

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD ZOOM MEETING ONLINE 27th APRIL 2021

ATTENDANCE

<i>Cllr. Noel McCarthy</i>	<i>Cllr. Colette Finn</i>
<i>Cllr. Patrick Gerard Murphy</i>	<i>Ms. Maura Fitzgibbon</i>
<i>Cllr. Gobnait Moynihan</i>	<i>Mr. Patrick O'Dwyer</i>
<i>Cllr. Patrick Gerard Murphy</i>	<i>Mr. Rob Bateman</i>
<i>Cllr. Gobnait Moynihan</i>	<i>Mr. Liam Ahern</i>
<i>Cllr. Sean Martin</i>	<i>Ms. Ann Piggott</i>
<i>Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond</i>	<i>Mr. Denis Kirby</i>
<i>Cllr. Derry Canty</i>	<i>Mr. Declan O'Leary</i>

EXECUTIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

<i>Mr. Denis Leamy, CE</i>	<i>Mr. Enda McWeeney of OSD</i>
<i>Mr. John Fitzgibbons, Director of FET</i>	<i>Ms. Suzanne Mullins, Director of OSD</i>
<i>Mr. Pat McKelvey, Director of Schools</i>	<i>Ms. Clare Creedon (Minute Taker)</i>

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending at such short notice.

SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR CARRIGALINE

The CE referred to the two letters that were sent to members which give the context for the meeting. The growing demand for special school provision is at a very serious juncture now. On foot of this the DES has been working closely with Stakeholders to prioritise the needs for children for September 2021. The DES are looking at accommodation options and prospective patrons. They are now going to establish a new school in Carrigaline in the existing Gaelscoil building which will be vacant in July 2021.

The new proposed school is intended to cater for eight special classes – 48 students which will be supported by relevant staffing. It will be on a Primary school basis, but the age range will go to 18 years of age. The DES has requested that Cork ETB become the Patron of this new school.

Mr. Declan O'Leary queried as to what other prospective Patrons were approached? The CE stated that there was no public call due to the urgency. The DES were also in discussions with Cope as they had raised the issue some years ago.

Mr. O'Leary asked what the implications are regarding the capital investment for the Carrigaline campus. Mr, Enda McWeeney referred to the capital issues and advised that there is a tender contract for the Carrigaline campus. The DES are looking for an architect for the

redesign of the existing school Gaelscoil. Cork ETB will then engage with the contractor involved in the campus to start the modification of the Gaelscoil. There are no structural changes required, but we do not have more details as of yet.

Cllr. Colette Finn asked what the difference between special education and the schools that have special classes and noted that the request from the DES gives Cork ETB a very short timeframe to work with. Mr. Pat McKelvey advised that children that are in a special class in Mainstream school have additional needs. In a special school children may have far more complex needs, be it physical or intellectual.

Mr. Liam Ahern referred to the model of our Lady of Good Counsel and asked if the new special school will be broadly ranged. Mr. Ahern stated that there are currently no places in special schools in Cork. He noted that while this will be a huge challenge for Cork ETB it is a very welcome opportunity for the ETB also.

The CE advised there are a complexity of needs. The SENOs will work closely with these families in terms of accessing the needs. Cork ETB will work closely with the NCSE to put resources in place. As a Statutory Agency we have a responsibility when asked by the DES to respond. He acknowledged that a lot of work will need to be undertaken and that resources will be critical.

Mr. Patrick O'Dwyer stated that he would support Cork ETB becoming the Patron to the new school. He did query as to whether with the short time frame the 48 places would be filled immediately. Mr. McKelvey advised that there are 44 children currently on the waiting list for the DES and they will be given priority. The initial admissions policy will have to reflect that and then it will need to be modified as the school progresses.

Mr. Denis Kirby stated that it is a positive development. He queried if Cork ETB is satisfied that the existing Gaelscoil will have moved out to allow the alterations to be undertaken. The CE advised that the DES have given assurances to provide resources to ensure its completed.

Cllr. Gobnait Moynihan stated that if Cork ETB is to undertake this it needs to be done right. These are vulnerable children and they cannot afford for this to go wrong.

The CE advised that this is a new area for Cork ETB. He has spoken to the Assistant Secretary General and advised that extra resources will be required. He advised that there is a former member of the Inspectorate who has expertise in this area and Cork ETB may be able

to engage them in an advisory role to assist with the set-up. It is crucial that the right leadership is recruited from the beginning.

Mr. McKelvey advised that the Executive will be calling on expertise from Board members also. There are other organisations in Cork that Cork ETB can link in with to gain knowledge and expertise.

Mr. Declan O’Leary referred to Cope and queried this relationship and the integrity to maintain same. The CE advised that he is concerned in relation to this also. The DES has assured the CE that they will continue to work with Cope in relation to their needs. There has been a lot of engagement with Cope in relation to this. They were afforded the opportunity to be engaged in this space also. Cork ETB will ensure we maintain those relationships.

Ms. Maura Fitzgibbon referred to the recruitment of staff and asked how many staff will be required and is redeployment being considered. Mr. McKelvey advised that there will be 8 teachers, 16 SNA’s, a Principal and Deputy Principal recruited. He advised that redeployment has not been envisaged for the time being.

Ms. Ann Piggott and Cllr. Mary Rose Desmond stated that this is a very welcome and positive move for Cork ETB. There are a lot of children that will benefit from this. Mr. Rob Bateman stated that it is great to see Cork ETB being chosen to deliver this. He noted that he has every confidence in the team on Cork ETB to achieve this within the short timeframe.

The Chairman advised that this was landed on Cork ETB very late in the process and it is indeed a very complex area which will bring many challenges for the ETB. The Board is very supportive of this but needs to ensure that the necessary resources and funding are made available to ensure this is delivered.

The CE advised that we will write to the DES outlining the above and seek the ongoing commitment for these resources and funding. The CE advised that he will keep members informed of developments throughout the process.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

SIGNED: _____
Chairman

DATE: _____