

# Education and Lifelong Learning Committee ELL(2) 08-04(min)

## Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday 19 May 2004

**Time:** 9.00am - 12.30pm

**Venue:** Committee Rooms 3 & 4, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay

### Members

Peter Black (Chair)  
Jane Davidson (Minister)  
Leighton Andrews  
Jeff Cuthbert  
Mark Isherwood  
Irene James  
Denise Idris Jones  
Janet Ryder  
Owen John Thomas

### Constituency

South Wales West  
Pontypridd  
Rhondda  
Caerphilly  
North Wales  
Islwyn  
Conwy  
North Wales  
South West Central

### Officials

Richard Davies  
Elizabeth Taylor  
Alan Lansdown  
Keith Davies  
David Weale  
Judith Nedin  
Charles Coombs  
Linda Whittaker  
Anne Morris  
Ceri Heywood

Director, Department for Training and Education  
Head, Schools Management Division  
Head, Pupil Support Division  
Head, Standards and Performance Division  
Schools Management Division  
Central Support Unit  
Strategic Policy Unit  
Financial Planning Division  
Financial Planning Division  
Financial Planning Division

### In Attendance:

David Cunningham-Jones and Huw  
Bunkham  
Pat Harries  
Trevor Roberts  
Professor Steve Bristow, Alasdair  
MacLaughlin and Gari Lewis

Stuart's Campaign  
Belt-Up School Kids (BUSK)  
Newport Transport  
Open Direction Ltd

## Committee Service

Chris Reading  
Holly Pembroke  
Ruth Hatton  
**Joanest Jackson**

Committee Clerk  
Deputy Committee Clerk  
Committee Support Officer  
**Committee Legal Adviser**

### Item One: Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public.

1.2 The Chair noted an apology from David Davies.

1.3 Lynne Neagle AM attended the meeting for the item concerning Coleg Gwent in the ministerial report. The Chair welcomed her to the meeting.

1.4 1.5 Members were invited to declare any interests in accordance with standing order 4.5. There were none

### Item Two: Minister's Report

#### Paper: ELL(2) 08-04(p.1) and Annexes

2.1 The Committee received its regular written report from the Minister, who made the following introductory remarks:

- Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (MYM) and Trinity College, Carmarthen - the Minister welcomed the recent partnership between MYM and Trinity College and undertook to bring a report to Committee in due course.
- Coleg Gwent - a written statement would be handed to Members around the table. A copy of this statement can be found at [www.wales.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gsi.gov.uk)

2.2 The Chair then invited Members to raise questions. In response, the Minister made the following points:

### Coleg Gwent

- With regard to Members' concern to the manner in which the college made the announcement, the Minister said she would expect ELWa-National Council to encourage Coleg Gwent to operate as good employers;
- Coleg Gwent had stated that no current AS level student would have to transfer their course to another college;
- The last Conservative Government had established FE colleges as businesses. The First Assembly had agreed that a national planning and funding framework be developed across Wales, to support the focussed development of colleges and other providers. Currently some colleges were more successful at planning and reviewing their business needs than others;
- The new sector skills councils were strategically planned and market-led;
- Coleg Gwent would be undertaking a 30-day consultation period on its proposals for rationalisation/restructuring. It would consult with Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs), Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and other bodies. Members would have an opportunity to put forward alternative proposals through the consultation process if they so wished;
- A strategic planning approach was needed for the post-16 sector, hence the formation of ELWa-NC;

- The Director of Education for Torfaen had met with the new principal of Coleg Gwent and had discussed how the needs of learners could be met. The new principal, Howard Burton would take up post on 4 June 2004;
- Coleg Gwent's board had been advised that it could replace franchise activity with core activity to encourage growth. The future of the college was very strong;
- Coleg Llandrillo and its LEA had established common timetabling which had proved effective;
- The Welsh Assembly Government's ambition was for no student to be disadvantaged when changes occurred in the sector, as they often did;
- Since 1999, funding for the FE sector had increased by some 30%;
- There had been a 24% increase in student numbers since 1999
- The previous Education and Lifelong Learning Committee had committed to a strategic approach for post-16 education. It had also supported the need for parity of pay between FE teachers and schoolteachers;
- ELWa-NC had not yet considered the detail of its allocations to colleges for 2004-05; the FE college financial year commenced in August;
- As the position in respect of financial plans prepared by FE colleges varied across Wales, it was important to strengthen planning arrangements for the sector; and
- Members might wish to prioritise funds for FE in the Budget Planning Round 2004 (item five).

