

**NOTE OF SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY FORUM**

TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2015 AT 1.30pm

Forestview, Purdy's Lane, Belfast

Attendees

Paul Sweeney	DE	(Chairperson)
Katrina Godfrey	DE	
La'Verne Montgomery	DE	
Gavin Boyd	EA	
Clare Mangan	BELB	
Barry Mulholland	WELB	
Shane McCurdy	NEELB	
Gregory Butler	SEELB	
Jim Clarke	CCMS	
Noreen Campbell	NICIE	
Micheál Ó Duibh	CnaG	
Avril Hall-Callaghan	UTU	
Mark Langhammer	ATL	
Helena Macormac	NAHT	
Gerry Murphy	INTO	
Sean Maguire	ASPECT	
Anne Speed	UNISON	
David Edmont	UNITE	
Peter McMurray	GMB	
Arthur McGarrigle	NASUWT	
Garth Manderson	DE	(Secretariat)

Apologies

Fiona Hepper	DE
Faustina Graham	DE
Paddy Mackel	NIPSA
John Dawson	GMB

Welcome and introductions

1. Paul Sweeney welcomed everyone and thanked the Staff Commission for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of Sixteenth Meeting held on 2 December 2014

2. The minutes were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting and formally adopted.

Matters arising from sixteenth meeting held on 2 December 2014

Academic Selection

3. The Chair confirmed his office had received three nominations to participate in a meeting to discuss Academic Selection, namely Micheal O Duibh (CnaG), Avril-Hall Callaghan (UTU) and Noreen Campbell (NICIE). Jim Clarke (CCMS) and Gerry Murphy (INTO) indicated a wish to be involved in this initial meeting.
4. It was agreed that the first meeting would extend the remit to discuss the points made by Noreen Campbell (NICIE) at paragraphs 23 and 24 under AONB of the sixteenth meeting held on 2 December 2014. NASUWT, ASPECT and GMB also agreed to nominate to representatives to attend the meeting.

ACTION: Any additional nominees for the meeting to be forwarded to Garth Manderson (DE) with a view to a meeting being arranged.

Budget 2015-16

5. The Chair updated Forum members on Budget 2015/16:-
 - Budget 2015/16 has been finalised;
 - The Minister is due to appear before the Education Committee 4 March 2015;
 - The Department's Savings Delivery Plan (SDP), providing the detail, will be published on DE's website on 4 March 2015;
 - Education received an additional resource allocation of £64.9m made up of £63m additional allocation, in recognition of the pressures facing education and in response to the consultation, £1.6m Executive Change Fund allocation for Nurture Units and £0.3m European Union Peace IV match funding allocation;
 - The Minister has announced the allocation of an additional £80m (from the draft budget position) to the Aggregated Schools Budget in 2015/16;
 - The outworking of the Final Budget 2015/16 for DE is that the Resource Budget still faces a funding gap of £97.6m, whilst the capital budget still faces a reduction of £36.1m;
 - With 77% of the Education Budget going directly to staff costs, it is acknowledged the education sector still faces a considerable challenge in

2015/16 and will still need to make posts redundant in order to address the funding gap; and

- Schools received their budget allocations last week (25 February 2015). It will be end March/early April 2015 before figures start to come in from schools with regard to redundancies. At this stage it is estimated that 500 teaching jobs and 1,000 non-teaching jobs may be lost.
6. Points made by Forum members:-
- Shane McCurdy (NEELB) highlighted the importance of knowing what is being made available for earmarked resources;
 - Avril Hall-Callaghan (UTU) stated that teachers may not put their name forward for redundancy because of what happened last year i.e. not possible to effect redundancies due to limited funding; and
 - The need to avoid Boards of Governors of schools going through the process and then no funding being available.
7. La'Verne Montgomery confirmed that the processes to be followed in respect of both school based teaching and non-teaching redundancies have issued to the relevant Employing/Funding Authorities. She advised that agreed correspondence, including individual/school level letters, would be used to ensure everyone involved would receive the same information with the key being managing expectations.

Future Development of School Staff Work Stream

- 8. The agreed meeting between Faustina Graham, Director for Collaborative Education and Practice in the Department and the work stream membership took place on 9 February 2015. All parties agreed that it was a useful meeting.
- 9. Whilst the work being progressed by Faustina is specifically with regards to teachers there is a huge amount of common ground which the Forum agreed was positive.
- 10. It was agreed that there would be one further meeting of the Future Development of School Staff work stream, with the Teacher Education Team in DE, in mid/late April 2015, with a view to the final report from the work stream going to the next meeting of the Forum scheduled for 2 June 2015, for final endorsement.
- 11. Avril Hall-Callaghan, in confirming the fact that the remit of the work stream was to consider the entire workforce, not just teachers, highlighted the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to be at the top of the agenda.

12. La'Verne Montgomery confirmed that the draft report of the work stream has been sent to the Minister for his consideration.

ACTION: The secretarial support team in DE for the Future Development of School Staff Work Stream will make arrangements for the proposed meeting in mid/late April 2015.

Education Authority

13. The Chair paid tribute to the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards and Board members for the work they have done since the inception of the Boards. The Minister will be hosting an event to celebrate their work.
14. The Education Authority (EA) will have 21 members. The Minister will announce one public appointment, the Chair, as the process is at an advanced stage. The other 20 members will be appointed through nominations.
15. Gavin Boyd confirmed the full Business Case for the Education Authority has been approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel and will be available shortly. There will be minimal pay bill impact on the number of staff required for the EA. The one group impacted is senior management (1st three tiers of the current ELBs). It will reduce from approximately 55 to 22. He acknowledged the good work of this cadre of staff in particular, along with the entire workforce across the 5 ELBs.
16. He confirmed that he is currently leading on work regarding the Staff Transfer Scheme and that a series of meetings with unions and staff were planned over the next period. An intranet site has been set-up to take questions from colleagues and Gavin was confident that staff were well informed of developments.
17. A focus is on Day 1 issues e.g. applying consistent policies across the 5 pillars. The key message was that on Day 1 the same people, in the same locations, will be dealing with day-to-day business with effect from 1 April 2015.

Any Other Notified Business

Future meetings of the Strategic Forum

18. The Chair advised that the Minister, in considering the departmental resource budget (to be reduced in the region of 10%) and the potential impact of the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme, is reviewing what work can be stopped or done less frequently.
19. The Forum currently meets 4 times a year and the Chair proposed that a sub-group of members meet to review the founding documents (Guiding Principles and Terms of Reference) to consider if any changes can be made in light of the Minister's review.

20. It was generally accepted that with the changing landscape e.g. the advent of the Education Authority and financial resources, it is appropriate that we all look at how we do things.
21. It was agreed that those meeting on Academic Selection would also look at the founding documents to this end.
22. Anne Speed (UNISON) and Mark Langhammer (ATL) commented on the value of Forum meetings and how, in their view, it would be important that they continue. The Chair confirmed there is no proposal to close down the Forum.
23. Gavin Boyd will discuss with colleagues in the Education Authority and determine who from EA will be involved in future.

ACTION: The Chair invited members, who wanted to be involved, to telephone Garth Manderson to facilitate the discussion for a review of the founding documents of the Forum.

Agenda Item for future Strategic Forum meeting

24. With a view to shaping some ideas to go into the Programme for Government, it was agreed that a discussion on public expenditure from 2016/17 onwards would be useful.

Venue of next meeting

25. Anne Speed (UNISON) offered to host the next meeting of the Forum scheduled for Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 2pm at UNISON, 165 York Street, Belfast.