

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2006 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM

1. PRESENT Mrs M E Donnell (Chairperson)

Councillor P Brannigan	Dr M Hollinger
Mrs S R Brownlee	Councillor P P McAleer
Mr M P Campbell	Mrs C M McCaul
Dr P Cunningham	Rev Canon J McKegey
Councillor B Curran	Councillor S McRoberts
Mr B Doran	Councillor R Mulligan
Mr P Gildea	Professor P Murphy
Councillor I E B Hanna	Mr A G Sleator
Councillor J Hanna	Mr J K Twyble
Councillor R A Harkness	Mrs E Wright

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs H M McClenaghan, Dr C Mangan, Mrs K Ryan, Messrs R Bullick, T M Heron, A P Murphy, Mrs L McCall and for part of the meeting Mr G Doran.

3. LOUGH ROAD LEARNING CENTRE, LURGAN : SCIENCE AWARD

The Chairperson welcomed Ciaran Morgan, Andrea Fitzsimmons and Lee Hanratty, Key Stage 4 pupils at the Lough Road Learning Centre who had won the Young Innovator Science Award in June 2006. She also welcomed Mrs P Curran and Mrs V Campbell from the Centre. Mrs Curran stated that she had been very proud of the pupils' achievement in being outright winners at the event which had been held in the Odyssey Arena. The pupils explained that the science project had taken the form of a chemistry board game called 'React'. The Chairperson congratulated the pupils on their achievement and expressed appreciation that their trophy would be displayed within Board Headquarters.

(The visitors withdrew from the meeting at 2.40 pm. Dr Hollinger entered the meeting at 2.40 pm and Mr Gildea entered at 2.41 pm.)

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr P H Aiken, Rev J Byrne, Councillor F Dawson, Mr C Mackin, Mrs M M Magennis, Mr W Mayne, Councillor J McCrum, Very Rev L M McVeigh and Rev D Somerville.

5. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to funding arrangements for posts contained within the report. It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mulligan, and agreed that the report** (B/10/06/2) prepared by the Head of Human Resources be adopted.

(Councillor J Hanna entered the meeting at 2.45 pm.)

6. BOARD MEETING : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2006

On the proposal of Mr Sleator, seconded by Councillor J Hanna, the minutes* (B/9/06/3) of the meeting held on 13 September 2006 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive.

7. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

7.1 REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION ON 7 OCTOBER 2006

The Chairperson reported that the Chairpersons and Chief Executives of the Education Boards had been invited to meet with the Minister on 7 October. She advised that 11 policy papers on a range of themes had been expected in advance of the meeting with initial views being sought on the day. However, these papers had not been circulated and the Minister had explained at the meeting that she had requested her officials to carry out further work on their contents and issue them in two or three weeks' time. The Chairperson advised that the meeting had been cordial with the Minister exploring how her preferred policy of decentralisation might apply to structures and particularly to the relationship between the Education & Skills Authority and schools. Other issues discussed included autonomy of schools, the employing authority / employer roles of ESA and schools, sectoral support and making progress on the aspirations in 'A Shared Future'.

The Chairperson outlined the themes of the policy papers which had been disclosed subsequent to the meeting with the Minister. Mrs McClenaghan stated that initial consideration would be given by officers to the themes so that on receipt of the papers from the Minister informed responses could be presented for the Board's consideration at its meeting on 8 November. She advised that all education partners would receive copies of the policy papers.

7.2 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM FOR MEMBERS

The Chairperson reported that the Boards' Chairpersons had been asked to attend a meeting on 30 October to discuss performance management arrangements for Board Members. She advised that she would report on this meeting to the Board at its meeting on 8 November.

(Mrs Brownlee entered the meeting at 2.58 pm.)

7.3 'RPA MOVING FORWARD' : ISSUE 3 – SEPTEMBER 2006

The Board noted the newsletter** issued by the Department of Education.

