

**Department of Education and Children
Education and Council Meeting
Minutes**

Date	20 th March 2017	Time	10.00am	Location	Conference Room, Hamilton House
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Attendees	
Mr Graham Cregeen, MHK	Minister for Education and Children
Professor Ronald Barr	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Andrew Shipley	Legal and Administration Manager
Mrs Jennifer Pendree	Education Council Member
Mrs Margaret Mansfield	Education Council Member
Mrs Tracey Martin	Education Council Member
Mr Robin Turton	Education Council Member
Mrs Diane Brown	Education Council Member
Mr Steven Bevan	Education Council Member
Mrs Barbara Brereton	Education Council Member
Mr Ray Smith	Education Council Member
Mr Andrew Cole	Education Council Member
Mrs Louise Strickett	Education Council Member
Apologies	
Mrs Sharon Mincher	Senior Secretary
Mr Geoff Corkish, MBE MLC	Department Member
Mr Lawrie Hooper, MHK	Department Member
Mrs Ann Corlett, MHK	Department Member

AGENDA ITEMS

1	Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies given as above	
2	Minutes, Matters Arising, Notification of Any other Business	
	Minutes of the meeting held on 28 th November 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed as such by Minister Cregeen.	
3.	MATTERS ARISING – from minutes dated 28th November 2016	
	Lezayre Roadworks – The car park at Bunscoil Rhumsaa was discussed and the CEO said that a meeting would be occurring with the CEO of Department of Infrastructure regarding the road works. He said that a key issue is health and safety and an idea was that there could be a gatekeeper onto the grounds of Bunscoil Rhumsaa, controlling the flow of traffic. Further discussion is needed around this issue and Mr Mooney will also be involved from a health and safety perspective. The CEO also talked about children with special educational needs. Mr Bevan will contact the CEO if there are issues. Ideas that arise from discussions will be brought to the attention of the Minister and Department Members.	

4 **A brief discussion on:**

- a) The foreseeable role of the Education Council over the next few years**
b) Whether the current structure is meeting its objectives and providing value for money

Education Council – A rumour regarding the continuance or otherwise of the Education Council was brought up. There was discussion around this and key points raised were:

- Consultation on the Education Bill is ongoing – the Education Council is one aspect of the considerations.
- A review of DED may impact the Department.
- Other areas under consideration which were referred to are:
 - private education providers, their licensing, inspection and quality of teaching and learning;
 - home schooling – rights of the parent and child;
 - behaviour outside of the school gate.
- Submissions are to be made to the Legal and Administration Manager.
- A document had been produced previously regarding the Education Council.
- Is the Education Council fulfilling the responsibilities that are expected?
- The Education Council is a consistent link between schools and the Department of Education and Children; a means by which information can be communicated – if no longer there, who would be the 'critical friend' and what would be there instead?
- Self-evaluation – a document could be circulated allowing members to undertake some self-evaluation. *Action – AS.*
- Schools and DEC are felt not to be passing information on.
- The Education Council is a body with experience and that it provides checks and balances where these do not exist, for example in government. Minister Cregeen disagreed with this as there is a consensus government and said that we have a good system, making reference to the recent visit of Spanish teachers to the Isle of Man. He went on to talk about different departments of government having different views, reflected in what their members put forward but that ultimately votes in Tynwald reflect individual views.
- Primary legislation 'locks' things in place in spite of political and executive changes and that it can provide protection for key areas in the future. Flexibility can be introduced through secondary legislation.
- More authority for the Education Council is needed

There was discussion around the role of Education Council members and in particular around recruitment and experiences of members as part of governing bodies. This included meetings going ahead even when members had informed Heads of attendance difficulties.

Communication is felt to be a key issue and Its Learning was suggested as a platform the Education Council could use.

Action – AS - To write to schools reminding them that minutes and papers for governors' meetings should go out a week in advance and to remind them of the roles of Education Council Members. Also, to enquire of a list of dates for meetings could be sent to members for those schools where there are difficulties.

Action – Education Council Members to inform the Legal and Administration Manager of those schools where there are difficulties.

Reference was also made to informal meetings of governing bodies. This led to a decision to hold an informal meeting of the Education Council on Wednesday 3rd May, 2017 from 9:30 until 12:30pm to discuss the Education Bill based on the Education Act 2001.

Action – AS to organize room at Hamilton House.

5	<p>Governors - Suggestions</p> <p>A Member expressed the view that people are on governing bodies for too long a time. There was a discussion around suggestions made by the Legal and Administration Manager and it was felt that a 2 year break should occur between roles. It was also felt that there should be a maximum term in any combination of roles of 8 years and then the governor would step down. Other views were also expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens for governors who fulfil different roles as governors in different schools? • There may be a waste of experience in the role if people were not able to spread their experience elsewhere. <p>It was pointed out that at the end of this term of the Education Council many members will step down – there will only be 3 experienced members left in 2 years time. It was questioned whether there could be a staggered step down of members?</p> <p>Minister Cregeen suggested that a policy is needed around this. To achieve a staggered membership it may be possible to look at extending the life of the Education Council to the introduction of the new Education Act. A Ministerial decision could be made regarding governors serving 8 years. The impact of such a move needs to be evaluated.</p>	
6	<p>St Thomas's School</p> <p>Meetings have been held about this and a deadline of September 2018 is being considered for any moves to be in place. It was felt that a visit to a 'faith' school would be useful by Mr Hooper, the Headteachers concerned and the Director of Education. Minister Cregeen feels that initial proposals need to be provided to parents by the summer of 2017. The primary concern behind any changes is the children. The bulk of any money realized by a sale of St Thomas' would be returned to the church but some funds for upgrades would be useful. Arrangements will have to be put in place to accommodate children, parents, staff and the community generally. A Member offered her assistance in whatever way she could. Another Member was concerned about why we are going down this route when we should have an inclusive education system, open to all pupils.</p>	TM
7	<p>Open / Joint Catchment</p> <p>There was discussion and concern expressed around Onchan and Ashley Hill catchment area and the numbers of pupils predicted for September in Reception. It was pointed out that Ashley Hill has capacity while Onchan has some 75 pupils registered for September. The question of an open catchment was raised.</p>	JP
8	<p>Any other matters of urgent importance</p> <p>School closures, press article – reference was made to the press article and it was restated that the Department has no plans to close schools. Plans for St Thomas' involve a merger of schools. Discussion around this issue referred to school capacity and tighter catchment area policies. It was also stated that closing schools would result in limited savings.</p> <p>Inclusion and Safeguarding and DFM – The Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding will make a presentation to the next meeting of the Education Council.</p> <p>SAVE programme and Programme for Government – to be discussed at the next meeting of the Education Council.</p>	

With no further items to discuss the meeting closed at 12.10pm	
The next Education Council meeting will be held on Monday 12 th June 2017 at 10.00am. This will be held in the Conference room at Hamilton House.	

Signature <i>G. Rogers</i>	
Dated <i>12/6/17</i>	