

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A SHARED EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 11 APRIL 2019 AT 10.30 AM IN BELFAST BOYS' MODEL SCHOOL**

**1. PRESENT** Rev A Adams (Chair)

Mr J Craig	Mr G Lundy
Mr G Doran	Dr I McMorris
Rev R Herron	Miss R Rainey
Mr E Jardine	

Mr K Mulvenna was in attendance.

**2. IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms S Long, Mr J Unsworth, Mr S Bradley, Mr P Close, Ms F Donnelly and Mr C McNickle.

School representatives: Mrs Mary Montgomery, Principal, Belfast Boys' Model School, Mrs O Black, Vice Principal Belfast Boys' Model School; Mr M Moreland, Principal, Mercy College Belfast, and Mrs A St Clare, Vice Principal, Mercy College Belfast.

**3. SHARED EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP**

*Mr Lundy declared an interest in Mercy College Belfast.*

The Chair welcomed the school representatives to the meeting and thanked the Board of Governors of Belfast Boys' Model School for facilitating the meeting. The school representatives outlined the history of shared education in both schools. This included participation in the DSC Shared Education Signature Project (SESP) and the Belfast Education Partnership.

Members heard that the partnership had evolved organically and that due to the commitment of the senior leadership in both schools, including the Boards of Governors, the partnership had overcome significant community challenges. The school representatives agreed that by recognising and valuing diversity the pupils of both schools had embraced sharing opportunities including shared classes and extra-curricular activities. The Committee heard from the pupils of both schools who outlined the benefits of their shared education experiences.

Following a performance from the shared choir, the Chair expressed thanks to the pupils for outlining their shared education experiences and she congratulated the pupils on their performance.

Members heard about some of the challenges experienced by the partnership. The matter of transport costs was highlighted as a particular concern. Another challenge was the alignment of school timetables. Opportunities for improvement were also discussed. Capacity building was highlighted as a priority and the school representatives agreed that investment in staff training would continue to deliver improved outcomes for both schools. Members also heard how the partnership supported each other in school improvement work.

A Member commended the school representatives for the progress that had been made in recent years and queried the future vision. Mrs Montgomery was mindful that funding was an issue for the partnership. She also said that teacher education and school development days would provide improved opportunities for the future. She stressed that the teaching workforce needed opportunities to access the skills needed to deliver shared classes.

Mr Mooreland said the future of the partnership would continue to progress so long as it was child centred. He said that the need for shared classes, driven by pupil subject choices at GCSE

and A-Level, would ensure that the partnership continued to develop. The school leaders agreed that pupil support for the partnership had led to further support from parents and the wider community. The role of the partnership in the local community was discussed and Members agreed that the needs of the children should continue to drive the partnership as the opportunities to access a wider curriculum would sustain the progress already achieved.

A Member expressed support for a long term study on outcomes for those children participating in shared education. He said that the data would play an important role in highlighting the positive effects of shared education. Members heard that the positive outcomes were a result of the professional teaching staff who had actively supported the partnership. The Chair thanked the school representatives and the pupils for their presentation.

#### **4. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Mrs S O'Connor and Mr O McMullan.

#### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2019**

The minutes\* (SE/4/19/4) of the meeting held on 14 February 2019 were agreed on the proposal of Miss Rainey and seconded by Mr Lundy.

#### **7. MATTERS ARISING**

##### **7.1 SHARED EDUCATION – EXPRESSION OF CULTURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (7.2)**

The Chair informed Members that a response from ETI on the matter of shared education and the expression of culture had been emailed to Members.

##### **7.2 SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUSES – PROJECT CHAMPIONS (8.2)**

Mr Unsworth informed Members that the matter of a project champion for each shared education campus projects would be considered by the Shared Education Assistant Directors' Forum. He said that an update on the matter of project champions would be provided at the next meeting.

A Member expressed the view that a key role of the project champion should be to engage directly with CCMS to accelerate the pace of progress.

*Action: Update to be provided on the matter of shared campus project champions.*

##### **7.3 SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUSES – CORRESPONDENCE TO DE (8.2)**

Mr Unsworth informed Members that the project governance arrangements for most shared campus programmes were scheduled to change following a joint review by DE, EA and the Central Procurement Directorate. The review found that the Senior Responsible Officer and Project Sponsor roles would be held by DE for all projects except the project which was being taken forward at Limavady which did not involve the acquisition of land. It was noted that in light of the governance changes the correspondence as agreed at the last meeting had not been issued. Mr Unsworth said that an update on the new governance arrangements would be provided at the next Committee meeting.

A Member queried the reasoning behind the revised governance arrangements. Mr Bradley explained that the shared campus projects were DE programmes and therefore DE was required to take on the role of the contracting authority and hold the land. The SRO and Project Sponsor for the Limavady project would remain with EA as there was no further shared land to be purchased.

