

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held on 11 October 2018 at 1.00 pm in Antrim Centre.

PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chair)

Mr D Cargo	Mrs S Kelly
Mrs M Culbert	Dr A McMorran
Mr G Doran	Dr I McMorris
Dr M Dynan	Mr O McMullan
Sir Gerry Loughran	Miss R Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M Baker, Mrs P Cooney, Mr J Unsworth, Mrs K Scott, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr J Collings (Interim Chief Executive).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Rev A Adams, Ms Á Andrews, Mr J Craig, Mr G Lundy, Mr N McCausland, Ms S O'Connor, Mr R Pollock and Ms N Toman.

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 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

The minutes* (E/10/18/3) of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 were agreed on the proposal of Miss Rainey and seconded by Mrs Culbert.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 NI AFFAIRS COMMITTEE - INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION FUNDING IN NORTHERN IRELAND (7)

The Chair advised that the Chair of the Board, the Interim Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and ICT had met the NI Affairs Committee the previous day to give oral evidence to the Inquiry on education funding in NI. A report on this matter would be provided to the Board at its meeting on 25 October 2018.

4.2 INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW ON AREA PLANNING – REPORT DATED MAY 2018 (10.1)

A Member highlighted the importance of working in partnership with Councils in order to overlay planning information with education needs. He asked officers, in refining the area planning process further, to take on board issues regarding social housing and its impact on the education estate. Mrs Scott confirmed the intention was that all such considerations would be addressed in EA's next three year Strategic Area Plan.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

MEETING INVOLVING THE PERMANENT SECRETARY ON 24 OCTOBER 2018

The Chair asked Members to submit topics to be discussed with the Permanent Secretary as soon as possible.

6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

6.1 GOVERNOR TRAINING PROGRAMME - NOVEMBER 2018 TO JUNE 2019

Mr Unsworth presented the programme* (E/10/18/6.1). He said it was intended that training to Governors would move away from individual face to face training to more online training and training made available through clustering of Boards of Governors. He said that all Board Members were welcome to attend any of the training programmes.

A Member said that maintaining some face to face training in the future would be beneficial.

Members expressed concern that the programme did not provide for financial management training, particularly in light of the scale of financial challenges across the education system and following reconstitution of Boards of Governors. Mr Unsworth said that Finance and ICT would be the first Directorate to deliver online training programmes to Governors around financial management. He said that Finance staff continued to work directly with schools on a daily basis on specific issues around budget planning. Mrs Scott referred to the new approach to review and categorise school budgetary plans. It was intended that specific support would be tailored to schools in the various categories.

A Member referred to practices to support schools around budget management. He suggested that reassurance should be provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that there was a practical process in place for every school, where this was required, to receive support from Finance in terms of day to day management of school budgets. He accepted that training could not be provided to all Governors following constitution. However, he sought assurance that the training was prioritising specific groups of Governors, eg new Governors, and Governors with specific responsibilities such as chairs of Boards of Governors and those with responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. Mr Unsworth confirmed that the programme set out the target audience and that courses were targeted with new Governors and chairs in mind. In response to a Member's query, Mr Unsworth undertook to provide information to the Committee on the uptake of Governors on specific training courses for the 2017/18 academic year.

***Action:** Reassurance to be provided to FGP Committee that there is a practical process in place for every school, where this is required, to receive full support from Finance in terms of day to day management of school budgets; and Committee to receive information on the uptake of Governors on specific training courses in the 2017/18 academic year.*

6.2 DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Mr Unsworth presented the paper* (E/10/18/6.2) setting out the context for the provision of professional development opportunities for school leaders. DE's strategy document 'Learning Leaders', published in 2016, had set out actions to be taken by EA and other education partners to support the professional learning and development of school leaders. Mr Unsworth said that DE had commissioned the General Teaching Council for NI to develop a new school leadership competencies framework. This work would be

supported by EA. He said that the School Development Service had also commenced work on developing a new framework to inform the provision of learning and development pathways for teachers aspiring to become school leaders. He presented the draft framework* which would be consulted upon with school leaders and other stakeholders at development phase and at delivery phase.