7.4 BRIEFING PAPER ON THE EQIA ON THE REGISTRATION AND GRANT-AID SCHEME FOR LOCAL VOLUNTARY YOUTH GROUPS

The Board noted that the five Education and Library Boards were conducting an Equality Impact Assessment on the above policy. The Chairperson stated that the briefing paper** was being circulated to enable individual responses to be submitted prior to the closing date of 30 November.

8. STANDING ORDERS : SIGNING AND SEALING

The Chairperson stated that the common five Board Standing Orders, approved by the Southern Board on 16 February, had now been approved by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department of Finance and Personnel.

It was proposed by Rev Canon McKegney, seconded by Councillor I E B Hanna, and agreed to authorise the Chairperson and Chief Executive to sign and seal copies for submission to DE.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

9.1 LIBRARY COMMITTEE : RESIGNATION OF MR P GILDEA

Mrs McClenaghan reported that Statute required that at least one member of the Library Committee should be a teacher serving at the time of appointment in a grant-aided school or institution of further education in the area of the Board. She advised that as Mr Gildea had been the only serving teacher on this Committee the Board was obligated to fill this vacancy in accordance with Statute. As some Members were absent from the meeting, she undertook to write to those Members who were serving teachers at the time of their appointment to request their consideration to serve on the Library Committee.

9.2 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to the unease of the Audit Committee at the size of its membership. The Chairperson of the Audit Committee invited Members, particularly those with financial or governance backgrounds, to consider serving on the Committee.

10. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION : SCHEME

The Chairperson stated that the Scheme* (B/10/06/8) for the Sub-Committee for Pre-School Education had been amended to reflect the new reporting structure to the Joint Education Committee. It was proposed by Councillor McRoberts, seconded by Dr Hollinger, and agreed that the Scheme be adopted and the Chairperson and Chief Executive be authorised to sign and seal copies.

The Chairperson referred to the possibility of holding a meeting of the Sub-Committee on 26 October to consider the PEAG Planned Provision for 2007/08 prior to its submission to DE. She advised that early submission of the PEAG Plan would enable play groups to be notified at an earlier stage of the number of funded places available to them. It was agreed that the membership of the Sub-Committee would remain as at present and that Mrs McClenaghan would issue an agenda for a meeting to be held on 26 October.

11. JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2006

Mr Campbell outlined the recommendations contained within the minutes of the first meeting of the Education Committee. He drew attention in particular to the consultation on the proposed amalgamation of the 16 further education colleges to create 6 new further

education colleges, the priority areas within CASS for 2006/07, the Extended Schools' Initiative attracting potential funding of almost £4.2m for schools within the Southern and Western Board areas, the budget position to date, the curriculum reserve support fund and the number of beginning teachers in Northern Ireland in permanent employment. Mr Campbell also drew attention to the concern raised at the meeting in relation to substitute teachers who did not hold professional teaching qualifications and stated that he had since been advised that DE was querying the qualifications of approximately three teachers within NI. He further drew attention to a DE circular advising schools and employing authorities that as from 1 September 2006 only substitute teachers on the NI Substitute Teacher Register could be employed to work in schools.

Mrs McClenaghan referred to the query raised at the meeting concerning rates of pay for lecturers. She advised that the proposed settlement for lecturers would breach the 3.5% pay award threshold dictated by HM Treasury and that the Department for Employment and Learning had written to the Department of Finance and Personnel to request the waiving of this threshold. She understood that a response was still awaited. She drew attention to a further issue under consideration involving a return to comparability between rates of pay for further education lecturers and teachers. She stated that DEL would have to be able to resource the additional costs that would arise in the individual colleges. Councillor Curran who had raised the query confirmed that he was satisfied at receiving a response.

It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that the minutes* (E/9/06/9) of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 be adopted.