### **Free School Breakfast Initiative**

- There were nine local authorities participating in the pilot from different areas including authorities from urban, rural and remote areas; and
- The pilot schemes would provide information and ideas such as optimum meal times and staggering the school day would be considered in light of the information gathered from the pilot.

### **Daugherty Assessment Review Group**

- The first paragraph of the group's report had stated that the statutory framework since the early 1990s had brought benefits to schools/pupils;
- The review group had concluded that the current assessment system however was not assessing the needs of children. A system that assessed the learning needs of children was therefore required. Such a system should be publicly accountable and teachers, parents and children should have confidence in the system;
- The group had found that diagnostic skills were complementary to the end of key stages;
- The report focussed on issues surrounding transition;
- Secondary schools currently did not have a system that they felt adequately engaged with: there was a need for a system that recognised the need for a continuum; and
- The report of the review group had been unanimous. Fuller comments would be required from the sector and a timetable would be needed. Professor Daugherty and ACCAC had advised that removing tests in this academic year would be unwise: a phased implementation was required.

### **Work Based Learning Providers**

- Janet Ryder asked for information relating to the number of training providers that had ceased to exist from the inception of ELWa. The Chair advised her to write directly to the Minister with this query.

### **Item Three: Secondary Legislation - Forward Look**

#### **Paper: ELL(2) 08-04(p.2)**

3.1 Janet Ryder proposed that the Committee should scrutinise ELL 22-04 Education (Health Standards) (Wales) Regulations 2004.

3.2 The Chair noted that there was no available time to consider these regulations before the summer recess, and asked the Minister to consider if the implementation could be delayed, to allow for scrutiny in the autumn term. The Minister agreed to consider this and report to Committee.

## **Item Four: Policy Review: School Transport - Information Gathering**

4.1 The Chair reminded the Committee that the new S-KOOL coach piloted by Newport Transport would be available for Members to view outside the Assembly building after the meeting.

4.2 The Chair welcomed David Cunningham-Jones and Huw Bunkham of Stuart's Campaign, Pat Harries of Belt Up School Kids (BUSK) and Trevor Roberts of Newport Transport. The Chair invited presenters to make short presentations.

4.3 David Cunningham-Jones and Huw Bunkham (Stuart's Campaign) spoke to their PowerPoint presentation. The presentation can be accessed at [www.wales.gov](http://www.wales.gov)

4.4 Pat Harries (BUSK) made an oral presentation; a copy of her speaking note can be accessed at [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

4.5 Trevor Roberts spoke to his paper, which can be accessed at [www.wales.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gsi.gov.uk)

4.6 The Chair invited Members to raise questions and presenters gave the following responses:

### **Stuart's Campaign**

#### Escorts/Supervision on Buses/CCTV

- The responsibility for supervision to adequate levels on school buses varied between local authorities. However, Stuart's Campaign believed that such matters should come under the control of local authorities.

#### Safe Walking Routes/Distance Limits

- The most acceptable, safe route to school was the shortest, safest route. In some areas a safe route might not exist. The system in Denmark was something that could be possibly adopted in Wales.

#### Behaviour/Discipline

- It was imperative that the driver had protection from interference from pupils i.e. via an escort or a barrier.

#### Impact of Cowbridge Accident

- The delivery of children to school by car had trebled since the fatal accident in Cowbridge. There was a need to give parents confidence in the school transport system.

### **BUSK**

#### Distance Limits

- The distance criteria should be discarded. If a parent wanted to put their child/children on a school bus they should be able to have the opportunity to do so. More

parents would let their children use school buses if they were confident that their children were safe. Parents would also be prepared to pay for school transport as long as it was safe.

