



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Education

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education  
– Shared Education Campuses Programme:  
Department of Education

14 January 2015



clarify that the definition of "shared education" that is set out in the protocol document is that which was provided to the ministerial advisory group on advancing shared education. It is:

*"Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion."*

The protocol document further states:

*"Specifically, 'Shared Education' means the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together."*

As you are aware, both the shared education policy and the Bill are out for consultation until 6 March. The protocol document uses the definition of "shared education" as it currently stands.

The Minister launched the shared education campuses programme in January 2014. There were 16 applications under the first call for expressions of interest. In July 2014, the Minister announced the first three projects to be supported under the programme. The Moy, Ballycastle and Limavady projects are now at the planning stage, with detailed feasibility studies and economic appraisals being developed.

Naturally, as with any process, we reviewed what could be improved following the outcome of the first call. As a result, the protocol document was revised and updated before the second call was launched. The revisions took account of our experience of the first call, relevant lessons learnt from previous shared education programmes and last year's revision of the Department's capital works protocol. We identified a need for greater emphasis on the programme being about schools and shared education involving different school-management types and across similar age groups, and greater clarity for applicants on what was being assessed and why. We therefore clarified the rationale for the endorsement of the relevant managing and planning authorities and made changes to the minimum percentage for religious balance. That is now a minimum of 15%, and preferably 30%. Stronger evidence of the existing sharing taking place between the schools involved in each application is now an essential criterion. A desirable criterion of disadvantaged-pupil consideration using free school meal-entitlement data and specific gateway, essential and desirable criteria, with only the essential and desirable criteria being scored, has been introduced.

Comments on the proposed changes were sought from the Department's key stakeholders through the area-planning steering group. Its views were incorporated into the updated document. The Minister then considered the proposed changes and agreed the revised protocol document for the launch of the second call. The closing date for applications to the second call is 30 January. At this stage, we expect that the Minister will be in a position to announce the next tranche of shared education campuses in June.

The recent announcement as part of the Stormont House Agreement of new capital funding of up to £500 million over 10 years to support shared and integrated education is welcomed and should advance shared education campus projects. Each project is subject to Executive and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) approval. We will be working with DFP colleagues on the detail of how funding can be accessed. As with all capital building schemes, selected projects will be taken forward to the economic appraisal stage, which, once submitted, will be considered with normal business-approval processes and in line with the Northern Ireland guide to expenditure appraisal and evaluation guidelines, including value for money and affordability. Only after approval of the economic appraisal, and subject to available capital funds, will a project proceed to tender and construction.

I hope that the Committee has found the overview helpful. As I said, Roisin and I are happy to take any specific questions on detail.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** OK. Thank you very much. May I ask for a progress update on the three projects that were announced? Obviously, we are in Moy today and will meet the two schools involved. We plan to visit Limavady in March and have also agreed a Committee visit to Ballycastle. It is important for us to have those conversations. For our own information, can you tell us where each of the projects sits?

**Ms Durkin:** Project boards have been established for the Moy and Limavady projects. The Limavady project board is actually meeting tomorrow. The Moy project board has had its first meeting. The detail of how the projects and feasibility studies will be progressed is being taken forward through the project boards. The Department has two representatives on each. The Ballycastle project board has not been established yet, but we are working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the board on trying to ensure that it is established as soon as possible. We are hoping for a date in the next few weeks, or in the next month or so. There has already been work done, in that the boards have been working with CCMS in the background to take things forward, but it will be when the schools, the boards of governors and the Department are established in the project board that it will gather some momentum and progress will be made on the feasibility studies and economic appraisals.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** For forward planning purposes, do you have any timescales in mind for when you hope to see ground broken on any of the projects?

**Ms J Durkin:** I think that it is too early to say when they will be, to use the commonly used phrase, shovel-ready. Until we know more detail about what exactly the projects will be, it is too early to say. Sites have been located for some projects. Until we have a project timeline and timetable, it will be very difficult to estimate when you can say that they will be shovel-ready. Colleagues in investment and infrastructure are working closely with the boards and CCMS on trying to get the project board established and to make some progress.

