

ENGAGEMENT TITLE: MEETING WITH MICHELINE BRANNAN – SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES (SCoJeC)

<i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>	Thursday, 11 May 2017 10.00 – 10.45
<i>Where</i>	T4.23, Parliament
<i>Who</i>	Micheline Brannan, Chair, SCoJeC Mr Ephraim Borowski, Director, SCoJeC Mrs Nicola Livingston, co-President, Glasgow Jewish Representative Council [Redacted] member of SCoJeC Council
<i>Key Purpose / Message</i>	Meeting to discuss SCoJeC concerns over the development of a teaching resource on Israel and Palestine.
<i>Official Support</i>	Andy Bruce, Head of Qualifications, Curriculum and Gaelic Division [Redacted] Alan Armstrong, Strategic Director, Education Scotland [Redacted] [Redacted], Learning Directorate [Redacted]

Key points

1. In a telephone discussion with Andy Bruce on 28 April, Micheline Brannan indicated 3 main concerns with the development of the Israel/Palestine teaching resource:

- Concern that the impetus for developing the resource had arisen from the Cross Party Group on Palestine
- Doubts over the impartiality of the Chair of the development group, [Redacted], who SCoJeC believe to be pro-Palestinian;
- Dissatisfaction over the consultation process for the resource.

2. Whilst SCoJeC have doubts over the appropriateness of developing such a resource at all, they now believe this project to be so flawed that it should not proceed any further. SCoJeC concerns have been exacerbated by an administrative error that led to correspondence from Ms Brannan being wrongly withdrawn from the MACCS system. Whilst appreciative of the apologies for this received from both DFM and officials, Ms Brannan remains keen to receive a written response to her concerns. Advice and a draft response was provided to DFM on 10 April.

3. Ms Brannan also attended the Cross Party Group on Palestine on 25 April at which the proposed teaching resource was discussed, primarily in relation to the fact that the resource is no longer openly available on GLOW. Following discussions with Education Scotland colleagues, the resource is available on a password-protected part of GLOW, which is appropriate given that the resource is still under development. However, this move has led to the Scottish Friends of Palestine writing to Education Scotland, copied to DFM, expressing concern over the availability of the resources and seeking a meeting with DFM.

Education Scotland advice

4. The resources have not been developed by Education Scotland but by a local authority group of officers based in the central belt: the Glasgow and Clyde Rights-Based Learning Group (GCRBL). Education Scotland officers have supported the group by providing accommodation and hosting meetings. As part of the consultation process, Education Scotland reviewed the resource and requested a number of changes to be made which were incorporated into the materials by the group.

5. Education Scotland has maintained a clear position throughout the consultation that the resources have not been endorsed or approved by them. There has been no reference to the resources on Education Scotland's web estate or social media.

6. The resources have now been through several iterations and Education Scotland considers that they are able to provide learners with a balanced but sensitive learning experience. The consultation to date has provided partners with opportunities to comment on the resources and has been professionally planned and delivered. However, only by trialing the resources in class will it be known if they successfully engage learners. The feedback from the piloting needs to be accessible to all practitioners on GLOW with the facility for further amendments in a safe and secure environment.

7. Education Scotland have recently spoken to [Redacted] at GCRBL who own the resource to ascertain if she is willing to work with all partners to produce an introduction statement from each perspective. However, given the concerns about [Redacted] impartiality, it is possible that SCoJeC will not wish to engage any further. As a compromise position, this task could be overseen by Education Scotland.

Background Briefing

Background and Publication of Resources

8. In March 2015, it came to light that a homework worksheet was issued to P7 children at North Lanarkshire school which portrayed Palestinians as terrorists/suicide bombers and required pupils to provide examples of 'Palestinian terrorist activity'. A similar worksheet was discovered in use in a Glasgow secondary school in December 2015.

9. The incident was covered in the national press and, among a number of actions that followed, Dr Allan met with the Association of Palestinian Communities (APC) in Scotland. Following this Education Scotland has supported the Glasgow and Clyde Rights-Based Learning Group (GCRBL), a collaborative group of representatives from eight local authorities, to develop more appropriate teaching and learning resources. GCRBL is chaired by [Redacted] at West Dunbartonshire Council, in a voluntary capacity.

10. GCRBL's work began in April 2015 with the aim of developing balanced advice and resources which supports good teaching and learning of this sensitive and complex topic that:

- develops learners' knowledge and understanding of human rights and how this relates to life locally, nationally and internationally (including details of specific entitlements, and their universal and unconditional application);
- explores the background to the Israeli-Palestinian situation;
- explores the challenges to peace in these countries;
- allows learners to consider and be able to demonstrate their role as local and global citizens in promoting justice and peace.

11. Concerns have been expressed by others, including the Scottish Friends of Israel (SFI), over the new teaching and learning resources. These partners have been invited to contribute their views on the development of the resources but it is not clear to us at this stage the extent to which these organisations, including SCOJEC, engaged. We are seeking this more information now.

The consultation process

12. During November and December 2016, there was a three day consultation. This included: one day for the Jewish/Israeli community, including the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities; Scottish Friends of Israel; and Scottish Jews for a Just Peace. There was one day for the Palestinian community, including: Association for Palestinian Communities; Scottish Friends of Palestine; and Palestine Alliance. There was a third day for parent and student representatives. Generally, the resources were well received except for the groups representing the Israeli/Jewish communities who remain strongly opposed. There were opportunities for all groups to submit further comments after the initial consultation day. The group did ask for the comments to be returned within a three day window but those that arrived late were acted upon where possible. A fuller note on the consultation events can be found at **Annex A**. The last column on the table shows what the group did in response to the requests for changes.

