

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2019 AT 1.00 PM IN BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL**

**1. PRESENT** Rev R Herron (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Mr G Lundy
Mr D Cargo	Mr N McCausland
Mr G Doran	Dr A McMorrان
Dr M Dynan	Mr O McMullan
Mrs S Kelly	Ms S O'Connor
Sir Gerry Loughran	Miss R Rainey

**2. IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr G Boyd, Mr J Collings, Mrs K Scott, Mrs P Cooney, Mr J Unsworth, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr J Cockroft, Mr J Dunbar, Ms M Lowery, and Mr C McCrumlish..

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

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Ms Á Andrews, Mr J Craig, Mrs M Culbert, Dr I McMorris and Mr R Pollock.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2019**

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Mr McMullan, the Committee agreed the minutes\* (E/2/19/3) of the meeting held on 10 January 2019.

**6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**6.1 GOVERNOR TRAINING PROGRAMME (5.1)**

Mrs Scott said that reports would be provided to the Committee at its March meeting on the procurement exercise for the Education Technology Services contract and on safeguarding issues in respect of schools accessing apps which were not on the C2k network.

**6.2 LEARNING LEADERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CONFERENCES (6.2)**

Information on conference dates and venues had been provided to Members.

**6.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 571 - ERGANAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL (9.4)**

The Committee noted a paper\*\* (E/4/19/4) setting out a position report on arrangements to engage with the parents of pupils enrolled at Erganagh Primary School and also with the principal and chair of the Board of Governors of a neighbouring school.

**7. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair extended the Committee's appreciation to the principal and Board of Governors of Ballycastle High School for facilitating the meeting at the school.

## **8. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE FINANCE REPORT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018**

Mrs Scott presented the finance report\* (E/2/19/6) which provided an overview of core funding as at 31 December 2018. In general all budget lines were forecast to be within budget for 2018/19. Mrs Scott drew attention to an easement of £93k reflecting the delay in the recruitment of School Improvement Professionals, a £50k pressure within the Music Service relating to the regularisation of music tutor contracts across the region, and an easement of £36k within Headquarters' costs which related to a recharge of the Director's salary to the Chief Executive's budget and a reduction in the use of external associates.

The Committee noted the report.

## **9. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **9.1 EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE (ETI) CHIEF INSPECTOR'S REPORT 2016-2018**

Mrs Cooney said that the Chief Inspector's Report\* (E/2/19/7.1) acknowledged that schools were working in a climate of severe financial challenge whilst endeavouring to continue to provide high quality learning experiences. While inspections continued across a range of ETI work, four of the five teaching unions were taking industrial action including non co-operation with ETI on school inspections.

Mrs Cooney presented an officer analysis\* of school inspection outcomes for the period April to December 2018. Members noted that schools had engaged in inspection activity during this period as follows:

- nursery and primary sectors - 36 schools (18%) out of 196 schools inspected had engaged with ETI;
- post-primary sector - 4 schools (9%) out of 45 schools inspected had engaged with ETI; and
- 4 out of 6 special schools had engaged with ETI.

The Report set out the range of impacts of action short of strike (ASOS) on management arrangements and school improvement work. It highlighted regret that for schools which were involved in the follow up inspection process and were engaged in ASOS, areas for improvement identified prior to January 2017 had not been re-evaluated. In addition, the Report had stated that without evidence from observing learning and teaching, the ETI was unable to assure stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for almost 43,000 learners in primary and post primary schools across full inspections, sustaining improvement inspections and monitoring inspections.

Mrs Cooney said that the key theme of the Report was putting learners first. The Report also gave focus to issues around safeguarding, pastoral care and transition as well as focusing on traditional pathways and digital learning. The Chief Inspector had noted that area planning needed to advance at a much quicker pace to ensure sustainability of schools. The Chief Inspector had also commented that, through the Shared Education Strategic Partnerships, shared education needed to be supported in the curriculum as an integral part of learning and teaching.

A Member referred to commentary on special schools. Another Member said that the Report was based on minimal evidence and that the impact of ASOS across all schools posed significant risks for EA.

The Committee noted the Chief Inspector's Report and the officer report on school inspection outcomes.

