

**BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD
NORTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD
SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD
SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD
WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD**

**Report on the Screening of the Education and Library Boards'
Resource Allocation Plans 2005/2006**

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Appendix A – Responses to Consultation

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 31 May 2005 the five Education and Library Boards issued a consultation report on their Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06. Part I of this report provided background information in respect of the Department of Education's funded part of the budget (90% of the Boards' total grant funding), the spending on schools and a summary of the current position in regard to the Boards' draft Financial Plans for the 2005/06 financial year. Part II outlined the equality considerations and set out the findings of the screening exercise on the implementation of the Boards' draft Financial Plans 2005/06.
- 1.2 The Boards conducted the screening of policies exercise in accordance with the arrangements specified in their Equality Schemes. In line with existing practice a common and co-ordinated approach was adopted to the screening process. A summary of the policies screened and the results of the screening were provided in the consultation report.
- 1.3 Each Board is required by Article 113 of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 to prepare and submit to the Department of Education a Financial Scheme for the forthcoming financial year. The Department of Education may approve any such scheme with or without modification in respect of such periods as the Department considers appropriate. A Board is not permitted to incur any expenditure otherwise than in accordance with the Financial Scheme approved by the Department.
- 1.4 One of the key requirements of the Boards in developing a Resource Allocation Plan was to plan service delivery in such a way that it ensures expenditure is contained within the spending limits specified by the Department of Education. This required the Boards to agree spending plans which incorporate savings of approximately £33 million. (Note: the total savings are inclusive of measures implemented in the SEELB relating to the 2004/05 financial year.)
- 1.5 The Boards' funding allocation remains the subject of continuing and on-going discussion, both internally and with the Department of Education. Consequently, the management of the budget distribution remains fluid. This was aptly demonstrated by the announcement on 20 June 2005 by Education Minister, Angela Smith that more money would be made available to target "specified areas of need". The £12.5 million financial package has been specified as follows:
- £3.5 million - Special Education
 - £2.5 million - School Meals
 - £2.5 million - Maintenance
 - £4 million - Shared services and reshaping the schools' estate.

In her statement the Minister re-iterated the need for sound financial management, she said:

“We all have to live within our means. Just as parents have to manage a family budget, public bodies too must live within their budget and contain expenditure within the levels approved by Ministers and I must emphasise that any breach of financial control will not be tolerated.”

1.6 The Boards have welcomed the Minister’s announcement that more money will be made available to the education sector. However, the Boards have not yet received confirmation from the Department of Education as to a) their individual allocation and b) any conditions on how this money is to be spent. Until this more detailed guidance is received from the Department of Education it will not be possible to indicate the level of easement, if any, that may be permitted against the Boards’ required savings of approximately £33 million in 2005/06 to remain within the allocated budget. The Boards understand the £12.5 million financial package has not been earmarked exclusively for their use but will cover and include the Voluntary Grammar, Grant Maintained Integrated and Irish Medium Sectors.

1.7 The announcement came after a vigorous campaign to obtain additional funding for the Boards. This included:

- a) representations to the Minister by Boards, schools, trade unions and political representatives;
- b) industrial action by members of NIPSA, UNISON and the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union in protest against the cutbacks in services as a result of under-funding;
- c) the withdrawal by some 32 district councillors from Boards over the level of cuts required;
- d) the organisation of a special conference of educationalists on the financial crisis in schools held in West Belfast on 20 June 2005;
- e) a special one hour edition of BBC Newsline on Monday 13 June 2005 to highlight the impact of the cuts; and
- f) other media campaigns, lobbying by the community and voluntary sector and a negative public reaction to the proposed cuts.

1.8 It is undeniable that difficult and controversial decisions have been made. The latter is evidenced by the responses received from consultees. However, the decisions were made in the context of the need to:

- protect front line services;
- protect services which are a statutory requirement;
- take account of the statutory framework within which Boards operate;
- ensure the efficient use of public money; and
- avoid compulsory redundancies if possible.

2. CONSULTATION STRATEGY

2.1 The five Boards consult annually on new policies screened and report on the outcome of the screening process. This supplementary report on the screening of

new policies is issued in September each year. Given the urgency surrounding the financial planning process for 2005/06 it was decided that a separate additional report be issued detailing the findings of this particular screening exercise.

- 2.2 The Boards strove throughout this process to ensure that staff, trade unions and Section 75 groups were kept fully apprised of developments. This was achieved through the sharing of information and briefings/dialogue with the trade unions and the Joint Consultative Forum and its Steering Group. Feedback from these sessions helped inform the screening process.
- 2.3 The consultation document was issued on 31 May 2005. Consultees were asked for their co-operation in responding swiftly to the documentation. The main umbrella groups were contacted and invited to meet with the Boards if this would be of assistance in compiling their responses. Full details of meetings and responses are contained in Appendix A.
- 2.4 A meeting with the Equality Commission was requested by the Boards to explain the likely impact on the delivery of services of the 2.5% efficiency savings to be achieved on a cumulative basis over the next three years and the under-funding of the Boards over the next three years. This meeting took place on 8 June 2005.

The Boards are grateful to all those who participated in this consultation exercise.

3. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The aim of this section is to summarise the feedback from consultees. For ease of reference the document has been cross-referenced with the numbering system used in the Boards' Consultation Paper, as appropriate. The full response of consultee groups is available on request. The following issues were raised:
- 3.2 **General comments:**
 - a) re write of the document requested in a more young people friendly manner; (Age Sector)
 - b) report was useful and clearly written; (Disability Sector)
 - c) welcomed the approach adopted by the Boards and acknowledged that, in similar circumstances, a number of public authorities would not have gone through the process; (Race Sector)
 - d) the document would benefit from a brief summary table, that clearly indicates the initial assessment of the four screening criteria for each policy; (Equality Commission)
 - e) concern that the screening exercise and consultation process does not reflect a rights based approach, in particular Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The whole approach seems entirely driven by financial constraints rather than by what is in the best interest of children and young people. No evidence of direct consultation with children and young people; (NICCY)

- f) concern in relation to the potential for marginalisation of equality issues at a time of financial constraint; (Trade Union Sector)
- g) concern that consultation on the Boards' draft financial plans is taking place at a time when the plans are operational – recognition that this position was not created by Boards but by the Government; (Trade Union Sector)
- h) to what extent were draft budgets screened by departments and public authorities? (Age Sector)
- i) an assertion that the screening process was fundamentally flawed; (Trade Union Sector)
- j) surprise at decisions that no equality impact assessments be conducted; (Age, Race, Disability and Trade Union Sectors)
- k) an expectation that detailed quantitative evidence and in-depth consultation to have been submitted alongside each proposal for cuts to enable informed comments to be given; (Women's Sector)
- l) the disadvantage faced by consultees when a difference of opinion emerges between a funder and service provider; (Age Sector)
- m) the need to ensure effective monitoring of the impact of any cuts so that children with special needs do not experience the double impact of the cuts i.e., cuts in special education as well as experiencing cuts as a child in school; (Disability Sector)
- n) a trade union indicated that the consultation raised a much more significant issue of the financial viability of maintaining a number of Boards. (Trade Union Sector)

At meetings of the Joint Consultative Forum and its Steering Group consultees raised a number of specific issues in relation to the proposed cuts and these are dealt with under subject headings detailed below. General points raised by consultees at these fora were:

- o) concern that those already marginalised will be the worst affected;
- p) the potential impact on the lower paid jobs within the Education and Library Service which would have a greater impact on women; cuts in service delivery were likely to have a negative impact on an already overstretched voluntary sector in that it would be forced to fill the gaps which emerged in service delivery;
- q) all policy decisions related to the cuts would require to be subjected to an equality impact assessment.

