

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 2.00 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM, ANTRIM OFFICE**1. PRESENT** Ms S O'Connor (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Sir Gerry Loughran
Ms Á Andrews	Mr G Lundy
Mr D Cargo	Mr N McCausland
Mrs M Culbert	Dr A McMorrán
Mr G Doran	Dr I McMorris
Rev R Herron	Mr K Mulvenna
Mr E Jardine	Miss R Rainey
Mrs S Kelly	Ms N Toman

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Ms S Long, Mrs C Duffield, Dr C Mangan, Mr D Hanna, Mrs K Scott, Mr S Wade, Mrs F Byrne, Ms C Deane, and Ms L McCall.

Mrs C Jamison attended in her role as Board Room Apprentice.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mrs P Carville, Mr J Craig, Dr M Dynan, and Mr O McMullan.

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 24 OCTOBER 2019

The minutes* (EAB/11/19/3) of the meeting held on 24 October 2019 were approved on the proposal of Miss Rainey and seconded by Mr Jardine.

6. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**5.1 COMMUNICATIONS - LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS (6.3)**

Ms Long said that the three 'Leading Together' events for school leaders held in November had been well received. She expressed appreciation to those Members who had attended the events.

A Member, who had attended one of the events in Antrim, commended the suitability of the programme for school leaders and said that feedback had been positive. He said that principals had expressed appreciation that the programme had given focus to partnership working between EA and schools.

5.2 EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES - ENGAGEMENT WITH CONTROLLED SCHOOLS' SUPPORT COUNCIL (CSSC) (13)

It was noted that reference to the issue raised by a Member in relation to Governors being made aware of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and work being carried out around the ethos of controlled schools by the Controlled Schools' Support

Council (CSSC) was included in the minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 14 November. Those minutes would be considered later in the meeting.

Mrs Scott said that CSSC had recently launched its ethos self-evaluation toolkit for schools, the details of which could be found on the CSSC website.

7. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

7.1 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Board noted that Ms Á Andrews had resigned from the Finance and General Purposes Committee and that Mrs S Kelly had resigned from the Transformation Programme Members' Sub-Group.

7.2 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW - MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2019

The Board noted the agenda for the GAR meeting held on 4 November 2019.

Ms Long said that discussion at the meeting had focused on EA's financial position including the development of the 3-5 year financial recovery plan, progress against plans for CoPE re-accreditation, and governance of the two major ICT projects (EA One and Education Technology Services). She outlined other areas which had received particular consideration at the meeting including 2019/20 business planning and day 1 planning for EU Exit.

Ms Long referred to the agreement reached in principle in respect of the teacher industrial action which was being considered by the Department of Finance. She advised that no further update was yet available.

The Chair referred to the reconstitution process of non-political Members at the end of March 2020 and said that she would be liaising with the Permanent Secretary in the coming weeks on this matter. Any update would be communicated to Members as soon as possible.

7.3 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME MEMBERS' SUB-GROUP – REPORT ON MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2019

Mrs Duffield provided a report on DE's Transformation Programme meeting held earlier in the week concerning DE's transformation projects and EA's four transformation projects which were receiving funding. She said that DE's Transformation Programme budget for 2019/20 remained at approximately £3m. A Business Case had been presented to the Department of Finance in respect of the continuation of funding for projects over the next three year period and also in respect of a small number of projects in the pipeline.

Mrs Duffield reported that Mrs E Bremner who had been appointed formerly as Head of Transformation had taken up post as Acting Assistant Director within the Operations and Estates Directorate and that Ms C Currie had now been appointed Acting Head of Transformation.

7.4 COMMUNICATIONS - UPDATE

Ms Long said that open conversations between the Corporate Leadership Team and school leaders and members of staff across the region continued. She said that 'EA Now' had been launched in November as a new internal communications tool to inform all staff, including school staff, of latest news and events across the organisation. Also, a workshop had been held with members of staff who had volunteered or been nominated to be communications influencers in support of the development of the Communications

Strategy. She said that further workshops were currently being planned with Board Members and principals to take forward the development of the Communications Strategy.

A Member sought clarity around the guidance to be given to schools on emergency procedures in advance of adverse winter weather conditions. Ms Long confirmed that guidance for schools on winter preparedness was an annual process and was being taken forward by the Director of Operations and Estates.

The Member asked that consideration would be given as to how EA would communicate with parents outside normal working hours. She was concerned that correspondence sent to parents outside normal working hours might cause stress in instances where there was no opportunity to seek further guidance from EA at that time. The Chair said that this matter would be reviewed by officers.

A Member queried whether EA had been made aware of any change to the arrangements for salt to be allocated to schools over the winter months. Ms Long said that a response would be provided to the Member directly.

