

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held in Antrim Board Centre on 8 February 2018 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chair)

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Collings, Mr M Baker, Mrs P Cooney, Mrs K Scott and Ms L McCall.

The Chair welcomed Ms Cooney, Assistant Director, to her first meeting of the Committee.

Mr S Sands attended in his role as Board Room Apprentice.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Sr C Hegarty and Dr A McMorran.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2018

The minutes* (E/1/18/3) of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 were agreed on the proposal of Mr Craig and seconded by Miss Rainey.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 MUSIC SERVICE (5)

The workshop to consider proposals on a future delivery model for the Music Service would be held on 26 February 2018.

4.2 INEQUALITIES WORKING GROUP (8)

Mr Collings advised that it was intended that the Inequalities Working Group would report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Any elements of the Group's work that related specifically to Education and Children and Young People's Services would be presented to those Committees for consideration.

The Committee was in agreement with this course of action.

Ms O'Connor left the meeting temporarily at 1.16 pm.

4.3 PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND THE STATUTORY DUTY TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE INTEGRATED AND IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION (9.1)

Mr Collings said that DE officials had attended the most recent meeting of the Pre-School Education Group (PEG) to outline DE's position with regard to encouraging and facilitating Integrated and Irish medium education in the pre-school sector. The chair of PEG had asked DE to formalise its position in writing. Mr Collings said that this communication, once received from DE, would be presented to the Children and Young People's Services Committee for consideration.

It was agreed that the DE correspondence would also be presented to the Education Committee for consideration.

Mr Collings advised that the GAR meeting, to be held on 6 February, had been postponed to 21 February. An update on the discussion involving pre-school education at the GAR meeting would be provided to Members at a subsequent meeting.

Ms O'Connor re-entered the meeting at 1.20 pm.

A Member indicated that the DE letter dated 15 January 2018 on pre-school education had been more explicit about the inherited requirement on NDPBs to support Integrated and Irish medium education. He was content however that the Committee should await further correspondence from DE on this matter.

A Member said that DE's letter of 15 January 2018 was its interpretation of the law. He suggested that Mr Collings should seek his own independent legal advice on the matter. Mr Collings took this comment on board.

Action: The DE correspondence, when received, to be considered by the Education Committee as well as the Children and Young People's Services Committee.

4.4 STRATEGIC AREA PLAN - ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2018-19 (10.3)

Mr Collings confirmed that the Catholic Schools' Trustee Service had been informed of the outcome of the Committee's consideration of this matter following the January meeting.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

5.1 ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATION PARTNERS

The Chair advised that representatives from the Controlled Schools' Support Council would be attending the Committee meeting on 8 March.

The Chair also advised that the Committee's decision had been conveyed to the Chief Executive of NICIE that discussion on transformation of schools to integrated status would take place when the Committee met NICIE at a future meeting.

A Member said that Mr Boyd was scheduled to meet the Board of NICIE at its next meeting.

5.2 C2K

The Chair said that, at the Board meeting held on 25 January, a Member had asked for a report to be presented to the Committee on the extent to which schools had access to independent lines outside the C2k network. He advised that this matter would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 8 March.

6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION

Mr Baker presented a paper* (E/2/18/6.1) providing an overview of the process to date to establish Learning Communities and a Leaders' Group within the Irish medium sector. He advised that four Learning Communities had been established to cover geographical areas. Initial meetings had been held which had included representation from EA and support from colleagues in CnaG. The purpose and role of the Learning Communities had been discussed along with the role of EA in supporting the sector.

Members noted the membership of the Leaders' Group. Mr Baker said that EA officers were working with the Learning Communities, the Leaders' Group and colleagues in CnaG to focus activities on school improvement in the sector and to identify key areas of common and complementary need. He highlighted a number of challenges facing the sector relating to staffing issues and the availability of substitute teachers and specialist provision. In addition, specific challenges existed around Early Years' provision and SEN. Mr Baker said that it was essential to carry out a thorough analysis of need within the sector. It was anticipated that support for the sector would be required from outside these groups. The EA would seek to enhance collaboration through external means in order to maximise potential supports to the sector. He said that there were a number of organisations which were supporting the development of pedagogy within the sector. However, it was clear that a strategy was necessary to focus and co-ordinate this development.

The Committee noted a summary of activities within the sector since April 2017, as set out in the paper. It also noted the list of recommendations, taken from the Irish Medium School Leaders' Working Group Report, which set out actions to be taken against the recommendations and the lead body or group to take forward those actions.

Mr Baker said that the Committee would be asked to give consideration to Irish medium bursary funding at its April meeting.

The Board Room Apprentice referred to possible collaboration between English medium and Irish medium schools on digital literacy and queried if such collaboration took place. Mr Baker said that a number of useful collaborative objectives existed within the Shared Education Signature Project. He referred to a specific shared education partnership which focused on the development of digital literacy skills for both pupils and teachers. He said that the knowledge and skills developed in this area would be disseminated to other schools.

A Member queried support available to the Irish medium sector through the Youth Service. Mr Baker undertook to pursue this matter.

Members welcomed the strategic approach being taken to address issues within the sector. The Committee commended the report.

Action: *Identify support available to the Irish medium sector from the Youth Service in a future report.*

7. AREA PLANNING

7.1 PRIORY INTEGRATED COLLEGE

Proposal to increase the enrolment number from 500 to 600, the admission figure to remain at 100, with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/2/18/7.2) which set out the rationale in respect of the request to commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper. Discussion ensued in respect of the potential impact of the proposal on other schools in the locality. Members noted that the number of admissions being received by the school had been over the admission figure of 100 in the last three years. This figure included both first and second preference applications.

On the proposal of Dr McMorris, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed to recommend that the EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

7.2 DUNCLUG COLLEGE

Proposal to establish a General Learning Support Centre for Key Stage 3 & 4 pupils and an Autism Spectrum Disorder Centre for Key Stage 3 & 4 at the school with effect from 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/2/18/7.3) which set out the rationale in respect of the request to commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal. A Member pointed out that the proposal was an outworking of the consideration given by the Children and Young People's Services Committee to enhance unit provision across the region attached to mainstream schools. Members referred to variances in the number of statements of special educational need across the region.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper.

On the proposal of Mr Craig, seconded by Rev Adams, the Committee agreed to recommend that the EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

7.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 541 - GAELSCOIL NEACHTAIN

Proposal to establish a statutory Irish medium nursery unit to provide 26 part time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/2/18/7.4) 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, the 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 consideration of the transformation arrangements of the current pre-school setting from voluntary to statutory, the sustainability of the proposal, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality, and the responses received to the consultation. Members considered EA's draft response to DE.

On the proposal of Mr McMullan, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee approved the response (as set out in the Case for Change) for submission to DE along with the publication of the Proposal.

7.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS - SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

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

- DP 533 St Columban's College, Kilkeel including the Learning Support Centre at the school - to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- DP 534 St Louis' Grammar School, Kilkeel - to increase admissions and enrolment numbers from 80 to 130 and 570 to 860 respectively with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter. The criteria for admissions to the school to be bilateral.
- DP 539 St Matthew's Primary School, Garvaghy - to discontinue with effect from 31 January 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 8 March 2018.

The meeting ended at 1.50 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

* Paper issued with agenda