



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Transitional Governance Arrangements for the Education Sector
<b>Date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> November, 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	The Committee will be aware that the issue of the appointment of elected Members to the Transitional Belfast Education and Library Board remains unresolved after almost a year of correspondence between the Council and the Minister for Education.
1.2	In essence, the disagreement between the Council and the Minister is centred on who should be entitled to nominate the elected representatives who will be appointed to serve on the Transitional Board.
1.3	Members will recall that the Committee, in December, 2009, first considered a request from the Minister to nominate eight Members from whom four would be chosen to serve on the Board. The Committee, at its meeting on 11 <sup>th</sup> December agreed to nominate only four Members with the representatives being selected using a one-off d'Hondt process. This resulted in the nominations falling to the SF, DUP, UUP and SDLP groupings. Throughout the subsequent correspondence, the Council has maintained the position that the four elected representatives should be appointed from the largest four political parties on the Council, thus reflecting on the transitional Board the wishes of the people of the city as expressed at the Local Council elections in 2005.
1.4	The Minister's position is different in that she insists that the Council submit eight names so that the principle of Ministerial choice is upheld.
1.5	At its meeting on 24 <sup>th</sup> September, the Committee agreed that it be left to each of the four main Party Groupings to decide whether to submit one or two names to the Minister. The Sinn Fein and Social Democratic and Labour Party Groupings submitted two names each while the Democratic Unionist and Ulster Unionist

	<p>Party Groupings submitted one name each only. A letter was sent to the Department of Education on 11<sup>th</sup> October explaining the Council position and urging the Minister to proceed to appoint the four elected Member representatives from that list of six names whilst ensuring that one elected Member from each of the four main Party Groupings was appointed.</p>
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<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>A further letter has been received from the Department indicating that “conversations with a purpose” have been held with the Council’s six nominees but that they cannot proceed to appoint Councillors to the transitional Belfast Board until the nomination and application process has been completed. The Department makes the points that Belfast is the only Council which has not submitted the requisite number of nominees to the Minister, that they have proceeded to make appointments of elected Members to several of the other Boards and that they cannot proceed in Belfast until the Council submits the names of an additional two candidates.</p>
2.2	<p>The current situation means that there is no political representation on the transitional Board in Belfast and the Committee is asked to consider the matter and take whatever action it considers to be appropriate.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	None

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	<p>The Committee’s previous decision has been consistent with it’s policy on proportionality in relation to the appointment of Members to Outside Bodies.<sup>5</sup></p>

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the information supplied and decide if it wishes to affirm its decision of 24<sup>th</sup> September that it be left to each of the four main Party Groupings to decide whether to submit one or two names to the Minister.</p>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010</p>	