

Department of Education and Children

Education Council Meeting

Held On 21st November 2014 at 10.00 am

At the Professional Development Centre, Santon Old School, Santon

Present: The Hon Tim Crookall, MHK, (Chairperson); Mr D Anderson, MHK; Mr G Corkish, MLC; Mr T Wild, MLC

Mr R Bankes-Jones; Mrs G Skinner; Mrs T Martin; Mr R Smith; Mrs L Strickett; Mr R Turton; Mrs M Mansfield; Mrs F Robinson; Mrs J Pendree; Mr S Bevan; Mr T Bennion; Mr G Roberts; Dr P G S Allinson-Cook

In

Attendance: Professor R Barr, Chief Executive Officer;; Mr G Moorcroft, Director of Education; Mr J Gill, Head of Legal and Administrative Services; Mrs H Christian, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services; Mrs J Buss – Acting Secretary

Apologies: Mrs M Frankwick; Mrs B Brereton

Item	Business	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence These were received from Mary Frankwick and Barbara Brereton.	
2.	Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2014 The Director of Education asked if a correction could be made to the wording in the fourth paragraph of point 12.3/14 (Shared Services) and that the word "hiccups" be replaced with "implementation difficulties". With regard to Shared Services, the Director of Strategy and Corporate Services stated that any issues raised were taken up and chased for resolution. The Chief Executive Officer said that there was no natural pattern to the issues; they were relevant to individual schools. Matters were being monitored, to ensure that health, well-being and education were not affected.	
3.	Matters arising from the Minutes not shown elsewhere on the Agenda. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Chief Executive raised the matter of regional swimming pools. They were currently operating at a deficit of £1.5 million per annum, a situation which was not sustainable. He was working closely with Paul Bridson, the Acting Head of Sport, Youth and Recreation, on a range of issues and would be putting together a strategy. The Department would be paying £5,000 for the services of an external validator. In order to reduce expenditure, areas such as shared purchases, maintenance and standardisation of staffing contracts were being looked at. The Chief Executive also said that an all Island Leisure Rate, which to be implemented requires legislation, would also be considered. It was felt that a Match to Sport Strategy of staying healthy, rather than having a population on long-term medication, would have a beneficial effect by reducing financial liability by one third. The Chief Executive stated they wanted to introduce equity and fairness into the process.2. The Minister advised that the proposed construction of the new Henry Bloom Noble Primary School would be taken to Treasury next month, with a view to the school opening in September 2016.	

3. The Director of Education stated that with regard to SSRE validation's, where governance is an issue, school Governors would be involved.
4. The Chief Executive advised that with regard to external validation of High Schools, he had met with Ken Cunningham and would appreciate feedback from the Council as to whether the process had been valuable. Members' views were that this had been excellent, but that it was a learning curve. They were broadly supportive if the Department wished to carry on with this process. The Chief Executive stated that Ken was aware of the differences in the Island's High Schools.
5. The Director of Education stated that the views and feelings of the Members would be incorporated into a review document which as it will be generic, would be shared with Governors. The correct e-mail address for the Director of Education would be circulated to Members.

4. Education Council Views on Priorities for Education up to 2020 (HC)

The Director of Strategy and Corporate Services (HC) invited the views of the Education Council on priorities for the DEC up to 2020. She suggested that these either be put forward at the meeting or submitted to her in writing by the end of term. She advised that the input of headteachers and other senior managers was to be sought at the Senior Managers' meeting at Mount Murray in January 2015 and she had already met with some students to hear their views.

She pointed out that by identifying educational priorities up until 2020, cost improvements could be better targeted and where staffing savings were required these could then be better planned to reduce the risk of redundancies.

The Chief Executive stated that there would be tough financial pressures upon the Department in the next financial year with any salary increases needing to be financed from existing budgets.

In respect of pensions, as a consequence of the partial break with the UK Teachers' Pension Scheme in 2007, teachers who were in the Teachers' Pension Scheme in 2007 and moved to work on the Isle of Man then returned to work in the UK, re-joined the scheme as new members, if they returned to the UK after 5 years. This increased the age at which they could access their pensions. This situation was having a negative impact on recruitment already and the recent proposals raised further concerns in relation to recruitment and retention and the risk of an exodus of teachers from the Island. The Minister advised that further discussions would need to take place and Government would need to be very careful which direction it goes in, as this has a huge impact not only on education, but other areas such as Health, the Police etc.

