

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,
19 FEBRUARY 2004 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM**

1. PRESENT

Mrs M Alexander (Chairman)

Mr P H Aiken	Councillor W J Martin
Councillor J F Bell	Mr W Mayne
Councillor P Brannigan	Councillor P P McAleer
Rev J Byrne	Rev C D McClure
Mr M P Campbell	Councillor S McRoberts
Alderman F E Crowe	Very Rev L M McVeigh
Mrs M E Donnell	Very Rev S Rice
Councillor J Feehan	Mr J W Saunders
Mrs S M B Fitzpatrick	Mr A G Sleator
Councillor I E B Hanna	Rev Canon F D Swann
Councillor J Hanna	Rev Canon W R Twaddell
Mr C Mackin	

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs H M McClenaghan, Messrs W Burke, T M Heron, J F Curran, P J A McGee, W B Weir, B O'Hara and for part of the meeting Mr W A Neville.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs S R Brownlee, Dr P Cunningham, Mrs E Gill, Alderman G A Hatch, Mrs D A McBride, Mrs C M McCaul, Councillor P McGinn and Councillor B Monteith.

(Very Rev L M McVeigh left the meeting at 2.45 pm.)

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

On the proposal of Councillor I E B Hanna, seconded by Mr Mackin, the report** (B/2/04/2) prepared by the Human Resources Manager was adopted.

5. MINUTES

On the proposal of Very Rev Fr Rice, seconded by Alderman Crowe, the minutes* (B/1/04/3) of the meeting held on 15 January 2004 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

COMMON FUNDING SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS (6.1)

Mrs McClenaghan confirmed that she had written to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and to the five recognised Teachers' Unions and that she was raising the question of school funding at a series of meetings with assembly members from the political parties with MLA's in the Board's area. One of these parties had been particularly concerned both at the lateness of the allocation and the absence of transparency on the funding criteria for the distribution of money among boards and had decided to consider asking a parliamentary question on both subjects.

Councillor J Hanna said that the continuing lateness of the financial allocation placed boards of governors in a very difficult position and that the timing of the allocation was an unacceptable way to manage education. Councillor Hanna also asked if the Board had any mechanism to make a "one off" increase in the allocation to a school of which he was a governor in order to eliminate a shortfall which had accumulated during the term of office of the previous governors. Mrs McClenaghan said that the Board had no such policy and pointed out that a similar case had been made by a number of schools.

7. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

7.1 DELEGATION TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

The Chairman reported that the deputation had met the Permanent Secretary and that the Chief Executive had issued a press release stating that the deputation had stressed to him that the Board was underfunded in comparison with other Boards. This had led to a very significant increase in the number of teacher redundancies.

Mrs McClenaghan explained that the Department would issue the budget the following week but that it might or might not be issued in time to be considered by the Services Committee on 26 February. She asked the Board to authorise the officers to write to schools early in March to convey to them the budgets recommended by the Services Committee. If however the letter did not arrive in time to be considered by the Services Committee it would be necessary to hold a meeting of the Policy Committee. She asked the Board to authorise the Policy Committee to meet to consider the budgets at 3.30 pm on Wednesday, 3 March if necessary and to authorise the officers to issue to schools the budgets recommended by the Policy Committee.

These provisional arrangements were agreed.

7.2 HOME COMPUTING INITIATIVES

Mr Neville said that the Board's officers had signed an agreement with a company which could supply computers to staff under a scheme initiated by the Government and supported by both Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise. Its purpose was to increase the use of computers in the home and the benefit to the Board would be increased computer literacy among the workforce. There would be no cost to the Board other than the very small cost of the staff time

involved in the Salaries and Wages section in setting up the monthly deductions from salary.

Members welcomed the initiative as indicative of staff development concerns and noted that the Board was the first organisation in Northern Ireland to operate the arrangement.

(Councillor P P McAleer entered the meeting at 3.12 pm.)

7.3 NIAO REPORT : LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

Mrs McClenaghan referred to the report and said that it would be discussed by the Services Committee. She drew attention to areas of the report which were positive in their comments on the Board's activities and recommended to other boards the practices of the Southern Board.

7.4 INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Department had approved in principle the establishment of:-

1. A new integrated primary school in the Cookstown area to be known as Phoenix Integrated Primary School, subject to achieving a minimum enrolment of 12 pupils in P1, meeting the requirement of a minimum of 30% of the pupils from the minority religion and the identification of a suitable site; and
2. An integrated secondary school in the Armagh area subject to a minimum of 50 first year pupils in Year 8, a minimum opening religious balance of 30% : 70% and the identification of a suitable site.

7.5 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman referred to Mr Mayne's recent illness and welcomed him to the meeting.

8. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS : APPROVAL FOR BOARD OFFICERS TO ACT AS DIRECTORS

Mrs McClenaghan reminded the Board that a number of officers acted as directors on Local Strategic Partnerships and other companies and that Article 87 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 provided protection against personal liability incurred in the course of their duties for the Board but did not extend to bodies such as Local Strategic Partnerships.

