

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE INTERIM BOARD  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 6 MAY 2010 AT 2.00 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM**

**1. PRESENT** Mr M P Campbell (Chairperson)

Dr M Hollinger  
Mr C Mackin

Mrs C M McCaul

**2. IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr A P Murphy, Ms L Ayling, Mr G Butler, Mr J Curran, Dr C Mangan, Mr G Doran and Mrs L McCall.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Mr P Gildea and Rev Canon J McKegey.

**4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

**4.1 MEETING OF ELB CHAIRPERSONS**

The Chairperson reported that the Chairpersons of the Boards had been invited to meet Mr G Boyd on 4 May 2010 in the ESAIT offices to receive an update on progress towards convergence activities. Mr Boyd had stressed that Boards would have a major role to play in convergence and that he hoped to finalise the Convergence Business Plan for each Board's consideration within the next two weeks.

Mr Murphy reported that the Chief Executives had also met Mr Boyd on 30 April 2010. Mr Boyd had indicated that Boards would be intimately involved in bringing forward convergence activities. The Board welcomed the significant move to fully engage Boards in taking forward the delivery of services within the convergence framework.

**4.2 MEDIA COVERAGE IN RESPONSE TO THE DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER'S ARTICLE**

Members noted the article\*\* published in the News Letter on 30 April 2010 entitled 'Education Boards slam McGuinness' in response to the Deputy First Minister's article which had appeared in the Belfast Telegraph on 14 April 2010 and the joint Boards' response which was published in the Belfast Telegraph on 24 April 2010.

**4.3 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Chairperson requested that consideration should be given to the establishment of a Remuneration Committee to agree performance related targets for the Chief Executive. A Scheme for the Committee, detailing a revised membership, was considered. It was proposed by Mrs McCaul, seconded by Dr Hollinger, and agreed to adopt the revised Scheme. Membership would therefore include the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board and one other Member. It was agreed that Dr Hollinger would serve as the third Member on this Committee.

The Chairperson advised that a meeting of the Remuneration Committee would take place on Wednesday, 26 May 2010.

Members expressed concern that another Committee was being established with limited membership. Risks associated with meetings being inquorate and having confined expertise, under the current Interim Board arrangements, were highlighted. These concerns were also relevant to the Audit Committee and the Teaching Appointments Committee. Mr Murphy advised that this issue had been relayed to Mr Sweeney.

*(Mr Mackin entered the meeting at 2.20 pm.)*

#### **4.4 TRANSITIONAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The Chairperson reported that he had received a letter from DE to confirm his appointment to the Transitional Board as a replacement Trustee Member. The Board congratulated Mr Campbell on his appointment.

### **5. DE RECURRENT SCHEME 2010/11**

#### **5.1 DE SCHOOL CENTRE**

The Chairperson reminded Members that the proposals in the paper\*\* (B/5/10/3.1) identified those areas considered by officers which would minimise the impact on schools of restrictions to the centre budget.

Ms Ayling drew attention to Paper A\*\* detailing the 2010/11 Analysis of Need. She explained that this paper set out the DE base spend for 2009/10 from which the draft scheme for 2010/11 had been prepared. To the 2009/10 figure £324k had been added to reinstate the maintenance budget to its correct baseline, excluding the cuts made during 2009/10. In addition, various pressures and easements had been factored into the overall requirement for 2010/11 of £95,564k. However, she pointed out that the allocation amounted to £92,383k, leaving a shortfall of £3,181k.

The Board noted the requirements in relation to Resources Allocated to Schools from the centre budget in Paper B\*\*. These areas related to Teacher Substitution Costs, Rates, Special Education in Mainstream and other miscellaneous areas, eg Redundancy and Premature Retirement, Contingency, Class Size, Curriculum Reserve and Emergency Support. The overall requirement for 2010/11 within this area was £33,727k which represented a 2.7% increase on the 2009/10 budget.