The Minister advised that he would be attending a Budgets briefing next week and will provide feedback. Involvement would be required to deal with any changes.

5. Questions from Education Council Members

iv) Teachers' Salary Progression – As Governors, we are currently being asked to sign approving members of staff moving up through the Pay Spine. Should this be before or after Moderation Teams have completed their assessments? – Mrs G Skinner

HC advised that Governors can sign, approving teachers moving up the pay spine, as the Pay Policy for Teachers and the Revised Policy for Appraising Teacher Performance were introduced on 1 September 2014 and therefore it is only the

SMART objectives being set for the current academic year that are being moderated this time. Next year there will of course also be moderation in respect of the pay decisions. HC also stated that next year the moderation process will have to be started much sooner in order to ensure that where there is pay progression, this can take place before Christmas. HC left the meeting at this point.

i) SENCO Release Time. What plans are in place to ensure that SENCOs within the Primary Sector are allocated release time in a more equitable manner, appropriate to the needs within their individual schools? – Mrs G Skinner

The Director of Education replied to the next two questions, as follows: since 2012/13 £2500 has been allocated to every primary school for SENCO release - the money is to be used to pay supply cover for SENCO release and works out at approximately 30 half day release sessions over a year. This release time could be used as half a day each week (for most, though not all weeks) or could be blocked at particular points in the year when the demands on SENCOs are greatest (eg to undertake assessments etc). The money is to be ring fenced for SENCO use only.

No distinction was drawn between schools as an assumption was made that larger schools have more capacity within their own budgets to provide additional time if it is necessary. This, of course, is not a perfect solution but at a time when budgets are very tight it is a genuine attempt to ensure that all schools have some capacity to release their SENCOs. We will continue to monitor this situation and evaluate whether it provides the most equitable use of this budget.

As secondary schools have a greater degree of delegation, they make the decisions themselves on staffing structures, allocation of leadership or release time and distribution of responsibility.

The Director of Education concluded by stating that with regard to the issue of SENCO distribution in respect of the size of a school, this would be included in future Agenda.

ii) iGCSE. Is there a cost implication when iGCSE is implemented? - Mrs G Skinner

The Director of Education stated that the short answer was "Yes".

He went on to explain that as part of the consultation process, a basic cost analysis was undertaken of the various options available to the Island and was shared with stakeholders during the information sessions in the secondary schools and through professional discussions in a number of forums. In short, this concluded that all of the options available would have a cost implication though opting for the Scottish qualifications would have proven more expensive than either of the other two options.

Following the Minister's statement to Tynwald in July, in which he indicated that by 2017 we anticipate that 80% of our GCSE entries will be through the International GCSE, as set by Cambridge International Education, a submission was made to Treasury for additional resources for the financial years 15-16, 16-17 and 17-18 to support schools in responding to the changes to both A-Levels and GCSEs. This outlined the potential costs in relation to the purchase of resources (eg text books, DVDs, revision guides etc), training/preparation and the possible allocation of TLR3 posts to provide support for curriculum leaders. Schools were asked to provide an outline of such costs, prior to the submission and the figures they provided were

used in providing the submission.

Approval in principle for this additional budget has been given by Treasury but this is subject to approval by Tynwald in February.

In addition, the Department has agreed that the April INSET day ought to be dedicated to changes to GCSE specifications, enabling clusters of teachers to meet to review the curriculum and share practice.

iii) KS2 and KS3 Staffing – How many staff move from KS2 to KS3 with individual children? - Mrs G Skinner

The Minister responded by stating that on average there is less than one member of staff per year that moves from KS2 to KS3 with individual children. The main reason for the low numbers is that we need to avoid dependency but there are also different needs and demands for the young people as they grow up.

6. Any Other Matters of Urgent Importance

A Member raised an issue whereby their appointment to the Council, combined with a part-time position at the Isle of Man College, had now come into question, even though the Member ensured that there was never any conflict of interest between the two posts. This situation also applied to other Council Members.

