

Department of Education and Children

Education Council Meeting Held On 22nd February 2013 at 10.00pm At the Professional Development Centre, Santon

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

Mr R Bankes-Jones; Mrs G Skinner; Mrs M Frankwick; Mrs T Martin; Mr R Smith; Mrs B Brereton; Mrs L Strickett; Mr R Turton; Mrs M Mansfield; Mr T Bennion; Mrs F Robinson

Apologies: Mr J Turner, MLC; Dr P G S Allinson-Cook; Mr G Roberts; Mr J Swindlehurst, Manager of Legal and Administrative Services

In

Attendance: Mr S Dobson, Chief Executive Officer; Mr M Barrow, Director of Education; Mr J Gill, Head of Legal and Administrative Services; Mrs J Buss – Secretary; Mrs S Brookes, Director of Services for Children

Item	Business	Action
1.	The Minister opened the Meeting by welcoming Mrs Sally Brookes, Director of Services for Children, who gave a power point presentation to Members on her role within the Department, together with a selection of current issues and developments. At the end of the presentation, there was a short Question and Answer session for Members. Mrs Brookes agreed to make copies of her presentation available for Members. The Minister thanked Mrs Brookes for her contribution.	SB
2.	Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2012 The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th December 2012 were subject to clarification on the dates of the next meetings as being 19 th July and 13 th December 2013.	
3.	Matters arising from the Minutes not shown elsewhere on the Agenda. None.	
4.	Discussion on Post 16 Provision The CEO suggested that this discussion take place at the end of the meeting, after the Members' question session.	
5.	Questions from the Education Council Members Question (i) raised by Mrs G Skinner - <i>'I understand from the Estates Director, that the DEC has now been requested by Treasury to submit a Business Plan regarding the long-overdue replacement school for Ballacloan Infants' School and Fairfield Junior School, neither of which are fit for purpose. (1) Has this been prepared and submitted? (2) Has a response been received? (3) When is the school going to be progressed?'</i> – The CEO responded that (1) a Business Plan has been completed and submitted; (2) No; (3) Progression is on-going and it was hoped that the issue might now be moved forward quickly. A meeting was to take place with Treasury, after which a timeframe could be given. The empty buildings would be looked at by the SAMU Committee, as to their potential for any future use. Question (ii) raised by Mrs G Skinner – <i>'As the new Disclosure and Barring Service has replaced Criminal Records Bureau checks, what impact will this have on recruitment of staff and will the new process speed up appointments?'</i> – HR	

responded that if the Department is instructed to pass on the cost to individuals, it is highly likely that recruitment would be slowed up, as the individual would have to instigate the process and make the payment personally. It is also likely this would deter potential relief workers, given there is no guarantee of work. For now, the Department is meeting the cost, hence keeping control and at present the turnaround time is 3 weeks, which is better than the 6 – 8 weeks that Police checks often took previously. The CEO confirmed that this system is working quicker, and as the Department is highly dependent on Relief Workers, it will continue to pay. Also now that secondary school teachers are exempt from Work Permit requirements, this should speed up the process. Safeguards will be in place, in that the CEO and Director of Education will Risk Assess individuals.

(iii) raised by Mrs G Skinner - *'Are those advertising/working as Private Tutors registered with the DEC, if not, is there a plan for there to be the introduction of such a scheme?'* – JG responded that the Department is not registered to do this and has no plans to register.

Question (iv) raised by Mrs G Skinner – *'Universities UK state on their website that they are no longer able to commit to previous methodology regarding Tuition Fees for Island Students. It would appear that each island is now responsible for negotiating terms with individual institutions. (1) Are such negotiations already underway? (2) How many institutions have been approached and fees negotiated: (3) Will these fee tariffs be made available to students before applications are made to UCAS?'* – The Director of Education confirmed that negotiations were taking place with Universities UK and there was a recommendation that Islands will pay £9,000. However four institutions would not be following the recommendations – Imperial College London, Cambridge, Warwick and Cardiff. The Director of Finance had already targeted Warwick and Cardiff and would be visiting Cambridge with representatives from two other Islands. The Department would be entering into negotiations for the year 2014/15 and will be continuing to push forward. The Director of Education emphasised that students should carefully check their applications themselves, to ensure these do not attract international fees. The Minister said that there was much confusion over fee charges and this area required a delicate and sensitive balancing act. A Member asked if Island students benefitted from any privileges if they were charged international rates? This would probably be the case.

Question (v) raised by Mrs G Skinner – *'I noted, with some considerable concern, a suggestion made by an MHK in the House of Keys recently, that parents of pupils and students who do not have English as a First Language make a contribution towards the associated costs. Please confirm that this is not being considered and that any of our school population requiring additional support in order to access education will not be charged for this.'* – The Minister responded that this was not the case and it was confirmed that there is support from the Department for EAL needs, through Susan Rossouw.

