

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2007 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM

1. PRESENT Mrs M E Donnell (Chairperson)

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

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs H M McClenaghan, Mrs K Ryan, Messrs R Bullick, 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 Mrs S R Brownlee, Dr P Cunningham, Councillor I E B Hanna and Councillor J McCrum.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Mrs McClenaghan drew attention to funding arrangements for posts contained within the report. It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Mrs Wright, and agreed that the report** (B/11/07/2) prepared by the Head of Human Resources be adopted.

5. BOARD MEETING : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2007

It was noted that Mr Aiken had not been part of the delegation to meet the DCAL Committee of the Assembly on 13 September 2007. On the proposal of Councillor McRoberts, seconded by Rev Mr Somerville, the minutes* (B/10/07/3) of the meeting held on 10 October 2007 were approved as an accurate record, subject to the above amendment, and were signed by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP : COUNCILLOR M MURPHY (8.1)

The Chief Executive reported that Councillor Murphy wished to serve on the Joint Youth Committee; the Joint Education Committee; the Joint Children & Young People's Services Committee; the Membership Committee and the Schools & Services Committee. It was proposed by Professor Murphy, seconded by

Councillor Feehan, and agreed that Councillor Murphy would serve on these Committees.

6.2 CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS : JOB EVALUATION (9)

Mrs McClenaghan stated that she had received a letter from NIPSA advising that it intended to continue the industrial strike action on two days each week. She reported that Classroom Assistants were continuing to telephone staff in Headquarters seeking information in relation to the impact of management's offer on their own personal circumstances. She stated that parents of young people with special educational needs were also telephoning seeking guidance. It was noted that the Minister of Education had invited Special School Principals to meet her at Board Headquarters at 5.00 pm that day to discuss contingency arrangements within Special Schools.

(Mr McCreesh entered the meeting at 2.40 pm.)

Mrs McClenaghan advised that at a meeting earlier that day representatives from the Teachers' Unions had requested Boards to issue a further letter to schools to acknowledge the management responsibilities of principals. She confirmed that this letter was being issued to principals. Mr Mackin welcomed the approach taken by Boards in this regard.

Mr McCreesh queried the position between the management and trade union side following the break down in talks with the Labour Relations Agency. He expressed concern that children and young people with special educational needs might not again receive essential therapies at school during the period of the industrial strike action and queried whether any liaison was taking place between Education and Health officials to provide therapy provision in the interim period. Mr Heron confirmed that the talks had broken down because of a failure to reach agreement. He stated that after two weeks of intensive talks with the Labour Relations Agency three of the four Trade Unions had undertaken to ballot their members on management's best and final offer. GMB's ballot had now returned with 4:1 voting in favour of management's offer, the ballots of two of the four Unions were still ongoing and NIPSA had refused to ballot its members. Mrs McClenaghan advised that Health and Education officials had been in discussions for several weeks to explore the possibility of providing therapies to children with special educational needs either at home or at school if parents were in a position to bring their children to school. She undertook to send Mr McCreesh a letter providing more detailed information in this regard.

Mr Aiken queried the implications should management accede to NIPSA's conditions. Mr McGreevy outlined legal advice which the Boards had received, ie that other Board employees on the same grade as Classroom Assistants would receive different hourly rates of pay thus creating inequality which could lead to multiple discrimination claims.

6.3 POLICY PAPER 21 : SECTORAL SUPPORT POST-RPA (10.1)

It was proposed by Mrs McCaul, seconded by Rev Canon McKegney, and agreed that the Working Group which had previously been convened to provide a response to the Sustainable Schools' Policy should again be convened to consider Policy Paper 21. It was noted that representation on the Working Group included Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG), the Governing Bodies Association (GBA),

the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), Board members representing the Trustees of Catholic Maintained Schools, the Transferors of Controlled Schools and those serving on the Sub-Committee for Controlled Schools. Mrs McClenaghan stated that comments on the Policy Paper were required by 14 December 2007 although she would seek to extend this deadline if the Working Group so required.