The Board noted the summary paper* (EAB/11/19/5) on proactive communications and issues raised in the media in the previous month.

***Actions:** Officers to consider how EA communicates with parents outside normal working hours; and seek clarification on the arrangements for salt to be allocated to schools over the winter months and respond to Member directly.*

8. MEMBERSHIP AND TEACHING APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2019

The Chair of the Committee said that a verbal report had been presented to the Committee at its meeting earlier in the day on priority schools. She said that the new recruitment toolkit for school leadership appointments was currently being developed and would be presented to the Committee in the New Year. She drew attention to the Committee's continued concerns in respect of the number of schools which presented recommendations for school leadership posts with no reserve candidates.

The Chair of the Committee provided a brief update on reconstitution of Boards of Governors and advised that a press release was being prepared to highlight EA's appreciation to school governors for their commitment to schools and the value of volunteering. In addition, officers were also giving consideration to the best approach to correspond with Governors to thank them for their service to schools.

The Board noted the principal, vice principal and teacher appointments.

The Board noted the minutes* (EAB/11/19/6) of the meeting held on 24 October 2019.

9. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2019

The Acting Chair of the Committee said that based on current information and available assumptions, EA was reporting an overall estimated funding gap of £93.835m (excluding Earmarked and Youth) comprising an estimated schools funding gap of £3.247m and an estimated block grant funding gap of £90.588m, after estimated savings of £21.255m. This represented a reduction of £41.702m from the position reported in the previous month due to the removal of the cost of the proposed teachers' 4.25% pay award pressure (£40.787m) at DE's request and a reclassification of core costs to Earmarked (£0.915m) for Brexit related costs. He said that EA was projecting price inflation pressures of approximately £13m as well as demand

pressures in areas such as special educational needs provision, transport, school meals, and the school development service. He advised that the Chief Executive and other senior officers had met DE officials to discuss EA's overall estimated funding gap. At that meeting, DE had requested officers to provide a paper setting out potential savings options, including projected costs and whether legislative or policy change was necessary. He advised that this paper would include all the potential savings options which had been considered previously by the Board.

The Acting Chair said that DE had agreed in principle to a 3-5 year financial recovery programme and discussions continued with DE on governance arrangements to ensure appropriate oversight of the programme. He said that, in light of the implications arising from the out-workings of the programme, the Committee had noted that arrangements would be put in place to secure independent strategic advice to support this work from both the public and private sectors.

The Acting Chair pointed out that, as at 5 November, EA had received financial plans from 993 out of 994 schools, of which 918 financial plans (92%) were in final format. He pointed out that, at this stage in the year, this was a much improved position on the previous year.

The Acting Chair said that the Committee had noted the minutes of a meeting of the Surpluses and Deficits Working Group and, in particular, the consideration being given to supports which could be made available to schools to take timely action to address budgetary challenges.

The Acting Chair drew attention to the recommendation concerning the renewal of 10 Term Service Contracts and the extension of 12 Term Service Contracts for current Building and Mechanical & Electrical works up to the period 31 March 2020. He also drew attention to recommendations concerning land and property transactions, tenders, and EA's Business Plan for 2019/20. He said the Business Plan now incorporated the issues raised by Members at the May Board meeting and set out progress against activities in quarter one.

The Acting Chair said that the Committee had received an update on the HR operating model and progress on the implementation of the HR structure below tier 4. Full implementation of the HR structure was anticipated to conclude by 31 December 2019. He advised that a presentation had been given on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2022 and the associated action plan. Members had commended the strategy and had noted the significant amount of work undertaken in its development, including the wide consultation exercise. In addition, the Committee had received a presentation on the process to develop EA's Consultation Framework.

A Member queried whether the issues identified by Members at the meeting and recorded in the minutes of 5 November could be incorporated into the Consultation Framework as footnotes and presented again to the Committee. He wished to ensure that the final document to be used by members of staff incorporated the Members' issues. He also said it was incumbent on EA to be mindful of the membership and uptake at meetings of the Joint Consultative Forum and to be proactive in engaging and consulting as widely as possible with various parts of society.

A Member said that, where appropriate, documents could be marked up for the Board's attention in order to show that Members' comments had been taken on board. Clarity was needed on whether documents were for Members' information or approval.

Mrs Duffield said that the framework set out guidance for internal staff on how to consult and engage and the document had been presented to the Committee for noting. She said that an easy-read user friendly document had also been developed in line with best practice in respect of consultation and engagement with stakeholders and interested parties.

The Chair said that the Corporate Leadership Team would review the issues raised by the Members around the Consultation Framework and report back in due course.

