

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A SHARED EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 10.30 AM IN LIMAVADY HIGH SCHOOL

1. PRESENT Rev A Adams (Chair)

Mr G Doran
Rev R Herron
Mr E Jardine

Mr G Lundy
Mr O McMullan

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Ms S Long, Mrs K Scott, Mr J Unsworth, Mr S Bradley, Mr P Close, Mr T Stewart, and Mr C McNickle.

Ms A Chambers, Department of Education (DE), was in attendance for item 5.

The following school representatives were in attendance for item 6: Mr D Mornin, Principal Limavady High School and Mrs R Moore, Principal of St Mary's High School, Limavady.

The Chair thanked the Board of Governors of Limavady High School for facilitating the meeting and the Committee agreed to take the items of business in the order below.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr J Craig, Dr I McMorris and Miss R Rainey.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

5. MAINSTREAMING FUNDING MODEL

Mr Bradley provided Members with a presentation on the mainstreaming of shared education. Members were also provided with a paper* (SE/11/19/7) on the current work streams in operation to inform mainstreaming. Mr Bradley said that as the DSC SESP project had entered its final months, EA had worked with DE to establish a new model to support shared education interaction for the DSC SESP schools. He said that all schools in the DSC SESP programme had moved to a pilot mainstreaming resourcing model for 2019/20 and the model was being continuously reviewed throughout the year.

Mr Bradley outlined three core components to the successful mainstreaming of shared education within a school partnership. He said that these components, as outlined below, reflected the identified inescapable costs of providing shared education:

- Leadership - understanding and commitment from Governors and school leaders;
- Curriculum - shared education delivered greater impact when consistently applied through the core curriculum; and
- Pupil engagement - for pupils to form meaningful relationships with their peers and gain maximum benefit from shared education.

Members heard that, based on these core components and the inescapable costs of shared education, a funding model had been developed for the 2019/20 Shared Education Pilot. The core areas for funding, identified by partnerships, were as follows:

- Transportation – a transport budget would be provided to partnerships based on the number of journeys required to participate in the planned shared pupil activity, taking into consideration the distance between partnership schools;
- Joint Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation – an allocation of sub cover would be provided to partnerships which would allow those teachers involved in the direct delivery of shared education to meet to plan, monitor, and evaluate together; and
- Effective Leadership – an allowance would be provided to each school which would be used to support effective leadership of shared education at a strategic and logistic level.

Members also noted that an allowance for basic resources and materials of 5% would be added to each school's budget. This would allow schools to make purchases to support their shared activity. Mr Bradley said it had been anticipated that, in time, schools involved in the CASE Peace IV programme and Sharing Together From the Start Programme would also transition to the mainstreamed funding model.

A discussion ensued on different challenges associated with primary and post-primary sectors. In particular Mr Bradley highlighted the issue of synchronised timetabling as being a challenge for the post-primary sector. He said that officers were working to support schools in this regard.

Members noted that an evaluation team, comprising DE and EA officers had been created to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2019/20 Extended Pilot funding model. Ms Chambers (DE) said that the dual function of simultaneously administering and evaluating the pilot presented a challenge. Close working relationships between DE and EA would alleviate this challenge. She said that recommendations for a proposed way forward would be presented to the Permanent Secretary of DE, in March 2020. Ms Chambers undertook to provide an update to the Committee in due course. Members also noted that an Annual Report on Advancing Shared Education would be laid by DE in the Northern Ireland Assembly in May 2020.

A discussion ensued on the costs for the 2019/20 Shared Education Pilot. Mr Bradley said that £3.12m had been allocated for the 2019/20 year and a discussion ensued on projections for future costs following the transition of schools involved in the CASE Peace IV programme. A Member expressed concern in relation to DE's ability to absorb further financial pressures. Ms Chambers said that the out-workings of the pilot would not be considered as part of the Review of the Common Funding Formula.

A discussion ensued on the costs associated with transport and Members were mindful that distance between schools was not always the sole contributing factor to increased transport costs. Mr Bradley said that time taken to travel between two relatively close urban schools could exceed the time taken to travel between two rural schools. He also highlighted that in rural areas a school's natural partnership was not always with the school that was closest in distance. Societal and geographic considerations needed to be taken into account when forming partnerships. Ms Chambers highlighted the benefits of blended learning for partnerships and Mr Close said that Teacher Professional Learning modules aimed to equip teachers with the capacity to deliver blended learning.

