

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,
24 JANUARY 2019 AT 2.00 PM IN ANTRIM BOARD CENTRE**

1. PRESENT Ms S O'Connor (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Rev R Herron
Mr D Cargo	Mrs S Kelly
Mr J Craig	Sir Gerry Loughran
Mrs M Culbert	Mr N McCausland
Mr G Doran	Dr A McMorrان
Dr M Dynan	Miss R Rainey
Mr E Jardine	Ms N Toman

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Mr G Boyd, Mr J Collings, Mrs C Duffield, Dr C Mangan, Mrs K Scott, Mr D Anderson, Mr M McDermott, Ms A Monaghan and Ms L McCall.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Ms Á Andrews, Mrs P Carville, Mr G Lundy, Dr I McMorris, Mr O McMullan and Mr R Pollock.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the requirement to declare interests where appropriate during the course of the meeting.

5. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2018

The minutes* (EAB/1/19/3) of the meeting held on 13 December 2018 were approved on the proposal of Mr Craig and seconded by Mrs Culbert.

6. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

6.1 BOARD MEMBER BUDGET WORKSHOP 2019-20

Mr Boyd said that Members had considered EA's budget pressures for 2019/20 at the workshop held earlier in the day. He said that, assuming a cash flat budget, the 2019/20 pressures exercise had identified estimated emerging pressures of £170m and estimated savings of £21m which would leave an estimated funding gap of £149m. Members had noted that schools were experiencing enormous financial pressure and were expected to overspend their budget allocations by £66m in 2019/20. Schools' pressures would be dealt with separately through the schools' 2019/20 planning exercise. Members had noted the analysis provided on the 2019/20 forecast position and had agreed that the community needed to be made aware of the reality of the challenging funding situation facing EA and schools. Mr Boyd said that he would be engaging with DE around the communication of this issue in the first instance.

A note of the meeting of the workshop held on 24 January 2019 would be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

6.2 APPOINTMENTS

The Chair extended the Board's congratulations to Ms Long on her appointment as Chief Executive effective from 1 April 2019. She expressed her appreciation to the recruitment and selection panel for its work in securing the appointment. She also provided a report on Mr Collings' responsibilities to support the Chief Executive and the Finance Directorate prior to his retirement at the end of February.

The Chair extended the Board's congratulations to Mrs K Scott on her appointment as Acting Director of Education. She said that Mrs Scott had taken up some of the Director's responsibilities from the start of January and would assume full responsibility from 1 March 2019.

A brief report was provided on arrangements in respect of the recruitment exercise for the post of Acting Director of Operations and Estates.

6.3 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME BOARD MEMBERS SUB-GROUP - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2018

Mrs Duffield said that the Sub-Group had received a report on further projects that had been commissioned by DE's Transformation Programme Board. This included the project relating to area planning.

A Member said he was aware of a number of school leaders who had expressed concerns around new digitalisation processes. As an unintended consequence of digitalisation, he understood that school leaders were now required to input data instead of having the facility to delegate transactional work to other school staff. Mrs Duffield said that EA was involving school leaders in the development of all digital projects through engagement sessions, user testing, and steering groups. She said that school leaders also formed part of the Transformation team.

The Board noted the minutes* (EAB/1/19/5) of the meeting held on 10 December 2018.

Action: Member's comments to be forwarded to the Digital Transformation team.

6.4 PERMANENT SECRETARY - CORRESPONDENCE

The Board noted the Permanent Secretary's letter* (EAB/1/19/5) dated 26 November 2018 regarding the content of agenda for Governance and Accountability Review meetings.

6.5 COMMUNICATIONS - UPDATE

Ms Toman declared an interest in Digital Admissions.

The Board noted the summary paper* (EAB/1/19/5) on proactive communications and issues raised in the media in the previous month.

Ms Monaghan provided an overview of the significant volume of traffic to the new Digital Admissions system since it had gone live on 3 January 2019.

A Member congratulated Ms Long on the media announcement relating to the appointment of the post of Chief Executive. She queried the media attention given to EA's logo and the use of other languages. Mr Boyd said that the logo had been designed by school children prior to the establishment of EA, as part of the remit of DE's Implementation Team. The logo approved by the Minister of the day had both trilingual and monolingual options. In 2016, departmental policies around logos had been changed

by the subsequent Minister. A decision had been taken at that time for EA to establish a monolingual logo in line with departmental policy.