**Mrs Roisin Lilley (Department of Education):** I know that you are visiting two schools, and we had the first meeting with the Moy project board in early December. We are looking at draft schedules of accommodation, but that is all subject to negotiations between the schools and the Department and capital colleagues. You are looking for things such as a land search. Until we know where that will be, we will not know what difficulties we may encounter. Therefore, although we could have timescales for when we would like to see the economic appraisal, including the technical feasibility aspects, completed, it is only after it is complete that you get into the design and start to get part of the technical feasibility to identify any particular issues that there may be with the land. Issues could include whether there will be flooding or problems with trees. That is why we cannot give more exact details at the minute. Even though the Limavady project board is having its first official meeting tomorrow, there have been quite a few negotiations in meetings with the Department, CCMS and the Western Board. Moreover, the Limavady project board has had a working group established, so it has been trying to progress matters there. The Ballycastle project will probably be slightly more ambitious than we had originally anticipated, so I think that that is to the better. That explains why it is perhaps not progressing as quickly, but we are hoping to get the Ballycastle project board set up for it. It probably would have been set up before Christmas, but we are hoping for it definitely to be set up, as Jackie said, this month.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Although we are far from progressing those, we are now going into another stage for another tranche. Therefore, you are adding further anticipation for other schools to get involved in a project that could be quite a considerable distance down the road.

**Ms Durkin:** It really depends on the nature of the projects that come forward, and we have no idea really what those will be through the second call. Of the three projects, some are for new facilities and for a shared STEM centre and sixth-form centre, while others are for a new single building on a campus. Therefore, it will depend on the complexity and scale of the project, and, obviously, it is dependent on how quickly feasibility studies and economic appraisals can be advanced. It is difficult to group all the projects together and say when they will definitely finish their economic appraisal, because each of them, so far, has been slightly different. We really do not know exactly what will come through from the second call.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** What feedback do you give to the unsuccessful projects?

**Mrs Lilley:** We have given a fair wee bit of feedback, even to those projects that did not pass the essential criteria. They might not have got the score, but they were given feedback. All got letters sent to them and to the managing authorities — both the boards and CCMS or the boards of governors. We met all the managing authorities over the summer and gave them additional feedback. In quite a few cases, the boards and CCMS have been working with some of the projects. When the Minister made his announcement in July, he also announced at that stage that he was going to go out for a second call. He said that, if they could address some of the issues that meant that they had not made the cut in the first call, schools would be welcome to apply for the second. We know that the

boards and CCMS have been working very closely with quite a few of the projects, and it is likely that those will come forward again in the second call. There has been a fair wee bit of feedback from us to the boards and, in some cases, the schools.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The scoring process is undertaken entirely by the Department.

**Mrs Lilley:** Yes.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Do you anticipate bringing in someone from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB), or even from the expert advisory committee, which has been identified in the new Delivering Social Change shared education signature project business case, to give some transparency?

**Mrs Lilley:** The assessment panel is made up of a range of colleagues from across the Department. The infrastructure director sits on it, as does Jacqui. They both sit on the Department's capital project board, so there is quite a bit of input from a capital perspective. Our senior economist and the grade 5 from curriculum and education, providing an education perspective, are also on that board. The new grade 5 looking after shared education and teacher development — that wide remit — is present. We then have an Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) colleague. We are trying to cover a wide range. Shared education, education, and infrastructure and economics are all examined by that cross-directorate panel.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I appreciate that. There is always going to be criticism, I suppose. An external view on the process might help.

**Ms Durkin:** As Roisin explained, educational benefits and the criteria in the protocol are paramount for a project to be approved. It is about identifying quality shared education projects as well as the campus and what is being proposed. I anticipate that, if expert advice on capital investment is required, the time to bring it in is when the feasibility study is being developed. There is certainly a lot of expertise on the boards and in CCMS. We do not anticipate that there will be anyone external on the assessment panel. If there is another call, that might be taken on board at that stage, but it will not for the second call applications.

**Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much for your briefing and for the help that you have given Duneane and Moneynick on my patch. Some £500 million is earmarked, but we have got only 17 schools. There are not that many coming forward. What are you doing to encourage applications from every area? Are you writing to all the schools or boards? We have three ideas: new facilities; enhanced facilities; and shared campuses. Is anyone expanding from that to other things that could be funded?