## 9.2 MODELS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT

Mr Cockroft, Ms Lowery and Mr McCrumlish provided reports on school improvement models of support illustrated through four case studies\* (E/2/19/7.1). The pilot models were based on building system capacity using peer to peer and school to school support and related to:

- A formalised seconded arrangement between two schools;
- A multi-disciplinary approach involving School Improvement, LMS and HR officers working together to develop leadership and manage a school's deficit position; and
- Arrangements to build leadership capacity and raise attainment in specific subject areas.

Mrs Cooney said that school improvement models were intended to build capacity in the system. The models would be incorporated into a handbook to provide a formalised systematic approach to be used by School Improvement Professionals to support schools.

A Member paid tribute to the efforts and creativity of the school leaders outlined in the case studies. He said that examination results continued to improve even though ETI was unable to carry out inspections. He said that the Chief Inspector had undertaken, at a previous meeting with Board Members, to look at developing the role of the District Inspector. He said that District Inspectors were vital in supporting schools through dissemination of good practice.

*Mr McCausland entered the meeting at 2.15 pm.*

Members commended officers on the various models being tested as a way of providing support to schools in the current financial climate. A Member said that challenges existed for EA to ensure that pupils were not restricted in their curriculum choice because of expediency. A Member said that the models were identifying the same issues that continued to arise in schools. EA needed to have a systematic approach for learning and development that continued to build on previously agreed models.

Discussion ensued on schools being elements of stability in communities. Members highlighted the importance of Education working in collaboration with other Government Departments to provide interventions that worked for communities. It was pointed out that while school leadership was crucial, capital was also needed to give ambition to school communities and to allow for integration of services, such as health and social care. Mr Cockroft provided an overview of the work and vision of the North Belfast Primary Principals' Support Programme.

Mrs Scott said that officers would continue to focus on school improvement work through multi-disciplinary teams. Updates on teacher professional learning, middle management and school leadership development would be provided to the Committee in subsequent months. She said that officers continued to work to develop a more innovative approach to area planning to layer in shared education, community planning, and community use of schools.

In response to a Member's query, Mrs Scott confirmed that the Education Directorate strategy for School Improvement would be presented to the Committee in due course.

**Action:** *The Education Directorate strategy for School Improvement to be presented to the Committee in due course.*

## 9.3 EXTENDED SCHOOLS' PROGRAMME

### 9.3.1 ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Mr Dunbar presented the Annual Report\* (E/2/19/7.2.1) which provided an overview, analysis and evaluation of the Extended Schools' Programme for 2017/18. The budget for the year was £9.152m which included individual and cluster funding allocations to 552 schools. Mr Dunbar said that while this was a 14% reduction on the previous year's allocation, the report illustrated that schools and clusters continued to provide activities and services which delivered positive outcomes for pupils, parents, schools and communities. He said that the general pattern of activities remained similar to 2016/17 with literacy and specialist clubs (including ICT, science, sports and other subject specific provision) remaining the most popular provision.

Mr Dunbar said that ETI had carried out an evaluation of Extended Schools' clusters in May 2018. The ETI final report was expected to be published towards the end of the 2018/19 academic year.

Mr Dunbar drew attention to recommendations contained in the annual report. These related to: an independent review of the programme; further alignment of the programme with the school development planning process; continued review and refinement of the new delivery model introduced in 2017/18 which was based on a risk based approach; and a continuation of support to schools to develop practices in specific delivery areas.

In response to a Member's query, Mr Dunbar said that schools were qualified to join the Extended Schools' Programme on the basis of free school meals entitlement.

A Member referred to areas within the report where the evidence provided by schools was not verified or quality assured. She asked that schools should be given support and direction in order to provide more meaningful evidence on outcomes.

A Member said that there needed to be an independent review of the programme with a view to mainstreaming the programme in line with other education and community policies and programmes, including the planning process. Mr Dunbar said that DE was carrying out a review of the programme which was expected to be completed in about 18 months' time. Reference was made to contractual issues which were impacting on the timeframe of the review.

On the proposal of Mr Cargo, seconded by Dr McMorran, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should approve the Extended Schools' Annual Report for 2017/18.