6.6 NEW YEAR'S HONOURS

The Chair extended the Board's congratulations to the individuals listed below who had been acknowledged in the New Year's Honours list for services to education and children and young people. The Chair advised that congratulatory letters would be issued on the Board's behalf to the recipients.

Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Mrs A M Loughrey - for services to children in early years education

Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Mr W H Connor, Chief Executive, Sentinus - for services to education

Mr T W P Donaldson JP - for services to the Boys' Brigade, Lay Magistracy and education

Mr W N Dougherty, Principal, Ebrington Primary School - for services to primary education and the community in Londonderry

Mr T E Long, Principal, Orangefield Primary School - for services to education

Ms M Roulston, lately Principal, Millennium Integrated Primary School - for services to education

Mrs J Weir - for services to the community in North Belfast

Medallists of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

Mr J Anderson, Buildings Supervisor, Omagh County Primary School - for services to education

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETINGS

7.1 MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2018

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, a Member presented the minutes. He said that a protocol for informing Members of incidents of death in service within EA had been developed. He referred to interim guidance that had issued from DE on the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and said that officers would be engaging with the Permanent Secretary to explore opportunities for cross departmental co-operation. He drew attention to the recommendation that the CYPS Business Plan should align to the outcomes contained within the CYPS Strategy and that further information would be provided to the Committee on the statutory assessment timeline.

The Board noted that statements of special educational needs had been approved by the Committee.

On the proposal of Dr McMorran, seconded by Rev Adams, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/11/18/6.1) of the meeting held on 6 December 2018.

7.2 MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2019

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, a Member presented the minutes. He said that, prior to the meeting on 10 January, a Board Member workshop had been held to consider the consultation feedback arising from the Early Years' Strategic Review. This work would be taken forward through further meetings of the Programme Management Board and the Members' Sub-Group, and officers would

engage further with DE officials around processes. He advised that the consultation report, implementation plan, final framework, and final EQIA would be presented to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

The Member said that consideration had been given to the Directorate's projected year end financial position as at 30 November 2018. He advised that, at future meetings, the Committee would receive a report on costs associated with the statutory assessment process and a report on the role of EA's Psychology Service.

The Board noted that statements of special educational needs had been approved by the Committee.

On the proposal of Dr McMorrán, seconded by Mr Jardine, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/1/19/6.2) of the meeting held on 10 January 2019.

8. CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2018

The Chair of the Committee said that the Committee intended to commence development on safeguarding and child protection support for vulnerable children and young people, particularly in the area of sexual exploitation. He said that the Committee would seek to be informed of the responsibilities of lead statutory agencies in this area as well as receiving clarity on EA's responsibilities.

The Chair of the Committee referred to interim arrangements for EA to provide child protection training to private operators involved in home to school transport. He said that consideration was currently being given to robust contractual arrangements for private contractors in the area of child protection.

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the recommendation for the Board to approve EA's Child Protection and Safeguarding Draft Policy and Procedures and the associated equality screening template. He also advised that the Committee had received a number of reports on Case Management Reviews and the Committee had been content that these were being progressed in accordance with process.

On the proposal of Mr Cargo, seconded by Ms O'Connor, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/1/19/7) of the meeting held on 10 December 2018.

9. MEMBERSHIP AND TEACHING APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2019

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the appointment of a number of teachers under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme. She also said that the Committee would receive a report, in due course, on the overall number of individuals in acting up arrangements to school leadership posts across all sectors.

The Chair of the Committee said that, in order to support school governance, a suite of information would be provided to schools in the near future which would include clarification on the role of all Governors, including co-opted Members. She said that the Committee had noted that training programmes for Governors were heavily subscribed, particularly in the area of recruitment and selection training. Officers had therefore been tasked with exploring alternative approaches to providing recruitment and selection training to Governors, for example by school leaders and through Area Learning Communities.

The Chair of the Committee said that, following the approvals given by the Committee to Governor appointments, 90% of controlled schools had been reconstituted as at 8 January 2019. Officers were now focusing on the remaining 10% of schools which had not yet reached the threshold for reconstitution.

The Board noted the minutes* (EAB/1/19/8) of the meeting held on 8 January 2019.