3.3 Maintenance of the Boards' Estates (inter-Board) (Para. 8.1)

- a) What evidence was used to judge the impact of this decision on the Catholic Maintained sector bearing in mind the historical context in relation to the physical conditions of schools in this sector? (CCMS)
- b) A school which is already in a state of disrepair, expressed concern that it would be further disadvantaged. (School Sector and NICCY)
- c) A school complained that its funds are now being used for maintenance – depriving/targeting funds at pupils' educational needs. (School Sector)
- d) A school suggested there was scope for improved quality control. (School Sector)

- e) Concern that the suspension of this work could have an adverse impact on people with disabilities. For this reason it should be impact assessed. (Women's and Trade Union Sectors)
- f) Scope to examine the concept of schools as 'Service Hubs'; in light of additional funds important to assess the distribution of these funds and their impact on areas of disadvantage, children with special needs and rural v's urban areas. (Rural Development Council)

3.4 Efficiency Measures - All Services (inter Board) (Para. 8.2)

- a) A school questioned whether there should be more school rationalisation to protect front line services. (School Sector)
- b) The protection of frontline staff at the expense of 'back room' services may disadvantage people with a learning disability. Need to protect 'back room' services to support children with special educational needs. (Disability Sector)
- c) Option for rural schools to work in clusters or for rural teaching staff to work collectively across schools to be exempt from cutbacks. (Rural Development Council)
- d) A complaint that the trawl for voluntary redundancies, under the 50 age group was restricted to Board Headquarters and Outcentre staff. (School Sector)
- e) One school indicated that a reduction of professional staff impacts on Principals and others who seek advice. There is no reward for a school that has effectively monitored sickness/ attendance. (School Sector)
- f) Implications for the proximity of service availability which may affect at least four of the nine categories. (Trade Union Sector)
- g) Boards are likely to increase sickness levels by reducing staffing levels, may in turn impact on quality of service provision. Measures could be counter-productive, question decision not to impact assess. (NICCY)
- h) Full impact assessment of measures suggested. Particular concern in relation to measures designed to reduce sickness. (Trade Union Sector)

3.5 Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service (CASS) (Para. 8.3)

3.5.1 (a) Policy: CASS: Reduced Support to Schools (inter-Board)

- i) A school suggested there is a need to review this service and that the proposal did not present a serious problem as schools or clusters of schools should be able to work together with minimum board input. (School Sector)
- ii) Concern at reduction of I.T. support. (Rural Development Council)
- iii) Performance, Review & Staff Development requires training to meet identified targets. A school indicated that given the teaching profession was largely female there would be a greater impact on women. (School Sector)
- iv) Concern that a reduction in CASS would impact on the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SEND0), therefore impact assessment is required. (Disability and Trade Union Sectors)
- v) Could have an adverse impact on ethnic minority communities. (Race Sector)

- vi) Boards have a responsibility to assess the impact of diminished in-service support to teachers and on children and young people. (NICCY and Equality Commission)

3.5.2 (b) Policy: Increase/recover costs in the Music Services (inter-Board)

- i) Concern that adverse impact identified yet no EQIA and with the statement that it cannot be addressed without funding, thus giving 'resources' priority over equality. (Trade Union Sector)
- ii) Proposal will disadvantage those who cannot afford the new charges. Working class children in the main will be disproportionately affected. The policy has the potential for adverse impact in terms of ability to pay between persons of different marital status. (Women's, Trade Union and Race Sectors)
- iii) A range of views was received from the school sector. Firstly, that the impact will be felt less in areas of disadvantage, never received support requested, major failing in the system. Secondly, the proposal impacts directly on pupils who suffer extreme social deprivation, and thirdly, that the City of Belfast School of Music is a real success story - should be protected and expanded. (School Sector)
- iv) Concern that this will lead to inequalities. Suggestion of sponsorship and/or inter-school links. (Rural Sector)

3.5.3 (c) Policy: Closure of Drumalla House Outdoor Education Centre (Belfast Board only)

- i) One school suggested that the Board close it and sell the site, another indicated that it would be difficult to replace this facility, a further school advised that the impact would be on students from disadvantaged areas who use the centre for team building. (School Sector)
- ii) full impact assessment should be undertaken, no indication of impact of the proposals on staff, consultations should take place with the unions. (Trade Union Sector)

3.5.4 (d) Policy: Proposal to Close: Fleming Fulton Chalet (Belfast Board only)

- i) It is paramount that the rights/opinions of pupils and parents are taken into account and that the Board of Governors is kept fully informed. (Chairperson, Board of Governors)
- ii) Concern for the boarders in the chalet and the impact on staff. (Staff member)
- iii) Positive decision, no child should be required to live away from home. (Individual response)
- iv) A school suggested that the chalet be closed. (School Sector)
- v) Children involved must be consulted about the closure of this facility and involved in decision about alternative support. (NICCY)
- vi) An EQIA should be carried out as the closure of this Chalet will adversely impact on young people with disabilities. (Equality Commission)

3.5.5 (e) Policy: Proposal to close:

- Glenwood and St Teresa's Family Literacy Centre
 - Glenwood Reading Centre (Belfast Board only)
- i) Concern that the closure of these centres could have an adverse impact on vulnerable children or those who require additional education support. Reading recovery has been recognised as a success and evidence shows that early intervention works. Concern that a reduction in early intervention programmes could result in some children having "special educational needs" which would then have to be met through a statutory process – this would not benefit the child or the education system in the longer term. A number of consultees indicated that they were unsure from the information provided that the alternatives in place would be sufficient. (Disability and Trade Union Sectors, NICCY and the Equality Commission)
 - ii) One school suggested that there was no longer a need for this service whilst another indicated that the proposal to close would have a negative effect on educational provision in the area. (School Sector)
 - iii) View this decision with great concern. If the Board wish to save on infrastructure costs while continuing to support these pupils through a community outreach programme, Women's Centres offer appropriate programmes for girls and women. (Women's Sector)
 - iv) May lead to disproportional disadvantage on religious beliefs or on disability grounds. (Trade Union Sector)
 - v) Could have an adverse impact in ethnic minority communities. (Race Sector)

3.5.6 (f) Policy: Cessation of Homework Centre provision (Belfast Board only)

- i) One school indicated that the closure would have a major affect on the community and a range of pupils. In contrast another school suggested that all such centres be closed, money could be better spent elsewhere. (School Sector)
- ii) Homework Centre staff indicated that this is a valuable medium through which courses such as XL and Young Enterprise can be provided. Children who attend may not have a conducive environment or the necessary resources to do homework or undertake independent study at home and a number of children who attend such centres attend or have attended special schools. (Homework Centre staff and Elected representatives)
- iii) Concerns raised on the proposal to reduce or withdraw homework centres; the impact of the proposal on the local community; the removal of a provision which offers valuable support to children living in areas of social deprivation; high percentage of children using the centres who are from one parent families. (Race and Trade Union Sectors, Elected representatives, Homework Centre staff and NICCY)
- iv) More information is required on the numbers of pupils and schools affected. (Women's Sector)
- v) Need to consult parents and children affected highlighted, EQIA suggested. (NICCY and Trade Union Sector)