### Contracts/ Behaviour and Discipline

- BUSK recommended that parents and LEAs had service contracts and routes. If it were proven that a child was putting other children's lives at risk, then they would forfeit their right to travel on the school bus, without the LEA being sued. If schools had zero tolerance for pupils' misbehaviour and had proper reporting systems in place, then it would be possible to change the attitude of children themselves. Most parents were willing to work alongside LEAs. However, some LEAs were not providing a duty of care and not providing risk assessments.

### Supervision/CCTV

- Supervision on buses was more appropriate for primary school children. CCTV systems were most effective - especially for secondary school age children. BUSK had looked into a panic button system that was linked to a control system/room in seconds.

### Special Education Needs/Children with Disabilities

- Most children with SEN/disabilities travelled in minibuses. It was positive that the Disability Discrimination Act was coming into force; some children were meant to travel in their wheelchairs, secured into the vehicles. Most contracted vehicles did not have provision for wheelchairs. Filling coaches with over fifty children with SEN or health needs would be impossible to supervise.

## **Newport Transport**

### Commercial

- Newport Transport was a private limited company, which was charged with operating independently of the local authority. Newport Transport was not unique in carrying school pupils on its local services. Newport was a small city and thus had a large number of pupils living under a three-mile distance limit. The LEA did not have responsibility for the transportation of these pupils, consequently, there was a large number of pupils travelling on Newport Transport services. Return tickets were charged at £1.10 per day. Two school runs per day would cover operational costs. Newport Transport was hoping to use the new S-KOOL coach for school trips, sports events etc.

### Special Education Needs/Children with Disabilities

- Children in wheelchairs were better catered for in individual vehicles and not mass-moved along with other pupils.

### Behaviour and Discipline

- The use of nominated seats for pupils in the new pilot S-KOOL coach had seen a change in behaviour of children on the bus: there was no pushing to get a seat on the bus.

### Consistency in Approach

- Education contracts and partnerships should be arranged. There should be dedicated school runs, specified vehicle types, operator credentials and minimum

standards. There was also a need for a code of conduct between pupils, parents, schools and LEAs and for partnership working.

#### Length of Contracts

- There was a need for contract periods to be longer at least from five to ten years.

#### Monitoring and Attendance

- If a problem occurred with discipline on the school run, Newport Transport could pass CCTV footage to the relevant school. It was hoped that all buses would be eventually equipped with CCTV. The S-KOOL coach had a code of contact, individual seats and CCTV, therefore did not require escorts. The pilot had picked the worst two school runs and since its inception there had been no problems reported. Newport Transport was hoping to convert its double-decker fleet to the S-KOOL coach specification. If two school runs a day occurred, it was possible that the coaches could be commercially run.

#### Partnership Working

- Newport Transport spent a considerable amount of time in schools discussing transport issues. In August, route plotting for 800-950 pupils would be undertaken. LEAs however were reluctant to get involved in commercial transportation of school pupils.
- There was a dependency on local authorities to take discipline issues forward. Having relationships with schools was particularly helpful.
- As a company, Newport Transport did more than most to co-ordinate provision with headteachers.

4.7 The Minister said that the Assembly Government did not have legislative responsibility for school transport. However, the Minister said that she was eager to assess what the Assembly Government could contribute, taking into account its lack of primary legislative power. The Minister told presenters and the Committee that the Assembly Government could issue non-statutory guidance. There would also be some opportunities to comment further on the Draft School Transport Bill. This Bill was an education bill, although many of the issues raised by BUSK and Stuart's Campaign were transport-related issues.

4.8 The Chair thanked presenters for their informative presentations.

#### **Item Five: Budget Planning Round 2004**

##### **Paper: ELL(2) 08-04(p.3) and Annexes**

5.1 The Chair asked the Committee to outline its initial, broad budget priorities for the education and lifelong learning portfolio. He invited the Minister to introduce her paper, a summary is below:

- The Budget Planning Round would allocate firm budgets for 2005-06 and indicative budgets for the subsequent two years;
- The Committee would be asked for its views on detailed budgets after the summer recess 2004 at the draft budget stage; and
- The Committee was reminded of its priorities set out in last year's budget planning round, as set out in paragraph 11 of paper ELL(2) 08-04(p.3)).

