

## Department of Education and Children

### Education Council Meeting Held On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014 at 10.00 am At the Professional Development Centre, Santon Old School, Santon

**Present:** The Hon Tim Crookall, MHK, (Chairperson)

Mr R Bankes-Jones; Mrs G Skinner; Mrs M Fránkwick; Mrs T Martin; Mr R Smith; Mrs L Strickett; Mr R Turton; Mrs M Mansfield; Mrs F Robinson; Mrs J Pendree; Mr S Bevan; Mrs B Brereton; Mr T Bennion

**In**

**Attendance:** Professor R Barr, Chief Executive Officer; Mr M Barrow, Director of Education; Mr G Moorcroft, School Improvement Adviser, Primary Education; Mr J Gill, Head of Legal and Administrative Services; Mr J Swindlehurst, Manager of Legal and Administrative Services; Mrs J Buss – Secretary

**Apologies:** Mr T Wild, MLC; Mr G Corkish, MLC; Mr D Anderson, MHK; Dr P G S Allinson-Cook; Mr G Roberts

Item	Business	Action
	The Minister opened the Meeting by asking for a minute's silence in memory of Dr Ian Killip, a former Principal at the Isle of Man College.	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Presentation on Post 16 provision by Steven Bevan and Gill Skinner</b></p> <p>The Members said that the presentation was a follow-up on thoughts raised by Stuart Dobson. They had met with JP and come up with a series of proposals, which they had already presented to RB. They explained that the current position was not working nor was it satisfactory or economic. A copy of the slide presentation is attached, for ease of reference.</p> <p>The Minister thanked the Members for the time and effort they had put into the presentation and asked if there were any questions.</p> <p>A Member asked how difficult it might be to impose the 3<sup>rd</sup> option of curriculum clusters. MB responded that mind-sets are changing with regard to the curriculum and schools are working more closely together. There were however no easy answers but so far there had been a good contribution to the debate. MB also stated that the outcome of the current consultation on 14 – 16 position, would impact upon the Post 16 provision.</p> <p>RB stated that the ultimate decision would be the Department's. Problems had been identified, so the onus was now on schools to come up with innovative and creative ideas. Advancements in technology mean that using links such as Skype, could not be discounted. RB encouraged Members to get involved through their Governing bodies to keep pushing and challenging Headteachers that changes need to take place.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013 were taken to be correct and were signed off by the Minister.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Matters arising from the Minutes not shown elsewhere on the Agenda.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Minister advised that he was still awaiting the Business Plan.</li> <li>2. Geoff Moorcroft, who succeeds Martin Barrow when he retires at Easter, was introduced to Members.</li> </ol>	

4.	<p><b>Briefing on 14 – 16 Examination Provision (MB)</b></p> <p>MB explained that the Department had held a series of public Meetings at RGS; CRHS, QE11 and SNHS, ahead of the launch of a public consultation on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014, on the impending 14-16 exam reform. The presentations were chiefly led by Paul Craine, the Department's Co-Ordinating Adviser for 11 – 19 Education. The Department was hoping for a high level of response from the consultation. A copy of the presentation, which can be downloaded from the Department's website, is attached for ease of reference.</p> <p>Members asked if there would be implications for teachers if the Island introduced the Scottish education system. RB replied that teaching issues would be a challenge, but this system was not being ruled out. Education on the Island is not the political football as it is in England, so a change of Government on the Island should not alter the position. The Department is very keen to have a more consistent set of examination Boards across schools, as it becomes difficult to swap teachers in and out of schools for cover purposes. The Minister expressed his thanks to all those who had taken part in the presentations.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Budget Up-Date (RB)</b></p> <p>RB advised that the Department's budget had come in under budget this year and he thanked individual budget holders for this, as the savings would help cost pressures in the forthcoming financial year. MB stated that there is contingency funding for supply cover, and there had not been much sickness absence. The Department was seeking to buy 'credit' from Treasury.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Shared Services Up-date (RB)</b></p> <p>RB informed Members that there was a lot happening with regard to Shared Services, affecting schools, the College, catering, health etc. Chris Wilson, the School Catering Manager, was taking the lead in preparing Draft Service Level Agreements which would be sent out for comment.</p> <p>Mark Lewin was working closely with ICT staff, to liaise with schools and the College as to the difference in systems used. A separate working group would be set up to look into this and Graham Kinrade, the Department's ICT Adviser, would be shadowed by an ISD staff member in order to see how things work.</p> <p>Caretaking and cleaning would impact on primary schools first, but RB said that talks were being held with the DOI on these issues.</p> <p>For the time being, Lettings would remain within schools and the College, but with the longer term view of centralising Lettings through the NSC system.</p> <p>RB stated that it was inevitable that operational issues will occur with regard to Shared Services, but a measured and balanced approach should be adopted in order for them to succeed.</p> <p>The Arts Council, Sports, the NSC and Regional Swimming Pools are all coming to the Department. Youth and Community are aligned to the NSC, so this situation would be closely monitored over the next 12 months.</p> <p>A Member asked if there would be any change in Terms and Conditions? RB responded that this would be an issue for the DOI and Health, who would be working closely with the Unions. The idea was to keep people in work. The Minister and RB had held meetings with key individuals, in order to try and minimise uncertainty.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Questions from Education Council Members</b></p> <p><i>1) Could we please be provided with an update of what proposed changes the Department will be making following the recent report into Children's' Services in order to improve outcomes for vulnerable children? – Mrs G Skinner</i></p> <p>MB stated that the Report had only just been received, so there had been a short period of time to look at it. Sally Brookes would be drafting up an Action Plan, which would go back to Tynwald in May. The Action Plan will be a public document. The emphasis should be on early intervention. Sally Brookes would be invited to attend a future meeting to</p>	