Mr Unsworth said that in recent years EA had continued to deliver a range of professional development programmes for school leaders. However, reduced budgets and the removal of earmarked funding had impacted significantly on the number of leadership development programmes made available. He advised that Mr S Comer, Head of Professional Learning and Development, would attend a future meeting of the Committee to report on developments.

Members queried the governance arrangements for taking forward 'Learning Leaders'. Mr Unsworth said that DE had developed and launched the strategy. A Learning Leaders' Oversight Group had been established which was chaired by DE and included representatives across the education sector, including university representatives. Mr Collings was EA's representative on the group. It was intended that EA would play a key leadership role in taking forward the requirements outlined in the strategy in close partnership with school leaders.

Members queried the level of resource available for Learning Leaders and a resourcing issue concerning university representation on the Learning Leaders' Oversight Group. It was agreed that issues of governance and resource for Learning Leaders should be discussed with the Permanent Secretary.

In response to a Member's suggestion, Mr Unsworth confirmed that EA had already established a focus group of principals to assist EA in taking forward the framework. In addition, he advised that a principals' forum had been established to work with EA's Directorates on any educational issue.

The Chair said that a small group of principals should be invited to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss the out-workings of the strategy.

Actions: *Issues of governance and resource around Learning Leaders to be discussed with the Permanent Secretary; and a small group of principals to be invited to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss the out-workings of the strategy.*

6.3 EDUCATION LIBRARY SERVICE - COMMENCEMENT OF REVIEW

Mrs Cooney said that consultation had commenced with stakeholders on a review of existing models of delivery for the Education Library Service (ELS). The review would seek to develop and implement a regional and innovative service which would support and resource the curriculum and promote literacy by encouraging a love of reading.

In response to Members' queries, Mrs Cooney said that the review would seek to enhance the role of the ELS within the school improvement agenda. EA would collect data on uses of technology and reading through digital means. It would seek to enhance the sharing of libraries across clusters and the sharing of resources for teachers across clusters. It was pointed out that the procurement exercise for IT connectivity for schools, after the expiry of the C2K contract, would make provision for library software.

Members considered that a radical review of the ELS was necessary to look at parallel systems and value for money in partnership with stakeholders, including Libraries NI.

Mrs Cooney said that a report on the findings of the consultation events would be presented to the Committee for consideration in due course.

The Committee noted the paper* (E/10/18/6.3).

7. AREA PLANNING

7.1 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2018/19 - PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs Scott presented a paper* (E/10/18/7.1) giving progress on work completed against the annual action plan. Within the 142 work streams identified by school type in the annual action plan, 47 work streams related to actions to address sustainability issues in primary schools with more than two composite classes (4 teachers or less), and 26 work streams related to actions to address sustainability issues in post primary schools with a sixth form with fewer than 100 pupils. The Committee noted that 49 of the 142 work streams had been completed in the first quarter of the year.

Mrs Scott pointed out that, due to the timeframe involved in consultation and the feedback received from consultation, all 142 work streams might not progress to development proposal stage by the end of the year. The process of consultation was further elongated within the special school estate to provide for additional community engagement. She said that EA continued to be challenged by DE on the pace of taking forward work streams to lead to development proposals.

Ms Culbert left the meeting at 1.57 pm.

A Member referred to the time associated with proposals to make small changes in school admission and enrolment numbers. This was particularly bureaucratic in circumstances where these proposed changes had no impact on neighbouring schools. Mrs Scott said that a DE working group had been established to look at this issue and progress had been made regarding piloting small increases in numbers. The Member suggested that this issue should be discussed with the Permanent Secretary on 24 October 2018.

Mrs Scott said that the current three year Strategic Area Plan covered the period 2016-2019. It might be appropriate to pause the process after this period for one year to reflect strategically on the structure and processes around area planning. However this would need to be discussed further with DE.

Members considered that the current structure for area planning was too process driven and did not prioritise educational provisions for children and young people, building schools strategically and linkages with the capital investment programme.

A Member said that an activity report setting out a RAG (red / amber / green) rating against progress would be beneficial for the Committee in future monitoring. Mrs Scott undertook to provide RAG rated progress reports to the Committee in the future.