7. BOARD MEETING : MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2007

On the proposal of Mr Aiken, seconded by Mr Sleator, the minutes* (B/10/07/5) of the meeting held on 25 October 2007 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive.

(Councillor Dr Weir entered the meeting at 3.02 pm.)

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

8.1 FUNDING COMMITMENT DISCLOSURE IN ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

8.1.1 LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DATED 30 OCTOBER 2007

Mr Heron explained that the special Board meeting of 25 October had approved the Annual Accounts and the NI Audit Office was prepared to certify them by the deadline of 31 October. He referred to the letter* (B/11/07/6.1.1) of 30 October from DE advising of a change to the funding commitment disclosure in the Annual Accounts to reflect the new arrangements in respect of End Year Flexibility. This changed the wording from EYF being a guaranteed resource "in the next financial year" to being a guaranteed resource "in future years". HM Treasury had restricted access to 2006/07 EYF in the 2007/08 financial year and potentially in future years. Mr Heron pointed out that Boards had initially been led to believe that this restricted access would not impact on services as the EYF remained committed to the Boards.

8.1.2 E-MAIL FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT OFFICE DATED 30 OCTOBER 2007

The Board noted the e-mail* (B/11/07/6.1.2) from the NI Audit Office in response to the DE letter highlighting the possible impact of the change in the wording of the funding commitment on the Boards' budgets and activities and its risk to financial management and control. On this basis the NI Audit Office was unwilling to complete the certification of the Annual Accounts until the Boards considered the implications of the change. Mr Heron pointed out that DE had not provided an explanation at the Accounts deadline as to what the EYF restriction would mean to Boards. As a result he was not in a position to advise the Board of the implication and the Board had therefore failed to meet its target date for certification of the Annual Report and Accounts by the NI Audit Office by 31 October due to the late notification from DE and lack of appropriate clarification. Mr Heron advised that on 6 November DE had written to Boards setting out the extent to which it wished to restrict EYF access

although he advised that the letter had also raised a significant number of queries. The NI Audit Office was not prepared to proceed with certifying the Annual Accounts until the five Boards had considered the impact of the change in funding on their Statements on Internal Control and the information recorded in their Annual Reports. He reported that the Chief Finance Officers of the five Boards were meeting DE officials the following day to obtain clarification on the 6 November letter and to fully understand the implications of the restricted access to EYF.

Mr Sleator stated that the receipt of such notification from DE one day prior to the deadline of 31 October was totally unacceptable. He said that the Board had done everything required of it to meet the deadline and the responsibility for missing the deadline lay totally with DE.

8.2 REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASPECTS OF THE REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – EMERGING FINDINGS

Mrs Donnell drew attention to the paper* (B/11/07/6.2) which indicated that no changes were suggested to the proposals in relation to the establishment of the Northern Ireland Library Authority and the responsibility of the Education and Skills Authority for the Youth Service. Mrs McClenaghan confirmed that the paper's position corroborated with the Board's viewpoint for the two services. In response to Mr Aiken, she undertook to respond to the paper to reaffirm that the Board's position accorded with the Executive Sub-Committee's Emerging Findings.

9. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

CHAIRPERSON'S MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION ON 10 OCTOBER 2007

The Chairperson stated that the chairpersons of the education partners in Northern Ireland had met the Minister on 10 October and had discussed the convergence programme and had obtained feedback from the Assembly Education Committee meeting. She advised that a further meeting had been scheduled for the following day.

IRISH STUDIES LIBRARY

The Chairperson stated that a Civic Reception had been hosted by Armagh City and District Council for the Library Service on 24 October in recognition of its entry entitled 'An Hibernian Atlas' in the UK Libraries "Turning the Pages" competition.