A Member said that a number of schools had expressed concern on perceived variations in contractor performance within the Term Service Contracts. He queried whether contractor performance was one of the standards to be monitored as part of the overall review of Maintenance and Minor Works. Ms Long confirmed that this was the case. She advised that a presentation had been given to the Transformation Programme Members' Sub-Group at a meeting held earlier in the day on the review of Maintenance and Minor Works and this had included associated quality and service standards.

The Board noted the financial position including that, given the range of inescapable unfunded pressures, EA continued to operate at significant financial risk.

Subject to an amendment to the list of those present at the meeting, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/11/19/7) of the meeting held on 5 November 2019 on the proposal of Mr Doran and seconded by Rev Herron.

Action: Officers to take on board the Members' comments on EA's Consultation Framework and report back.

10. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2019

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, a Member presented the minutes. He said that Members had received initial feedback on the consultation relating to EA's draft Elective Home Education Guidelines. Overall, 444 responses had been received and these had been mainly positive. The draft Guidelines, which would be amended to reflect consultation feedback and Members' comments, would be presented to the Committee for consideration at its February meeting. The Member also reported that consideration had been given to proposed interim arrangements for the provision of youth work in EOTAS Centres. The Committee had approved the interim arrangements in principle and had sought further clarification on the line management of youth workers, the development of clear lines of communication, and operational arrangements in relation to EA policies and procedures. This information would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chair of the Board said that the update to be provided to the Committee in January on special schools in the Belfast area should reflect on opportunities for capital investment.

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

On the proposal of Mr Mulvenna, seconded by Miss Rainey, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/11/19/8) of the meeting held on 7 November 2019.

11. SHARED EDUCATION COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2019

The Chair of the Board extended the Board's congratulations to Queen's University Belfast on obtaining the Queen's Anniversary Prize for work on shared education.

The Chair of the Committee said that a presentation had been provided on the shared education practices and experiences of Limavady High School and St Mary's High School, Limavady. Information had been provided on staff training and development and the extension and enhancement of the curriculum. In addition, the school leaders had highlighted

that consideration should be given to prospective teachers at undergraduate level being prepared for the delivery of shared classes and that ETI should recognise different circumstances in sharing relationships.

The Chair of the Committee said that a report had been provided on current work streams to inform mainstreaming. As the DSC Shared Education Signature Project (SESP) had almost concluded, EA had worked with DE to establish a new model to support shared education. All schools in the DSC SESP had now moved to a pilot mainstreaming resourcing model for 2019/20 and the model was being continuously reviewed throughout the year. She provided a progress report on the uptake of partnerships and attendance at courses in the DSC SESP and as part of the CASE PEACE IV project.

The Chair of the Committee said that a progress report had been provided on the Strule Shared Education Campus. Site works were almost complete, however the main works contract remained suspended. It was anticipated that a more substantive update would be provided to the Committee at its next meeting.

A Member said that the two school leaders had expressed concern at the pace of progressing capital works for the Limavady Shared Education partnership. He urged officers to support the two schools to manage expectations. The Chair of the Committee asked officers to be inventive in the approach to be adopted towards the ease of movement between the two schools and thus enhance the partnership.

A Member referred to the challenges raised by the two school leaders to present the curriculum as part of a sharing partnership.

Discussion ensued on opportunities for pupils to have access to suitable courses at Further Education Colleges. Members discussed pathways in education, accreditation of courses, the strategic approach to the 16-19 curriculum, careers advice to pupils in schools, and relationships and associated costs between the FE sector and schools. Mrs Scott undertook to provide a position paper on DE's 14-19 Policy to a future meeting of the Education Committee. A Member requested information on the number of selective and non-selective schools currently using FE provision.

Dr McMorris left the meeting temporarily at 3.04 pm.

A Member queried the arrangements to plan for future capital priority projects in the controlled sector. Mr Hanna said that a paper on project proposals for controlled major capital works was being presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its January meeting.

Dr McMorris re-entered the meeting at 3.06 pm and Ms Toman left the meeting temporarily at this time.

On the proposal of Rev Adams, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/11/19/9) of the meeting held on 14 November 2019.

Action: *Paper to be provided on DE's 14-19 Policy to a future meeting of the Education Committee.*

12. EDUCATION COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2019

Mrs Jamison declared an interest in Strathearn School.

Ms Toman re-entered the meeting at 3.08 pm.

The Chair of the Committee said that a DE official had attended the meeting to outline the work being taken forward by DE to reduce educational underachievement as a result of social disadvantage. The Committee had also noted the Extended Schools' Programme Annual Report for 2018/19, and that £5.8m of the overall £9.1m budget for the Extended Schools' Programme had been funded from the Confidence and Supply Agreement during 2018/19 and 2019/20. He referred to a recommendation in the Annual Report which sought the introduction of a three year funding model to provide schools identified at the start of the cycle with some certainty of funding throughout that period.