*Action: Update to be provided on shared campus governance arrangements.*

#### **7.4 EA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FORUM (9)**

Mr Unsworth informed Members that the Terms of Reference of the Shared Education Assistant Directors' Forum had been amended to reflect the full scope of shared education responsibilities.

#### **7.5 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE (10)**

The Chair informed Members that the Chair of the Board and she had attended the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Connections Conference in Coleraine on 6 March 2019. She highlighted how the conference had provided an opportunity for stakeholders to peruse a marketplace of organisations who had the ability to deliver on the community connections aspect of shared education. She commended officers for their work in connection with this very successful event.

Mr Close informed Members that the event had been attended by 32 primary schools and 26 community agencies which had the capacity to support shared education partnerships across a range of areas including community relations, health and well-being, substance abuse, and internet safety. Members noted that school leaders had welcomed the opportunity to engage with organisations. This had enabled schools to embed community connections within their partnerships. Mr Close said that he aimed to relay the positive feedback to other local councils with a view that similar conferences should be held across the region.

### **8. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

#### **EXPRESSION OF THANKS**

The Chair thanked the Committee Members and officers for their support during her tenure as Committee Chair.

### **9. SHARED EDUCATION RISK REGISTER**

*Rev Herron and Mr Lundy declared interests in respect of the Strule campus.*

Mr Bradley presented the Shared Education Risk Register which combined the three risk registers from the three earmarked funded shared education projects, SESP, CASE, and Strule.

A Member referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and reiterated his frustration at the suspension of the Strule Main Works Contract and the accruing costs associated with delay. The Member expressed the view that the risk associated with the Strule delay as outlined in the risk register had not alleviated those frustrations. The Member queried what impact the delay had in escalating the cost of the Strule project. Following discussion, Ms Long said that, subject to Board approval, she would write to DE on the matter of costs associated with the delay. It was agreed that a draft letter would be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

A Member highlighted that the Secretary of State had allocated £140m of UK Government funding to support the development of the Strule project and he queried whether access to this funding was subject to time restraints. Mr Bradley informed Members that this funding

commitment had been drawn from Fresh Start Agreement commitments and as such was time limited. He said it would be for DE to clarify plans beyond the Fresh Start timescale.

Mr Bradley highlighted that school leaders had been working hard to carry out all necessary work to ensure that all relevant data had been made available for the business case addendums. A Member commended the work of school leaders and expressed concern that unreasonable expectations had been placed upon them.

Ms Long informed Members that the Permanent Secretary of DE was scheduled to attend the next meeting of the EA Transformation Programme Sub-Group and Members were mindful of the transformative aspects of the Strule project. Ms Long undertook to liaise with the Chair of the Sub-Group to consider the matter of Strule delays.

A Member referred to a risk in relation to international exchange rates. It was highlighted that the CASE Peace IV programme was paid in Euro and all calculations for budget forecasting had been made at a rate €1.18 to each £1. It was noted that due to currency fluctuations there was a risk that awards to partnerships could be worth less than originally envisaged.

A Member referred to an increased risk that funding would not be drawn down from funding bodies into EA accounts due to procedural issues, queries or adverse decisions by funding bodies. Ms Donnelly said that a minor modification request had been made to SEUPB in February 2019. This had resulted in the suspension of the claims process as the funder's electronic system had readjusted. It was noted that the suspension had a timing impact on the project's ability to recoup funding from SEUPB. The Member queried what impact this had on schools. Ms Donnelly said that it had no impact, it was noted that schools were paid upfront and that EA retrospectively claimed the money back from the SEUPB.

The Committee noted the Shared Education Risk Register\* (SE/4/19/7).

**Action:** *Draft letter to DE on the costs associated with the Strule delays to be considered at the next meeting of the Board. Officers to liaise with the Chair of the EA Transformation Programme Sub-Group to consider the matter of Strule delays.*

## **10. SHARED EDUCATION ACTIVITY**

### **10.1 DSC SHARED EDUCATION SIGNATURE PROJECT**

Mr Close presented the DSC SESP Progress report January to April 2019. He said that all cohort 1 partnerships had received the final 40% of their approved budget for 2018/19 as part of the mainstreaming pilot. Engagement with cohort 1 partnerships through consultation events and one-to-one meetings had helped inform the proposals for the funding model for 2019/20. This had been presented to DE and EA was awaiting confirmation on approval.

The Chair queried whether, subject to the approval of the funding model, the schools could expect to deliver similar levels of quality shared education activity. Mr Close said that following an analysis of funding models, it was expected that the levels of shared activity would be sustained in 2019/20.

Mr Close referred to previous discussion on the Community Connections Conference. He reiterated that the feedback from the attendees had been positive and stakeholders had explored meaningful and sustainable ways of engaging with their communities.