5.2 After some discussion, the Committee identified the following initial budget priorities for education and lifelong learning:

- Teachers' continuing professional development (CPD), particularly in relation to performance management;
- Provision for the possible implementation of recommendations set out in the Committee's forthcoming policy review report on Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- Iaith Pawb - the supply and development of teaching staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh;

- Post-16 provision, including sixth form provision;
- Higher Education, with particular regard to the reconfiguration agenda; and
- Early years provision.

5.3 Janet Ryder asked for clarification on the breakdowns for education spend in the local government revenue settlement. The Chair advised her to write to the Minister with this particular query.

5.4 Mark Isherwood asked if he could circulate a document summarising financial information regarding FE colleges in Wales, which he had recently received, to the Committee for information. The Chair agreed and asked the Clerk to arrange this.

5.5 The Chair undertook to write on behalf of the Committee to the Minister for Finance and Local Government with the Committee's initial budget priorities. The letter would be circulated in draft form to Committee Members for their approval.

### **Item Six: ACCAC Quinquennial Review**

#### **Paper: ELL(2) 08-04(p.4)**

6.1 The Chair welcomed Professor Steve Bristow, Gari Lewis and Alasdair MacLaughlin of Open Direction Ltd to the meeting. The Chair invited Professor Bristow to introduce the Final Report on the Quinquennial Review of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales.

6.2 Professor Bristow introduced the report and referred to ELL(2) 08-04(p.4) and the findings of the report. He said that the Committee could have confidence in the existence and work of ACCAC. Open Direction Ltd was of the opinion that ACCAC was well governed, managed and was efficient in its operation. It was felt that ACCAC was delivering against the objectives set by the Welsh Assembly Government. Open Direction Ltd had felt however that ACCAC might wish to consider promoting greater public visibility and awareness of its work.

6.3 The Chair invited the Committee to comment on the findings of the final report. In response to Members' questions, Professor Bristow made the following points:

#### Recommendation 7 - Raise Profile/Image

- The review prior to the Quinquennial review had noted the relatively low profile of ACCAC. Currently, ACCAC's profile was high amongst its interested audience. However, ACCAC tended to have less of a public image amongst its wider group of stakeholders. In light of any implementation resulting from the Daugherty Assessment Review Group's recommendations on an accreditation model, ACCAC might become more visible to schools.

#### Recommendation 10 - Commercial and Financial Expertise

- It was felt that audit committees in organisations were strengthened by the presence of an accountant or other finance specialist, combined with non-specialists whose general perspectives were focussed on achieving the objectives of the organisation and desired outcomes. The mechanism for ACCAC to adopt to achieve this was most likely co-option.

#### Recommendation 16 - Procedures

- Provided that ACCAC responded satisfactorily to paragraph 4.58, it was felt that there was no reason to believe that ACCAC would fail to ensure that it had formal business planning, risk assessment and project management control procedures in place. The most appropriate form of monitoring would be through the sponsorship division in the Welsh Assembly Government, possibly in collaboration with the Financial Planning Division

## Welsh Medium Vocational Qualifications and Materials

- Open Direction Ltd believed that ACCAC had been active in the development of Welsh medium vocational qualifications and guidance materials. There was a need for co-ordination of provision of occupational qualifications through the medium of Welsh. There were also difficulties in identifying and securing occupationally qualified assessors who were able to speak Welsh. Training and assessment through the medium of Welsh was affected by the lack of suitable personnel available. There was a wider need to acquire more assessors and examiners, not just in the work-based assessment area, who were able to work through the medium of Welsh. The Minister added that she had been pleased to attend the launch of the first Welsh medium customer services National Vocational Qualification (NVQ).

## Business Sector

- Developing a closer relationship with the business/industry sector was positive. Open Direction Ltd had received a nil response in the consultation during stage one of the review, from the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). This had been disappointing as Open Direction Ltd had mapped some creative working that ACCAC and WDA had jointly embarked upon. It would be important for greater emphasis to be given to bringing together strategies to achieve A Winning Wales and The Learning Country.