She had sought the advice of the Boards' solicitors who had advised the chief executives of the five boards that they should inform them of the officers who served and ask the Board to provide as much indemnity as it was permitted to provide. She said that in each case the Board's officers had a valuable role and that she did not wish to withdraw them from the bodies concerned. It was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Councillor I E B Hanna and agreed that Mrs McClenaghan should investigate the

possibility of obtaining indemnity insurance for the officers concerned and report back to the Board at a future meeting. In the meantime the Board noted that the following officers served as directors of companies:-

Mrs H M McClenaghan	Cookstown Strategic Partnership Newry and Mourne Strategic Partnership Northern Ireland Business Education
Mr G P Butler	Armagh Strategic Partnership Dungannon and South Tyrone Strategic Partnership
Mr G Doran	Craigavon Strategic Partnership
Mr D McCool	Banbridge Strategic Partnership
Mrs K O'Hanlon	Developing Early Learning and Thinking Ability

(Councillor J F Bell, Councillor J Feehan, Mr C Mackin and Very Rev S Rice left the meeting at 3.40 pm.)

9. REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Mrs McClenaghan presented a paper* (B/2/04/7) setting out the final draft response which had been prepared following the meeting of the Policy Committee. She said that the present meeting provided the final opportunity for members to make further comments and the Chairman invited them to do so.

Mr Aiken drew attention to the list of facilities in the table at the end of the first page and suggested that the level of support for a very wide range of voluntary youth groups should be included and Mrs Fitzpatrick said that the same applied to a wide range of voluntary pre-school education facilities. It was agreed that Mrs McClenaghan should expand the first page to include references to both items, either in the table or otherwise.

Councillor J Hanna and Councillor McRoberts said that their respective councils had taken advice on the best model and had been supportive of the role of the Board. In reply to a question from Mr Sleator, Mrs McClenaghan said that the five chief executives in recommending the draft responses had made a decision not to recommend that their boards should favour one of the five models to the exclusion of the others. It was agreed that the draft response should be submitted subject to the amendments proposed by Mr Aiken and Mrs Fitzpatrick.

10. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN : 2004-2007

Mr Aiken referred to page 11 and asked if the partnership working demonstrated by the role of the Youth Service Advisory Committee should be included. Mr Sleator referred to section 4 and asked that there should be a reference to the situation regarding funding. It was agreed that both items should be included in the Plan.

Mrs McClenaghan also outlined various changes which had been suggested by the officers since the circulation of the first draft and which reflected the responses made through consultation.

It was agreed to adopt the Plan.

(Councillor J Hanna and Councillor W J Martin left the meeting at 4.01 pm.)

11. POLICY COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (P/2/04/9) of the meeting held on 3 February were noted.

12. EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES

12.1 MEMBERS PRESENT (1)

Mrs Donnell said that her name was not recorded in the list of members present and that the note at the end of minute 8 that she had left the meeting at 2.45 pm was also incorrect. She had in fact withdrawn from the meeting at 2.45 pm, returned at 2.47 pm and had otherwise attended for the entire meeting.

12.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL IN REGIONAL TOWNS AND CITIES : DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (14)

Mr Sleator asked when it would be appropriate for Board members who were not members of the Education Committee to raise questions which did not appear to be covered by the paper or the minutes. He was informed that the Education Committee would discuss the matter again at its March meeting and that it would be appropriate for such points to be raised when its minutes were being considered by the Board on 18 March.

On the proposal of Alderman Crowe, seconded by Mr Campbell, the minutes* (E/2/04/10) of the meeting held on 3 February were adopted subject to the corrections in relation to Mrs Donnell's attendance.

13. TEACHERS' STAFFING COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (TSC/1/04/11) of the meeting held on 21 January were noted.

14. SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES

14.1 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION (4.4)

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to this minute which referred to requests for mobile classrooms. While the minute did not contain any recommendation she wished to make it clear that the Board should not provide accommodation as a consequence of consideration by a Committee which did not have responsibility for accommodation. She confirmed that the schools in question would be considered with all other schools by the Services Committee at its February meeting.

Alderman Crowe drew attention to the inadequate staffing in the Southern Health and Social Services Board's Speech Therapy Service which was of concern to his Council.

14.2 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY BILL (9)

Mr Aiken drew attention to a reference to consultation about this Bill in relation to a document which had been due to be released in January. Mr Burke said that much of the consultation had already taken place and that the Department had decided not to issue a new consultative document. There was also some doubt about the date when the Bill would become law.

In reply to a question from Councillor I E B Hanna about future consultation with schools, Mr Burke said that both principal teachers and governors would be consulted when the draft legislation was issued.

On the proposal of Mr Campbell, seconded by Councillor I E B Hanna, the minutes* (SE/1/04/12) of the meeting held on 15 January were adopted.

15. SERVICES COMMITTEE : MINUTES

15.1 COMMON FUNDING FORMULA : DEPUTATION (5.1)

Councillor Brannigan drew attention to the disappointment expressed by the Chairman in the second paragraph about the deferral of the Formula and said that it was shared by other members.

15.2 TENDERS (12.1)

Mr Campbell drew attention to the wide disparity in prices in relation to T2711. Mr McGee confirmed that the prices entered on the tender forms had been correctly recorded.

The minutes* (S/1/04/13) of the meeting held on 29 January were adopted.

16. ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS : MINUTES

The minutes* (B/2/04/14) of the meeting held on 17 December 2003 were noted.

The meeting ended at 4.14 pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE

* Paper circulated

** Paper tabled

WBW/AE

20 February 2004