A Member expressed the view that it appeared beneficial for some schools to work together and it was noted that a reconfiguration of natural partnerships would be carried out following the transition of schools from the CASE Peace IV programme.

A Member queried whether further publicity could be afforded to the success of shared education partnerships. Ms Chambers referred to the numerous shared education engagements undertaken by the Permanent Secretary. She said that these were routinely reported on social media. A

Member said that local councillors also had a role to play in promoting shared activity and Members were mindful that a Minister of Education would further champion the benefits of shared education. Mr Stewart said that, as part of a communication strategy, the CASE Peace IV team within EA was active on social media platforms.

The Chair referred to the link between shared education and community planning. Mrs Scott said that a cross-directorate team would consider identified outcomes from each Community Plan to inform EA strategic planning. She said that the Community Use of Schools Committee and Education Committee had considered this matter. The Chair reiterated how Community Planning had the potential to positively impact shared education and it was agreed that the Committee would receive further information on the link between community planning and shared education.

Action: *Committee to receive, in due course, an update on DE decisions regarding mainstreaming funding. Committee to receive further information on the link between Community Planning and Shared Education.*

6. LIMAVADY SHARED EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Mr D Mornin, Principal, Limavady High School and Mrs R Moore, Principal, St. Mary's Limavady to the meeting. A video showcasing the Limavady shared education partnership was presented and it was noted that the video had also been used by DE as part of Community Relations Week.

Members heard how shared classes in the partnership had evolved organically to the point where they had become normal practice in both schools. Learning for Life and Work was cited as an opportunity for sharing at Key Stage 3 and a range of subjects had been identified for sharing at Key Stage 4. Both principals acknowledged the difficulties associated with synchronising timetables to facilitate sharing at Key Stage 4. They highlighted that good working relationships between school leaders had enabled the partnership to overcome scheduling problems.

Mrs Moore highlighted the importance of developing shared classes at Key Stage 3 and the importance of involving parents in shared activity. She said that the Year 8 'Love for Life' programme had been delivered to parents as a workshop to provide information and this had alleviated any concerns they might have had. It was also noted that teachers from both schools had participated in each of the school's parent evenings. Mr Mornin said that it was important to showcase shared education opportunities to prospective students. He said that when a child entered either school they knew that shared classes would be a natural part of their education. He said that pupils from both schools had embraced shared activity and had requested shared break times and lunches. A Member welcomed the schools' approach to transparency as children prepared to enter Key Stage 3.

Both principals acknowledged challenges that had occurred. These included the escalation of flag flying in Limavady in 2018 and incidents that had occurred in relation to the wearing of remembrance poppies. Mr Mornin and Mrs Moore agreed that such challenges enabled pupils from both schools to discuss respective identities in a respectful manner through Learning for Life and Work. Mr Mornin praised the pupils' ability to deal with such sensitive matters.

A discussion ensued on the Continuous Professional Development of teachers and Mrs Moore said that teachers involved in shared partnerships should be given the time to maintain and build upon positive working relationships. She also expressed the view that prospective teachers at undergraduate level should be prepared for the delivery of shared classes.

Mr Mornin provided an update on the commencement of capital works on site and he referred to

the need to manage expectations. He highlighted the need to agree a suitable campus operating agreement and Mrs Moore queried future inspection arrangements in light of a fully functioning shared campus. Mr Mornin referred to misconceptions within the community that a shared campus meant integration. Mrs Moore highlighted both school's separate identities and stressed the need to celebrate and maintain both of those identities.

A Member queried the extent to which Rossmar School and Limavady Grammar School had participated in shared classes. Mr Mornin said that pupils from Rossmar School had participated in shared physical education, technology and home economics classes. He expressed support for expanded engagement with Limavady Grammar School.

A discussion ensued on the opportunities for pupils from both schools to attend Further Education (FE) classes at the North West Regional College. Mr Mornin said that pupils from Limavady High School had attended construction courses. However, he expressed concern at the unsustainable costs associated with FE courses.

A Member queried the input from each of the respective Boards of Governors and the Committee heard that both the Chair and Vice-Chair of each Board of Governors attended Project Board meetings. Shared meetings of Boards of Governors had also taken place and Shared Education was a standing item on the agenda of each Board.

Following questions from Members, the Chair thanked Mr Mornin and Mrs Moore for their presentation and for responding to Members' queries.

7. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes* (SE/11/19/4) of the meeting held on 19 September 2019 were agreed on the proposal of Rev Herron and seconded by Mr Lundy.

