partner in community planning, the potential existed for building on collaborative relationships. He suggested that the representatives from sectoral bodies should be invited to meet the Education Committee to discuss areas of broad educational interest.

The Chair of the Authority suggested that EA Board Members should be made aware of District Council Strategic Partnership meetings and events and encouraged Members to participate where items of business were of relevance to children and young people or were of particular interest.

Mr Collings said that he would liaise with education partners to identify appropriate officers to participate in the governance arrangements for community planning in each of the 11

District Council areas. He undertook to provide progress reports to the Committee on this matter.

On the proposal of Dr Dynan, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that Mr Collings should liaise with the EA's education partners to coordinate the membership of the District Council Strategic Partnership Boards and operational groups as required, and to provide regular progress reports to the Committee on community planning.

**Actions:** *Co-ordinate membership of District Council Strategic Partnership Boards with education partners; and provide regular progress reports to the Committee.*

## **8.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

### **8.2.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 469 – ST BRIGID’S COLLEGE, DERRY Proposal to establish an Irish Medium Unit.**

Mr Gilbert presented the paper\* (E/6/16/9.2.1) which advised that the proposed establishment of the Irish Medium unit would remain within the current admission and enrolment numbers at the school. He said that a further development proposal would be presented to the Committee in September 2016 on the establishment of a stand alone Irish Medium school in Derry. As the statutory consultation period did not take July and August into account, he said that the two development proposals for the Derry area would receive final consideration by the Minister at the same time.

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Sr Hegarty, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should publish the Development Proposal and approve the EA Response\* (Appendix 1) for submission to the Department of Education.

### **8.2.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 470 – ANAMAR PRIMARY SCHOOL Proposal to close with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

CCMS had requested the withdrawal of this Development Proposal due to the time which had elapsed since consulting with parents. It was noted that CCMS planned to consult again on the proposal.

### **8.2.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 471 – ST PATRICK’S PRIMARY SCHOOL, CROSSMAGLEN Proposal to increase the capacity number from 350 to 504 pupils, thus permitting the school to increase the admission number from 50 to 72 pupils with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

Mr Gilbert presented the paper\* (E/6/16/9.2.3) and drew attention to the reservations regarding the size of the proposal requested. These reservations were set out in the draft EA response. He pointed out that CCMS would be required to amend the Case for Change for St Patrick’s Primary School in light of the withdrawal of the proposal to close Anamar Primary School. In addition, the EA response would also now be required to reflect the withdrawal of the proposal in respect of Anamar Primary School.

On the proposal of Fr Bartlett, seconded by Sr Hegarty, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should publish the Development Proposal and approve the EA Response\* (Appendix C) for submission to the Department of Education, subject to amendments being made in respect of the withdrawal of the proposal in respect of Anamar Primary School.

#### **8.2.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL 472 – CLONALIG PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Proposal to increase the capacity number from 168 to 205 pupils, thus permitting the school to increase the admission number from 24 to 29 pupils with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

Mr Gilbert presented the paper\* (E/6/16/9.2.4) and again pointed out that CCMS would be required to amend the Case for Change for Clonalig Primary School in light of the withdrawal of the proposal to close Anamar Primary School. He said that the draft EA response would also reflect the withdrawal of the proposal in respect of Anamar Primary School.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Miss Rainey, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should publish the Development Proposal and approve the EA Response\* (Appendix C) for submission to the Department of Education, subject to amendments being made in respect of the withdrawal of the proposal in respect of Anamar Primary School.

### **8.3 AREA PLAN 2017-20 : PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee noted the programme of work which had taken place to prepare the draft Area Plans for Primary, Post-Primary and Special provision as set out in the paper\* (E/6/16/9.3).

The draft Area Plan for 2017/20 would be presented to the Board for consideration at its meeting on 30 June 2016 following which the Plan was required to be submitted to DE by the end of July. Following receipt of any DE comments on the draft Area Plan, a public consultation would be conducted in early Autumn in order to finalise the Plan in early 2017 and to allow for action plans to be prepared for implementation from 1 April 2017. Thereafter, annual action plans would be produced.

A Member said that the Authority should be examining nursery and pre-school provision in the same strategic way as primary, post-primary and special provision. Some Members commented on the necessity to ensure collaboration across government departments when developing the plans. Mr Gilbert confirmed that Further Education partners were involved in the various Area Planning groupings.

*(During discussion of this item, Ms Andrews left the meeting temporarily at 3.14 pm and re-entered at 3.19 pm.)*

The Committee agreed that a workshop on the detail of the draft Area Plan should be facilitated for all Board Members prior to it being presented for consideration to the Board at its meeting on 30 June 2016. A choice of dates for a workshop would be provided to Members to ensure that all had opportunity to review the document.

**Action:** Organise workshops on the draft Area Plan 2017/20 for all Board Members.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 8 September 2016.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm.

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**CHAIRPERSON**

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**DATE**

\* Paper issued with agenda