**Ms Durkin:** The detail is being worked through, but, as I understand it, the £500 million is for shared and integrated schools. As I mentioned in my briefing, each project is subject to approval from HMT and the Executive. I know that CCMS and the boards have been engaging with schools in their area and encouraging proposals. They have been working very closely with schools. As far as marketing the programme is concerned, indications are that anyone who applied in the first call and was not successful has looked at this call to identify what further information they need to provide and how they can be more specific about how they meet a certain criterion. However, we have not written to individual schools to encourage applications. That has been down to the managing authorities and the planning authorities, but we have responded, as Roisin said, to calls from schools for feedback.

**Mrs Lilley:** I will add to that. When we met the boards as part of the feedback process, we actively encouraged them by asking whether there were any additional schools on the ground that would consider the second call. We did that with all the boards, not just those that had unsuccessful projects. We met all board chief executives and encouraged them to look at projects. When launching a project, we sent an email to each school. Prior to that, we advised the education and library boards and CCMS that we were launching a second call on a certain date, thus giving them advance notice. They fed in comments through the area-planning steering group, as Jacqui said, but we let them know that we were launching a second call and sent an email to all schools to let them know that the call was out. We then issued a reminder to all schools. Therefore, we tried as much as possible to advertise the programme. Where I personally took calls from schools, I actively encouraged them to contact both their local board and CCMS, which would get actively involved with them, because a lot of the projects are joint ones.

**Mr Kinahan:** Another angle has been pointed out to me. Those schools that are super-mixed or really well integrated fall slightly outside the system. What about those that want to enhance what they are doing in the school because they integrate well or those that want to enhance their buildings? There is that angle. Furthermore, there is a need for more community involvement. There is a great push to get the communities involved, and that is very much part of sharing and integration. Are we pushing those two angles as well?

**Mrs Lilley:** Integrated schools can apply, but one of the gateway criteria, or essential criteria — yes or no criteria — is that they share with a school with a different management type. There is no debarment of integrated schools, but they need to partner with another school-management type.

Another gateway criterion requires community, parent and pupil support. That is because the applications are coming from schools on the ground, and they can do so only with community support. It is a T:BUC target from OFMDFM, but, again, it is about education. One of the benefits is the community use of schools, and a lot of the projects coming through are looking for there to be community use. That is why we made specific reference in the protocol document to the Department's guidance on the community use of schools. It is a gateway criterion, and we have referenced that in our protocol document as well.

**Mr Kinahan:** [*Inaudible.*] Thank you.

**Mr Newton:** Thanks for coming. You have nearly answered my question. It is about the socio-economic, as opposed to the religious, or perceived religious, mix. There is no criterion for socio-economic mix. Am I right in saying that no points are awarded for that?

**Ms Durkin:** One of the desirable criteria is targeting social need and the free school meal entitlement. Therefore, that will be included. It was recognised in the first call, and the socio-economic mix was one of the issues looked at. That is why the free school meal entitlement is now in there.

**Mrs Lilley:** As Mr Kinahan pointed out, although community, pupil and parent support is essential — a gateway for which you have to show evidence — another essential criterion is societal benefits, and we have given some examples of what those are. There are some marks for that in the criteria, although I accept that they are not as high. Primarily, it is still schools that we are talking about, but we are trying to recognise that there will be something awarded for societal benefits. Then, as Jacqui said, we have tried to take account of the social mix, because it was clearly referenced in the T:BUC strategy document that one of the benefits of shared education, as well as raising standards and having that cross-community mix, was that social mix, which helps raise standards. That is why we introduced that as a desirable criterion.

**Mr Newton:** It encourages upward mobility through the education system, but it must cut across bodies, rather than take place within bodies. Socio-economic mix does not receive the priority that it might. I think of young Protestant males, who move within the same board or controlled situation, as opposed to moving outside it.

**Mrs Lilley:** Look at the way in which we have deliberately phrased the gateway check this time: numbers at the school; management type; and phase of the school. We wanted to make sure that cross-community mix was at the heart of it.

The disadvantaged pupil is a desirable criterion. We do not disbar a school if it does not meet that criterion, but the aim is to try to get that social mix, so it is primarily cross-community. We have also said this time that, if an application comes in with schools at different phases — say post-primary as well as primary schools under one application — there has to be a cross-community mix at both phases, because you want shared education to occur across both age ranges. That is to try to take account, hopefully, of the point that you are making.