- 3.5.7 (g) Policy:** Cease Funding to Specialist Instructors – Youth Service (Belfast Board only)
- i) A school commented that this provision should never have been funded by educational services. (School Sector)
 - ii) Suggested that an impact assessment should be undertaken in respect of this proposal, potential impact on young people and staff. (Trade Union Sector)
- 3.5.8 (h) Policy:** Early Years Learning Service (Toy and Book Library) (Belfast and South Eastern Boards only)
- i) One school indicated that there was no problem in closing this facility. Another school in contrast pointed to the negative effect on educational provision. (School Sector)
 - ii) Could have an adverse impact on ethnic minority communities. (Race Sector)
 - iii) A more detailed account of existing users and the possible impact of this cut in services requested. (Women’s Centre)
 - iv) Need to consider, in consultation with parents and children, the impact of this change. (NICCY)
 - v) Determination accepted by a trade union.
- 3.5.9 (i) Policy:** Alternative Use of Downpatrick Resource Centre (South Eastern Board only)
- i) Welcome the imaginative use of shared resources as a general principle. (Rural Development Council)
 - ii) Need for an assurance that the proposal will be subject to prior negotiation and agreement. (Trade Union Sector)
- 3.5.10 (j) Policy:** Closure of Cabra Towers Outdoor Field Study Centre and Relocation of Provision to Ardnabannon Outdoor Centre (South Eastern Board only)
- i) Rationale noted. Need for full consultation in respect of staff affected. (Trade Union Sector)
- 3.5.11 (k) Policy:** Operation of full cost recovery for Studio On.
- i) Determination accepted by a trade union.
- 3.5.12 (l) Policy:** Operation of full cost recovery of the Causeway School and either full cost recovery or closure of the Centres at Ballymoney and Ballymena. (North Eastern Board only)
- i) Noted that a review is on-going, await the outcome before commenting further. (Trade Union Sector)

3.6 Special Education (Para 8.4)

3.6.1 General:

- i) Announcement by Minister on 20 June 2005 welcomed. Fully meets the funding deficit identified by the three Boards. (Rural Sector)

- ii) The perceived message from the Boards was that special educational needs was one of the reasons why they were in this crisis. If the focus is on statutory provision there will be an increased demand on the statutory process. (Disability Sector)
- iii) To date there has been very inadequate provision for supporting children and young people with learning disabilities to have equal rights to education; any and all proposals to reduce/"cut" this provision are totally unacceptable; parents have a constant fight to try to get the support that their children with learning disabilities need in school. They consider that the Education and Library Boards' proposal to **cut** rather than **increase** funding are an absolute affront to them and their children. A full impact assessment is required. (Disability, Women's and Trade Union Sectors)

3.6.2 (a) Policy: Pupil Support Services (Belfast Board only)

- i) Two schools identified the negative effect on educational provision which arose from this proposal. It was suggested that the service needs to be increased. Further information requested in respect of the alternative methods of service delivery.
- ii) If the Board proposed to change the way in which Pupil Support Services are delivered it should conduct an EQIA. A trade union indicated it expected to be fully consulted on any such proposals. Information requested on the staffing implications referred to in the consultation briefing paper. (NICCY, Equality Commission, Trade Union Sector)

3.6.3 (b) Policy: Reduced Support for Summer Activity Scheme for Children with Special Needs (South Eastern Board only)

- i) Extremely concerned at the reduction in this provision and would wish to see an increase in summer activity schemes rather than a reduction. These children are socially isolated and over the summer period the scheme provides an opportunity to bridge the gap in learning over that period. (Disability and School Sectors)
- ii) EQIA should be considered. (Equality Commission & Trade Union Sector)

3.6.4 (c) Policy: Reduction in Article 56 Budget to Schools (South Eastern Board only)

- i) No indication of the extent of the reduced funding, could have an adverse impact on children with disabilities, EQIA should be considered. (Equality Commission & Trade Union Sector)

3.6.5 (d) Policy: Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) - (Southern Board only)

- i) Full consultation expected on any proposals. (Trade Union Sector)

3.7 Transport (Para. 8.5)

3.7.1 (a) Policy: Introduction of Board Minibuses to Replace Taxis and Private Hire (Inter-Board)

- i) A school suggested that there are potential plus factors in this change. (School Sector)

- ii) Concern that children would lose out through this change in provision and that the introduction of Board minibuses would mean that some children may be sitting on a bus for long periods. (Disability Sector)
- iii) Suggest better links with rural community, vehicles could be used to generate income or develop jointly funded provision (SIB joint support of school buildings). (Rural Development Council).
- iv) Determination accepted by a trade union.

3.7.2 (b) Policy: Review of School Crossing Patrols and the application of the LARSOA Guidelines (South Eastern, Southern and Western Boards only)

- i) Strongly oppose the view that no impact assessment is required, impact on employment opportunities for older people; School Crossing Patrols are a valuable and necessary element in providing a safe and secure environment for children to and from school; removal may act as a disincentive for children to walk. (Age & Trade Union Sectors)
- ii) Requested copy of LARSOA guidelines, not provided in time to consider as part of the response. (Age Sector)
- iii) Concern around the safety of students and the adverse impact on staff (older workers) was highlighted. (Steering Group/Joint Consultative Forum)

3.7.3 (c) Policy: Withdrawal of Transport at 2.00 p.m. (South Eastern and Southern Boards only)

- i) Particular disadvantage to children and parents in rural areas. (Rural Development Council)
- ii) May have an impact on parents with dependants at the affected schools. (Trade Union Sector)
- iii) Review of provision, EQIA should be carried out. A trade union indicated that there must be no expectation that teachers will undertake any additional supervision as a result of this proposal. (Trade Union Sector, NICCY & Equality Commission)

3.8 School Catering (Para. 8.6)

3.8.1 (a) Policy: To increase the price of school meals (inter-Board)

- i) Welcome the increase to this budget allocation (2005/2006); concern at negative impact on families just above free school meals threshold; Government recognition of nutritional needs of school children - concerned Northern Ireland children will be disadvantaged in comparison to rest of United Kingdom if the importance of school meals is not fully recognised. (Rural Development Council)
- ii) Proposals will only further the decline in school catering, to the detriment of the most disadvantaged. (Women's Sector and NICCY)
- iii) One school indicated that the meals facility for their school is a disgrace. (School Sector)
- iv) A school indicated that income/revenue (additional) generated should be offset against the school in question, where breakfast clubs and mid-morning breaks occur and should not be used to offset less efficient

operations. It also suggested that the price increase would have a negative impact. (School Sector)

- v) Equality Commission and NICCY have suggested that there ought to be an assessment of the impact of any change to prices.
- vi) Determination accepted by a trade union.

3.8.2 (b) Policy: To review charges for staff currently receiving a meal at an abated rate/free (inter-Board)

- i) A range of views came from the School Sector. One school questioned “why did this ever arise”; another said it should be fine, if edible. Is the alternative cost effective?” and finally a concern to ensure that this charge was not passed on to schools.
- ii) Decision noted. Teacher Union would wish to make comment once negotiations are complete. (Trade Union Sector)

3.8.3 (c) Policy: Laundry Allowances (Southern and Western Boards only)

- i) Decision noted. Teacher Union would wish to make comment once negotiations are complete. (Trade Union Sector)

3.8.4 (d) Policy: Convert Kitchens to Dining Centres “Efficiency Measures” (Belfast and Western Boards only)

- i) Anecdotal evidence where schools have lost their kitchens, quality standards have not been maintained. Strong concerns were expressed about the freshness and quality of meals, choice of meals available, the quality of fried food being transported and the impact on breakfast clubs which are seen as beneficial. (Parents, Elected Representatives, School Sector and Rural Development Council)
- ii) Proposals are made in defiance of recent evidence concerning the importance of providing school children with meals that are nutritionally appropriate and made on the premises rather than simply re-heated on the premises. (Women’s Sector)
- iii) More information required and, in consultation meetings organised by the Belfast Board, an extension to the consultation period was requested. (School Sector)
- iv) The proposals affect two schools where pupil numbers are increasing and/or are likely to increase due to regeneration plans (Parents, Elected Representatives and School Sector)
- v) Change in method of provision could adversely impact upon certain Section 75 categories of kitchen staff. An EQIA should therefore be carried out. (Equality Commission & Trade Union Sector)
- vi) Recommendation made to the Department re: procurement of high quality food from local producers. (Rural Development Council)

3.9 Centre Schools (Para. 8.7)

3.9.1 (a) **Policy:** Reduce Centre School Funding (inter-Board)

- i) keep under review and appraise trade unions of developments. (Trade Union Sector)

3.9.2 (b) **Policy:** English as an Additional Language (EAL) (inter-Board)

At the Joint Consultative Forum meeting held on 26 May 2005 there was a difference of viewpoint between the Boards and the Department of Education in relation to the funding of this provision. It was agreed that the Department of Education and the Boards would meet to clarify the position.