## Key Skills

- There had been a move away from the model of external testing to the model of testing portfolio skills. This could involve a similar approach to accreditation that the Daugherty Assessment Review Group was suggesting for Key Stages 2 and 3 in schools. The Minister added that ACCAC's advice to herself had been to remove tests at the end of Key Skills.

## Reliability of Coursework as an Assessment Mechanism in the 'Electronic Age'

- ACCAC had been engaged in reviewing the National Curriculum for the statutory age of provision and had engaged in creative thinking through its own consultation processes. ACCAC was taking a measured view - balancing the different pressures on schools and pupils.

6.4 Professor Bristow concluded that Wales was well served by the stability and proven effectiveness of ACCAC. Any sudden move to change the current basis of operations was deemed by Open Direction Ltd to be reckless, unwise and would possibly impede the achievement of the education and lifelong learning objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government.

6.5 The Minister said that a plenary debate on the Final Report was scheduled for 15 June 2004.

6.6 The Chair thanked presenters for their contribution and said that ACCAC would appear before the Committee in the autumn term for general scrutiny.

## **Item Seven: Draft Sustainable Development Action Plan**

### **Paper: ELL(2) 08-04(p.5)**

7.1 The Chair welcomed Alan Lansdown, Head of Pupil Support Division, from the Department for Training and Education and Charles Coombs, from the Strategic Policy Division. Charles Coombs introduced paper ELL(2) 08-04(p.5) and invited the Committee to comment upon the Welsh Assembly Government's draft sustainable development action plan.

7.2 In response to Members' questions, Alan Lansdown made the following comments:



## Measurable Outcomes

- There were a number of pilot projects in existence; one in particular in Pembrokeshire which was addressing whole school approaches and the evaluation of it would provide a useful starting point for assembling appropriate outcomes. More generally, it was more difficult to measure the pupils' understanding of the concept of sustainable development. Varying approaches to embedding sustainable development in the school curriculum were being compiled in a database by the Department for Training and Education and this would be brought before the Committee in due course.

## Definition of 'Sustainable'

- The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Panel had on its inception found it difficult to define the term 'sustainable'. Eventually, it had decided to use the definition used in England.

## Method of Teaching

- Various programmes of study which had been prepared by ACCAC, were identified as having opportunities for the teachers to incorporate sustainable development in delivering them. Also, a mapping exercise was currently underway to identify areas where global citizenship could be taught.

## Educational Needs Analysis/FE and HE Sectors

- The main focus of the first two to three years of work on sustainable development had been on the schools sector. However, there had been increasing recognition that the work should be extended to the tertiary sector. Professor John Farrar, a member of the ESD Panel was currently preparing a strategy paper for the FE and HE sectors. It was almost certain that he would consider undertaking a needs analysis as part of it. The Minister added that ACCAC had already delivered guidance for whole school policies and for the FE/HE and adult learning sectors.

## 7.3 The Chair summarised that the Committee's main comments had been:

- Clear support for mainstreaming; and
- Welcomed the opportunity to assess measurable outcomes, in relation to the pilot projects underway. The Chair said that he would write to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside with the Committee's comments.

## **Item Eight: Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

### **Paper: ELL(2) 06-04(mins)**

8.1 The Committee was invited to ratify the minutes of the previous meeting on 28 April 2004. The minutes were ratified, subject to an amendment to one of the action points. The Minister stated that she would report to the Committee on tender pricing and price harmonisation at the first opportunity (not May).

## **Action Points**

- Minister to report back to Committee on partnership between Trinity College, Carmarthen and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin;
- Minister to consider whether implementation for secondary legislation item ELL 22-04 could be delayed and report back to Committee;
- Clerk to circulate document provided by Mark Isherwood re FE colleges to Committee Members;
- Chair to write to Minister for Finance and Local Government with Committee's initial budget priorities;
- Clerk to amend Committee's report of its consideration of the Draft School Transport Bill; and

- Chair to write to Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside with the Committee's comments on the draft sustainable development action plan.

