

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2007 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM

1. PRESENT Mrs M E Donnell (Chairperson)

Mr P H Aiken	Councillor P P McAleer
Councillor P Brannigan	Rev Canon J McKegney
Mrs S R Brownlee	Councillor S McRoberts
Rev J Byrne	Very Rev L M McVeigh
Mr M P Campbell	Councillor R Mulligan
Councillor J Feehan	Councillor M Murphy
Mr P Gildea	Professor P Murphy
Councillor P Gildernew	Mr A G Sleator
Councillor J Hanna	Rev D Somerville
Councillor R A Harkness	Mr J K Twyble
Dr M Hollinger	Councillor Dr P A Weir
Mrs M M Magennis	Mrs E Wright
Mr W Mayne	

2. IN ATTENDANCE

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

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr P Cunningham, Mrs C M McCaul and Councillor J McCrum. It was agreed that Mrs McClenaghan would send a card to Mrs McCaul offering the Board's best wishes on a speedy recovery.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to funding arrangements for posts contained within the report. It was proposed by Councillor Harkness, seconded by Mr Campbell, and agreed that the report** (B/12/07/2) prepared by the Head of Human Resources be adopted.

5. BOARD MEETING : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2007

On the proposal of Mr Twyble, seconded by Rev Canon McKegney, the minutes* (B/11/07/3) of the meeting held on 14 November 2007 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS : JOB EVALUATION (6.2)

Mr McGreevy advised that a meeting of the Joint Negotiating Council had been held on 30 November 2007 to ascertain if agreement could be reached by both the Trade Union Side and Management Side on the implementation of Job Evaluation

for Classroom Assistants. He reported that a vote had been taken at that meeting which had resulted in a collective agreement being reached. He stated that the Boards would therefore be issuing a letter to Classroom Assistants on an individual basis the following week to advise that agreement had been reached on 30 November 2007 and to provide Classroom Assistants with the opportunity to access that agreement. Mr McGreevy highlighted that the agreement would not be enforced on any Classroom Assistant.

6.2 FUNDING COMMITMENT DISCLOSURE IN ANNUAL ACCOUNTS : LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY (8.1.2)

The Board noted the letter* (B/12/07/4.2) from the Permanent Secretary dated 27 November 2007 directing Boards on the revised wording to be used within the Funding Commitment Disclosure Note. Mr Heron presented a paper** (B/12/07/4.2) detailing the additional wording to be added to the Statement on Internal Control in the Annual Accounts for 2006/07 and the Financial Performance Commentary in the Annual Report for 2006/07.

Mr Sleator referred to the risks which could arise from the new policy on restricted end year flexibility explained in the note. It was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Mrs Wright, and agreed that the revised wording would be incorporated into the Statement on Internal Control and the Financial Performance Commentary within the Annual Report 2006/07.

Mr Aiken referred to the reference to Standing Orders within the Permanent Secretary's letter. He sought clarification on the position of Joint Committee minutes where either SELB or WELB would approve the recommendations contained within joint Committee minutes and the other Board would reject them. Mrs McClenaghan undertook to discuss this matter with the Chief Executive of the WELB.

6.3 NOMINATIONS TO THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE AND THE SOUTH WEST COLLEGE (12)

The Chairperson reported that following the November Board meeting two members had indicated an interest in serving on the Governing Body of the South West College. It was proposed by Professor Murphy, seconded by Mr Sleator, and agreed that Councillor R Mulligan and Councillor Dr P A Weir be nominated to serve on this Governing Body.

6.4 BOARD AGENDA AND PAPERS (9.3)

Further to the Board's decision at its last meeting to reduce the amount of paper circulated to Members, it was agreed that for a trial period Members could receive their Board agenda and papers by CD, e-mail or by post. Members undertook to notify the Minute Secretary of their preference to receive papers.

7. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

WELCOME

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Phelim Gildernew from Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council to his first meeting of the Board.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION EXPANSION PROGRAMME : ALLOCATION OF PLACES FOR THE 2008/09 SCHOOL YEAR

The Board noted that the DE letter** (B/12/07/5) dated 4 December 2007 was advising that children in their final pre-school year should be given preference by schools over children not in their final pre-school year. Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to the absence of legislation in this process and outlined the difficulties which would arise as a result of the already agreed timetable for action and the finding of money for oversubscription of nursery places. She advised that the Transfer Officers of the five Boards had met to discuss the letter and had submitted a response to DE earlier in the day stating that the process identified in the letter of 4 December was unworkable.

ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

Mrs McClenaghan provided an overview of issues discussed at the Accountability Meeting on 7 December 2007 involving the Permanent Secretary, the Chairperson and her.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF COOKSTOWN LIBRARY AND COLLEGE

Mrs McClenaghan referred to the successful official opening of Cookstown Library and College on 28 November 2007. She expressed gratitude to staff at the South West College for their assistance in the arrangements with the official opening.

7.5 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL CONSULTATION MEETINGS : DRAFT BUDGET 2008 – 2011

Mrs McClenaghan thanked those Members who had attended the DFP consultation meeting the previous evening. She advised that DE was holding a consultation meeting on 7 January 2008 in Armagh City Hotel to discuss the education budget and that she would be informing schools and the Youth Service of this meeting.

SCHOOL VISITS

The Chairperson stated that Mrs McClenaghan and she had visited schools in Moy, Dungannon and Cookstown on 19 November 2007 and schools in the Banbridge area on 26 November 2007.

8. MINISTER FOR EDUCATION'S STATEMENT : OUTLINING A VISION FOR OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Board noted the Minister's Statement* (B/12/07/6).

9. PRESS RELEASE : FINANCE MINISTER PUBLISHES FRAMEWORK ON LOCATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS

The Board noted the Press Release* (B/12/07/7).

10. TEACHERS' PREMATURE RETIREMENT SCHEME : LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY DATED 27 NOVEMBER 2007

The Board noted the DE letter* (B/12/07/8) advising that from 1 April 2008 employers would assume responsibility for all costs associated with enhancement of teacher pensions. Where the Board decided to award added years by reason of efficient discharge or redundancy it would be required to make full payment of the capitalised value (lifetime payment) of the additional pension to DE. Mrs McClenaghan stated that the Chief Executives had discussed this issue with the Permanent Secretary earlier in the week and had also asked him to specify the maximum number of applications for premature retirement to be considered within each Board area. Mr Campbell received confirmation that these arrangements did not affect teachers who would be retiring on health grounds.

Mr Sleator stated that the implications arising from this letter were more wide-ranging than merely consideration of financial issues. He drew attention to possible changes in the age profile of the teaching staff in schools with perhaps the loss to a school of younger teachers more recently trained in the delivery of curricular issues.

11. WORKING PARTY RESPONSE TO POLICY PAPER 21 : SECTORAL SUPPORT POST RPA

Rev Canon McKegney presented the draft Response* (B/12/07/9) and drew attention to the positive collaboration and the shared interests of the education partners who served on the Working Party.

It was proposed by Dr Hollinger, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed to approve the Response.

12. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AS TO PRIMARY (INCLUDING NURSERY) AND SECONDARY EDUCATION NO 218 : COLLONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Minister had approved the proposal to close Collone Primary School with effect from 31 August 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter.

(Councillors Brannigan and Feehan and Rev Mr Somerville left the meeting at 3.50 pm. Very Rev Fr McVeigh left the meeting temporarily at 3.50 pm.)

13. FINANCE COMMITTEE

13.1 MINUTES

Mrs Wright drew attention to the DE letter dated 6 November 2007 advising that the Board had formally been allocated £4,512k out of its total EYF carry over of £17,852k and also referred to the recommendations arising from the Committee's consideration of this matter.

It was proposed by Mrs Wright, seconded by Mr Campbell, and agreed that the minutes* (F/11/07/11.1) of the meeting held on 23 November 2007 be adopted.

13.2 REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE PERMANENT SECRETARY ON 7 DECEMBER 2007

Mr Heron outlined the background to the current EYF position and drew attention to DE correspondence, DE's assessment of the Board's EYF committed and uncommitted expenditure analysis in 2007/8 and the Finance Committee's concerns particularly that EYF monies restricted from the delegated schools' budget would remain committed to SELB schools.