advise Members of progress. MB stated that the judgements within the Report were similar to the Department's own Self Assessments, so the findings had not come as a big surprise.

2) *Given the recent restructuring and amalgamation with NSC and Arts Council what differences will be seen in opportunities for Departmental budgetary savings?* - Mrs G Skinner

RB responded that there were more challenges than opportunities. The regional swimming pools have deficits and need to be made more effective. No money had ever been set aside for maintenance or replacement. Several meetings were taking place to see how these challenges were going to be faced.

3) *Will there be any impact on the quality of school meals from 1st April, particularly to those receiving free school meals?* – Mrs G Skinner

RB stated that there really should not be any change in the standard. The Service Level Agreements make specific reference to healthy options and food was being prepared in the same centres as previously. Feedback would however be appreciated.

The Minister added that wherever possible and within a balanced position, Manx produce will be used. Although some individuals may be paying a little bit more, on the whole, centralised purchasing can make savings in the region of millions of pounds.

## 8. Any Other Business

**Political Members** – these were advised as: Mr Tony Wild, MLC (DED); Mr David Anderson, MHK (Sport) and Mr Geoff Corkish, MLC (Arts). The Minister stated that he was delighted to be remaining within Education and that the future was both interesting and exciting.

**Hills Meadow** – Members were advised that the Isle of Man Post Office were vacating their premises at Hills Meadow and gifting the site to DEC. Best use would be made of these premises.

**Visit to Island by Beth Davis from the NUT** – MB advised that Beth would be bringing a party of Heads and Deputy Heads back to the Island during the last weekend in June, returning in early July, to look at what the Island does and would be visiting all schools.

**Members Expenses** – JG reminded Members that expenses claims needed to be submitted by 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014, otherwise they would not be paid. Members were requested to use the most up-to-date form and complete it both fully and carefully.

**Staff Re-organisation at Hamilton House** – JG advised that staff from within the Student Awards area and Legal and Administration would merge. As part of the reorganisation, JS would be moving to Finance. JB would remain as Secretary to JG. JS and JB would no longer be attending Education Council meetings. JG wished to record his thanks to JB and JS for all the work they had done in the past.

**Martin Barrow** – Martin would be retiring at the end of term, so this too was the last Education Council meeting he would attend.

The Minister thanked these staff for their contributions over the years.

**Recent Appointments** – GM advised that David Jenkins had been appointed as the new Headteacher for Bunscoill Rhumsaa with effect from September; Rose Burton had been appointed Headteacher at Willaston Primary School. Interviews for the headship at St John's were taking place that afternoon and for Castle Rushen High School on Monday.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 12.40 pm.

The date of the next meeting would be Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Signed *R. Crockett*  
Minister for Education and Children

Date *27/6/14*