A substantial number of responses/representations made relate to this policy area.

- i) No shift in Department of Education policy on EAL, Consultation Paper is misleading; concerned at Boards' decision not to carry out an EQIA on the reduction of EAL services, ask that Boards reconsider. (Department of Education)
- ii) Concern that very significant policy changes in EAL provision are being introduced by the Boards prior to DE finalising its EAL policy and that the consultation paper is misleading in its presentation of this issue. (Individual response)
- iii) The Commission feels that this change of policy should be impact assessed as it may have an adverse impact on minority ethnic groups. Mitigating measures or changes to the way the policy is delivered should be considered as required. However, and despite extensive effort, the Commission remains unclear about the roles and responsibilities of individual schools, the Boards and the Department of Education in this matter. The Commission would urge all relevant public bodies to engage with stakeholders to ensure there is an agreed understanding and ultimate resolution of this issue that benefits the key stakeholders: children and their parents. (Equality Commission)
- iv) The Boards' decision not to screen and impact assess this policy has been criticised by a number of consultees. (Race, Age, Trade Unions, Women's and Disability Sectors and individual responses)
- v) Adverse impact on minority ethnic children in schools. Boards asked to introduce mitigating measures, namely no reduction in their service provision. (Race and Women's Sectors)
- vi) A number of good practice models being developed and used by Boards, work should be extended rather than cut. (Race Sector)
- vii) Concern regarding the idea of a proposed managed service, short term solution but may not be sustainable. (Race Sector)
- viii) Welcome the decision of Department of Education to develop a strategic policy on EAL provision, concerned a major decision under Common Funding Formula already taken and independent review conducted and that the report has not been published. (Race Sector)

- ix) Most teachers are unlikely to have the necessary skills and expertise to teach EAL, ill-considered policy should be reviewed and changed. (Individual response)
- x) Current practice elsewhere in United Kingdom reflects the need to have an advisory support team as well as teachers for direct teaching. (Individual and Staff responses)
- xi) A school indicated that pupils are admitted all year round. Failure to provide EAL discriminates against ethnic minority children. (School Sector)
- xii) Legislative duty of care, because of bad management and the absence of a co-ordinated and strategic approach to the delivery of education to these children they could be disadvantaged. (Political Sector)
- xiii) Concern that money allocated to schools is not ring-fenced, nor are schools required to account for how EAL money has been spent. (Race, Disability Sectors and Individual responses)

Issues raised at meetings of the Joint Consultative Forum and its Steering Group:-

- i) NICEM expressed the view that if EAL provision was not made available there was the potential for legal action under Section 75, the EU Race Directive and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- ii) A number of consultee groups questioned why a major policy decision had been taken before a policy had been consulted on, namely the new funding arrangements for EAL.
- iii) Section 75 does not apply to schools - want funding to remain with the Boards for the time being.

3.9.3 (c) Policy: Swimming Programme (North Eastern and Western Boards only)

- i) The ability to swim is an essential life skill, note the intention to withdraw funding which again will impact most directly on children from disadvantaged areas. (Women's Sector)
- ii) A trade union accepts the determination provided no teacher is made compulsorily redundant as a consequence. (Trade Union Sector)

3.9.4 (d) Policy: Cluster Arrangements (South Eastern Board only)

- i) Determination accepted by a trade union provided kept under review. (Trade Union Sector)

3.9.5 (e) Policy: Withdrawal of assistance to nursery schools in respect of children aged two years (South Eastern Board)

- i) May have an adverse impact on parents with dependants and ethnic minority communities. (Race and Trade Union Sectors)

3.9.6 (f) Policy: Reduction in Curriculum Reserve/Class Size/Contingency Funding (South Eastern only)

- i) A school indicated there may be a negative effect. (School Sector)

3.9.7 (g) Policy: Rationalisation (South Eastern Board only)

- i) Concern that under-resourcing of school amalgamations can create major difficulties for teaching and non-teaching staff and the provision of services to pupils. (Rural Development Council).
- ii) Determination accepted by a trade union. (Trade Union Sector)

3.9.8 (h) Policy: Withdrawal of Small Grants (South Eastern Board only)

- i) Impact assessment should be undertaken, detrimental effect on Section 75 groupings, e.g. different marital status, those with or without dependants. (Trade Union Sector)

3.10 School Library (Para. 8.8)

3.10.1 Policy: Reduce book funding (inter-Board)

- i) A number of schools indicated that this was a short-sighted policy which would have a negative effect on educational provision particularly in areas of social deprivation.
- ii) Disadvantage to children in rural areas who may have to travel a significant distance to a library. (Rural Development Council).
- iii) Would have an impact on children with special educational needs, in particular the purchase of books in alternative formats – important to carefully monitor what items are not purchased. (Disability Sector)
- iv) Potential impact across a number of equality categories. (Trade Union Sector)
- v) A trade union accepts the determination that no impact assessment is necessary. (Trade Union Sector)

4. BOARDS' RESPONSE TO COMMENTS RECEIVED

4.1 Outline of decisions taken and/or response of the five Boards following consideration of the issues raised in the consultation process. Decisions/responses have been cross-referenced with the issues raised at Section 3 “Summary on Consultation” of this report. The Boards’ response is as follows:-

4.2 General Comments (para. 3.2)

- a) Boards contacted the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and offered to meet with them to discuss the report. The Forum declined this request indicating that it may be difficult for young people to understand the implications of the cuts. The Forum offered its services to the Boards for any future consultation exercises.
- b) & c) Comments noted.
- d) The methodology adopted is consistent with that in use during the past four years. Given that a review of the Equality Schemes is imminent this suggestion will be considered as part of that review.

e) Approximately 67% of the Department's financial allocation is earmarked for the Schools' Delegated Budget. It is the Boards' Centre Budgets (non-earmarked) funding where the savings of £33.2 million are required. The Boards must face the financial constraints imposed by their allocated funding and have sought to do so mindful of the need to protect front line services and those for which there is a statutory requirement. The overall statutory framework has informed the process (see comments at (k) below). Consultation took place with the pupils affected by the proposal to close the Fleming Fulton Chalet.

f) - h) The Boards publicly declared that the Draft Priorities and Budget for 2005-06, if adopted, would result in significant deficits if service levels are to be maintained. Across the Boards a budget deficit of approximately £33 million was projected. Contingency plans were developed, generally referred to as 'five Board scenario paper', based on projected budgets. This paper included an impact assessment of the potential effects of service reduction in specific service areas and it was shared with the Department of Education. These plans helped to inform Board members in the decision making process.