**Action:** *Schools to be given support and direction in order to provide more meaningful evidence on outcomes to inform the report.*

### 9.3.2 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - DECEMBER 2018

Mr Dunbar presented the audit report\* (E/2/19/7.2.2) on the Extended Schools' Programme. He said that while the report included a number of priority 2 and priority 3 recommendations, the overall audit opinion was satisfactory. This information had been relayed to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2019.

The Committee noted the audit report, including the actions to be taken as set out within the management responses in the report.

## 10. AREA PLANNING

### 10.1 STRATEGIC AREA PLAN FOR SCHOOL PROVISION 2017-2020 DRAFT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2019/20 (YEAR 3)

Mrs Scott said that the draft annual action plan for 2019/20 had been considered initially by the Committee at its meeting on 8 November 2018. The amended draft action plan\* (E/2/19/8.1) was now presented for the Committee's consideration and approval to enable it to be forwarded to DE for endorsement. Thereafter, the action plan would be provided to the Area Planning Steering Group and the final document would be presented to the Board for approval. Mrs Scott said that, once the final action plan had received Board approval, EA would engage with schools named in or affected by the action plan prior to its publication.

Mrs Scott said that the annual action plan's main focus was on two teacher schools and the provision of sustainable post 16 provision pathways. All schools falling outside the Sustainable Schools' Policy, which had not been considered within previous action plans, had been subject to assessment against the sustainable schools' criteria by the Area Planning Local Groups. She pointed out that a number of primary and post primary schools had not been included in the action plan, following consideration at APLG meetings, for specific reasons. These reasons were outlined in the paper. The annual action plan for 2019/20 now identified 35 work streams across pre-school, primary, post primary and special schools reflecting key issues and proposed actions published in the Strategic Plan for each local government district.

Mrs Scott referred to narrative in the action plan on issues in special schools and said that a sentence concerning engagement with the Health sector would be amended. A Member received clarification on the proposed terminology to be used.

Members expressed serious concerns that the current structure for area planning was too bureaucratic and had the inevitable consequence of drawing out the process. They drew attention to the considerable work that was undertaken to provide for detailed plans, including proposed resources. However, many area planning outcomes could not be delivered as area planning did not align to some form of guaranteed capital development. This was significant as communities were being asked to support programmes of work. Members discussed the last Ministerial direction given on area planning and expressed criticism at the lack of pace of change due to an overly complicated area planning process.

A Member highlighted specific concerns within schools at the current time on account of the consideration being given to increase the admission capacity in some schools.

*Mrs Kelly left the meeting at 3.20 pm.*

Members referred to DE's current review of area planning. They pointed out that the EA Board represented all educational interests and political parties and highlighted that DE should be engaging with the Board on transformation around area planning. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Permanent Secretary setting out Members' concerns around the Board's inability to deliver on the previous Minister's objectives in respect of area planning on account of constraints within the process. It was also agreed that Mr Boyd would raise this matter at the next meeting of DE's Transformation Programme Board.

On the proposal of Dr Dynan, seconded by Ms O'Connor, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should approve the draft annual action plan for 2019/20, subject to an amendment in the narrative concerning special schools, and submit the document to DE for endorsement.

**Action:** *Letter to be sent to the Permanent Secretary setting out Members' concerns around the Board's inability to deliver on the previous Minister's objectives on account of constraints within the area planning process; and matter to be raised at the next meeting of DE's Transformation Programme Board.*

## **10.2 RESETTING SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENT NUMBERS**

Mrs Scott said that DE, as part of its area planning transformation programme, was conducting a pilot exercise with a view to facilitating permanent reductions to schools' approved admission and enrolment numbers without the need for a development proposal. The intention was that this resetting could be facilitated where there was no impact on neighbouring schools. She said that assumptions and criteria were being drawn from the Sustainable Schools' Policy and were indicative of DE's position that the focus should be on schools that currently had an approved enrolment above the primary optimum configuration of a seven class based school. Mrs Scott said that 100 schools (48 controlled and 52 catholic maintained) had been identified that had an established trend of enrolment below their approved enrolment. While all schools would be notified of the pilot exercise, those schools that met the agreed criteria would be invited to information sessions and given the opportunity to participate. She said that a paper would be presented to the Committee for consideration in the Spring identifying the controlled schools that had taken part in the pilot exercise and which met the criteria for a reduction in their approved admission and enrolment numbers.

A Member received clarification on the agreed criteria.

