



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013  
ROOM 29

**Present:**

Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Michaela Boyle MLA  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:**

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

**Apologies:**

Mervyn Storey MLA, Trevor Lunn MLA, Pat Sheehan MLA

*The meeting commenced in closed session at 9.36am.*

**1. Legal Advice - Development Proposals**

*A representative from Assembly Legal Services joined the Committee at 9.37am.*

Simon Kelly, Assembly Legal Services, provided legal advice regarding Development Proposals and the associated consultation process.

*Michaela Boyle and Chris Hazzard joined the meeting at 9.42am.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to seek further clarification as to why he is unable to brief the Committee after the conclusion of a consultation on a Development Proposal and prior to the final decision being made.

## **2. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral evidence session**

The Committee considered evidence in closed session relating to its Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process.

*Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 9.48am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 10.13am.*

*Jonathan Craig declared an interest as a member of a Board of Governors of a school.*

*Jonathan Craig left the meeting at 10.27am.*

*The meeting moved to open session at 10.42am.*

## **3. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral Evidence from Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and Gaelscoil na bhFál.**

*The following witnesses joined the meeting at 10.43am:*

Dr. Micheál Ó Duibh, Chief Executive Officer, CnaG; Áine Andrews, Principal, Gaelscoil na bhFál; and Roisin Brady, Board of Governors, Gaelscoil na bhFál;

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Jo-Anne Dobson returned to the meeting at 10.44am.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 11.44am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to commission Assembly Research to produce a short paper on language immersion systems and the related inspection regimes in Scotland and Wales, and other relevant jurisdictions.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education to seek information on the number of Education and Training Inspectorate staff who are trained to assess Irish Medium Education schools; how training for ETI staff with regards to Irish Medium Education is accessed; and for a copy of the template Management and Reporting System (MARS) report used as part of the inspection process in all schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite District Inspectors to an informal briefing event on the evening of Thursday 23 January 2014.

#### 4. Apologies

Apologies were recorded as above.

#### 5. Chairperson's Business

**5.1** The Deputy Chairperson advised that the Northern Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) Annual Report and Accounts for 2012-13 had now been published.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to NEELB to seek clarification in respect of:

- how it plans to improve its 10-day invoice payment record which apparently worsened from 58% in 2011-12 to 53% IN 2012-13;
- the apparent reduction of £100m in the valuations associated with land held by NEELB;
- reported additional financial obligations relating to Magherafelt High School;
- the increase in employer contributions from 4.6% to 19% in respect of NILGOSC liabilities; and
- an update on the job re-evaluations of 35 Nursery Assistants.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to seek information in respect of the NEELB Annual Report 2012-13 in respect of the:

- Savings Delivery Plan verification exercise;
- end of project evaluation report on the STEM Action plan; and
- Extended Schools annual report.

**5.2** The Committee noted the recent announcement by the Minister for Employment and Learning regarding a joint Department of Education/Department for Employment and Learning Review of Careers Services.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the Terms of Reference for the review.

**5.3** The Deputy Chairperson noted that many Members were now using their ACER tablets during meetings to access Committee papers.

#### 6. Draft Minutes of 20 November 2013

**Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

#### 7. Matters Arising

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

- a summary of evidence received in private session on 13 November 2013;
- further correspondence from Mr Lyle Cubitt; and
- a response from the Department of Education on the size of inspection teams and the frequency of inspection visits.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the last two items would be published on its webpage.

The Committee noted that Parents Outloud is scheduled to brief the Committee on its submission to the Inquiry on 8 January 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the written submission from Parents Outloud to the Department of Education so that it could respond to the claims and questions raised. The Committee also agreed that the relevant response would be shared with Parents Outloud prior to the briefing on 8 January 2014, if time permitted.

## **8. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School improvement process - Departmental briefing on the responses to the consultation on the revised Formal Intervention Process**

The Committee noted with dismay that, owing to the late receipt of briefing material from the Department, it was not possible for Members to properly scrutinise and respond on this important issue.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer the briefing; and also agreed to write to the Department to highlight its disappointment regarding the late receipt of papers, and encouraging the Department to comply with the agreed protocol for providing information to Assembly Committees.

## **9. Correspondence**

**9.1** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the Green Investment Bank and opportunities for energy efficiency projects in schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek comment on the uptake of the investment opportunities in question.

**9.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) confirming that the Department for Education has updated the capital investment information which informs the monthly activity reports.

**9.3** The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned parent regarding post-primary transfer arrangements.

**9.4** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the consultation, ending in January 2014, on proposed increases to the contributions for members of the NI Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS) with effect from April 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek a written briefing on responses to the consultation once it has concluded.

**9.5** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the Safer Routes to Schools Initiative.

**9.6** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education regarding the publication of the Traveller Child in Education Action Framework.

**9.7** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to a Committee query regarding Home to School Transport issues.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek the Terms of Reference of its planned Home to School Transport policy review.

**9.8** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to a Committee query regarding the Department of Education's Contingency Fund.

**9.9** The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Education to a Committee query regarding the provision of support by the Education and Training Inspectorate to the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted that the Department has commissioned NISRA to undertake additional analysis on the 2012-13 GCSE and A-Level results in respect of attainment linked to Free School Meal Entitlement. It was also noted that the relevant additional work would not be completed until later in December.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider the NISRA GCSE and A-Level data during the Departmental briefing scheduled for 15 January 2014 on the responses to the consultation on the CCEA review of GCSEs and A-Levels.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education and seek clarification on the additional analysis being carried out by NISRA.

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

## **11. Any Other Business**

The Committee noted that it had previously agreed to hold an informal meeting with Pasi Sahlberg regarding the education system in Finland.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Michaela Boyle for her contribution to the Committee for Education since the beginning of the mandate, and wished her well as she moves on to another Committee.

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

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 December 2013 at 9.30am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.54am.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**4 December 2013**