**Mr Rogers:** Ladies, you are very welcome. Roisin, you mentioned earlier that an integrated school, for example, would have to join up with a school from a different management type in order to avail itself of this. Do you believe that the necessity to join up with a school of another management type inhibits the development of shared education? I am thinking not only of integrated schools but of some place like St Columbanus's College in Bangor or Strabane Academy, where a significant part of the school population comes from the other community. Those schools cannot really avail themselves of this on their own.

**Mrs Lilley:** No, because this is about expanding shared education. If you have a school that is one type of school in name but that has a mixed population, it will still need to join with another school of a different management type as part of the application process. When we are looking at the religious balance, we look at the total school population of both schools. In the examples that you gave, there is already sharing in those schools, so you are not increasing the amount of sharing. This is about sharing with another school and more pupils coming together to share.

**Mr Rogers:** If St Columbanus's College, which is a Catholic maintained school, were to join with a Catholic voluntary grammar school, together they would tick that box.

**Mrs Lilley:** They may not meet the religious balance, though; it depends. They are two different school-management types, but they may not necessarily meet the cross-community test, because there has to be a minimum of 15%, and preferably 30%.

**Mr Rogers:** Let us say that St Columbanus's has 700 pupils and the other school has 700 pupils. Is it 15% of 1,400 pupils?

**Mrs Lilley:** Yes.

**Mr Rogers:** Well, St Columbanus's, with over 300 pupils from the other community, meets that criterion even before the schools are put together.

**Mrs Lilley:** We are trying to get schools of a cross-community mix. I accept what you are saying. We had the religious mix as 30%, and we then deliberately reduced it. The reason for that was not so much because of the example that you have given; rather, it was because of rural schools. In a rural area, it may not be demographically possible for two small schools to come together to have a bigger mix, yet they are still having that mix. That scenario could happen. I imagine that they would then need to look at the rest of the test. Therefore, it could be possible, but that is not the intention. The intention is to try to have a cross-community mix. However, you could say that the pupils in the other non-selective Catholic school could then be mixing with some of the pupils of St Columbanus's who are not Catholic. It is possible. However, we are looking for a cross-community mix. I am not saying how your example would be assessed by the panel, but the two schools could probably achieve the cross-community mix based on religious balance.

**Ms Durkin:** It is an interesting point, but the programme is specifically targeted at supporting schools that have a history of sharing and that have almost been like pathfinder schools in reaching across to the other community and establishing shared education experiences for pupils. It is a capital investment programme specifically for that. If St Columbanus's were to partner with another school from another management type, that would not disbar it from applying for the programme either. However, as a single, stand-alone school, it would not be supported.

**Mr Newton:** Methody is the same position.

**Ms Durkin:** However, it is a shared school in itself, because there are pupils from both communities and a good mix of pupils in that school building.

**Mr Rogers:** My point is that such schools cannot avail themselves of this and, as such, are inhibited in developing, promoting and taking this on.

**Ms Durkin:** They would fall into the Department's capital programme. If there was capital investment needed in those schools, they would come under the criteria for capital investment.

**Mrs Lilley:** There is nothing to prevent the likes of St Columbanus's College joining with another Catholic maintained school and a controlled post-primary. You could have three schools involved. It does not have to be just two schools in partnership.

**Mr Rogers:** The other point is a general one. Suppose, for example, that a proposal is endorsed by the two management authorities and the planning authority. Can the Department challenge that endorsement and decide to drop it out of the next stage of assessment?

**Ms Durkin:** No. If it is approved by the Minister, it would go through to feasibility study and economic appraisal. If a project board were established and it became apparent that how the two schools were working together was not as positive as was indicated in the application process, the departmental officials on the project board could raise that, in the first instance, with the chair or chairs of the project board and say that the indication in the proposal is that this project is about whatever it happens to be about. You could raise concerns at that level. However, once it is approved, it will progress to economic appraisal and feasibility study.

**Mrs Lilley:** Can I take you back a step even before that? It may have management authority endorsement and planning endorsement. As long as it meets the rest of the gateway criteria, it then has to be assessed by the panel. So, whether it gets to the stage where it is recommended to the Minister will depend on how it scores on all the rest of the criteria.