A Member welcomed the approach which provided for a more efficient and expedient way of resetting admission and enrolment numbers and did not negatively impact on neighbouring schools. He pointed out that a number of schools did not qualify for Major works or funding through the School Enhancement Fund unless a development proposal had been brought forward.

The Committee noted the paper\* (E/2/19/8.2).

## **10.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 573 - AUGHNACLOY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Proposal to increase the admission and enrolment numbers from 17 to 26 and from 116 to 182 respectively with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/2/19/8.3) 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 and the summary paper. 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. Mrs Scott highlighted resource implications for the proposal. It was noted that within the locality, Development Proposal No 577 for the discontinuance of Lisferty Primary School was being taken forward within the same timeframe.

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

#### **10.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 577 - LISFEARTY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/2/19/8.4) 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.

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

*Mr Lundy declared an interest in the following two schools and left the meeting at 3.42 pm.*

#### **10.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 578 - SPERRIN INTEGRATED COLLEGE**

Proposal to increase the admission number from 80 to 100, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 500 to 620 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

This proposal was considered in conjunction with Development Proposal No 579 - Rainey Endowed Grammar School.

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/2/19/8.5) 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, 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 and the summary paper. This included the rationale for the proposal, current sustainability of the school, and responses received to the consultation. Discussion ensued on the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality, particularly Parkhall Integrated College and Cookstown High School. Members commented that since the amalgamation of the grammar and high schools in Cookstown in 1977, Cookstown High School had continued to successfully serve the local population as a community school. They requested that EA's response be amended to highlight the potential impact on Cookstown as a community school.

A Member said that he supported the Development Proposal for Rainey Endowed Grammar School, given the extent of its oversubscription over a number of years, and therefore he supported the Development Proposal for Sperrin Integrated College.

Subject to an amendment to EA's response to reference Cookstown High School, as detailed above, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE, along with the publication of the Proposal, on the proposal of Mr Cargo and seconded by Rev Adams.

Sir Gerry Loughran recorded his disagreement to the above motion.

**Action:** Amendment agreed to EA's response.

## **10.6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 579 - RAINEY ENDOWED GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

Proposal to increase the admissions number from 100 to 120, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 700 to 840, with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

This proposal was considered in conjunction with Development Proposal No 578 - Sperrin Integrated College.

Mrs Scott presented the papers\* (E/2/19/8.6) 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, EA had undertaken formal consultation with the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal. Discussion ensued on the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality, particularly Parkhall Integrated College and Cookstown High School. Members commented that since the amalgamation of the grammar and high schools in Cookstown in 1977, Cookstown High School had continued to successfully serve the local population as a community school. They requested that EA's response be amended to highlight the potential impact on Cookstown as a community school.

A Member said that he supported the proposal given the extent of oversubscription at the school over a number of years. He also referenced temporary variations approved by DE in recent years. He said that the proposal should be considered on its own merits.

Subject to an amendment to EA's response to reference Cookstown High School, as detailed above, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE, along with the publication of the Proposal, on the proposal of Mr Cargo and seconded by Mr McCausland.

Sir Gerry Loughran recorded his disagreement to the above motion.

**Action:** *Amendment agreed to EA's response.*

## **10.7 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL OUTCOMES**

The Committee noted that the following Development Proposals had been approved:

- (i) DP 544 Taughmonagh Primary School (approved with modification) - to increase the admission number from 25 to 30, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 174 to 210, with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (ii) DP 554 Priory Integrated College - to increase the enrolment number from 500 to 600 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (iii) DP 555 Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt - to decrease the admission and enrolment numbers from 89 to 81 and 622 to 567 respectively with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (iv) DP 556 Holy Child Primary School, Belfast - to decrease the admission and enrolment numbers from 775 to 609 and 111 to 87 respectively with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (v) DP 558 Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, Castlewellan - to increase the admission and enrolment numbers from 15 to 21 and 87 to 145 respectively with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.

**11. RETIREMENT OF MR J COLLINGS**

The Chair paid tribute to Mr Collings for his guidance, advice and leadership to the Committee as Director of Education. He wished him every health and happiness in his retirement.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 14 March 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.54 pm.

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**CHAIRPERSON**

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**DATE**

\* Paper issued with agenda

\*\* Paper tabled