

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY HELD ON 11 APRIL 2019 AT 1.00 PM IN BELFAST BOYS' MODEL SCHOOL

1. PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Mrs S Kelly
Ms Á Andrews	Sir Gerry Loughran
Mr D Cargo	Mr G Lundy
Mr J Craig	Dr A McMorran
Mrs M Culbert	Dr I McMorris
Mr G Doran	Miss R Rainey
Dr M Dynan	

Mr K Mulvenna was in attendance

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Ms S Long, Mr M Baker, Mr J Unsworth, Mr M McConkey, Ms L McCall, and for part of the meeting Mrs P Cooney, Mrs A Morrow and Mrs C Currie.

Ms M Thompson, Principal of Hazelwood Integrated College, was in attendance.

A deputation on behalf of the Board of Governors of Craigavon Senior High School attended, comprising: Mr M Allen, Chair of the Board of Governors; Mrs R Craig, Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors; Mr P Lonsdale, Governor; and Ms R Harkness, Principal.

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

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr O McMullan and Ms S O'Connor.

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 14 MARCH 2019

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed the minutes* (E/4/19/3) of the meeting held on 14 March 2019.

6. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

**STRATEGIC AREA PLAN FOR SCHOOL PROVISION 2017-2020
DRAFT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2019/20 - YEAR 3 (8)**

Mr McConkey said that the Permanent Secretary had responded on 26 March 2019 to EA's letter setting out Members' concerns with regard to area planning processes. The Permanent Secretary had agreed to grant an extension of one year to deliver the strategy subject to EA providing assurances on the following:

- A more robust reporting template would be adopted which would monitor and account for slippage more effectively. This would be considered by the Area Planning Working Group at its next meeting.
- EA would revise the 2019/20 Annual Action Plan to include actions to be undertaken in 2020/21 which would provide indicative publication dates for every work stream, including

work streams for special schools. This work would be taken forward by DE, CCMS and EA officers in a joint workshop on 15 April 2019.

- EA would use the additional year to ensure delivery of all 146 work streams to publication stage, and to enable a robust evaluation of the 2017/20 Strategic Area Plan to proceed in the preparation of the new Strategic Area Plan.

Mr McConkey said that the Chief Executive would be responding shortly to the Permanent Secretary to this effect. It was intended that the revised 2019/20 Annual Action Plan would be presented to the Committee at its May meeting and thereafter submitted to DE for endorsement.

A Member queried if representatives from other managing authorities were required to attend the workshop being held on 15 April. Mr McConkey said that the purpose of the workshop was to revisit the timelines associated with each work stream. The attendance of officials from other managing authorities was therefore unnecessary. The work would be discussed at meetings of the Area Planning Steering Group and the Area Planning Working Group.

7. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

APPRECIATION

The Chair expressed appreciation to the Principal and Board of Governors of Belfast Boys' Model for facilitating meetings of the Education and Shared Education Committees at the school. He commended the school along with other schools in the area on the positive and encouraging work taking place in respect of shared education.

8. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE FINANCE REPORT AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2019

Mr Baker presented the finance report* (E/4/19/6) which provided an overview of core funding as at 28 February 2019. In general all budget lines were forecast to be within budget for 2018/19. He said that a HR work stream was about to commence on managing attendance and substitute cover.

The Committee noted the report.

9. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

9.1 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARNING LEADERS' STRATEGY 2018/19

The Chair welcomed Ms Thompson, Principal of Hazelwood Integrated School, to the meeting.

Mr Unsworth presented a report* (E/4/19/7.1) setting out progress against implementation of the Learning Leaders' Strategy for teacher professional learning in 2018/19. Implementation of the strategy was being taken forward through a Learning Leaders' Oversight Group which was chaired by DE. The strategy's implementation had been impacted during the year by teacher union industrial action and limited availability of funding within school budgets and EA budgets. Key actions that had been taken forward by the SDS Professional Learning and Development Team to support the strategy's implementation were outlined in the report. Mr Unsworth said that, as part of the restructuring within SDS, recruitment activity for posts within teacher professional learning and other teams was currently taking place.

Mr Unsworth said that a report on the review of PQH and preparation for headship programme would be presented to the Committee for consideration prior to the end of the current academic year.