12. JOINT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2006

Mrs McCaul reported that all schools had been notified of the new management structure across the two Board areas. She advised that a joint bid from the WELB and SELB had been successful in securing monies for Lifeskills training and outlined the positive relationships being established between the newly appointed Transition Officer and staff in special schools. She referred to a review being undertaken by Homefirst Community Trust into future day support services for people with learning disabilities and outlined the Committee's concern that no educational representation existed on the Trust's project board and project team. Mrs McCaul also referred to the consultation paper on Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity for Travellers in Education and to Member comments requesting that a more holistic approach to traveller welfare be included in the Boards' response.

Dr Cunningham advised that he was associated with the Committee which had initiated the review to be undertaken within the Homefirst Community Trust area. He stated that the Committee hoped to extend this model of provision for persons aged 14 years and over to all areas within NI and to specifically include education and health services. He confirmed that the review within the Homefirst Community Trust area was focusing on health services at this moment in time.

It was proposed by Mrs McCaul, seconded by Councillor Brannigan, and agreed that the minutes* (CYPS/9/06/10) of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 be adopted.

(Dr Cunningham left the meeting at 3.50 pm.)

13. JOINT YOUTH COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Twyble drew attention to the presentation delivered at the meeting detailing the structure of the Youth Service, the impact of collaboration and its development across the two Board areas and financial information. He referred to the imminent appointment of the Child Protection Officer for the Youth Service and to the possibility of establishing a Stakeholders' Forum within each Board comprising Board Members and other persons with youth interests.

It was proposed by Mr Twyble, seconded by Councillor Brannigan, and agreed that the minutes* (Y/9/06/11) of the meeting held on 20 September 2006 be adopted.

14. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (M/9/06/12) of the meeting held on 13 September 2006 was noted.

15. FINANCE COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Sleator drew attention to the attendance at the Committee of representatives from Drumcree College and CCMS to discuss the school's financial plan. He outlined the Committee's recommendation to approve the plan for one year only, subject to DE approval, on condition that management allowances be reviewed and non-teaching costs be further examined. He also highlighted the adverse variance of £358k at schools' centre at 31 July 2006 on account of the rising costs associated with long term teacher sickness absence and rates and advised that a report would be presented to the Committee identifying trends of long term sickness and areas of particular concern.

Mr Sleator advised that the additional allocations received in year would be factored into the delegated schools' plans. He stated that these additional allocations meant that the delegated schools' carry over could be significantly higher than forecasted.

Councillor J Hanna considered that the Board should safeguard its interests when applying for a new build within a green belt area by ensuring that the site was designated for educational purposes. Mr Murphy advised that the Board followed guidelines in relation to identifying sites for educational purposes. It also carried out an economic appraisal for any major capital work and submitted this options paper to DE for consideration. He advised that the Board was also obliged to use the Valuation and Lands Agency in all its dealings with land and property values. Councillor Hanna requested that consideration be given to writing to the Planning Service to ensure that sufficient land for educational purposes be provided in the Area Plans.

It was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Mrs Wright, and agreed that the minutes* (F/9/06/13) of the meeting held on 22 September 2006 be adopted.

16. SCHOOLS & SERVICES COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Councillor McRoberts advised that the Southern Board's share of the additional allocation for New Nutritional Standards for School Meals was £375k. She outlined the recommendations arising from the NI Assembly's Environment Committee in relation to new safety measures on home to school transport and she expressed her appreciation of the progress taken to promote the safety of Board children in this respect. She drew attention to the Development Proposal concerning Clogher Valley Integrated Primary

School and outlined the concerns raised by Members of the Advisory Sub-Committee for Controlled Schools in relation to the impact on the existing schools in this area of declining enrolment. Councillor McRoberts briefly updated Members on the major capital programme for 2006/07.