The Chair of the Committee referred to the establishment of Locality Leadership Networks. He also drew attention to the development of an innovative international professional learning project for school leaders which would further support the vision of the Learning Leaders' Strategy. Assurance had been given that the UK's exit from the EU would not impact on the funding stream for any approved Erasmus project already awarded to education bodies in the UK.

The Chair of the Committee said that consideration had been given to the projected decline in the birth rate over the next three year period and its impact on pre-school education. He also referred to consideration given to the terms of reference for the Area Planning Cross-Directorate Group and the recommendations being presented in respect of Development Proposals.

A Member referred to the success of various educational initiatives. He considered that the Extended Schools' Programme was one of the most successful initiatives to be introduced in the NI education system. He also referred to the 'Full Service School' pilot scheme which had commenced in 2005 concerning two Belfast schools and he queried the rationale for not rolling out such a successful scheme to other schools. Furthermore, he expressed regret that schools which had formed part of group 1 projects had received additional resourcing but had however subsequently closed. It was noted that the Member's comments would receive further consideration when the Director of Education took up post.

On the proposal of Rev Herron, seconded by Dr McMorris, the Board approved the minutes* (EAB/11/19/10) of the meeting held on 14 November 2019.

13. 'PROVIDING PATHWAYS' STRATEGIC AREA PLAN FOR SCHOOL PROVISION 2017-2020 - REVIEW

Mrs Scott said that, as previously reported, DE had approved an extension to the Strategic Area Plan for a further year, to 2021, to enable a robust and comprehensive review of the plan to be undertaken and for the review to inform the next Strategic Area Plan. It was anticipated that the review would identify successful practices and outcomes as well as those practices and outcomes which required improvement including barriers to area planning. She presented a paper* (EAB/11/19/11) which set out information on the scope of the review, progress to date, and governance structures. Based on planning, proposed resources and assumptions, she said that SIB was expected to complete the review and produce a final report by the end of March 2020.

Mrs Culbert left the meeting temporarily at 3.18 pm.

A Member referred to previous consideration given to DE's Circular on Jointly Managed Schools and he queried EA's current position with regard to taking forward Jointly Managed Schools. Mrs Scott said that this matter would be picked up by officers within the Shared Education team for discussion with DE colleagues as part of DE's transformation programme strand 2 (examining barriers to area planning).

A Member said that the Transferor Representatives' Council and the Catholic Trustees were

currently in discussion with DE on the matter of Jointly Managed Schools. She highlighted challenges in this area around ownership of schools.

A Member who was the Chair of the Surpluses and Deficits Working Group said that it was becoming evident to the Working Group that, in reality, the financial viability of schools was out of synchronisation with the parameters set out in the Sustainable Schools' Policy. It was therefore important for EA to drive forward viable options in localities where there was joined up thinking.

A Member referred to the ambitious timeframe to present an evaluation report by March 2020 and said that, given that the term of office for non-political members was to conclude by 31 March 2020, updates on the review should be provided to Members before that time.

Mrs Culbert re-entered the meeting at 3.24 pm.

A Member received confirmation that the CSSC would also support the work of the review.

Members sought clarity on the role and membership of the SIB team to deliver the review. A Member said that whilst she recognised the challenges in this area, she wished to record her concern at the significant level of resource implication. Ms Long said that the intention was that SIB would be commissioned to deliver the review on EA's behalf. She advised that consideration had been given to the ambitious timeframe for completing the review along with EA's internal capacity to deliver such a project. Officers had worked closely with SIB and had played a key role in identifying individuals who had appropriate skillsets to deliver the review. Mrs Scott undertook to forward the SIB proposal to Board Members along with the membership of the SIB team who would undertake the review and produce a final report.

A Member queried the arrangements to align the outcomes of the review with the work being taken forward within the two strands of DE's transformation programme. Mrs Scott said that DE had concluded its evidence gathering and had moved to the next stage to work on policy. It was anticipated that DE's two strands would inform the development of EA's next Strategic Area Plan.

The Board noted the paper.

Action: *An update on the review to be provided to the Education Committee at its January meeting; SIB proposal, including membership of the SIB team to take forward the review, to be forwarded to Members; and Shared Education officers to discuss the matter of Jointly Managed Schools with DE colleagues as part of DE's transformation programme (strand 2).*

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would be held on 18 December 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.32 pm.

Chair

*Paper issued with agenda

Chief Executive

**Paper tabled

Date