Ms Ayling detailed the pressures, amounting to £2,267k, on the centre budget set out in Paper C\*\*. Attention was also given to the easement of £222k which related to the annual audit and review of Learning Support Centres (LSCs). Mrs McCaul commented that, due to the current Interim Board arrangements, opportunities to discuss service provision to the level previously considered at individual Committee meetings were limited and she requested an update on the position of LSCs. Dr Mangan advised that an audit was completed annually of the staffing levels and the number of children attending LSCs. She stated that since the implementation of SENDO more children were remaining in mainstream classes with Classroom Assistant support. The annual audit was indicating that some LSCs were very small and that the level of resource was therefore

disproportionate and unsustainable. The audit was also identifying less demand for LSCs in the primary sector. She advised that primary school principals were aware of the decreasing uptake of places in LSCs and she drew attention to an exercise with ten schools in the Board's area where reductions in the support provided by Classroom Assistants had been agreed in order to maintain the current level of teaching provision. Dr Mangan explained that Classroom Assistance in the post-primary sector was based on shared assistance rather than by individual dedicated assistance, as was the case in the primary sector. Mrs McCaul highlighted the importance of ensuring a uniform approach in this provision as the Boards moved towards convergence.

Ms Ayling pointed out that, given the budgetary settlement, no job evaluation contingency monies were being recommended to be set aside. It was noted that this was at variance with previous years where the Board had prudently been able to reserve such a contingency. It was highlighted that for 2010/11 there were no current indications of likely significant category settlements which were not already accrued for.

Consideration was given to Papers D\*\* and E\*\* setting out options for savings which would meet the Board's shortfall at centre of £3,181k. Clarification was sought as to the proposed savings of £250k to be realised from the regional alignment of Statutory Assessment arrangements for nursery age children. Dr Mangan advised that when entering primary school less than half these children generally met the criteria for statutory assessment. Currently, the SELB was the only Board that allocated such support to nursery age pupils without a Statement of Educational Need. The proposal, to be effective from 1 September 2010, would therefore align services with the arrangements in place in other Boards. Dr Hollinger received confirmation that this proposal would only apply to nursery schools and nursery classes attached to mainstream schools and would not impact on pre-school places in the Early Years Projects attached to the five special schools.

Members queried the £100k savings in transport which related to proposed savings in school crossing patrols and taxis. Mr Butler advised that reviews of school crossing patrols had identified some areas which no longer fulfilled LARSOA requirements and could therefore be withdrawn. He also explained that the growth in taxi usage over the last number of years had increased significantly due to the uptake by children with Statements of Special Educational Need. The Transport Section proposed to task one officer with the responsibility of scrutinising taxi usage to ensure that tight controls in this area were maintained.

Ms Ayling reminded Members that the Board had been able to direct in-year savings to reinstate most of the initial £2,500k reduction from Maintenance in 2009/10. The proposed savings of £1.7m in Maintenance was therefore set against an appropriate need figure and not an already reduced 2009/10 figure. The recommended option of a £1.7m reduction would allow priority summer time school-based projects to be progressed which had not been possible in 2009/10 because additional maintenance funding had become available too late in the year. Acknowledgement was also given to the approximate 0.5% cut in budgets across all Board services.

Mr Mackin queried the proposal to remove the Emergency Support Initiative which amounted to £112k in 2009/10. He believed that this fund provided invaluable and necessary support for some schools in genuine emergency cases.

He sought clarification as to the arrangements and services that schools could access should this fund be withdrawn.