**Mr Rogers:** But, if it ticks the boxes of the strategic plan in both schools, that would be a very strong factor in what the project board would look at.

**Mrs Lilley:** No. Are you talking about the assessment panel here?

**Mr Rogers:** Yes.

**Mrs Lilley:** There are four gateway checks that they have to meet. The management endorsement and the planning authority endorsement are two separate checks. We have explained the reason for that, and it was important that that was part of the feedback. If we explained to schools why they needed to have those endorsements, they could understand it. So, they need to meet all those gateway checks. They are simple yes/no answers. If they score a no on any of those gateway checks, they will still be given feedback, and the rest will be looked at but will not get scored. So, they may meet those four gateway checks, but they still have to be scored against all the essential criteria and the two desirable criteria. They will then get a score.

**Mr Rogers:** And the other gateway checks are?

**Mrs Lilley:** The number, management type and phase of school and the evidence of community, parent and pupil support. They are just yes/ no answers; either you have them or you do not. There are then the essential criteria. The primary one of those is the educational benefits, because these are schools and it is about raising educational standards. So, the four essential criteria are educational benefits, evidence of existing sharing, the societal benefits, which Mr Kinahan referred to, and the religious balance. They are awarded marks on the essential criteria. If you score zero on any of the essential, we will still score you, but we will have to say that we could not recommend it. If it is an essential criterion, you have to pass it. There are then two desirable criteria. There is one about location, and there is the disadvantaged pupil consideration.

**Ms Durkin:** Schools need to provide evidence. It is not just ticking a box and saying that they have that. They have to provide actual evidence of how they are meeting that criterion.

**Mr Rogers:** How is evidence of sharing measured?

**Mrs Lilley:** When you are looking at evidence of sharing, you are looking for schools to giving examples such as, "Here is where we have been sharing for x number of years. We have so many classes that we share and so many pupils cross over." It could also be, "We have joint board of governors meetings", or, "We have joint pastoral policies." They have to show evidence that they have a history of sharing. This is perhaps more relevant to post-primary, but some schools even have examples such as, "We synchronise some of our timetables so that our pupils can share."

You could have a primary school where one teacher [*Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.*] share a class between two pupils and somebody else takes a class and they share our computers. It is them saying, "Here is how much sharing we've done". Some of the teachers may have done joint training. So, they provide evidence to us of what sharing they have done.

**Mr Rogers:** It would really be a shared class rather than a shared teacher?

**Mrs Lilley:** A shared teacher is an element, but we are looking more for shared classes, where the pupils are sharing and have a history of sharing. That is so important because we know that there are

likely to be issues as we move through the process. It is one thing to have a history of sharing when you have joint classes moving back and forward and another to physically have a building that you are jointly responsible for. Issues will arise from that, and if we have two schools that already have a history of dealing with difficult issues as they arise, the chances are that they will be better placed to deal with them. So, sharing a teacher is an example, but we would be looking for something more than that as a strong basis for scoring highly in that category.

**Mr Rogers:** Take two rural primary schools that share a teacher. That is a big step, but it is something that is practical and can be done, whereas sharing pupils and the cost associated with doing so is just [*Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.*]

**Mrs Lilley:** I am not going to try to preclude it, and I am not trying to prejudge anything that may come in. One of our desirable criteria is location, so this is all about a shared community and bringing communities together. It is about bringing the children together and the sharing of education. So, the question that you would pose then is, "What shared facility are you going to create?". You are going to have to bring the pupils together in a shared facility. If it is only about sharing teachers, there are other programmes that the schools can avail themselves of, such as the Delivering Social Change shared signature programmes.

This is about, as Jacqui said, us putting capital infrastructure in place specifically for sharing. Whether that is a mobile, a STEM centre or a new school, you are going to have to put pupils in it. So, if the schools feel that the way they are currently working precludes that, I am not sure how a shared facility would enhance what they are doing, because a shared facility would presumably have to be used by the pupils.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Newton, you wanted to come in on a small point.

**Mr Newton:** I have just a very short question. In terms of the schools that you are in communication with about a shared campus, the list — our list, anyway — starts with Belfast Royal Academy (BRA) and finishes with St Mary's in Brookeborough. What would be a rough timescale for a decision?