Question (vi) raised by Mrs M Frankwick – *'If the Department is unable to achieve savings through student tuition fees, should smaller schools with falling rolls be concerned for their future?'* – This question was rephrased in light of Tynwald's approval for student tuition fees. The Minister stated categorically that there were no plans to close any schools. JG confirmed that to do so, would require public consultation and the earliest anything could happen would be September 2014. A Member expressed concern regarding social care housing issues, which were affecting the numbers at Ballasalla school. The Minister said that he was aware of this.

Question (vii) raised by Mr S Bevan – *'The previous Education Council indicated that it had no objection to a charge being made to pupils for using the school bus services. Has this been progressed further, or have alternative options been*

	<p><i>considered?</i> - It was stated that this would be a DCCL decision and whether it would be affected by budgets remained to be seen. One suggestion was that children living within a mile of their school would no longer be collected by a school bus. In some areas the bus service would be re-routed to cut costs, rather than introducing a fee. Members were also advised that trials on the new articulated buses would be taking place over the next month.</p> <p>Question (viii) raised by Mr S Bevan – '<i>Can the Minister confirm if Education Council members are covered by the DEC registration with the ODPS, individual school registrations with the ODPS, or if they are required to register individually as data controllers?</i>' - JG confirmed that Members are covered under the register. They should however not be retaining any copies of files or reproducing or circulating any paperwork.</p> <p>Question (ix) raised by Mr S Bevan – '<i>Is there an official record kept of the items discussed and agreed at the Secondary Head meetings held at DEC. If so, can copies of these Minutes be circulated to Education Council members?</i>' – It was confirmed that Minutes of these were kept. However it was not felt appropriate that these be circulated. Both the CEO and the Director of Education stated that they could assist, if needed, with any specific questions that Members might have. JG also confirmed the number of meetings that Governing bodies should be having per year. The requirement was 3 times per year plus 1 visit around the school. The recommendation would be to meet 6 times (ie once every half term) per year to include a walk around the school. However if more meetings were required, permission should be sought from the Department. JG also stated that new expenses claims forms were available, which included the start and finish times of the meetings. Teachers would only be paid for attendance at evening meetings.</p> <p>Question (x) raised by Mrs T Martin – '<i>The Chris Quigley Conference held recently was about the Primary Education Curriculum. As EdCo members, would it not have been beneficial for us to attend, even just the evening session, so we can keep up with the up-dates to the curriculum in our schools?</i>' - The Director of Education stated that this meeting had been organised by the NAHT and not the Department. A Member enquired whether it would be possible to obtain copies of any presentation used at the Conference. This would be looked into. It was also stated that Members could attend relevant DEC conferences.</p>	MB
<p>6.</p>	<p>Any other matters of urgent importance</p> <p>A Member enquired if there would be any forthcoming training sessions for new Council Members. JG responded that 2 sessions would be organised for the end of April. Details would be circulated in due course.</p> <p>In respect of the new recruitment policy, a Member stated that if the Chair was required to attend, they needed to be invited by the Headteacher.</p> <p>A Member asked when is a primary class deemed to be full? The response was that within catchment, a class would never be full, but may need to be redesigned to accommodate the pupils. The Link Advisers at the Department would be able to assist with this.</p>	
	<p>After a short break, discussion then focussed on Post 16 Provision.</p> <p>Why Would We Change It?</p> <p>The following headings emanated from the discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broader Curriculum / Economies of Scale Accessibility for all with a broader offer / alternative 16+ options other than 'A' level Pros and Cons to centralised / devolved As is – role models / adaptation to economic need / opportunity Virtual 6th form Risks to Establishing a 6th Form Centre Capital need Importance of breaking the monopoly? 	

	<p>Geographic cluster / aligned curriculum Curriculum cluster Difficulty with hybrid combinations Gove / Risk Factor Second chance offers / level 1 courses Key Relationships / School – Isle of Man College Offers Block Timetable Timetable of Schools (8.00 am – 6.00 pm?) Use of mobile devices? The CEO asked if Alternative Pathways could be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>In concluding the meeting, the Minister stated that all schools, except for St Thomas’ and the Pre School Assessment Centre, had now been visited by himself, Mr J Turner, MLC and Mr T Wild, MLC. They had been made very welcome by each establishment and felt they had learned a lot. Members were asked to pass on feedback to the schools.</p>	
	<p>The meeting ended at 12.50.</p>	

Signed
Minister for Education and Children

Date