

EDUCATION AUTHORITY**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 16 MAY 2019 AT 2.00 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM, ANTRIM****1. PRESENT** Ms S O'Connor (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Mrs S Kelly
Ms Á Andrews	Sir Gerry Loughran
Mr D Cargo	Mr G Lundy
Mr J Craig	Mr N McCausland
Mrs M Culbert	Dr I McMorris
Dr M Dynan	Mr O McMullan
Rev R Herron	Mr K Mulvenna
Mr E Jardine	Miss R Rainey

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Hanna, Mrs K Scott, Mr S Wade, Mrs S McCartan, Mrs A Kee, and Ms L McCall.
Ms A Campbell attended in her role as Board Room Apprentice.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mrs P Carville, Mr G Doran, and Dr A McMorran.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**SYMPATHY**

The Chair paid tribute to Sr Criostoir Hegarty, a former EA Board Member, who had passed away on 8 May 2019. She said that Sr Criostoir had passionately believed in the value of education and had pursued this ideal through her involvement on the Board. She paid tribute to the valuable contributions Sr Croistoir had made to the Board and to the lives of the children and young people she had served throughout her teaching career, most notably as Principal of Thornhill College.

6. INITIAL BUDGET PLAN 2019/20

The Board, at its meeting on 30 April 2019, had noted EA's opening resource budget allocation for 2019/20 (£1,940.69m), the impact of the overall financial position on individual Directorates, and had considered the draft Initial Budget Plan for 2019/20. The 2019/20 funding gap at that stage was estimated to be £139.3m. The Board had agreed that further work was necessary and that the Finance and General Purposes Committee, at its meeting on 7 May 2019, would consider a revised Plan. Mr Wade said that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had noted the 2018-19 provisional outturn for recurrent, capital and annually managed expenditure which had been submitted to DE on 29 April 2019. The Committee had agreed further revisions to the Initial Budget Plan and to the draft letter to DE to accompany the Plan.

Mr Wade presented the revised Initial Budget Plan* (EAB/5/19/4). The paper gave further analysis on the movement from the 2018-19 provisional outturn to the 2019-20 estimated financial position across all Directorates. He drew attention to the detail provided on estimated pressures and proposed savings within each Directorate. He also drew attention to the detail provided in the revised draft letter to DE to accompany the submission of the 2019/20 Initial Budget Plan. The letter set the context of EA's financial position. Since 2010/11, EA's budget had experienced a real term reduction of approximately £250m. In addition, since its establishment, EA had delivered savings of £80m and further savings of £20m (estimated) was anticipated to be achieved in 2019/20. Mr Wade said that the profiled pressure in respect of transformation (£6.4M) had been removed from the 2019-20 financial position as expenditure could only be committed once DE had confirmed the funding. The estimated financial position for 2019/20 had therefore been amended to reflect a funding gap of £132.8m (estimated).

Members highlighted the need to constrain expenditure within DE's resource budget allocation. Discussion ensued on unpalatable decisions that needed to be taken to achieve a balanced budget and the impact of this on essential services. The Chair said it was important that areas to be further considered should not negatively impact directly on children and young people and the teaching profession. Members discussed potential savings that could be achieved through postponing areas of service delivery. It was agreed that the letter to DE would be amended to provide sufficient examples of areas where potential savings could be achieved through postponing service delivery and the consequences of postponing these pressure areas.

Members received confirmation that the estimated funding gap (£132.8m) took account of projected figures associated with pay settlements. It was agreed that Members would receive an analysis of the impact of pay settlements within the estimated funding gap. It was also agreed that the letter to DE would set out this information and that the letter would acknowledge that EA had no provision for this significant pressure.

A Member asked officers to reflect on the content of paragraph 16. He also said that the narrative contained within paragraph 17 should be strengthened. This was agreed.

In response to a Member's query relating to schools' surplus requirements, Mr Wade said that, within the remaining £27m, schools were expected to draw down an estimated £13m in 2019/20. The Member requested that the narrative contained in paragraph 7 should be amplified. This was agreed.

Members discussed estimated demand pressures within the HR Directorate. Mrs Scott provided a report on the approach taken to reduce salary costs through voluntary exit over a period of years which had resulted in a lower staff base in 2018/19. It was agreed that further explanation should be provided in the paper around the additional staffing requirement within HR for 2019/20. It was also agreed that a report should be provided to Members, in due course, on current staffing levels by Directorate compared to staffing levels in former ELBs in 2014/15.

On the proposal of Sir Gerry Loughran, seconded by Rev Herron, the Board agreed that the Initial Budget Plan and the letter to DE would be amended in the areas detailed above and that the revised Plan and letter would be circulated to Members for consideration and approval.

The meeting ended at 1.55 pm.

Chair

*Paper issued with agenda

Chief Executive

** Papertabled

Date