Mrs Morrow said that a series of conferences had been provided for school leaders across district council areas to raise awareness of the Learning Leaders' Strategy. The strategy sought to encourage teachers to collaborate within schools and with other schools, to develop and disseminate good practice and build professional learning communities. It would be a process of self-evaluation and reflection and teachers would be informed by evidence based research. She said the TPL continuum would provide pathways for teachers. Officers were currently engaging with local universities to explore potential for accreditation of EA programmes.

Attention was drawn to research undertaken by Professor John Hattie on interventions that had impacted most on outcomes for pupils. Mrs Morrow said that it was intended that SDS would hold an annual event for school leaders which would focus on educational leadership.

Ms Thompson outlined her educational experiences as principal to bring about school improvement. She had sourced professional learning and evidence based research, both locally and in other jurisdictions, to inform learning and to enhance capacity in the school. She said the journey continued to be one of self-improvement and, in a recent ETI inspection report, four areas of best practice had been identified relating to pedagogy in the school. She sought to access support for the pupils from the community within and around the school. Particular mention was given to supports made available by means of social workers and occupational therapists. Members received clarification in these two areas. Ms Thompson considered that it was important for schools to work with other stakeholders on pupil welfare and that every large school should have access to at least one social worker. She also outlined initiatives within the school to promote staff care and well-being. Feedback was also sought from the pupils.

Members commended Ms Thompson on the excellent initiatives which were being taken forward in respect of school improvement and the well-being of pupils and staff.

A Member said that the current system to measure outcomes was based on examination results and was ineffective. The challenge was for EA to identify a framework which could demonstrate appropriate and effective quality outcomes for children and young people and value for money for society.

A Member pointed out that various initiatives over the years had still not managed to address the long tail of underachievement for children and young people.

Mrs Cooney said that a number of associates were currently giving consideration to a value added framework for school improvement. The framework would have a dashboard of measures which related to the quality of experiences and outcomes for children and young people. It would focus on system effectiveness and system improvements. The metrics of the framework would require careful consideration in conjunction with DE and ETI. Mrs Cooney said that work in this area would be presented to the Committee in due course.

The Committee noted the report.

Action: Members to be invited to the Educational Leadership conference on 15 May 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast (key note speaker is Professor John Hattie).

9.2 PILOT COACHING PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mrs Cooney presented a paper* (E/4/19/7.2) on the implementation of a pilot coaching programme for 60 principals in the current academic year, focused on optimising achievement through promoting emotional health and well-being. The paper also set out plans to review the Optimising Achievement Model and to develop the next steps for a comprehensive framework to support the well-being of the whole school community. She said that 195 principals had submitted an expression of interest to participate in the pilot coaching programme. Following discussion with DE, additional funding had been secured to enable the pilot to be expanded to accommodate two further cohorts involving 80 and 85 principals.

Members noted that a launch event for the pilot was being held on 27 April 2019.

Mrs Currie said that a cross-directorate, cross-organisational Steering Group would be established to take forward the learning and key recommendations from the review of the project with the intention that it would support a wider EA health and well-being strategy.

Members welcomed the programme which would enable participants to more effectively manage stress and anxiety in the workplace. A Member particularly highlighted serious challenges for schools arising from social media.

A Member received confirmation that consideration had been given to ensuring that principals, who were facing significant issues within schools, had facility to be included in the programme. Mrs Cooney drew attention to the bespoke nature of the coaching support which was designed to suit each principal's needs.

Mrs Culbert left the meeting at 3.55 pm.

A Member said that consideration should also be given to upskilling principals to roll out mentoring and coaching within the school community. Mrs Cooney said that officers would be considering this matter as part of an exit strategy for the programme.

The Committee noted and commended the report.

10. AREA PLANNING

10.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 574 - CRAIGAVON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Proposal to operate on a single site, 26-34 Lurgan Road Portadown, with effect from 1 September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/19/8.1) 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. Mr McConkey said that the Board of Governors of Craigavon Senior High School had indicated that its preferred option was to operate on a single site. He provided a report on the engagement undertaken with all education and community stakeholders as part of the proposal. This included schools, parent groups, political parties, and the local Council. An outline of the number of responses received to the consultation, including the nature of the responses from the parent's forum, was provided. This number was broken down into those who were in agreement to the proposal and those who disagreed with the proposal.

