



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Appointments to the Belfast Education and Library Board
Date:	10th May, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will recall that, at the meeting on 18th May, 2012, the Committee was reminded that correspondence has been received from the Department of Education indicating that, following the selection process which had been carried out to appoint 4 Members to the Board from the 8 names submitted, which involved the completion of application forms by the nominees, an eligibility sift of applications against the criteria and, for those who met the eligibility criteria, a conversation with a purpose, the outcome was that three of the nominees did not progress beyond the eligibility sift stage and one candidate had withdrawn from the process.
1.2	This has resulted in only four eligible candidates remaining in the process and the Minister for Education has asked for the current pool of candidates to be augmented before he made his choice of candidates to be appointed. The Department had therefore requested the Council to submit an additional four nominations, who would be required to undergo the same selection process as that set out above. It was noted at that time that those Councillors who had previously been nominated and who did not progress beyond the eligibility sift would not be eligible for re-nomination.
1.3	The Committee agreed that the Minister be requested to make as many appointments as possible from those candidates who had already been deemed to be appointable, in line with the Council's d'Hondt system of proportionality which provided that the four appointments should comprise two Sinn Féin Party representatives and one each from the Democratic Unionist and Social Democratic and Labour Parties, with any places remaining unfilled using this process to be selected from those Parties which had not been offered their entitlement. In addition, the Committee agreed that should the Minister not agree

	<p>to make such appointments, then the undernoted process should be employed to select the additional four nominations:</p> <p>Choice 11 – Democratic Unionist Choice 12 – Sinn Fein Choice 13 – Democratic Unionist Choice 14 – Alliance</p>
1.4	<p>However, if the Democratic Unionist Party maintained its previous position of only submitting one candidate (which it had already done as part of the process in October, 2011), then the nominations from the Parties willing to supply names would fall to:</p> <p>Choice 12 – Sinn Fein Choice 14 – Alliance Choice 15 – Ulster Unionist Choice 16 – Sinn Fein</p>
1.5	<p>Correspondence was received from the Department indicating that the Minister was unwilling to make any appointments to the Board until he received an additional 4 nominations from the Council and those persons have completed the selection process. Accordingly, in line with the Committee decision of 18th May, the Party Leaders concerned were to be requested to provide the names of suitable candidates.</p>
1.6	<p>However, at the Council meeting on 3rd April, that decision was amended to provide that the Minister be requested to appoint the four current nominees from the Council who had successfully passed the eligibility sift. A letter was sent to the Department of Education on 8th April making this request.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>A response has been received from the Department (copy attached at Appendix 1) indicating that the Minister has considered the request from the Council but has confirmed that he is unwilling to make any appointments to the Board until the Council provides the names of an additional four nominees.</p>
2.2	<p>The Committee will be aware that this matter has been under discussion between the Department of Education and the Council for a considerable time and the Council has expressed its frustration that the Board continues to operate without any local political input. In order to move things towards a resolution, it is recommended that the four names are sought from those political parties eligible to nominate under the d'Hondt table of choices. If any Party refuses to nominate a Member then that choice will pass to the next eligible Party until the four places are filled.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	None.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	The identification of those Parties entitled to nominate Members for consideration for appointment is based upon the Council's accepted system of proportionality. There are, therefore no relevant equality and good relations implications.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is requested to agree to the process set out in paragraph 2.2 for the identification of the four additional Council nominees.

6	Decision Tracking
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager June, 2013	