Mr Sleator stated that Mrs Donnell, Mrs Wright, Mrs McClenaghan, Mr Heron and he had met the Permanent Secretary on 7 December 2007 to raise the Committee's concerns and to demonstrate that DE's analysis of SELB need relating to EYF expenditure had been erroneous. Mr Sleator stated that they had pointed out to the Permanent Secretary that no account had been taken of the Board's prudent spending in previous years and its decision to restrict spend on maintenance works in times of financial hardship. They had explained that DE's assessment of SELB maintenance monies had not taken account of the fact that two thirds of the Maintenance budget was planned and one third was response maintenance, neither had it acknowledged that not all planned works had been at contract stage at the end of August. Mr Sleator stressed that Members had been highly concerned that SELB schools were being denied access to their own resources and that the risk arose that unspent SELB resources could be lost to SELB schools while not being lost to Education overall in Northern Ireland.

Mr Sleator stated that DE had agreed to issue a letter to schools to inform them of the change in EYF policy. Mr Heron advised that the draft letter had been issued to the Chief Finance Officers of the five Boards for comment. He reported that the letter did confirm that the balance of EYF monies would remain committed to schools and would be released, when required, within the constraints of Treasury policy. Mr Heron also advised that details of school allocations for 2008/09 were still to be agreed.

Members expressed concern that the risk could still exist that unspent SELB resources could be lost to SELB schools particularly following the establishment of ESA. The Board agreed that the following Statement of Understanding would be submitted to DE for confirmation:

“Based on the meeting with the Permanent Secretary and the report back, the Board is of the view that the £17.8m EYF as at 31 March 2007 remains committed to the SELB and that SELB schools retain full entitlement to their individual surpluses and to the reserves held at centre for the benefit of SELB schools.”

(Mrs Magennis and Mr Mayne left the meeting at 4.22 pm.)

14. SCHOOLS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

14.1 MINUTES

Councillor McRoberts drew attention to ongoing work to review the Reference Form; the minutes of the Advisory Sub-Committee for Controlled Schools held on 10 October 2007 and 15 November 2007; the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee held on 9 October 2007; the draft Investment Strategy which would

receive consideration later in the meeting; and the presentation given on the Procurement Section.

(Very Rev Fr McVeigh re-entered the meeting at 4.28 pm.)

Mrs McClenaghan referred to Development Proposal as to Primary (including Nursery) and Secondary Education No 221** which set out the proposal of the Focus (NI) Learning Trust to establish a new federated primary school initially on three campuses in Northern Ireland with effect from 1 September 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter. Comments on the proposal were sought from Members.

The Board expressed concern that this proposal would create a further educational provider particularly in light of the need for the Board to have regard to surplus places in existing schools. Attention was drawn to the limited enrolment numbers proposed for the three campuses in light of the indicative figures given in the "Policy for Sustainable Schools". Concern was also expressed that the establishment of such a school would create a precedent for religious minority groups.

It was noted that the Board was obliged to publish the Development Proposal.

It was proposed by Councillor McRoberts, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that the minutes* (SS/11/07/12) of the meeting held on 15 November 2007 be adopted.

(Councillors Hanna and Mulligan left the meeting at 4.38 pm.)

14.2 CRAIGAVON TWO TIER REPORT

The Report** (B/12/07/12.1) providing an historical overview of the Craigavon two-tier system and the conclusions of the review was noted. In order to progress the recommendations contained in the Report the Board agreed to nominate Mrs M E Donnell and Mr J K Twyble to serve on the Project Board to assist in the future proofing of the Craigavon Two-Tier System.

Members expressed appreciation that the review had been approached in such a professional manner. Mrs McClenaghan confirmed that the Report had been sent to the Minister of Education and the Chairperson of the Assembly Education Committee.

(Mrs Brownlee, Councillor Gildernew and Professor Murphy left the meeting at 4.42 pm.)

14.3 BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE : DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT, DRAFT BUDGET AND DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Mr Murphy presented the response* (B/12/07/12.2). Mr Aiken referred to comments raised at the Schools & Services Committee in relation to the retention of rural libraries and those libraries in disadvantaged areas. It was agreed that the Working Group of the Library Committee would consider these issues at its meeting the following day and would submit comments to be incorporated into the response.

Subject to the addition of comments from the Library Committee's Working Group, it was proposed by Councillor McRoberts, seconded by Mr Campbell, and agreed that the response be adopted.

(Rev Canon McKegney left the meeting at 4.50 pm.)