Financial allocations were notified by the Department of Education on 15 February 2005. Draft budgets were submitted during the last week in March 2005. Boards screened the draft Financial Plans during April/May 2005 and published the results at the end of May 2005.

i) & j) Screening was conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 7 of the Boards' Equality Schemes.

It states "... only those policies which may present a significant risk to the statutory duty in Section 75 (1) of the Act to 'have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity' should be subject to such detailed assessment."

k) More detailed information was made available on each Board's website on their draft Financial Plan. The main purpose of the consultation paper was to pull the information together on the strategic and financial context and to summarise the outcome of the screening exercise. The screening could not commence until draft Financial Plans had been approved by the Boards (see comments at paragraph 4.2 (f-h) above). Notwithstanding this the five Board scenario paper was shared with the trade unions in December 2004. A briefing was provided to the Steering Group of the Joint Consultative Forum on 26 January 2005, information leaflets were issued to consultees (February and April 2005) and a special meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum was held on 22 March 2005. At the Steering Group meeting on 11 May 2005 community/voluntary sector groups were asked to facilitate, in partnership with Boards, consultation meetings to obtain feedback on the consultation document.

- l) Boards accept this as a valid point. For the Boards' part, the difference of opinion is unfortunate. The need for a resolution of the service delivery issue is of paramount importance.
- m) Boards accept the need to monitor the impact of these measures, (see Action Plan at Section 5 of this Report). A questionnaire will also be issued to consultees to obtain their views on the impact of the efficiency measures.
- n) This matter is currently under review. The closing date for responses on the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland is 30 September 2005.
- o) & p) A review will be conducted at the end of the financial year taking account of the data collected at (m) above to profile the impact, as far as is practicable, on staff and service users.
- q) See comments at h) and k) above

4.3 Maintenance of the Boards' Estates (inter-Board) (Para 3.3)

- a) – d) The Manhattan Database – Estates Management Programme is being used to document all maintenance requests. These are prioritised based on a risk assessment. Boards are continuing to undertake Health and Safety and urgent response maintenance work.
- e) For the past two years the Department of Education and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure have provided earmarked funds for the purpose of improving access to school buildings and to public libraries. This work is continuing and work to improve access for people with disabilities will be unaffected by the action taken to achieve savings in the maintenance budget.
- f) The Boards have not yet received confirmation from the Department of Education as to a) their individual allocation and b) any conditions on how this money is to be spent. Until more detailed guidance is received from the Department of Education it will not be possible to indicate the level of easement, if any, that may be permitted across the Boards' required savings of approximately £33 million in 2005/06 to remain within the allocated budget. Boards will, if they have the discretion to do so, take account of the feedback received as part of this consultation exercise.

4.4 Efficiency Measures – All Services (inter-Board) (Para 3.4)

- a) Part of the £12.5 million package includes measures to deal with falling pupil numbers and to take forward the modernisation of Board services. (See earlier comments at Section 1.6.)
- b) Boards fully accept the important role 'back room' staff have in the delivery of a comprehensive education service. Where practical, the philosophy has been to reduce rather than eliminate services and to constrain costs in areas such as administration. For this reason a blanket ban has not been placed

on the filling of posts, instead each vacancy is being scrutinised to determine the potential impact of the post not being filled on the Boards' statutory requirements to provide certain services. This strategy will be monitored and reviewed.

- c) Comment noted.
- d) The trawl was restricted to these areas because this is where the pressure is for exploring shared services and staff reductions. A wider trawl across all Board staff has not been ruled out.
- e) Boards accept that a reduction in administrative and/or professional support will impact on School Principals in that the response times for dealing with issues may be longer but advice and support will continue to be provided. Boards view effective monitoring of sickness/attendance as good management practice.
- f) The Boards accept that the actions to reduce staffing levels will impact upon virtually all of the Section 75 equality dimensions. Trade unions are receiving information on a regular basis on the impact of efficiency measures on staffing levels. This information will inform the proposed review at the end of this financial year.
- g) & h) The policies and procedures in place for the management of sickness absence remain unchanged. It is the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of the procedures that are being more carefully monitored.

4.5 Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service (CASS) (Para. 3.5)

4.5.1 (a) Policy: CASS: Reduced Support to Schools (inter-Board)

- i) Boards appreciate the ongoing support of schools in the delivery of this Service. Staff will be reallocated where appropriate to ensure the Boards' statutory duties are fulfilled. The Service will target those priorities identified in the schools' own development plans. The Service is currently undergoing a Best Value Review.
- ii) The main support for ICT is through C2K, hence any reduction at CASS level is minimal in relation to the total support for it.
- iii) Training for PRSD is the responsibility of the Regional Training Unit. There is no commitment by CASS to support PRSD. There is an External Adviser for every school in Northern Ireland funded by the Department of Education through the Western Board.
- iv) The Boards' understanding is that separate earmarked funding will be allocated for SENDO training.
- v - vi) Boards acknowledge that the reduction in planned expenditure on this area will impact upon a number of the Section 75 equality categories. However, the impact for this current year is not regarded as significant.

4.5.2 (b) Policy: Increase/recover costs in the Music Services (inter-Board)

- i) This service is organised as part of the Boards' non-statutory provision. The equality of opportunity goal enshrined in Section 75 of the Act has been taken into account by the Boards. This policy had been earmarked for an EQIA, it was suspended because of the outworking of the Department of

Education's Education and Training Inspectorate Report 2002. A programme of work aimed at improving pupils' equality of access and to cater for a wider range of pupils with other musical interests was underway. Given the current financial constraints, Boards are not in a position to fully implement this programme of work. Whilst charges have been increased, Boards have implemented other measures, where appropriate, to minimise the impact of increased charges e.g. "group teaching".

- ii) & iii) See (i) above. It is inevitable that the potential costs to parents could result in a reduced uptake, particularly from those pupils in socially and economically deprived areas. Those who can least afford the proposed increases will be disadvantaged. Research commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment concluded 'Instrumental Music Services may have an important role to play in relation to social and educational inclusion'. All Boards and schools are required to have a remission policy through which the charging disadvantage can normally be addressed.
- iv) Inter-school links are already used where practical in the provision of this service. A Board will consider sponsorship support where it would be likely to produce significant net benefits and have no adverse impact in terms of the Board's corporate values or the public interest. When considering sponsorship regard will be given to the appropriateness of the sponsoring firm and the nature of its products and the Board's role as an education organisation working with children, young people and schools.

4.5.3 (c) Policy: Closure of Drumalla House Outdoor Education Centre (Belfast Board only)

- i) & ii) The Board considered the consultee responses, one of whom recommended that the Board conduct an equality impact assessment. It is the view of the Board that whilst the closure of this facility may limit choice, there appears to be adequate provision of this type of residential establishment in Northern Ireland. Also schools/youth groups who previously used this facility will be encouraged to use the Delamont Outdoor Centre and/or through shared working arrangements the facilities available in the South Eastern Board.

The Board has entered into a consultation process with the recognised trade unions in respect of this proposal. All staff except one volunteered for redundancy. The remaining member of staff, who was declared redundant, had only two month's service working five hours per week.

It is the opinion of the Board that the proposal will not adversely impact on schools and/or youth programmes, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

4.5.4 (d) Policy: Proposal to Close: Fleming Fulton Chalet (Belfast Board only)

- i) – vi) As a result of the consultation process with parents, pupils, staff and Board of Governors of Fleming Fulton School and other feedback received the Board has taken the following decision:-

The chalet will not be closed prior to satisfactory alternative arrangements being made for the existing boarders. This may include developments around Phab (NI) and Ulidia Housing Association in partnership with Fleming Fulton School to establish an independent Living and Assessment Centre at the site of the chalet should the development proposal be approved by DE. In future, pupils who require boarding facilities will be assessed on an individual basis with the likelihood of family based living within the board area.