9.3 BOARD AGENDA AND PAPERS

Very Rev Fr McVeigh requested the Board to give consideration to the amount of paper being issued with the Board agenda. It was proposed by Rev Canon McKegney, seconded by Councillor McRoberts, and agreed that for a trial period substantial supporting papers to Committee minutes would no longer be issued to Members as part of the Board agenda; however a Member could request receipt of a particular paper for his or her own information. Mr Mayne stated that an alternative option was to remove the Committee papers already circulated to Members who served on that Committee.

(Mr Aiken left the meeting at 3.15 pm.)

9.4 EVENTS

The Chairperson stated that she had attended the opening of Craigavon Civic Centre following its major works and the Mayor's Installation Dinner. She had also attended speech days at Lurgan College and Tandragee Junior High School.

10. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

10.1 BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE : DRAFT BUDGET 2008 – 2011

The Board noted the paper* (B/11/07/8.1) providing information on how to access DFP's budget proposals for 2008-2011 on its website. Mrs McClenaghan urged members to attend one of the area consultation meetings detailed in the paper** (B/11/07/8.1) and stated that she would be writing to schools the following week to inform them of the consultation dates.

Mrs Ryan stated that the draft Library budget was identifying a 2.2% increase overall; however this figure included an allocation for ELFNI and some costs associated with DCAL Libraries Branch. The indicative figure for the Library Service was therefore +0.35% but with the rate of inflation the projected figure would be -2.5%. She pointed out that the Library Committee would be required to give consideration to effecting savings in the Library budget in the following financial year.

Mr Heron stated that the overall increase in the Schools' allocation was 3.1% which would keep pace with the rate of inflation. He drew attention to factors which were not yet known, ie the Assessment of Relative Needs Exercise (ARNE), costs pertaining to the implementation of ESA and other initiatives. He urged caution in releasing monies held at centre to assist with any initiatives until the Board was fully aware of such pressures. He stated that the proposed allocation for the Youth and Community Relations budget was identifying a cut of 4.8% in cash terms which would reduce to 7.8% to take account of inflation.

It was noted that firm notification of the Board's budget would be received by February 2008 following which the Board would inform schools of their budget position.

10.2 BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE : DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2008 – 2011

The Board agreed that the draft Programme* would be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting on 23 November 2007.

10.3 BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE : DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2008 – 2018

The Board agreed that the draft Investment Strategy* would be referred to the Schools & Services Committee for consideration at its meeting on 15 November 2007.

11. PROPOSED NORTHERN IRELAND LIBRARY AUTHORITY : LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE DATED 18 OCTOBER 2007

The Board noted the letter* (B/11/07/9) advising that the new date for the establishment of the Library Authority would be 1 April 2009 subject to the successful passage of legislation.

12. BOARD NOMINATIONS TO THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE AND THE SOUTH WEST COLLEGE

The Board noted the letter* (B/11/07/10) dated 5 October 2007 from DEL seeking two Member nominations to the Governing Body of the Southern Regional College and one Member nomination to the Governing Body of the South West College. However, in order to afford ministerial choice the letter had requested more than one nominee for each vacancy.

The Board agreed to nominate the following Members:

Southern Regional College:

- Mrs Wright (proposed by Professor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Harkness)
- Councillor McRoberts (proposed by Mr Twyble and seconded by Dr Hollinger)
- Mr Aiken (proposed by Mr Campbell and seconded by Rev Mr Somerville)

South West College:

As no member indicated an interest the Board agreed that Mrs McClenaghan would submit the names of former Board members who would be willing to serve on this Governing Body.

13. JOINT YOUTH COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Twyble referred to the remarks made by the outgoing Chairperson particularly in relation to the successful establishment of the Stakeholder Forum. He drew attention to the findings of the Chief Inspector's Report 2004-06 (Executive Summary) in relation to the Youth Service; the Target Monitor Review and the Service's Business Plan; collaborative development plans for outdoor education; the position of the Youth Outreach Initiative; and the report given in respect of youth services within Omagh and Strabane divisions. Mr Twyble pointed out that the financial targets within both Boards were being met and drew attention to the capital works being carried out.