**Mrs Lilley:** Sorry, the schools that we are in communication with about the shared campuses are the six schools that have come through from the first call. The application for the second phase does not close until 30 January. The boards and CCMS are the ones who have been working with schools who are bringing forward projects. Some schools may contact us directly if they are looking for a bit of clarification, but we have generally tried to steer them towards working with the boards and CCMS because they need their endorsement. The likes of BRA, which you mentioned, have their own managing authority. However, if it is going to be sharing with another school, it will need that endorsement. So, we are not in direct contact with schools that are thinking of putting applications in for the second call.

**Mr Newton:** OK.

**Mrs Lilley:** Other than to provide clarification that they have a particular question and feedback from the first call.

**Mr Lunn:** Thanks for your presentation. The sharing agenda predates T:BUC by many years, as we know, and the original aim was to improve educational outcomes and deliver the curriculum. What is the priority now? It is societal or is it educational?

**Mrs Lilley:** It is still primarily educational, and that is said in the T:BUC strategy. T:BUC refers to the fact that shared education can raise educational standards. It will help to break down intergenerational educational disadvantage and community disadvantage. So, education is still the key. It is about education but on a cross-community basis. Education is still the primary objective.

**Mr Lunn:** Is it fair to ask you about the £500 million that has been announced. Presumably, that is £50 million a year, but I wonder whether it has to be £50 million a year for a start. Could it be front-loaded?

**Ms Durkin:** Our finance colleagues are discussing with DFP exactly what the detail of that is. We do not have that detail other than the headline announcement. However, how that will actually break down into what is for shared education and what is for integrated education, how it is phased and what

it is used for is not clear. As I mentioned earlier, it is about Executive and HM Treasury approval for individual projects. So, we need to work with colleagues on how that will work and what it will look like.

**Mr Lunn:** If it is a bit vague at the moment, it will fit quite nicely with the rest of T:BUC in my opinion, but we will see where it goes. The £500 million is specified as being for shared and integrated education. You are going to be putting out calls for shared education projects. Will you put out calls for schools that might want to transform to integrated status or for parents to think about establishing a new integrated school?

**Ms Durkin:** As I understand it, as far as I am aware, we will not be doing that, because this programme is specifically about the shared education campuses programme. So, I do not envisage that happening. Although colleagues who are working in that area may be better able to advise the Committee on that point. What you are concerned about is the T:BUC commitment and the shared education campus. As you know, we have a second call out for projects. The aim is to have 10 projects commence within the next five years. That is the priority for the programme at the minute.

**Mr Lunn:** The Department now has the same obligation to facilitate and encourage shared and integrated education. The word "promote" has been slipped in there about shared projects, but not shared advances, whether that will make much difference to the situation. So, it seems odd that, on the face of it, we have a pool of £500 million to be spent over the next 10 years. The good folk in the integrated sector would be concerned that the main emphasis and the whole thrust of how that money is going to be spent is on shared education projects not integrated.

**Ms Durkin:** We are alive to our statutory obligations. As I said earlier, the shared education policy and Bill are out for consultation and, if agreed, would put on the statute book equal parity to facilitate and encourage shared education. This particular programme is focused on shared education campus projects. It is not clear yet how that £500 million will be divided between shared and integrated education and how it will be applied to specific projects.

**Mr Lunn:** In five or 10 years, when the reviews are done, it will be interesting to see how it all pans out. I am not trying to be particularly critical. Can you tell me about two of the projects that you are working on in Ballycastle and Limavady? What is the actual proposal in Ballycastle?

**Mrs Lilley:** I am just flicking through the papers because I want to make sure that I get it right. As Jacqui said earlier, we have three of them, and they are quite different. I know that you are going to visit the two primary schools later today. St Mary's High School, Limavady and Limavady High School are two post-primary schools that are located fairly close to each other. They have a long history of sharing already as part of the delivery of the entitlement framework. Even prior to that, they had a history of sharing. The project is to provide two new shared facilities: a shared sixth-form centre and careers centre on the St Mary's school site; and a shared STEM centre on the Limavady High School site, which would be used by both schools. There is a walkway between the two schools that is council property. You asked earlier about local community and council involvement. One of their proposals is that there would be a peace/harmony bridge over the walkway between the two schools and, as we understand it, funding has been approved by the council. That is the St Mary's project.

