

SUMMARY NOTES

EXTENDED SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

16TH JANUARY 2009, DUNGANNON TEACHERS CENTRE

1.0 Discussion

There is an ongoing dispute about funding professional development programmes for principals and other staff out of the Extended Schools money, particular issues in relation to a counselling course that a principal in a school in the Western Board area wants to complete. This issue has been left with the officers of the Western Education & Library Board to resolve but there are concerns about setting a precedent and schools making decisions without approval.

In terms of the overall approach in terms of assessment and approval, there are concerns around a clear understanding of the timeframes that schools are having to work with, the funding letters being issued by the Department and approval dates, but also the extent to which governors are actually involved in the process.

It is noted in terms of wider opportunities for engagement and funding, there are real opportunities beginning to emerge through Peace III, the Rural Development Programme with the local action groups and Neighbourhood Renewal and it was important that Extended Schools linked in with these works.

It is now proposed to have a celebration event in March in respect of the work that has been taken forward by the schools. The dates set are:

- 20th March 2009 – for Derry, Limavady, and Strabane in the City Hotel;
- 27th March 2009 – for Castlederg, Omagh and Fermanagh in the Silver Birches Hotel;
- 24th March 2009 – for the Southern Board area in the Armagh City Hotel.

Training has now been provided for schools in relation to the next programme, which will commence on the week of 21st February 2009.

It is worth noting that sustainable schools policy is to include community engagement as part of the assessment process and this also links in with extended schools.

2.0 Future for Extended Schools

It appears under RPA it is likely that Extended Schools may move over to Children & Young People Services and there was a general discussion about moving it away from the teaching and learning side, given that Extended Schools was initially about improving achievement. It was the view of the committee that the programme should stay within the teaching and learning side, but there does need to be closer working between Children & Young People Services. This matter is to be taken up further by the two Education Boards for further consideration and will be raised regionally through the four Chairs.

Concerns were raised around a number of programmes being delivered by a couple of the schools in the West, particularly a relationship and sexual health programme, which had its funding withdrawn by Boards and indeed the Education & Library Boards previously. It was advised that the programme should not be funded and staff should take on the role of advising the schools of their decision. It was also agreed in terms of future roll-out that it would be important that education should flag up projects that require a health review in advance of any decision being made, this would allow health and social care staff to examine initiatives that are coming forward and give professional advice to the schools.