It was proposed by Mr Twyble, seconded by Very Rev Fr McVeigh, and agreed that the minutes* (Y/10/07/11) of the meeting held on 17 October 2007 be adopted.

(Councillor McAleer left the meeting at 3.45 pm.)

14. JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Campbell drew attention to the relaunch of NIPPA on 1 November; the minutes of the SELB PEAG meeting identifying a population growth in the SELB area and its impact on pre-school provision; Extended Schools allocations and the monitoring process in place to ensure monies were not allocated for other purposes. He referred to the Target Monitor

reports and pointed out that a Regional Communications Officer would soon take up post to assist with addressing shortfalls in communication relating to the Revised Curriculum. Mr Campbell also referred to the Annual Reports on Literacy 2006/07, the proposed NI Regional Literacy Programme, the NI Literacy Strategy Action Plan 2007/08 and the recommendation in respect of allocating Curriculum Reserve Funds within the SELB.

It was proposed by Mr Campbell, seconded by Very Rev Fr McVeigh, and agreed that the minutes* (E/10/07/12) of the meeting held on 25 October 2007 be adopted.

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

Mrs McCaul advised that the Inter-Board Regional Strategy Group for Special Educational Needs had written to DE in relation to a concern raised by the Committee which affected the delivery of level 1 courses to young people with special educational needs in further education colleges. She drew attention to the presentation given by the DE Regional Co-ordinator for Independent Counselling Services for Schools and the Contact Youth Programme Manager (Southern Region) for School Counselling which was currently offering counselling services to 230 post-primary schools in the Province. She also highlighted the healthy financial position within both Boards.

It was proposed by Mrs McCaul, seconded by Dr Hollinger, and agreed that the minutes* (CYPS/10/07/13) of the meeting held on 25 October 2007 be adopted.

(Councillor Murphy left the meeting at 3.55 pm.)

16. FINANCE COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Sleator referred to the End Year Forecast Commentary, particularly highlighting the run rate trends within the delegated schools' budget and the Committee's intention to examine school budget plans at its January 2008 meeting following submission of school financial plans by 30 November 2007.

It was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Mrs Wright, and agreed that the minutes* (F/10/07/14) of the meeting held on 26 October 2007 be adopted.

(Councillor Brannigan left the meeting at 3.58 pm.)

17. AUDIT COMMITTEE : MINUTES

Mr Sleator referred to discussion relating to the Library Service's Risk Register 2007/08 and Performance Indicators, the sample Internal Audit report relating to teacher sickness absence and reports undertaken by the NI Audit Office particularly in relation to Job Evaluation.

It was proposed by Mr Sleator, seconded by Mrs McCaul, and agreed that the minutes* (A/10/07/15) of the meeting held on 8 October 2007 be adopted.

18. LIBRARY COMMITTEE

18.1 MINUTES

Mr Mayne referred to the establishment of a working group to examine budget issues within the Service for the next financial year, the contribution of members' views on the book entitled 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' and the attendance of the Chief Executive Designate, Miss Irene Knox, at the next Committee meeting.

It was proposed by Mr Mayne, seconded by Very Rev Fr McVeigh, and agreed that the minutes* (L/10/07/16.1) of the meeting held on 16 October 2007 be adopted.

18.2 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR DR P A WEIR

The resignation of Councillor Dr Weir from the Committee was noted. The Chairperson urged Members, particularly Councillor Members, to consider serving on the Committee.

19. CONSULTANTS' SELECTION PANEL : MINUTES

Professor Murphy pointed out that the structural steelwork sub-contract for works being carried out at Banbridge Academy would be re-advertised on account of the limited number of contractors on the select list.

It was proposed by Professor Murphy, seconded by Councillor McRoberts, and agreed that the minutes* (CSP/10/07/17) of the meeting held on 19 October 2007 be adopted.

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

The minutes* (B/11/07/18) of a meeting held on 6 June and the minutes** (B/11/07/18) of a meeting held on 5 September were noted.

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE

* Paper circulated

** Paper tabled

15 November 2007

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