Councillor Harkness wished to correct comments attributed to him in the minutes. In relation to the Development Proposal for Clogher Valley Integrated Primary School the following should read: *“He explained that two of the schools no longer had a Principal and that he thought one school in the Clogher Valley region would be the best option.”* In relation to complaints received concerning minor works required at Ballyhannon Lodge the following should read: *“He reported that he had received 18 complaints from local residents.”*

Rev Canon McKegney advised that a comment attributed to him in the minutes was incorrect. In relation to the Development Proposal for Clogher Valley Integrated Primary School the following should read: *“Rev Canon McKegney stated that at present there were 3 struggling schools in an area of declining enrolment.”*

It was proposed by Councillor McRoberts, seconded by Mrs Brownlee, and agreed that, subject to the above amendments, the minutes* (SS/9/06/14) of the meeting held on 21 September 2006 be adopted.

(Councillor Curran left the meeting at 4.15 pm.)

17. LIBRARY COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Campbell referred to the importance of marketing Saturday opening of the Irish and Local Studies Library, the Library Committee Working Group’s intention to visit libraries within other Board areas prior to the move to a single library authority and the book token gifts to be provided to Hospital Library volunteers at Christmas. He highlighted the recommendation of the Committee in relation to the report on changes to Branch Library provision that the Board would move to formal consultation on the closure of Moneymore and Waringstown Libraries and that opening hours for Cookstown and Lurgan Libraries would increase to 53 hours of opening per week which would become the standard for flagship libraries.

(Mrs McCaul left the meeting at 4.20 pm.)

In a presentation Mrs Ryan advised that a review of Library Services had begun in September 2004. She drew attention to the high rate of decline in book loans over a ten year period, 1994/95 to 2003/04, and provided Members with details of stock purchases within the same period. In 2005 the Library Service had effected a package of savings resulting in a reduction of 6 posts and had categorised Branch Libraries into three bands to help prioritise changes. She drew attention to considerations to be given to the Government’s ‘Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries’ document and also advised that DCAL was requiring an annual stock budget per head of population with target spend of £1.50 per capita in 2006/07, £2.00 in 2007/08 and £2.50 in 2008/09. She outlined the findings of the Library survey, initiated in March 2006, and highlighted usage patterns within two flagship libraries in band 1, Cookstown and Lurgan, and two libraries in smaller settlements with reasonable access to a flagship library (band 3), ie Moneymore and Waringstown. She confirmed that the adoption of the Library Committee’s recommendation meant that the Board would be entering into consultation on the

proposed closure of Moneymore and Waringstown Libraries and to extend the opening hours of Cookstown and Lurgan Libraries.

(Mr Sleator left the meeting at 4.25 pm.)

Councillor J Hanna stated that he was opposed to the closure of any library in principle but he was aware of the financial constraints imposed on the Board. He advised that he was in agreement with proposals to extend library opening hours in the evening and considered that the two issues in the proposal should be separated into discrete proposals for consultation purposes. He was aware that the mobile service had a good uptake in areas; however he drew attention to a village where he understood the service had low usage.

Mrs Ryan confirmed that the Library Committee would also be reviewing the mobile service. In response to a query from Mr Doran, Mrs Ryan advised that book loans for children had remained constant but adult book loans had fallen.

Councillor McAleer advised that Cookstown District Council at its meeting earlier in the week had expressed its opposition to the proposed closure of Moneymore Branch Library. He expressed concern that any pre-conceived outcome might exist at this time. Mrs Ryan stated that officers would be consulting with Cookstown District Council during the consultation period and confirmed that the staff in the Library had been kept informed of developments as they progressed.

It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Councillor Harkness, that the minutes* (L/9/06/15) of the meeting held on 26 September 2006 be adopted. The Chairperson called for a vote on adopting the minutes which resulted as follows:

For 17 Against 1

The Chairperson declared that the minutes of the Library Committee had been adopted.

18. TEACHING APPOINTMENTS' COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (TAC/9/06/16) of the meeting held on 20 September 2006 was noted.

19. COMMITTEE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PERIPATETIC TEACHERS

The minutes* (PT/9/06/17.1 and 17.2) of the meetings held on 13 and 22 September 2006 were noted.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE

* Paper circulated

** Paper tabled

12 October 2006

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