## Paper to note

### ELL Committee's Report on Draft School Transport Bill

#### Paper: ELL(2) 08-04(p.6)

- The Chair invited the Committee to confirm that it was content with the draft report of its consideration of the Draft School Transport Bill; and
- Owen John Thomas requested that the report should include wording to the effect that clear guidelines should be provided to LEAs, to facilitate their bids to participate in pilot schemes. Subject to this amendment, the Committee approved the report.

## Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

### Cumulative schedule of action points arising from Committee meetings

Meeting Reference	Date	Action	Responsibility	Status
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Minister's Report - The Minister undertook to provide a note to Committee outlining dates of future stakeholder/local meetings for the Free School Breakfast Initiative	Minister	Completed
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Minister's Report - The Clerk would circulate the web link for the report of the review of Careers Wales to the Committee	Minister/ Committee Clerk	Completed
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Autumn Term - The Minister suggested that it would be useful for Careers Wales to update the Committee on its progress in the autumn term	Committee Clerk	Pending
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Minister's Report - The Minister undertook to provide any available information in the next Ministerial report on the number of training providers that had ceased to exist since the inception of ELWa-National Council (1 April 2001)	Minister	Pending
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Minister's Report - The Minister to report to Committee on tender pricing and price harmonisation of work based learning at the first opportunity.	Officials	Pending
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Secondary Legislation - The Clerk to prepare a report of the Committee's consideration of the secondary legislation (ELL13-04 -16-04) for Business Committee	Committee Clerk	Completed
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Draft School Transport Bill - The Clerk to prepare a draft report for Plenary on the draft school transport Bill. The Committee would consider this draft report at its meeting on 19 May	Committee Clerk	Completed
ELL(2) 06-04	28 April 04	Minutes (1 April 2004) - The Clerk to amend paragraph 3.14 of the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April	Committee Clerk	Pending

ELL(2) 07-04	13 May 04	SEN Policy Review - The Clerk to circulate a paper outlining emerging issues, conclusions and recommendations for the policy review, in advance of the 16 June meeting.	Committee Clerk	Pending
ELL(2) 07-04	13 May 04	ELL Annual Report - Clerk to lay report	Committee Clerk	Pending
ELL(2) 08-04	19 May 04	FE Sector - circulate document provided by Mark Isherwood re FE colleges to Committee Members	Committee Clerk	Completed
ELL(2) 08-04	19 May 04	Budget Planning Round 2004 - Chair to write to Minister for Finance and Local Government with Committee's initial budget priorities;	Committee Clerk	Pending
ELL(2) 08-04	19 May 04	Draft School Transport Bill Report - amend Committee's report of its consideration of the Draft School Transport Bill	Committee Clerk	Completed
ELL(2) 08-04	19 May 04	Sustainable Development Action Plan - Chair to write to Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside with the Committee's comments on the draft sustainable development action plan	Committee Clerk	Completed

### Actions outstanding from spring term 2004

Meeting	Date	Action	Responsibility	Status
Reference				
ELL(2) 02-04	28 Jan 04	School Transport Policy Review - Committee Clerk to make arrangements for the appointment of an expert adviser to assist the Committee with the review of school transport	Committee Clerk	In hand
ELL(2) 03-04	25 Feb 04	PE and School Sport - The Minister would report to Committee after the Easter recess, when the 30 sports development centres were in place	Minister	Pending
ELL(2) 03-04	25 Feb 04	Children's Commissioner/Clwyd Report - The Commissioner to be invited to address the Committee on the Clwyd Report	Committee Clerk	Pending

### Outstanding Action from 2003

Meeting	Date	Action	Responsibility	Status
Reference				
ELL(2) 02-03(p.1)	9 Jul 03	Student Choices for HE - Minister to investigate the availability of research into student preferences for higher education and report back to Committee	Minister	Pending
Minister's Report ELL(2) 02-03(p.1)	9 Jul 03	National Insurance Costs for Local Authorities Minister to provide a note for Committee on National Insurance costs for local authorities	Minister	Pending
Minister's Report				