The Board will also enter into exploratory dialogue with Phab (NI), the Ulidia Housing Association, the Board of Governors of Fleming Fulton School, other ELB's, and other agencies deemed relevant by the Board to clarify future funding arrangements and to establish:-

- Interim living accommodation for registered pupils.
- Short tem living accommodation for pupils on a dual placement.
- Short term living accommodation for registered pupils to attend Fleming Fulton for period of assessment and to foster developments post SENDO era

4.5.5 (e) Policy: Proposal to close:

- Glenwood and St Teresa's Family Literacy Centre
- Glenwood Reading Centre (Belfast Board only) (Belfast Board only)

- i) – v) Pupils who attended Glenwood Reading Centre will be referred and supported through outreach and peripatetic services within their own schools.

The Board considered the consultee responses, some of whom recommended that the Board conduct an equality impact assessment. It is the view of the Board that this was an additional non statutory provision provided by the Board through its core funding. The Board is satisfied that all pupils who require this type of support will receive it, albeit in a different format. It is therefore the decision of the Board that this proposal does not require an equality impact assessment.

4.5.6 (f) Policy: Cessation of Homework Centre provision

Newhill, Holy Trinity, St. Gemma's and Avoniel. (Belfast Board only)

- i) – v) The Board has sought to minimise the impact of the current financial constraints through the maintenance of services for which it has a statutory requirement to provide. The Board has carefully considered the responses of consultees but without additional resources cannot continue to fund these centres. The Homework Centre funding provision will cease with effect from 31 August 2005.

4.5.7 (g) Policy: Cease Funding to Specialist Instructors – Youth Service (Belfast Board only)

- i) Comments noted.
- ii) Of the responses received only two consultees recommended that the Board should consider an equality impact assessment. The Board, having considered the responses to this proposal, are of the view that the impact of ceasing this provision is not significant and therefore does not require an equality impact assessment.

4.5.8 (h) Policy: Early Years Learning Service (Toy and Book Library) (Belfast and South Eastern Boards only)

- i) Comment noted.
- ii) – iv) The Early Years Service (previously Toy and Book Library) was set up at a time when there was no pre-school provision, additionally, at that time there was no enriched curriculum. This type of provision is now provided through PEAG (for which the Belfast Board has 100% capacity places and the South Eastern Board 88% capacity places). Sure Start and other parenting initiatives are also available.

The resources of the Early Years Service are to be retained for use by the schools in which the service operated. Taking account of the provision available, the Boards are of the view that the needs of both children and parents can continue to be met through these different methods of support and therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

- v) Comment noted.

4.5.9 (i) Policy: Alternative Use of Downpatrick Resource Centre (South Eastern Board only)

- i) & ii) Comments noted.

4.5.10 (j) Policy: Closure of Cabra Towers Outdoor Field Study Centre and Relocation of Provision to Ardnabannon Outdoor Centre (South Eastern Board only)

- i) This closure has been effected, all staff affected by the closure were offered deployment and this has been accepted by all, save for those staff who elected to opt for voluntary redundancy.

4.5.11 (k) Policy: Operation of full cost recovery for Studio On (South Eastern Board only)

- i) Comment noted.

4.5.12 (l) Policy: Operation of full cost recovery of the Causeway School and either full cost recovery or closure of the Centres at Ballymoney and Ballymena. (North Eastern Board only)

- i) The position of the Causeway School remains under review. It is hoped that external funding or support can be identified to maintain the facility post March 2006. Service provision through the Ballymena and Ballymoney centres has been/is being relocated to other venues. Ballymoney Centre is scheduled for closure from 31 October 2005. There appear to be few if any

impacts on service recipients from the relocation of the services and the small number of possible redundancies (two) are being handled by the normal procedures which provide resolutions through transfer/retirement/voluntary redundancy.

4.6 Special Education (Para 3.6)

4.6.1 General:

- i) – iii) The Boards have not yet received confirmation from the Department of Education as to a) their individual allocation and b) any conditions on how this money is to be spent. It is the Boards' understanding that £3.5 million has been allocated to Special Education. Until more detailed information is received from the Department of Education it will not be possible to indicate the level of easement, if any, in this budget area. Boards will, if they have the discretion to do so, take account of the feedback received as part of this consultation process.

4.6.2 (a) Policy – Pupil Support Services (Belfast Board only)

- i) & ii) The Board has considered the responses of consultees and, taking account of the services provided, is of the opinion that the Board will continue to meet its statutory obligations and through the alternative methods of service delivery provide additional non statutory support. The alternative methods of service delivery include:-
- movement away from withdrawal of the pupil to inclusion within mainstream school;
 - more emphasis on group work as opposed to individualised work;
 - referral of some pupils to other existing specialised provision;
 - programme of staff development for teachers in behaviour management.

A small number of teaching staff (6) across the range of pupil support services have opted to be made voluntarily redundant.

The Board is of the view that the impact of this proposal on those receiving the service and on staff is limited and therefore does not require an equality impact assessment.

4.6.3 (b) Policy: Reduced Support for Summer Activity Scheme for Children with Special Needs (South Eastern Board only)

- i) & ii) The comments of the consultees are noted. Notwithstanding the extent of financial pressures being experienced by the South Eastern Board, the Board has maintained this non-statutory provision and has not abolished but reduced the duration of the scheme. The Board will continue to work with the Trusts, Councils and the voluntary sector to explore other alternative sources of funding for the future.

4.6.4 (c) Policy: Reduction in Article 56 Budget to Schools (South Eastern Board only)

- i) The Board has consulted with all special schools in its area before implementing this budget reduction. All children in attendance at Special Schools are in receipt of a Statutory Statement and the Board will continue to fully meet the requirements of the children as set out in such statements.

4.6.5 (d) Policy: Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) - (Southern Board only)

- i) Comment noted.

4.7 Transport (Para. 3.7)

4.7.1 (a) Policy: Introduction of Board Minibuses to Replace Taxis and Private Hire (Inter-Board)

- i) – iv) Under these arrangements there is no change in provision. No child's entitlement to school transport assistance will be affected by the proposal. The Boards have secured £1.4 million from the Department of Education to fund the purchase of vehicles to replace some taxi/private operator provision where it is cost effective to do so.

4.7.2 (b) Policy: Review of School Crossing Patrols and the application of the LARSOA Guidelines (South Eastern, Southern and Western Boards only)

- i - iii) Comments noted.

4.7.3 (c) Policy: Withdrawal of Transport at 2.00 p.m. (South Eastern and Southern Boards only)

- i & ii) The South Eastern Board is currently reviewing its 2.00 p.m. transport arrangements. Existing arrangements will continue to pertain where there is an operational or other benefit accruing to the Board. No decisions have as yet been taken whilst the Board assesses the operational demands arising from the forthcoming academic year. The Board is satisfied that all eligible pupils who require transport assistance will receive it. It is therefore the decision of the Board that this proposal does not require an equality impact assessment.

The Southern Board has carefully considered the views of the consultees. In addition to the comments from the consultees the Board received at its meeting on 28 July 2005 a deputation from parents and schools affected by the Board's decision. Having reconsidered their decision given the ongoing financial constraints the Board was unable to revoke its decision. The Board is satisfied that all eligible pupils who require transport assistance will receive it. It is therefore the decision of the Board that this proposal does not have a significant impact on the Board's obligation to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and therefore does not require an equality impact assessment. Additionally, the Board has agreed to send a cross-party deputation to meet with the Minister for Education to seek additional funding to restore the service.

