



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2014  
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA

*The meeting commenced in private session at 10.00am.*

The Committee discussed the Departmental briefing on the Programme for Government commitments; Business Plan update; and Savings Delivery Plan progress.

*The meeting entered public session at 10.17am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

**2.1 ETI Chief Inspector's Report**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate is expected to publish her 2012-14 report on 6 November 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to meet informally with the Chief Inspector to discuss her forthcoming report prior to its publication.

## **2.2 Education Bill**

The Chairperson noted that contrary to recent press reports the Committee had not endorsed the previous Education Bill which was to establish the Education and Skills Authority.

## **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings of 3 September 2014.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **4.1 Community Planning**

The Committee considered previous correspondence on the role of schools in respect of new district council Community Planning powers and responsibilities.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of the Environment and the Department of Education seeking an update on how schools are to be encouraged to participate with the new district councils in Community Planning pilots and activities.

## **5. Correspondence**

**5.1** The Committee noted correspondence from the Big Lottery Fund relating to its Reaching Out: Supporting Families Programme.

**5.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Education in respect of the Education Budget.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Minister of Education advising that the Executive had agreed that the Minister should bring forward legislation to replace the five Education and Library Boards with a single body.

Members set out their views on the ring-fencing of budgets; the importance of effective DE budget scrutiny by the Committee and the need for continuing financial support for schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Clerk should draft a response to the Minister in respect of the budget that would be considered at the Education Committee meeting of 17 September 2014.

**5.3** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel enclosing an Assembly Research paper on departmental end of year expenditure surges.

**5.4** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education enclosing the consultation document on the draft equality impact assessment on the reform of the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme 2015.

The Committee noted that the Department will brief the Committee on this matter, in October.

**5.5** The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) to attend its event, Exploring the Best Interests of Children and Young People: From Principle to Practice, on Thursday 20 November 2014, Long Gallery.

## **6. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to meet informally with the Joint Department of Education / Department for Employment and Learning Careers Review Panel on Tuesday 23 September 2014.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to endorse a press release regarding its inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Employment and Learning seeking:

- information as how the further and higher education sectors currently interact with Shared Education programmes and the Integrated Education sector; and
- details of DEL policy in respect of how these sectors should interact with Shared Education programmes and the Integrated Education sector in order to comply with relevant obligations and the Programme for Government.

## **7. Programme for Government commitments / Business Plan update / Savings Delivery Plan progress - Departmental Briefing**

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.49am.*

Paul Sweeney, Permanent Secretary; Fiona Hepper, Deputy Secretary; Trevor Connolly Director of Finance; David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications

and Standards; and Gary Fair, Director of Planning and Performance Management, Department of Education briefed the Committee and answered questions on the relevant Programme for Government commitments, the Department's 2013-14 and 2014-15 Business Plans and the 2012-13 Savings Delivery Plan outturn.

*11.42am Jonathan Craig left the meeting.*

*11.47am Pat Sheehan left the meeting.*

*11.49am Sean Rogers left the meeting.*

*11.49am The Chairperson left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson assumed the Chair.*

*11.57am Sandra Overend left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under Standing Order 49(5) continued to hear evidence.*

*12.01pm The Chairperson returned to the meeting and resumed the chair. The Committee regained its decision making quorum.*

*12.01pm Jonathan Craig returned to the meeting.*

*12.02pm Sandra Overend returned to the meeting.*

*12.03pm Jonathan Craig left the meeting.*

*12.14pm Danny Kinahan left the meeting.*

*12.43pm Danny Kinahan returned to the meeting.*

*12.55pm The Chairperson left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson assumed the Chair.*

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 1.01pm.*

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

### **Programme for Government**

- information on GCSE attainment or equivalent targets in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland;
- information as to how DE and the Education and Library Boards identify relevant parents not involved in the Early Years allocation process;
- the mechanisms DE is to use to engage relevant parents not involved in the Early Years allocation process;
- clarification as to whether the Early Years Transformation Fund can be used to address gaps in Early Years provision across Northern Ireland;
- further information on the Lisanelly project work streams;

- details on the ownership of the St Lucia site; and
- commentary on CCEA's 2013-14 Annual Report which refers to the poor reliability of the 2013-14 Levels of Progression data collected from schools and DE's repeated commitment to use this data to establish a numeracy and literacy attainment baseline at Key Stages 2 and 3.

### **Business Plan**

- further information on the planned review of the Revised Curriculum;
- further information on the Area Planning process for Special Schools;
- clarification on whether the terms of reference for the School Workforce Review have been altered to focus on non-teaching staff;
- clarification on the roll out of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) strategy for teachers; and
- the actions which are to be taken forward following the Review of Post-Primary Irish Medium Education.

### **Savings Delivery Plan**

- an explanation as to why teacher substitution costs have increased in 2012-13 by £3m (since 2011-12) costs when the Savings Delivery Plan details savings of £400k in 2012-13; and
- sight of the 2013-14 Savings Delivery Plan Progress report.

### **8. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **9. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting**

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 17 September 2014 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 1.02pm.*

**Danny Kinahan**  
**Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**17 September 2014**