15. LIBRARY COMMITTEE

15.1 MINUTES

Mr Aiken referred to the presentation given by the Friends of Moneymore Library at the meeting. He stated that the Library's new opening hours would be operational from January 2008 and he congratulated those involved in making this possible. Mr Aiken also drew attention to the presentation given by Ms Irene Knox, Chief Executive (Designate) of NILA, copies of which were available for interested Members. He advised that the Budget Working Group was meeting the following day at which consideration would be given to effecting savings in the budget in light of the draft Libraries budget for 2008/09. He requested the Board's approval that recommendations from the Budget Working Group would be presented to the January meeting of the Board and that delegated authority would also be given to him to consider these matters further with the Chief Librarian to enable a report to be presented to the January Board meeting. The Board so agreed.

It was proposed by Mr Aiken, seconded by Mr Campbell, and agreed that the minutes* (L/11/07/13) of the meeting held on 21 November 2007 be adopted.

15.2 RETIREMENT OF CHIEF LIBRARIAN

Mrs Ryan advised that she planned to retire on 31 March 2008. Mrs McClenaghan paid tribute to her contributions to the Library Service and to the Senior Management Team. She outlined proposals for the filling of the post of Chief Librarian in an acting capacity. It was proposed by Councillor Harkness, seconded by Councillor Murphy, and agreed that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Library Committee and Mrs McClenaghan assisted by the Head of Human Resources would serve on the recruitment panel. The Chairperson of the Board and the Chairperson of the Library Committee also paid tribute to Mrs Ryan for her distinguished contributions to the Library Service.

16. JOINT YOUTH COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Aiken referred to future meetings of the Stakeholders Forum; the achievement of Mr K Quinn, an outdoor education instructor at Shannaghmore, in becoming the World Kayak Surfing Champion; and the successful study visit to Abderdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council. He also referred to the paper entitled "A new pattern for Youth Services" which had been developed as a result of concerns from ELBs, the Youth Council for NI and YouthNet in relation to the positioning of the Youth Service within the new structures. Mr Aiken drew attention to hard decisions which would have to be taken arising from the 4.8% cut in the draft Budget for Youth for 2008/09 which, taking account of the rate of inflation, equated to a 7.5% cut.

It was proposed by Mr Aiken, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that the minutes* (Y/11/07/14) of the meeting held on 21 November 2007 be adopted.

17. JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Campbell referred to the establishment of a sub-committee to provide draft responses to two DEL consultation documents and a further sub-committee to consider the draft response to the consultation document "A Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy for Northern Ireland". He also drew attention to the Extended Schools' Annual Reports for 2006/07 and stated that clarification was being sought by the Extended Schools' Project Management Board in relation to the awarding of responsibility points to extended schools' co-ordinators.

(Councillor Murphy left the meeting at 5.06 pm.)

It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Very Rev Fr McVeigh, and agreed that the minutes* (E/11/07/15) of the meeting held on 22 November 2007 be adopted.

18. JOINT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Campbell drew attention to the request for officers to be authorised to process statements during the holiday period until the January meeting of the Committee. He referred to the presentation given on the Traveller Education Support Service and to the support and advice given by this Service to traveller children and their parents.

It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Mrs Wright, and agreed that the minutes* (CYPS/11/07/16) of the meeting held on 22 November 2007 be adopted.

19. TEACHING APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (TAC/10/07/17) of meetings held on 16 October 2007 were noted

20. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE : MINUTES

The minutes* (MC/11/07/18) of a meeting held on 14 November 2007 were noted.

21. SCHOOL REDUNDANCY

It was proposed by Mr Aiken, seconded by Mr Twyble, and agreed that discussion in relation to this matter would be held in committee.

It was proposed by Dr Hollinger, seconded by Councillor McRoberts, and agreed to resume the meeting.

The Board noted that it had been proposed by Very Rev Fr McVeigh, seconded by Mrs Wright, and agreed that Mrs M Owens, a Classroom Assistant at St Joseph's Primary School, Meigh, would be offered premature retirement on the grounds of redundancy with effect from 31 August 2007.

**22. ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND EDUCATION AND LIBRARY
BOARDS : MINUTES**

The minutes* (B/12/07/20) of a meeting held on 7 November 2007 were noted.

The meeting ended at 5.15 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE

* Paper circulated

** Paper tabled

14 December 2007

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