Dr Mangan advised that the support provided through the Emergency Support Initiative was normally ten hours per week of domestic assistance. This support from the Centre budget depended upon a school's budgetary position and whether or not the circumstance could be classified as a genuine emergency. She pointed out that the Behavioural Support Team employed a number of Classroom Assistants who, in genuine emergency situations, could assist schools over a short term period. She also explained that the Board had a dedicated phone line which had been established to provide guidance and support to principals in relation to behavioural issues. It was noted that the SELB was the only Board to provide funding through the Emergency Support Initiative. Dr Mangan highlighted that principals were being advised to make the most efficient use of the support provided by Classroom Assistants and, in the event of particular instances arising within a school, to use that resource effectively on any given day. In light of the assurances provided by Dr Mangan with regard to the contingency measures in connection with the Behavioural Support Team, it was proposed by Dr Hollinger, seconded by Mrs McCaul, and agreed to adopt Paper E\*\* which identified the necessary savings of £3,181k to meet the required shortfall in the centre budgets.

The Chairperson paid tribute to Ms Ayling and the Finance team for their work to date in drawing up and presenting a draft Scheme.

The Chairperson considered that the impact of the Budget on the centre allocation should be communicated to schools and, if necessary, to the wider community. This was agreed.

## **5.2 INITIAL EARMARKED FUNDING 2010/11**

Ms Ayling presented the paper\*\* (B/5/10/3.1) setting out the DE allocations received to date for earmarked funds. She pointed out that the earmarked position was better than earlier indications from DE; allocations were either cash flat compared to the 2009/10 initial allocations or had been slightly increased. The Board noted that those areas which had received a cash flat settlement but would require an uplift for pressures such as inflation etc would have to be met from the core budget, thus creating a potential additional pressure not included in the proposed 2010/11 core scheme considered previously. This area would therefore require close in-year monitoring.

However, for the outstanding allocations remaining, namely SEN Code of Practice, Revised Curriculum, Entitlement Framework / Entitled to Succeed, Schools & Youth Community Relations Programme, Equipment for Major Works and Equipment for Specialist Accommodation, a higher level of uncertainty about the continuing level of funding existed. Communications from DE had indicated potential reductions in some areas and detailed reviews of need in others. She highlighted that the £270k allocated to School Improvement would enable the programme to continue only to the end of June 2010. Thereafter, the Board would be required to submit a bid to DE for further funding. Until more information became available, the Board would need to scrutinise closely any commitments in these areas in the context of the risk to the core budget should Earmarked funding be reduced.

The Board also noted the reduction in the Extended Schools' budget of 1.2% which gave an allocation of £1,858k. Ms Ayling reported that the Pre-School Initiative allocation of £3,146k, an increase of 11.7% on the 2009/10 initial allocation, had been communicated verbally to the Board. As yet, no formal letter in relation to this fund had been received.

### **5.3 DE YOUTH**

Mr Doran presented a paper\*\* (B/5/10/3.2) setting out the Youth baseline budget at £4,569k, a 2.79% like for like increase on the 2009/10 allocation. This figure included funding for maintenance within the Youth Service. Attention was given to the earmarked allocations which were detailed in the paper.

Mr Doran drew attention to inescapable commitments, namely cost of living pay increase (1%); employer's superannuation costs (a rise of 16% to 17%); part-time Youth Leader voluntary sector pension provision (a rise of 16% to 17%); and rates (approximately 3% which would allow for water charges).

Mr Doran outlined the areas of proposed expenditure, as set out in the paper, to give an overall spend of £4,569k. He also presented a paper\*\* which gave a cost comparison on the budget allocations for 2009/10 and the proposed allocations for 2010/11, including earmarked.

It was proposed by Mrs McCaul, seconded by Mr Mackin, and agreed to adopt the recommendations in the paper.

The Chairperson expressed appreciation to Mr Doran and his staff in preparing the Youth Budget for the Board's consideration.

## **6. DE CAPTIAL SCHEME 2010/11**

Mr Butler reported that the capital allocation was still awaited. He drew attention to the Minister's statement to the Assembly which had indicated that funding would only be available to meet costs associated with PPP projects, existing major works schemes and a limited allocation for other works.

The meeting ended at 4.50 pm.

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**CHAIRPERSON**

\* Paper circulated  
10 May 2010

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

\*\* Paper tabled  
LMcC

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**DATE**