Mr McConkey said that, as a result of pre-publication undertaken with schools and the wider school community, the Case for Change had been amended slightly to provide some further information on the Options considered. Members considered the Case for Change,

including the amended sections as outlined in a paper**. Consideration was given to the rationale for the proposal, the current sustainability of the school particularly the nature of the split site operation and duplication of provision, and the condition of the educational facilities available to the pupils at the Lurgan campus. Members also considered the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and noted the responses to the consultation as set out in the papers. Mr McConkey drew attention to the school's considerable challenges to match the needs of the pupils to the curricular offer. He pointed out however that the school was compliant with the statutory requirements of the Entitlement Framework as evidenced by a recent inspection report. He drew attention to the school's deficit financial position and to projections that the school's deficit would increase substantially year on year within the three year budgetary plan. The increasing deficit projection was based on LMS officer experience working with schools in respect of their budgetary plans which operated across split site and single site locations. The amendments to the Case for Change reflected: a statement made by the previous Education Minister on the Dickson Plan around policy context; the basis on which EA made projections on school budgetary positions; and an enhanced explanation of the disadvantages to Option 4 which would impact on Lurgan Junior High School.

The Committee was in agreement with the amendments to the Case for Change as outlined in the paper**.

Mr McConkey said that, on 19 March 2019, EA had received a pre-action letter for judicial review on the grounds that the applicant was challenging the lawfulness of the recent consultation process regarding Craigavon Senior High School. He said that officers had met Junior Counsel on 26 March 2019 to discuss the issues contained in the letter and a response to the applicant had been issued on 10 April 2019 to indicate that EA did not accept that its consultation process in relation to this proposal was unfair or unlawful for any of the reasons as set out in the pre-action letter.

The Chair welcomed the deputation from Craigavon Senior High School to the meeting.

Ms Harkness thanked EA for initiating the review and the consultation process. She said that all seven Dickson Plan schools had been involved in the consultation and she commended officers on their professionalism. She drew attention to the need to expedite the process as quickly as possible for the educational benefits and well-being of young people in the Lurgan area.

Mr Allen also expressed appreciation to EA for initiating the review. He said that the Lurgan campus of Craigavon Senior High School was not fit for purpose. He referred to safeguarding issues at the school and inadequate teaching facilities at Lurgan campus, including no provision on site for sports or extra-curricular activities. The priority of the Board of Governors was the safeguarding of children and staff, followed by the delivery of a curriculum that the children were legally entitled to. He acknowledged EA's response to resolve safeguarding risks. Some however had not been resolved satisfactorily on either a temporary or permanent basis owing to the sharing of facilities with Southern Regional College.

Mr Allen said that the Board of Governors had explored various options as part of the review. It was in agreement with the proposal to operate on a single site in Portadown as a temporary solution until a new building was completed. Its preferred option was to operate as a single school on a new site. He urged EA not to delay taking a decision on this matter any further. The Board of Governors did not wish another cohort of young people to continue to be disadvantaged at the Lurgan campus. He said that, following the

appointment of a new principal, improved management systems and changes to the curriculum had been put in place. The Board of Governors wished to build on recent optimism, address issues and explore new opportunities.

Mrs Craig drew attention to the strengths of the Dickson Plan which she said was highly supported by the community. She said that the appointment of the new principal had given new energy to the community and had resulted in the restructuring of the leadership team and an improved curriculum. She outlined the benefits of operating on one campus in respect of developing the curriculum and improving the school's financial situation. Mrs Craig drew attention to the Memorandum of Understanding which had been developed to provide greater coherence between Dickson Plan schools. She said that while six of the seven schools had signed up to the MoU, it was anticipated that all schools would be signed up once the development proposal process was complete.

Mr Allen urged EA to continue the process without delay. The Board of Governors was deeply concerned about the educational needs and well-being of the young people attending the Lurgan campus. He thanked the Committee for receiving the deputation.

The Chair thanked the deputation for their presentation and the deputation withdrew from the meeting.

A Member referred to transport considerations where pupils opted to enrol at schools outside the Dickson Plan.

Members discussed the vision for Craigavon Senior High School as set out in the Case for Change. This included a mission statement for the short term (2-3 years), the medium term (3-5 years), and the long term (5-10 years). It was pointed out that the Case for Change was considered in conjunction with the Development Proposal. It was therefore the intention that EA, as part of the long term strategy, would seek major capital investment to provide state of the art accommodation for Craigavon Senior High School to operate as a 14-19 school on a new site. All building would be in accordance with DE's Building Handbook.