8. MATTERS ARISING

8.1 SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS PROJECT CHAMPION TEAM – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE (9)

Mr Unsworth said that the work of the Shared Education Campus Project Champion team was ongoing and that an update would be provided at the January Committee meeting.

8.2 SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY PROGRAMME (10.1)

Mr Unsworth said that officers were engaging with the Schools of Sanctuary Programme to explore synergy between the programme and shared education. An update would be provided in due course.

9. SHARED EDUCATION ACTIVITY

9.1 DSC SHARED EDUCATION SIGNATURE PROJECT

Mr McMullan declared an interest in this item.

Mr Close presented the DSC SESP Progress report for the period September to November 2019* (SE/11/19/8.1). Members noted that 158 partnerships had submitted Action Plans for 2019/20 and the total number of individual pupils engaged in activity throughout 2018/19 had been 65,383. The total number of teachers engaged in Shared Education throughout 2018/19 had been 6,076 and 255 had teachers registered to attend TPL Modules in Term 1 out of a potential 255 places.

Mr Close highlighted that 12 Boards of Governors' modules were being delivered as part of EA's Programme for 2019/20 and 240 shared education co-ordinators had registered to attend the Middle Management Programme in November and December 2019.

Mr Close provided further information on the 2019/20 Shared Education Mainstreaming Funding Pilot. He said that the SESP team had been working closely with DE colleagues to plan and implement the pilot. Members noted that the Mainstreaming Sub Group met on a monthly basis to outline work streams and to share actions undertaken. Mr Close outlined a range of actions that had been completed since the Project Board meeting in September 2019. These included the submission of action plans, officer engagement with partnerships, the issuing of Letters of Offer and the delegation of budgets to all partnerships who had returned Letters of Offer. It was anticipated that all budgets would be delegated by November 2019.

Mr Close said that a Community Connections Sub Group had been developed which would explore how partnerships could link to external agencies and local councils. He said that officers had made contact with each council and meetings had been arranged with the Good Relations Officers to establish how shared education could be enhanced. A Member referred to the wide remit of Good Relations Officers and he expressed the view that shared education should form part of a more substantial work stream at council level. He expressed concern that shared education could lose prominence against a wide range of council priorities. Mr Close referred to recent meetings with Belfast City Council as part of the PEACE IV Shared Spaces programme and he said that engagement had been productive.

A Member said that an update on the Ballycastle Shared Campus should be provided to Causeway Coast and Glens Council. Mr Bradley said that the project governance arrangements for the shared campus programmes including the role of SRO, except for the Limavady campus, had transferred to DE. The Member said that there was an opportunity for the Shared Education Project Champion team to engage effectively with councils.

The Committee noted the report.

9.2 CASE PEACE IV PROJECT

Mr Stewart presented the CASE Shared Education Project update* (SE/11/19/8.2). He highlighted that 92% of partnerships had received Letters of Offer for 2019/20 and pupil numbers had increased again for the third successive year. He said that the suspension of the claims process, due to a modification request, had impacted significantly on the ability of the CASE partners to ensure a smooth flow of funding from SEUPB to EA and Léargas. Members noted that the suspension had recently been lifted and both organisations were in the process of completing retrospective claims.

Members noted that EA's Internal Audit had completed their Audit Trail Review of CASE Peace IV Shared Education and a satisfactory result had been awarded to the project. One Priority 3 recommendation relating to a small number of finance coding errors was noted.

The Chair said that she was encouraged by increased participation and teacher attendance at TPL courses. The Committee noted that despite action short of strike, attendance at CASE Shared Education TPL courses had not been impacted.

The Committee noted the report.

9.3 STRULE SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS

Mr Lundy and Rev Herron declared an interest in this item.

Mr Unsworth said that the pre-election purdah period had meant that no announcements in relation to the Strule site would take place before 12 December. He said that a more substantive update would be provided at the next Committee meeting.

Mr Unsworth reiterated that shared education activity had been maintained whilst the Main Works Contract remained suspended. In addition, site works had also been almost entirely completed. He said that officers would consider arrangements to receive a briefing from relevant stakeholders in due course.

Action: *Committee to receive written update on Strule at the next Committee meeting. Officers to consider arrangements to receive a briefing from relevant stakeholders in due course.*

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 16 January 2020.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm.

Chair

*Paper issued with agenda

Date

** Papertabled