The Chair expressed appreciation to all Members and officers who had supported schools through the reconstitution process.

10. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2019

A budget workshop had been held earlier in the day to enable Board Members to consider the 2018/19 projected outturn position and estimated pressures identified for 2019/20.

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, a Member presented the minutes. He referred to consideration given to the review of the post primary transfer process in 2018, Brexit day 1 delivery planning, the Governor training programme for 2018/19, and the National Joint Council pay award for 2018/19 and 2019/20. He said that, in considering the note of the meeting of the Inequalities Working Group held on 29 November 2018, the Committee had noted that a workshop would be held in the coming months to review EA's Committee structure. He drew attention to recommendations concerning the implementation of the standardised parental payment scheme for home to school transport in 2018/19, tender reports, and land and property transactions.

A Member said that the minutes should record that the note of the meeting of the Inequalities Working Group was being referred back to the Inequalities Working Group. It was pointed out that this would be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 5 February 2019.

A Member referred to the definition of policy and the process of policy development. He referred to paragraph 4.1 of EA's Equality Scheme which had been agreed in 2015. He also referred to a publication of the Government Legal Department 'The Judge over your Shoulder - A guide to good decision making' (2018).

A Member referred to a report published by the Equality Commission on evidence gathered on public authority practices. The report presented recommendations on how to ensure the effective implementation of public authorities' statutory equality and good relations duties. She considered it would be beneficial to consider the matter of enforcement further at the Board Member workshop and to invite a representative from the Equality Commission to attend. Mr McDermott said that EA had adopted a number of the recommendations contained in the Equality Commission's report. He said that the Equality Commission was satisfied with EA's processes with regard to consultation and had wished to showcase EA's practices in this area.

A Member said that the remit of the upcoming Board Member workshop was strategic. The purpose of the workshop was to review EA's governance structure, including an overview of executive and non-executive responsibilities.

The Chair said that the Head of Legal Services was attending the workshop. While policy definition and consultation processes would be covered at the workshop, she said that more in-depth discussion would require another meeting at a later date to consider how EA enforced its Section 75 responsibilities.

It was agreed that, given the in-house expertise in the Equality Unit, Mr McDermott would consider the need for a representative from the Equality Commission to attend a future workshop.

On the proposal of Miss Rainey, seconded by Mr Jardine, the Board agreed to appoint Mrs M Culbert to the Schools' Surpluses and Deficits' Working Group.

On the proposal of Mr Doran, seconded by Mr McCausland, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/1/19/9) of the meeting held on 8 January 2019.

Action: *Provide members with a link to the Equality Commission Report 'Acting on the evidence of public authority practices'.*

11. EDUCATION COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2019

The Chair of the Committee said that Mrs G McGrath, Director of Education with CCMS, had attended the meeting to outline the role of CCMS, its working relationship with EA, and current work on the development of eight position papers which set out challenges facing schools at the current time.

The Chair of the Committee said that Members had discussed challenges around providing adequate Governor training programmes across the region. Concerns had also been raised around schools using software which was not supported by the EA network. He said that a report on the new school leadership competencies framework, which had been commissioned by DE, was expected to be provided to the Committee in the Autumn. A finance report had also been presented which had shown that, in general, all budget lines within the Education Directorate were forecast to be within budget for 2018/19. He pointed out that the recruitment of the 17 School Improvement Professionals was expected to commence in the first quarter of 2019/20.

The Chair of the Committee said that a cross Directorate presentation had been given on the development of the school data profiling framework. It was envisaged that this framework would allow for a multi-disciplinary approach to address school issues and challenges. He also referred to the report on the review of the post primary transfer process in 2018 and to recommendations relating to Development Proposals.

A Member referred to the significant increase in the number of young people at post primary transfer stage in 2018 and the expectation that this figure would continue to rise until 2024. The Chair referred to the work undertaken, in conjunction with DE, to forecast demand within particular areas.

A Member referred to the recommendation concerning Erganagh Primary School. He sought assurance from officers that processes were in place to effectively support the pupils of Erganagh Primary School as had been requested by the Committee. Mrs Scott confirmed that actions were proceeding as requested by the Committee.

