



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2013  
SENATE CHAMBER

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Michaela Boyle MLA  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

Seán Rogers MLA

*The meeting commenced in closed session at 9.43am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were recorded as above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

**2.1 Revised Agenda**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that due to unforeseen circumstances CCMS were unable to give evidence as planned.

The Chairperson noted that Departmental officials had kindly agreed to provide a briefing on EU and Peace IV funding which had been postponed from 25 September 2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to adopt a revised agenda for the meeting.

*Danny Kinahan joined the meeting at 9.45am.*

## **2.2 AccessNI**

The Committee noted reported practices by an Education and Library Board (ELB) relating to AccessNI approval for part-time music tutors.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to each of the ELBs to seek clarification on whether additional approvals were required for part-time music tutors who have already been approved by Access NI; and for information on how funding for music tuition has altered.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on its advice and guidance to the ELBs with regard to the approvals required for tutors provided to schools by external organisations.

*The meeting moved into open session at 9.48am.*

## **2.3 Sectoral Support Bodies**

The Chairperson referred Members to correspondence from the Minister which advised that the work to establish new sectoral bodies for Controlled and Catholic Schools will cease by 31 December 2013; and that further progress on the Education Bill is required to provide the appropriate context for the funding and development of the sectoral bodies.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to:

- express its disappointment in respect of the cessation of development work for sectoral bodies and the consequent continuing absence of appropriate representation for Controlled schools on the Area Planning Steering Group;
- welcome the inclusion of Further Education sectoral representatives on the Area Planning Steering Group; and
- request an update on the ongoing progress or obstacles in respect of the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority and the continuing passage of the Education Bill.

## **2.4 Ballee Community High School**

The Chairperson referred Members to a meeting involving the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson with representatives from Ballee Community High School in respect of Area Planning in Ballymena and Development Proposal 277.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) seeking clarity regarding reported procedural irregularities in respect of Development Proposal 277 and highlighting possible unfair and inconsistent treatment of Ballee Community High School by NEELB.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to seek feedback from the Area Planning Steering Group on the adoption of

alternative Area Planning solutions, including e.g. Controlled School Hubs, as proposed in the 'A Better Way' document.

### **2.5 Community Resuscitation Strategy**

The Committee noted the recent statement from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the Community Resuscitation Strategy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if it is considering revising its guidance to schools to require compulsory training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

*Pat Sheehan joined the meeting at 9.58am.*

### **2.6 CEL Report on CEIAG**

The Committee noted that the Committee for Employment and Learning's report on its Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance is to be debated by the Assembly on Monday 25 November 2013.

### **2.7 NI4 Kids**

The Committee noted an article outlining the Committee's work in the past year for NI4Kids.

*Stephen Moutray joined the meeting at 10.02am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to amend the article and for it to be published as amended.

## **3. Draft Minutes of 13 November 2013**

**Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

## **4. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted information relating to its ongoing Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process including:

- correspondence from NIPSA; and
- the Memorandum of Response to the Public Accounts Committee in respect of its report on literacy and numeracy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the information would be published on its webpage.

## 5. Alternatives to Free School Meals Entitlement as a Measurement of Deprivation - Non- Departmental Briefing.

*Professor Tony Gallagher joined the meeting at 10.06am.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 10.15am.*

*Stephen Moutray left the meeting at 10.55am.*

*Professor Gallagher left the meeting at 10.58am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Clerk would produce an issues paper for the briefing on 4 December 2013 when the Committee would consider its response to the consultation on the revised Common Funding Scheme.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed that the Clerk should circulate:

- an Institute for Public Policy Research paper entitled "Closing the attainment gap in England's secondary schools", 2012; and
- a Century Foundation report entitled: "Economically integrative housing promotes academic success in Montgomery County, Maryland, 2010"

## 6. Departmental Briefing - Community Access to Schools

*The following witnesses joined the meeting at 11.08am:*

Brenda Shearer, Head of Youth and Schools in the Community Team, DE; Steven Law, Youth and Schools in the Community Team, DE; Briege Arthurs, South Belfast Partnership Board and Chair of the Joint CCMS/ELB Working Group; and, Paul Crooks, Head of Claims and Legal (SELB/WELB): Member of the Joint CCMS/ELB Working Group.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 11.23am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 11.23am.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 11.40am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department indicating that:

