



<b>Subject:</b>	Motion: Special Schools
<b>Date:</b>	18th May, 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider correspondence which has been received from the Chief Executive of the Education Authority in response to the Council's motion on Special Schools.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note the response and take any such action as may be determined.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b> The Council, at its meeting on 9th April, passed the following motion on Special Schools, which had been proposed by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Copeland and seconded by Alderman Rodgers:

3.2	<p>“This Council expresses its grave concerns at the plans by the Education Authority in Northern Ireland to close a number of special schools and also to amalgamate others in the city of Belfast.</p> <p>The Council believes that if the plans go ahead they will have a devastating effect on staff and on pupils and their families, many of whom have serious physical and mental health problems.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Council agrees to request the Chief Executive and members of the Board of the Education Authority to meet with an all-party delegation from the Council to discuss this as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>This Council calls on the Education Authority to call a halt to this consultation process until they engage fully with the schools, parents, pupils and all the stakeholders involved.”</p>
3.3	<p>A response has now been received from Mr. Gavin Boyd, Chief Executive of the Education Authority. A copy of that correspondence is attached.</p>
3.4	<p>Mr. Boyd states that the Education Authority has not commenced a formal consultation process around the future of special schools. He points out that, during more than twenty-three engagement sessions, the Authority has made it clear to parents, school representatives, Boards of Governors and Elected Representatives that it wished to invest in the special schools’ estate, to redress the significant accommodation issues which have been identified in schools in the Belfast area and to create the resources and facilities required to meet the complex needs of children and young people.</p>
3.5	<p>Mr. Boyd points out also that the Education Authority has been engaging with Elected Representatives to address misconceptions which had been reflected in the media and that it would continue to engage with them as the work outlined in the aforementioned sessions was progressed. He concludes by confirming that he would be happy to meet with Members if they considered that to be beneficial.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	<p><b>Document Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Response from Chief Executive of Education Authority.</p>