Action: *Area planning issues to be discussed with the Permanent Secretary on 24 October 2018; and Committee to receive RAG rated area planning progress reports at future meetings as appropriate.*

7.2 REVIEW OF POST 16 PROVISION IN BALLYMONEY

Mrs Scott presented the paper* (E/10/18/7.2) setting out the analysis, undertaken by both EA and CCMS, on the viability of a jointly managed post 16 provision between Our Lady of Lourdes and Ballymoney High School in the context of DE Circular 2015/15 (Jointly

Managed Schools). She said that, in light of the number of challenges identified, it was considered that the innovation was unlikely to achieve DE approval to a development proposal due to sustainability and viability factors. Statistical data on admission and enrolment numbers for schools in the Ballymoney area was provided.

A Member said that given the successful collaborative working arrangement between the two schools over the years, it was imperative to develop an innovative approach to ensure this continued success. He sought further clarity on work undertaken to date.

Mrs Scott confirmed that the shared education dimension would continue. The two schools were still actively involved in collaboration at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, the analysis had identified that the innovation was not financially sustainable as one of the schools had not met the minimum enrolment threshold to substantiate the establishment of a sixth form provision. She said it was recommended that officers would re-engage with Ballymoney High School, Dalriada School and the further education sector to explore alternative means of providing sixth form education for students coming from the non-selective sector.

A Member commented on the need for EA to engage with the Catholic Trustees in the Ballymoney area.

On the proposal of Dr McMorris, seconded by Mr Cargo, it was agreed that a paper would be presented for the Committee's consideration, in due course, on post 16 provision in the non-selective sector in the Ballymoney area which would support the successful shared relationships already in existence in this area. It was also agreed that, in order to promote social cohesion in areas where sustainability issues impacted on a minority community, social cohesion should form part and parcel of EA's area planning considerations.

Action: *Committee to receive a paper for consideration in due course on post 16 provision in the non-selective sector in the Ballymoney area in support of the successful shared relationships already in existence in the area.*

7.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 558 BUNSCOIL BHEANNA BOIRCHE

Proposal to increase the school's admissions and enrolment numbers from 15 to 21 and 87 to 145 respectively with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/10/18/7.3) 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, 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.

On the proposal of Dr Dynan, seconded by Miss Rainey, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

8. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

NON-SELECTIVE POST PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE NEWTOWNARDS AREA

A Member referred to concerns raised in the community and in the press on issues relating to proposals concerning post primary education in the Newtownards area.

Mrs Scott reminded Members that, as part of the Committee's prior deliberations, case for change papers had already identified the need to explore options for post primary non-selective education in the Ards area, and that the report had highlighted sustainability issues regarding Movilla High School as set against DE's Sustainable Schools Policy. Mr Unsworth referred to improvements in the school's examination results this year but also highlighted some concerning school improvement issues including the fact that the school was still in formal intervention.

Mrs Scott provided a verbal summary on the temporary variation in admission numbers granted by DE for certain schools in 2018/19 in the greater Newtownards area. This was reflective of the increase in pupil numbers in that year group coming through in the area. It was pointed out that although there were places in Movilla High School, the Permanent Secretary had granted temporary variations in a number of post primary schools in the area. Mrs Scott also pointed out that as the statistics were also identifying an increase in pupil numbers for 2019/20 in this area, EA was working with DE to alleviate this short term issue. A paper on this matter would be presented to the Committee for consideration at its meeting on 8 November 2018.

Mrs Scott said that the strategic review of non-selective controlled post primary education in the Ards area had outlined a number of options going forward and that, as part of a due diligence exercise, one such option had to refer to the use of the existing estate should Movilla High School close. However, an amalgamation of Glastry College and Movilla High School was not an option. A Member reported that this appeared to have been mis-reported in the media and it was causing some concern with the local community.

This issue would come back to the Committee in the near future with a request to begin formal consultation.

The Committee noted the report.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 8 November 2018 in Lisnagelvin Primary School.

The meeting ended at 3.12 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

* Paper issued with agenda

DATE

** Paper tabled