- although the Committee generally welcomed the draft Departmental guidance on Community Access to Schools, it was not convinced that the guidance would necessarily have a positive impact on community access and therefore sought feedback on its effect at a later date;

- the Committee expected the Department to work proactively with ELBs and Councils to further encourage greater community access to schools; and
- the guidance and related procedures should be simplified by the Department and made less bureaucratic and more flexible.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister of the Environment to request an update on the non-statutory community planning pilots; and to ask the Minister to encourage Councils to engage proactively with schools so as to enhance community access to school premises.

## 7. Departmental Briefing - EU and Peace IV Funding

*The following Departmental witnesses joined the meeting at 11.41am:*

Brenda Shearer, Head of Youth and Schools in the Community Team; Russell Welsh, Head of Curriculum Development Team; and Michael McGivern, Central Support and Co-ordination Team.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 11.43am.*

*Chris Hazzard returned to the meeting at 11.54am.*

*Stephen Moutray returned to the meeting at 12.05pm.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson returned to the meeting at 12.17pm.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 12.21pm.*

*Robin Newton left the meeting at 12.27pm.*

The Committee noted with some dismay that the absence of detail in the Department's submission and oral briefing limited Members' ability to effectively scrutinise the Department's policy, plans and practices in respect of EU funding.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- an assessment of the Youth in Action and Comenius programmes;
- evidence of joint working between the Department and the managing authorities of the European Social Fund, and the European Regional Development Fund;
- details of Departmental bids to the Peace IV Funding round;
- clarification in respect of the United Communities funding for the Lisanelly campus;
- confirmation in respect of the timescale for the drawdown of funds for Peace IV and the status of the Multi Annual Financial Framework; and

- an oral briefing on these matters in January 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Special European Union Programmes Body to request an update and explanation of the current EU and Peace IV funding process, including opportunities for funding for educational purposes.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to commission Assembly Research to provide an overview of the EU and Peace IV funding process, and details of education programmes in other countries funded by EU Structural Funds.

## 8. Correspondence

**8.1** The Committee noted correspondence from NSPCC regarding Child Protection and Safeguarding in the Curriculum; and also noted that the second anniversary of the safeguarding legislation coming into operation was approaching.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek comment on the range of programmes highlighted by the NSPCC, and also to ask for an update on the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) on the second anniversary of the safeguarding legislation coming into operation.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite NSPCC to brief the Committee at a future date on child protection issues.

**8.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education which provided an update on applications to the Youth Capital Funding Scheme for Voluntary Organisations in 2013/2014, including a list of successful applicants.

**8.3** The Committee noted correspondence from the Board of Governors of Tummery Primary School and St Macartan's Primary School, Dullaghan regarding the Western Education and Library Board Development Proposal 249.

**8.4** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education declining its request to revise spreadsheets relating to the Common Funding Scheme to include the one-off £15.8m allocation for 2014-15 and confirming that the proposed change to the VAT factor will be of no detriment to Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated schools.

**8.5** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education following queries raised by the Committee regarding the PEDU Stage 2 Reports - on Home to School Transport, and School Catering Services - advising that the Department will not publish the relevant PEDU Action Plans.

## 9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to reschedule the CCMS briefing due to be taken that day for Wednesday 8 January 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to receive evidence in closed session at its meeting on Wednesday 27 November 2013. The Committee also agreed that there would be no Hansard record of the briefing and that the Clerk would provide a summary of the evidence for inclusion in the Inquiry report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education indicating requesting an informal meeting with a delegation of Associate Assessors responsible for school inspections.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Forward Work Programme as amended.

## **10. Any Other Business**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to hold an informal strategic session early in the New Year.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite Professor John Gardiner, Deputy Principal of Education and Students at the University of Stirling, to provide an briefing on his work on inspection and the school improvement process within Northern Ireland.

## **11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27 November 2013 at 9.30 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.37pm.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**27 November 2013**