- (iii) Children are required to be supervised for the duration of their attendance at school. There will be no change in Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Service.

4.8 School Catering (Para. 3.8)

4.8.1 (a) Policy: To increase the price of school meals (inter-Board)

- i) - iii) The Minister's statement on the additional funding emphasised that the extra funding would be ring-fenced to ensure maximum benefit to pupils. It is the Boards' understanding that the additional money (£2.5 million School Meals) is to be used to improve the nutritional standard of the meal (see paragraph 1.6 of this Report). Boards are required by the Department of Education to recover the full economic costs of production for any meal or refreshment provided. The five Boards are currently exploring the possibility of sharing services including for example the feasibility of a Northern Ireland School Meals Service.
- iv) Comment noted.
- v) See comments at (i) & (ii) above. The impact of the price increases will be carefully monitored and a report on the findings published at the end of the financial year.
- vi) Comment noted.

4.8.2 (b) Policy: To review charges for staff currently receiving a meal at an abated rate/free (inter-Board)

- i) & ii) The full cost to the Boards of an abated rate/free meal for catering and supervisory staff who are required to work over the lunch-time period is approximately £3.1 million. Negotiations are on-going with the trade unions with regard to this matter. There is no proposal to pass on the charge of the abated rate/free meal to schools. Teacher trade unions will be consulted on any proposed changes to these arrangements where they impact on their membership.

4.8.3 (c) Policy: Laundry Allowances (Southern and Western Boards only)

- (i) Negotiations with the Trade Union Side whose members are affected by any proposed change are ongoing with regard to this matter.

4.8.4 (d) Policy: Convert Kitchens to Dining Centres "Efficiency Measures" (Belfast and Western Boards only)

- i) & ii) See comments at paragraph 4.8.1 (a).
- iii) More information on the impact on staffing is provided at (iv) below). The Belfast Board are of the opinion that an extension to the consultation period would not enhance this process and it could have a negative impact on the Board's proposal to redeploy staff.
- iv) The BELB have met with the school catering staff directly affected by the proposal and their trade union representatives. The Western Board has met with trade union representatives, and is making arrangements to meet with staff before the end of August 2005.

- v) In the WELB 29 school catering staff are potentially affected. At present the Board can redeploy 23 staff to other kitchens, 4 staff have expressed an interest in taking voluntary redundancy, leaving only two staff who have not yet been accommodated. The Board is fairly confident, given the normal turnover of catering staff, that it should be possible to redeploy these staff. A final decision on conversions will be taken by the Board in September 2005.

In the BELB 16 school catering staff are affected. A commitment to redeploy these staff has been given. Given that the redeployment of staff is ongoing and that children will continue to be provided with a school meal the Boards are of the view that the impact of this proposal is not significant.

- vi) This recommendation is being forwarded to the Department of Education's School Meals Branch.

4.9 Centre Schools (Para. 3.9)

4.9.1 (a) Policy: Reduce Centre School Funding (inter-Board)

- i) Agreed.

4.9.2 (b) Policy: English as an Additional Language (EAL) (inter-Board)

The Boards have considered the consultees comments and have revisited the historical documentation in their possession in relation to the treatment of EAL funding consequent upon the introduction of the new Common Funding Formula arrangements. Having revisited this information the Boards continue to hold the view that the introduction of the new Common Funding Scheme restructured the funding of EAL by shifting the emphasis in funding provision and support from centre to schools. The arrangements formed part of the public consultation undertaken by the Department in advance of the introduction of the new scheme and formed part of the Department's EQIA. Consequently the Boards do not consider it appropriate to conduct a further EQIA at this point in time. The Boards have sought to mitigate where possible the consequences of this shift in funding. In addition in the light of the consultees representations the Boards have asked the Department to seek to secure additional earmarked funding as part of the September monitoring round.

Belfast Education & Library Board

With regard to EAL provision for the academic year 05-06, Belfast Education and Library Board officers met with schools to discuss the option of a managed service, however there was insufficient interest in this type of provisions.

The Board is appointing, on a permanent basis, two Assistant Advisory Officers to work in partnership with schools in order to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL). This will involve the development of a new element of support within the School Support Service. The Assistant Advisory Officers will provide advice and support to teachers as part of their continuous professional development. Support will also include guidance on meeting

the learning needs of ethnic minority pupils through effective planning and differentiation and advice on assessment procedures for newly arrived pupils. The officers will also support schools in developing policies which ensure racial equality and cultural diversity.

North Eastern Education & Library Board

NEELB will provide EAL support through two dedicated members of CASS staff, who will provide direct teaching to those pupils who have arrived into the country post-October 2004 census. NEELB will seek to build capacity within schools so that teachers have the necessary knowledge as to how to include the pupil(s) within the classroom, and to move away from a model whereby support was the ELB's responsibility. To this end the NEELB are offering INSET to primary and post-primary teachers, and introducing afternoon cluster meetings whereby the EAL tutors can demonstrate resources and/or advise on devising support programmes. This service can also be accessed by classroom assistants who may provide additional withdrawal language support sessions for the pupils in order to reinforce the issues within the whole-class setting. A further development is the production of a guidance booklet, with an emphasis on inclusion.

The Board believes that it needs to develop the teachers' understanding of how to integrate the pupil within the class so that the provision for EAL pupils is a fundamental aspect of a school's literacy/SEN policy, and that the school will be enabled to respond to the growing numbers of EAL pupils as part of school practice.

South Eastern Education & Library Board

With regard to EAL provision for the academic year 2005/06 the South Eastern Board Officers have met with primary, secondary and special schools to discuss what arrangements they are putting in place to deliver EAL provision. Whilst a small number of schools have elected to employ their own teachers to address this provision over 42 schools have elected to purchase this service from the Board's Central Support Service.

The Assistant Advisory Officer (AAO) and the 5 EAL teachers will work in partnership with schools in order to raise the attainment of all ethnic minority pupils. The AAO will provide advice and support to teachers as part of their continuous professional development as well as guidance on meeting the needs of EAL pupils. EALS teachers will provide direct teaching support to the 42 schools with who have elected to purchase this support from the Board and will work in partnership with classroom teachers to assess, monitor and evaluate EAL pupils progress.

It is intended that the AAO, the EAL teachers and the Home School Liaison Officers will offer INSET and arrange cluster meetings for classroom teachers with regards to EAL support programmes. This service can also be accessed by classroom assistants.

The Home School Liaison Officers, one for the Chinese community and the other for Bangladeshi community will continue to support schools with pupils from these communities.

The Board is in additional preparing a number of guidance materials and booklets for schools and parents.

Southern Education & Library Board

In its consideration of EAL provision for schools for the 2005/06 academic year, the Southern Education and Library Board wrote to schools on 4 April 2005 to explore the possibility of employing a teacher(s) on a shared basis to teach English as an Additional Language. However, there was little or no interest in this type of arrangement.

The Board, given that schools now have the funding to support EAL pupils, will not be providing direct teaching support in the 2005/06 academic year. However, an additional £120,000 has been allocated from its 2005/06 Block Grant under Board Initiatives to support EAL provision. The Board has appointed on a permanent basis two Assistant Advisory Officers.

The Assistant Advisory Officers will work in partnership with schools to ensure that systems are in place to support, monitor and evaluate the achievement of ethnic minority pupils and which will include the provision of guidance on supporting language development across the curriculum. The officers will assist the Languages Adviser responsible for EAL provision in the promotion of an SELB In-Service Strategy and in particular in identifying priorities for training and support in relation to language development. Some funding on a pro rata basis will be made available to schools that have enrolled 'new' EAL pupils since the October 2004 census date.