I understand that there have been a few working group meetings between both schools, the Western Board and CCMS. As Jacqui said earlier, because the projects are new pathfinder projects, the project boards are slightly different from the normal project boards for capital, in that there are joint SROs and joint chairs. So, it is jointly chaired by CCMS and the local education and library board, in recognition of the fact that it is those three projects anyway. So, they are having their first project board meeting tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully, if the weather is clement enough, we will all go up there.

The Ballycastle project involves Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College. Again, they are two post-primary schools that are physically quite close to each other. They have a long history of sharing over a large number of years. Their proposal is for two new core schools and two shared centres, one for STEM and one for the performance and creative arts at Key Stages 4 and 5. The actual sharing in the two shared centres will be very extensive.

**Mr Lunn:** Will there be one on each site?

**Mrs Lilley:** That is under negotiation. It is part of the discussion on how the actual layout would look; whether it would be one building or a building on each of the two sites. That is where we get into the issues of the site and the actual physicality. Colleagues who know these things, our architects, tell me that you have to look at whether there is hilly or damp ground. I would never have thought of things like this. We do not know the detail of how that will look. That is a significant project, and we need to get into the detail of how it is taken forward, but that is their proposal.

**Mr Lunn:** OK. Thank you.

**Mrs Overend:** Thank you. It has been an interesting discussion this morning. I wondered about the criteria. Are they the same as before or are they weighted differently?

**Mrs Lilley:** We have revised the criteria. We took account of the lessons that we had learnt earlier and we have revised them slightly. The gateway criteria are not marked any more. That is a specific yes or no: you either have it or you do not have it. You will excuse me if, this morning, I do not actually say what the allocation of marks will be for each of the criteria. This is a public meeting. It is still an open competition; it does not close until 30 January. We are happy to give that information to the Committee for Education. We did that for the last assessment. Sharing has moved from being desirable to being essential. We have changed the balance for the religious aspect. We have put greater emphasis on this being about schools and schools sharing. We have introduced that new desirable criterion for disadvantaged pupils. We have emphasised in the protocol document and the criteria exactly the type of thing that we are looking for as evidence. We thought that that made it easier for schools. Certainly, the feedback that we have had so far — even from some of those who had applied in the first call — said that schools welcomed the revised criteria because they think it makes it clearer to them exactly what it is we are looking for.

**Mrs Overend:** Are you doing anything differently to try to encourage more rural schools to participate? You talked about Limavady. The two schools are side by side. That makes it much easier for them to share. A lot of rural schools in my constituency, for instance, are five miles apart. It is a big effort for them to share. A lot of schools do that. Are you looking for value for money?

**Ms Durkin:** Roisin made the point earlier that it is important that there is history of sharing. Some rural schools already have a track record of successful sharing. They have worked around the logistics, depending on how far apart they are and how they get pupils together for shared education experiences. Through the area planning steering group and working with CCMS, the boards and others, we have tried to say, "Be aware", to give as much notice as we can about the launch of the second call and remind them about the timescale for submission. They are really working on the ground with individual schools where they know that there is already that pattern and history of sharing between partner schools to try to encourage them to say whether they are candidate schools for this programme.

**Mrs Lilley:** Location is a desirable criterion, and I appreciate the comments about rurality. Where the schools are not side by side, and if there is a distance between them, we have tried to ask how the school will try to minimise disruption for the pupils. It is primarily about the educational benefits. That is the key thing. We are not trying to say, "You cannot be a distance apart.". If they are a distance apart, we are asking, "How will you minimise the disruption for the education of the children?". Rural schools may be used to thinking about that anyway. We have tried to take account of it as much as we can. The majority of the schools — the ones that we are aware of anyway so far, but there could be others coming in that we are not yet aware of — are working with their local planning and managing authorities, and, because we have had quite a lot of engagement with them through the three projects that have come through the first call and in feedback that we have given to other projects, I would like to think that the boards and CCMS would have a good idea of the sort of evidence that we are looking for and how they will encourage the schools to present that evidence.

**Mrs Overend:** Saying that, even schools within a town have distances between them as well. That is evident. Does the sharing have to be as part of the 9.00 am to 3.00 pm day? Could it be for extra-curricular activities? That might minimise the disruption to the school day, but it could be something like a choir club or a STEM club. Is that sort of thing acceptable?