A Member drew attention to variations in approach by schools to vetting arrangements for new Governors. Mrs Scott referred to a DE Circular on this issue. She said that DE carried out Access NI checks on Governors appointed as DE representatives. However, Governors appointed as EA representatives did not undergo this vetting. Given the disparity, she undertook to include this matter on the agenda of the Membership and Teaching Appointments Committee for its consideration.

On the proposal of Rev Herron, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/1/19/10) of the meeting held on 10 January 2019.

***Action:** Membership and Teaching Appointments Committee to consider vetting arrangements for Governors.*

12. AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2019

The Chair of the Committee reported that Mr R Forrest had resigned as an external independent member of the Committee and that Mr T Salmon had agreed to continue in his role for a further twelve month period in line with the arrangements for reconstitution of the EA Board. He advised that a process was in place to appoint a successor for Mr Forrest for the twelve month period. The Chair paid tribute to Mr Forrest for his contributions to the work of the Committee, and EA, over the last four years.

The Chair of the Committee said that consideration had been given to the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) and the Head of Internal Audit's independent evaluation of the content of the CRR. Three new risks had been incorporated into the CRR which related to preparations for planning for Brexit Day 1 and two major ICT projects. He said the Finance and General Purposes Committee would receive a presentation on the two ICT projects in due course and he urged all Members to attend that Committee meeting in order to be apprised of the projects and their associated risks. He also referred to an area of risk within the CRR on safeguarding and home to school transport and said that this matter was being taken forward by the Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee.

The Chair of the Committee said that, in considering the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18, the Committee had agreed to recommend that the Chair and Chief Executive should be authorised to sign the Financial Statements. He reported that the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) intended to issue an unqualified audit opinion on EA's Financial Statements. He said the Committee had noted the C&AG's draft report on EA's 2017/18 overspend position and the draft Report to those Charged with Governance. Management had been asked to respond to both reports.

The Chair of the Committee reported on consideration given to priority 1 recommendations, progress reports on fraud and whistleblowing, and the reprioritised Internal Audit Plan. To date, 40% of audits in the 2018/19 plan had progressed to either draft or final report stage and a further 29% were ongoing. He said that assurance had been provided by the Head of Internal Audit that the majority of the audits in the reprioritised plan would be completed to at least draft report by year end to enable reasonable assurance to be reported in his Assurance Report and Opinion for 2018/19.

The Chair of the Committee said that a report on Procurement transformation and governance had been noted, including arrangements to take forward a successful CoPE re-accreditation programme.

A Member welcomed the letter to issue from the Chief Executive to Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated (VG/GMI) Schools on the requirement set out in DAO 10/07. He said that a number of VG/GMI schools had contracts in place for external audit services for a period of up to three years. With this in mind, he considered that the letter should align with the terminology of DAO 10/07 and impress that implementation should take place at the earliest possible date. Mr Anderson acknowledged that schools might incur

penalties through the cessation of contracts. He outlined an approach to address this issue to support schools.

On the proposal of Mr Cargo, seconded by McCausland, it was agreed that the C&AG's public interest report, when finalised, would be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration and that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18, in its final format, would be presented to the Board for approval.

On the proposal of Mr Jardine, seconded by Dr Dynan, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/1/19/10) of the meeting held on 10 January 2019.

Action: *C&AG's public interest report, when finalised, to be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration, and Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18, in its final format, to be presented to the Board for approval.*

13. HOUSE STYLE FOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Board considered the paper* (EAB/1/19/12) which had been amended to reflect Members' feedback at the previous meeting.

A Member said that consideration should be given to developing the executive summary page which was attached to the front of all papers presented to the Board and the Committees for consideration. This was agreed.

A Member referred to the protocol for raising agenda items, including emergency agenda items either by Members or officers. The Chair said these procedures were set out in EA's Standing Orders.

A Member said that the paper set out that Members' comments would not be attributed to a Member's name in the minutes except in certain circumstances, which were listed in the paper. He considered however that the paper should reflect that, on occasion, a Member might request his or her name to be recorded against a particular issue. Subject to this amendment, the Board approved the paper setting out the house style for Board and Committee minutes on the proposal of Mr Jardine and seconded by Miss Rainey.

Action: *Executive summary page, attached to the front of all papers presented to Board and Committee, to be developed; house style paper agreed subject to one amendment.*

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would be held on 28 February 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm.

Chair

Chief Executive

Date

*Paper issued with agenda ** Papertabled