Discussion ensued on providing clarity around the wording of the Development Proposal to support the consultation process. The Committee agreed that the Development Proposal was an interim solution in preparation for a new build for the school and this should be reflected in an explanatory note after the Development Proposal wording to give clarity in advance of the public consultation exercise. Mr McConkey undertook to liaise with DE officials on the appropriate wording to be added in brackets to the 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 Proposal subject to clarification being provided to the Board, at its meeting on 30 April 2019, on the explanatory note to be added to the Development Proposal.

It was noted that the Proposal would be published and the two month consultation period would commence once clarification had been provided by DE to the Board.

10.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 580 - GLENCRAIG INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to establish a statutory nursery unit to provide 26 part-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/19/8.2) 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. Members noted that the Pre-School Education Group had supported the proposal.

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

10.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 581 - CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to establish a statutory nursery unit to provide 26 part-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/19/8.3) 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. This included the rationale for the proposal, current sustainability of the school, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality, and a response received to the consultation. The single response combined the views of staff, parents and Governors. Members noted that the Pre-School Education Group had supported the proposal.

On the proposal of Sir Gerry Loughran, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee approved the response for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

10.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 583 - ST MACNISSIUS' PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to discontinue St MacNissius' Primary School, Tannaghmore with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/19/8.4) 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. Members noted the outcome of consultation meetings, including issues raised in written submissions to the consultation and at the meetings.

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

10.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 584 - ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, BROLLAGH

Proposal to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/19/8.5) 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. 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. Members noted the outcome of consultation meetings, including issues raised in written submissions to the consultation and at the meetings. It was also noted that, on 15 March 2019, EA had been notified of the outcome of a parental ballot for the school for a proposal for transformation to controlled integrated status. Mr McConkey said that legal advice would be sought in respect of taking this forward.

Mr McConkey said that Development Proposal No 584 was a separate process.

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

10.6 CASTLEWELLAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The following proposals were read in conjunction with each other:

- Proposal to discontinue Castlewellan Primary School with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter
- Proposal to discontinue the Moderate Learning Difficulties class at the school with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mr McConkey presented the papers* (E/4/19/8.6) which set out the rationale in respect of the request to commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposals.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper.

A Member referred to the significant impact of the proposal on the minority community in the area. He referred to previous consideration given by the Committee to other proposals which had impacted on minority communities. In those instances the Committee had 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. He said that an area planning solution should be found that would meet the needs of the community.

Mr McConkey referred to previous consideration given by the Committee to an amalgamated provision for Castlewellan Primary School and Annsborough Integrated Primary School. However, prior to publication, the proposal had become unsustainable as parents of pupils attending Castlewellan Primary School had moved their children to other provisions at the end of the 2017/18 academic year. He said that EA was engaging with NICIE with regard to Annsborough Integrated Primary School and its future location in order to best meet the needs of the community in that area.

The Member emphasised that where sustainability issues impacted on a minority community, social cohesion should form part and parcel of EA's area planning considerations. He expressed concern that the area planning process for Castlewellan Primary School reflected bureaucracy and did not take account of the needs of the community. He asked for a report to be provided to the Committee in six months' time on

progress relating to Annsborough Integrated Primary School and Castlewellan Primary School. This was agreed.

On the proposal of Dr McMorris, seconded by Dr McMorran, 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.

Action: Report to be provided to the Committee in six months' time on progress relating to Annsborough Integrated Primary School and Castlewellan Primary School.

10.7 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL OUTCOMES

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

- (i) Development Proposal No 547 - Ashfield Boys' High School (approved with modification) - an increase in the approved enrolment from 600 to 700 with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter
- (ii) Development Proposal No 557 - Cullnady Primary School - to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter
- (iii) Development Proposal No 562 - Bellarena Primary School - to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

The Committee noted that the following Development Proposals had not been approved:

- (iv) Development Proposal No 523 - Drumlins Integrated Primary School - to establish a statutory nursery unit to provide 26 part-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter
- (v) Development Proposal No 543 - Enniskillen Integrated Primary School - to establish an additional 26 part-time nursery places at Enniskillen Integrated Primary and Nursery School with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 16 May 2019.

The meeting ended at 4.25 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

* Paper issued with agenda

DATE

** Paper tabled