**Mrs Lilley:** It is an example of sharing.

**Ms Durkin:** It is about educational benefits. Primarily, there should be good examples of the educational benefits of the sharing experience, but I expect that schools will provide evidence of all the types of sharing that they are doing, whether it is curriculum-based or extra-curricular activity or, as was mentioned earlier, is about community use in that, if the facility was available, how it would encourage cross-community activity in a particular community. The focus is very much on educational benefits and quality education experience, but it is also about as much evidence as schools can provide — *[Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.]*

**Mrs Lilley:** A lot of the schools have that extra-curricular element to their sharing, but, if they are putting in a bid for a capital infrastructure, they need to say what they plan to use it for.

**Mr Lunn:** I will follow up on John's point, if you do not mind. If it is primarily about educational benefits, why is there such an emphasis on the requirement for a cross-sectoral approach? Let me develop that a wee bit. For example, what if BRA and Methody both needed a state-of-the-art STEM facility, but it was not economically viable to provide two, and so they wanted to share one? Bear in mind that BRA has about a 40% Catholic intake and Methody has a 40% Protestant intake. So, in all other respects, except that they both come from the voluntary grammar sector, they would fit the criteria, but they would not be allowed to apply under this scheme. Is that correct?

**Mrs Lilley:** Under the current criteria, yes, because we are looking for two different management types.

**Mr Lunn:** That is my query. If you say that you are looking for two different management types, that would make most people think that you are emphasising the societal benefit of all this. But, in fact, you have told us several times that it is really the educational benefit that is important.

**Mrs Lilley:** I apologise if I have caused confusion. It goes back to Jacqui's point; this is an OFMDFM strategy. It is from Together: Building a United Community. So, it is looking to build a united community. That was one of its headline actions, and, because it is about education, the Department of Education is implementing it. We are looking for it to provide quality education, but it is under the auspices of Together: Building a United Community. You then have to show that there are good educational benefits, too.

**Mr Lunn:** I could make the same case for two integrated schools. It is not very likely because of the distances involved, but they could find themselves in the same position.

**Ms Durkin:** If they are both the same management type, at the minute, under the criteria, yes. Or if you have a controlled and a GMI —

**Mr Lunn:** What about a controlled integrated and a grant-maintained integrated that wanted to put a project forward?

**Ms Durkin:** Again, it would be about that quality educational experience and about whether they had a history of sharing. I expect that it would be very difficult for schools to come forward and bid for this programme if they did not have a previous history of being involved in shared education activity.

**Mr Lunn:** We will see how it goes.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** From the essential criteria, it appears that small schools are not really encouraged to come forward. You say:

*"That consideration of the Bain report recommendations of not more than 2 composite year groups in a class and a school of a minimum of 4 teachers will be met."*

Is that as an individual school or is that as two schools combined?

**Mrs Lilley:** That is from the Bain recommendations on finance for education. Under the gateway criteria, we said that the planning authority approval is that they meet the criteria in the sustainable schools policy or, where that is not the case, the CCMS, if it is a Catholic maintained school, and the education and library board, if it is a controlled school, have to say why they feel that it meets part of their sustainable schools policy going forward. That is why it is so important that you get planning

authority approval. We are saying that that is what the normal criteria are, the same as for other schools. However, if they are putting forward a proposal where the schools do not meet some of or one of the sustainable schools criteria, the planning authority then has to state why they still are endorsing it — that is that it is part of their overall strategic vision for that area and the managing authorities say that it fits with their strategic views for their schools.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** So, small schools should not necessarily be discouraged by reading those criteria?

**Ms Durkin:** No, but they should be engaging with their managing authorities and their planning authorities to ask whether they have any intention or plans in relation to that school. That is why it is really important at an early stage. As I said earlier, a lot of these projects have arisen from a long history of sharing in individual schools, and this programme is potentially providing access to capital funding to build on that — no pun intended. So, it is important that they engage with their planning authority and ask what the area plan is and what the intention for these schools is going forward. They are certainly not precluded from participating where they have that endorsement from their planning authority.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No one else has indicated any further questions. Obviously, we look forward to speaking to those involved in the projects that have been selected, and we look forward again to hearing from you, as time goes on, with an update on various projects. Thank you very much.