Mr Close informed Members that there had been a high demand for places within the TPL Modules for Term 3 2018/19. 250 teachers had registered to engage in teacher

professional learning in collaborative shared education partnerships. Members noted an evaluation report which had been produced outlining the range of TPL on offer. Mr Close said that the future TPL Strategy would consider the learning from the previous 3 years.

The Chair said that a school had requested support for teachers in the delivery of sensitive and controversial topics as part of shared education activity. Mr Close reported that he had met with the school and that the required training had been identified.

The Committee noted the SESP Progress report January to April 2019\* (SE/4/19/8.1).

## **10.2 CASE PEACE IV PROJECT**

*Mr Craig declared an interest as Chair of the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council PEACE IV Partnership.*

Mrs Donnelly presented the Peace IV CASE project update. She said that recruitment processes for the programme manager and two development officers had commenced. She highlighted that the budget had been re-forecast to account for underspends. This exercise had been carried out by EA in association with Léargas. Underspends arising from the delay to the start of the project and the truncated nature of Year 1 activity had been highlighted.

As discussed earlier in the meeting Mrs Donnelly said that a modification request had been submitted and approved by SEUPB. A further modification request remained under consideration by SEUPB for project extension to 2022 and revised staffing.

Ms Donnelly informed Members that the Stage 2 funding programme had been launched across six workshops. These had been attended by almost 200 school principals. She said that Stage 2 funding was based within the framework of Learning Leaders and it built on the work of SESP in developing teacher-led joint practice development approaches to professional learning. Members noted that a selection of five Teacher Professional Learning modules had been agreed for delivery from 1 May 2019.

A Member referred to a risk in relation to international exchange rates and queried whether the delay in EA's ability to reclaim might have a negative impact due to fluctuating exchange rates. Ms Donnelly said that claims were made on a monthly basis and that each claim was based on the exchange rate of that month. Members noted that the delays in making claims to the SEUPB had resulted in a risk of receiving less favourable exchange rates. A Member queried what percentage of spend had taken place to date and Mrs Donnelly indicated that less than a quarter had been spent to date. The Member expressed the view that this had heightened the risk associated with currency fluctuations. The Committee noted the Peace IV CASE Project update (SE/4/19/8.2).

## **10.3 STRULE SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS**

*Rev Herron and Mr Lundy declared interests in this agenda item.*

Mr Bradley presented the Strule Managing Authorities Liaison Group (MALG) project update for April 2019. Members noted updates in relation to: the delivery plan; the main campus project progression; planning; site ownership, governance and management; the education model; communications; and the forward work plan.

Mr Bradley informed Members that following satisfactory consideration by DE the Business Model would be considered by the Department of Finance. The Chair highlighted that the matter had been discussed earlier in the meeting and actions had been agreed. The Committee noted the Strule Managing Authorities Liaison Group (MALG) project update for April 2019\* (SE/4/19/8.3).

## 10.4 SHARED CAMPUS PROGRAMMES

Mr Bradley presented updates on the Shared Campus programmes. He reiterated that the project governance arrangements for most shared campus programmes were scheduled to change following a joint review by DE, EA and CPD. The review had found that DE was better placed to undertake the SRO role and project sponsor on all projects except the project which was being taken forward at Limavady. This was because there was no new shared land to be purchased at Limavady and all construction would be contained within the current site boundaries.

The Committee received updates on the shared campus programmes in Limavady, Ballycastle, Moy, Brookeborough and Duneane/Moneynick.

A Member referred to the Moy shared campus programme and queried whether land had been purchased in advance of a planning application. Mr Bradley undertook to report back on this matter.

The Chair highlighted that the business case for the Duneane/Moneynick shared campus was still under development and that it was expected to be processed by DE during 2019. She queried what considerations had been given to the sustainability of the programme and Mr Bradley said that DE had requested information on long term enrolments. The Chair expressed concern that the project had stalled, she expressed support for the benefits of the project and she requested a further update at the next meeting of the Committee.

A Member expressed frustration at the delays in the business case approvals and highlighted that the business case for the Moy campus had undergone nine versions before being approved by DE in March 2019. A discussion ensued on whether strategic outline cases were required to assess changes in the projects over time. Ms Long informed Members that work was ongoing with DE to streamline the business case process and to gain a better understanding of the reasons for delays.

Members noted that the business case for the Brookeborough shared campus was still under development and that it would be processed by DE during 2019. Members agreed to receive further updates on the project.

**Action:** *Mr Bradley to report on the purchasing of land in relation to the Moy Shared Campus programme. Further updates to be provided on progress of the Shared education Campus programmes*

## 10.5 PROVISION AND SUPPORT OF SHARED EDUCATION BY EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Mr Bradley provided an overview\* (SE/4/19/8.5) of the external providers commissioned and procured directly by EA to support the delivery of Shared Education. The Committee noted the report detailing external providers and their specific type of support.

## 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 13 June 2019.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm.

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Chair

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Date

\*Paper issued with agenda \*\* Papertabled