Western Education & Library Board

The Western Board is hoping to have two full-time CASS staff available to offer EAL support during the 2005-06 academic year. Training and support will be offered to a number of primary and post-primary teachers to increase their understanding of how to prepare a baseline assessment of all newly arrived pupils, set appropriate targets and develop strategies and resources to meet the needs of pupils and in particular improve home school links and partnerships. On-line support will be developed using the Board's website and schools will be encouraged to network and share knowledge/experiences.

The Board will continue to work closely with local support groups e.g. Polish Welfare (Derry), Ethnic Group (Omagh) and Children of the World (Enniskillen).

- 4.9.3 (c) Policy:** Swimming Programme (North Eastern and Western Boards only)
- i) Under the Department of Education's LMS Common Funding Formula swimming provision is a delegated cost and Boards are not in a position to hold funds centrally for this purpose. Swimming costs can be met from schools' delegated budgets and therefore no significant equality issues have been identified.

4.9.4 (d) Policy: Cluster Arrangements (South Eastern Board only)

i) Comment noted.

4.9.5 (e) Policy: Withdrawal of assistance to nursery schools in respect of children aged two years (South Eastern Board)

i) The consultees' comments are noted. The South Eastern Board would wish to emphasise however that there is no change in the number of places available, the admission arrangements or the normal funding provided to nursery schools.

4.9.6 (f) Policy: Reduction in Curriculum Reserve/Class Size/Contingency Funding (South Eastern only)

i) Comment noted.

4.9.7 (g) Policy: Rationalisation (South Eastern Board only)

i) & ii) Comments noted.

4.9.8 (h) Policy: Withdrawal of Small Grants (South Eastern Board only)

i) The Board considered the trade unions' recommendation that an equality impact assessment should be carried out on its decision to withdraw its small grants scheme (£10,000 per annum).

It is the view of the Board that this is an additional non-statutory provision provided by the Board to pupils in its area but accessed by very few. Its decision to withdraw such funding does not have a significant adverse impact on the Board's equality obligations.

4.10 School Library (Para. 3.10)

4.10.1 Policy: Reduce book funding (inter-Board)

i) - iv) Boards, in the consultation document, acknowledged the negative affect of this decision. It is envisaged that the funds available will still allow for a number of stock items to be purchased and that core services will continue to be provided. In addition, the ni-libraries.net web portal which provides access to the stock catalogues of the five Boards has created a greater awareness of what is available and the potential for more effective use of stock.

v) Noted.

5. ACTION REQUIRED

5.1 Given the commitments contained at Section 4 of this Report, the Boards will:

i) Advise consultees, when information is available, on how the £12.5 million has been allocated and any conditions on how this money is to be spent, paragraph 1.6 refers.

ii) Implement the decisions referred to at Section 4. They are:

- a) Review the manner in which screening information is presented to consultees, paragraph 4.2 d) refers.
 - b) Develop mechanisms to monitor the impact of the measures specified in the Resource Allocation Plans, in particular the impact on staffing across the five Boards, paragraph 4.2 m) refers.
 - c) The Fleming Fulton chalet will not be closed prior to satisfactory alternative arrangements being made for the existing boarders. This may include developments around Phab (NI) and Ulidia Housing Association in partnership with Fleming Fulton School to establish an independent Living and Assessment Centre at the site of the chalet should the development proposal be approved by DE. In future, pupils who require boarding facilities will be assessed on an individual basis with the likelihood of family based living within the board area, paragraph 4.5.4 d) refers.
 - d) The North Eastern Board is to complete its review of the operation of full cost recovery of the Causeway School, paragraph 4.5.12 refers.
 - e) The five Boards are exploring the possibility of sharing services including for example the feasibility of a single Northern Ireland School Meals Service. An inter-Board Working Group has already commenced a detailed examination of the feasibility of such an exercise in the School Meals Service. It is proposed to complete that exercise and make recommendations in the course of this year, paragraph 4.8.1a) refers.
 - f) Negotiations to be concluded with the trade unions on the review of charges for staff currently receiving a meal at an abated rate/free, paragraph 4.8.2 b) refers.
 - g) Negotiations to be concluded with the trade unions on provision of laundry allowances to staff in the Southern and Western Boards, paragraph 4.8.3 c) refers.
 - h) Redeployment of staff, where possible, in the Belfast Board and Western Boards who are affected by the proposal to convert kitchens to dining centres, paragraph 4.8.4 d) refers.
- iii) Conduct a review to ensure that Boards' contain expenditure within the accrued limit approved by the Departments during the financial/school year and publish the findings.
 - iv) Issue a questionnaire to consultees to obtain feedback on their experience of the under-funding during 2005/06. Aim to issue in June 2006 so that information gleaned may help inform the financial planning process.
 - v) Provide through the Joint Consultative Forum and its Steering Group regular updates on the implementation of the Boards' Financial Plans.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1** The Boards greatly appreciate the co-operation, advice and feedback received from a range of organisations and individuals throughout this consultation process. The unavoidable consequence of the current under-funding of the Boards is that, in order to act within the limits of our allocated budgets, difficult and in some cases controversial decisions have had to be made.

Whilst Boards would not expect consultee groups to necessarily agree with those decisions, it is hoped that you feel your views have been considered.

Responses to Consultation

Inter-Board

NICEM 15 June 2005

MENCAP 15 June 2005

Intra-Board**Belfast Education and Library Board*****Convert Kitchens to Dining Centres***

Staff and Trade Unions 6 June 2005

Vere Foster	22 June 2005	} Parents/Board of Governors and Staff in schools, also some local Councillors in attendance
Grove	22 June 2005	
Wheatfield	23 June 2005	

Proposal to Close Fleming Fulton Chalet

Parents 6 June 2005

Pupils 9 June 2005

Cessation of Homework Centre Provision

(Newhill Homework Centre) 17 June 2005

Southern Education and Library Board**Withdrawal of Transport at 2.00 p.m.**

Public Representatives 10 June 2005

Public Representative 13 June 2005

Public Representative 17 June 2005

Public Representatives 23 June 2005

Public Representative 24 June 2005

Trade Union 15 July 2005

Drumadonnell Primary School, Banbridge

Public Representatives, Parents,

Teachers, Board of Governors 16 June 2005

St Colman's Primary School, Annaclone, Banbridge

Board of Governors, Parents,

Teachers, Board of Governors 23 June 2005

Western Education and Library Board

Convert Kitchens to Dining Centres

Staff and Trade Unions 27 June 2005

English as an Additional Language

NICEM 16 June 2005

Review of School Crossing Patrols

Trade Unions 16 June 2005

Southern and Western Education and Library Boards

Laundry Allowances

Trade Unions 31 May and 9 June 2005

Written responses were received from:-

Age Concern

ANIMATE

Anonymous (1)

Christian Brothers Schools

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Department of Education

Down Lisburn Carers Forum

Fleming Fulton Chalet (2)

Fleming Fulton School - Chairperson, Board of Governors

Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Individual Responses (4)

Labour Relations Agency

NASUWT

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

NIPSA

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)

Northern Ireland Rural Development Council

Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Orangefield High School

Sinn Fein (Press Statement)

Staff of the English as an Additional Language Support Unit - BELB

St Gemma's High School - Homework Centre Staff

St Gemma's High School

St John the Baptist Boys' Primary School

UNISON

Women's Forum Northern Ireland

Women's Support Network