The Chief Executive responded that this was a grey area and needed clarification. It would be picked up as an item for the new Education Bill. It was agreed that changes should not be made part way through a Member's term of office but should come into effect when the new Education Council is appointed.

A Member stated that he had not received documentation in relation to the meeting, which had been sent by e-mail. JG replied that there had recently been big issues with the Outlook system. He asked the Member to provide his e-mail address, which would be noted. The Member also pointed out that the Minutes published on the website were old ones and had not been up-dated since the last meeting.

A Member enquired if schools were in breach of Data Protection by sending out confidential documents via e-mail. JG advised that personal or sensitive material needed to be sent password protected, with the password being sent first.

A Member commented that St Ninian's Lower School was hard to find. The Minister said that he would speak to the DOI with regard to signage.

A Member said that the Remembrance Day Service held at St Ninian's Lower School the previous evening had been excellent, with the efforts of Year 5 and Year 6 children to be highly praised. It was hoped that a similar event could be organised to mark the end of the First World War.

A Member asked if the Education Bill would contain a clause to cover training by private educators. The Chief Executive stated that this was an area in which there was a clear requirement for such providers to be registered and inspected. JG advised that the new Bill was progressing. The suggestions already expressed by the Council, together with proposals from REAC will be co-ordinated, with those from Primary and Secondary Headteachers, with whom he would soon be meeting.

Mr T Wild, MLC reported that some students getting off school buses had then proceeded

to walk straight in front of the bus. A message needs to be got out to students regarding this practice. He also wished to express thanks to the Island of Culture Committee for all their hard work, culminating in a final project which is to take place at Hills Meadow next week. If any Members wish to attend, they should let Julie Keeble know.

The Minister advised that currently there was Treasury backing for projects such as the William Kennish site, the extension at Ballakermeen and work at QE11. It was hoped that Castle Rushen High School could be included in the projects pipeline.

Mention was made of school bus fares which would be coming into effect in January. JG explained that the fare had been reduced from 50p per journey to 25p and payment would be via a sophisticated Smart Card System. There would not be a charge for children having Free School Meals but all swipe cards would look the same. The cards would be loaded with relevant information, so as they are not used inappropriately. A charge of £2 would be made for a replacement card. Once a student leaves school any balance remaining on the card can be reclaimed.

The Chief Executive advised that Paul Burnett had recently been appointed to the Safeguarding Board. It was hoped that an event would be organised next year at the Villa Marina, with a guest speaker, to which Members would be invited. Paul also hoped to produce a quarterly newsletter.

The Chief Executive also advised that further to the Scottish Inspection report, there would be a follow up inspection led by Debbie Brayshaw in April of next year, which would be monitored to ascertain where matters are up to.

The Chief Executive and the Director of Education informed Members that they were talking to Health and Social Care with regard to pre-school provision, to ensure that standards are applied and that the best childcare provision is made. Tina Moore and Chrissy Callaghan have also been involved and would alert the Department if there are any issues. It was felt that if money became tight, then some issues might get 'downgraded'.

A Member enquired if the Department was aware of any work from the Children Centre being passed to St Christopher. The response was 'No'. With cross agency referencing, it was felt that Paul Burnett might pick up on this.

A Member enquired if a new site had been found for the Education Support Centre to move to, following the sale of the Nunnery. The Chief Executive said that discussions were on-going with a number of sites being looked at in conjunction with the Estates Director, including the old Homefield site. Members would be up-dated in due course.

The Minister concluded the meeting by stating that the major investor in the Nunnery would be coming to the Island and would be in talks with both himself and the Chief Executive. He was keen to work with Education and this might provide an opportunity to avoid duplication and possibly share or save costs. Whether this will work or not remains to be seen.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 11.45 pm.

Future Meetings

The dates and times of future meetings of the Education Council are as follows:

10.00 am Friday 13th March 2015 – Note, change of date

10.00 am Friday 19th June 2015

10.00 am Friday 20th November 2015

The Meetings will take place at the Professional Development Centre, Santon.

Signed

Minister for Education and Children

Date