13. Education Scotland's [Redacted] has well established links with the Israeli/Jewish group and he attended the consultation events to provide a professional overview and to

reassure partners. [Redacted], Children and Young People's Commissioner, joined the meeting of the Jewish communities in the afternoon

14. Education Scotland understands that all parties involved in the consultation were informed that resources would be piloted in a few schools, and the feedback from teachers used to inform further improvements. GCRBL group agreed with Education Scotland that the resources would need to be moved from their current position on a GLOW blog (managed by the group) to an area relating to global citizenship to allow staff to access the materials and to have a facility to share the findings from pilots with teaching professionals. The password was removed from the blog on 23 March 2017 ready for the next stage of the consultation but the move to a new area of Glow was temporarily halted following discussions with Scottish Government senior staff. The resources have now been moved back to an area which can only be accessed by teaching professionals issued with passwords. The removal of the resources, albeit temporarily from the blog, has not been greeted with approval by some of the Palestinian groups. Education Scotland's practice is not to expect practitioners to post comments arising from a pilot on an outward facing website especially with an issue as sensitive as this one.

15. Education Scotland has not been able to issue access right to partners to view the resources on Glow as safeguarding procedures require all adults to have undergone Disclosure checks and a few of the individuals have been cleared. Education Scotland, therefore, has had to copy the extensive range of resources back onto the blog (27 April 2017) but with a clear statement that the materials are still undergoing consultation. Access to the materials is restricted by password to partners involved in the consultation.

16. The piloting of resources is an important development in the production of any new learning and teaching materials. Learners invariably find glitches or areas that need to be clarified further in new materials and these need to be addressed before publication. This approach is especially important due to the number of videos, presentations and other resources incorporated into what is in effect a library of resources. The impact of these materials will vary across schools which all have their own unique context.

17. The Association of Palestinian Communities requested Scottish Government funding to support this development but no resource was available from Scottish Government or Education Scotland. Education Scotland has, however, provided support to the Chair of GCRBL in holding several consultation sessions with interested partners on both side of the issue.

Correspondence from SCoJeC

18. Micheline Brannan, the Chair of SCoJeC (Scottish Council of Jewish Communities) wrote to you, copying Education Scotland, on 7 December. She raised a number of issues in relation to the teaching resources, including:

- the manner in which the resource has been prepared;
- the appropriateness of the resource at all for use in P6-S2;
- the potential for the topic to be divisive and raise inclusion issues; and
- a perceived lack of inclusion of the Israeli and Jewish perspectives.

19. Learning Directorate officials withdrew this letter from the MACCS system on 4 January. This was done in error following your meeting of 14 December with Dr Issam Hijjawi of the Association of Palestinian Communities in Scotland (a member of the Palestine Alliance) and [Redacted] of GCRBL.

20. This error was established following a recent exchange between Paul Johnston and Ms Brannan. Immediately upon realising the error that had been made, officials contacted Ms Brannan's office on 27 March to explain that the case had been mistakenly withdrawn from the correspondence system and to convey apologies for this.

Notes on the consultation events

Israel/Palestine Teaching Resource Community Consultation

Following wide consultation with education professionals and subsequent adaptations to the resource, three days of community consultation have been arranged as follows.

Israeli community consultation day 29 November 2016 (Optima)

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

[Redacted]

Scottish Friends of Israel

[Redacted]

Scottish Jews for a Just Peace

[Redacted]

Glasgow Jewish Representative Council

[Redacted]

Palestinian community consultation day 6 December 2016 (Optima)

Association of Palestinian Communities

[Redacted]

Scottish Friends of Palestine

[Redacted]

Scottish Palestinian Forum

[Redacted]

Parent/Student consultation day 7 December 2016 (North Lanarkshire)

North Lanarkshire have undertaken arrangement of the parent/student consultation event.

Commissioners/developers will be represented by:

Glasgow and Clyde Local Authority Officers: [Redacted] Glasgow City Council

EIS: [Redacted]

Children and Young Person's Commissioner for Scotland: [Redacted]

Education Scotland: [Redacted]

Project Coordinator: [Redacted]

Teacher involved in development is [Redacted].

**Israel and Palestine Learning and Teaching Resource
Collation of Consultation Responses**

Consultation partner	You said	We Did
Scottish Council for Jewish Communities February 2016	There was a rise in anti-Semitic incidents following the Gaza war in 2014 and such incidents have no place in modern Scottish society, any classroom materials produced should challenge such attitudes and behaviour.	Lesson added on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia Lesson added where children compile ground rules to promote respectful language and attitudes.
Education Professionals June 2016 Statement of ongoing support for further development of the resource and/or detailed responses to consultation received from teachers and education officers from Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, Education Scotland and EIS.	Material is quite powerful and rich for classroom use.	No action
	Very applicable to classes and curriculum	No action
	Consistency of levels, need for greater progression in knowledge and skills	Levels re-examined and changes made.
	As it stands, there is too much detail and the amount of time it would take could hinder uptake. Should be a mandatory core element that is brief enough to be covered in a few lessons with the possibility of moving onto greater depth or other areas of the curriculum.	Exemplar ‘units’ for Level 2/3 and Level 3/4, Introduction to Israel and Palestine, along with teacher guides have been produced to give an example of how material could be drawn from the library of resources.
	More information from Palestinian perspective than Israeli perspective	After further research, more information was added from an Israeli perspective. Engagement was sought from the Israel/Jewish community to help identify authoritative information that accurately reflects the Israeli perspective. Every attempt has been made to accurately reflect different voices and truthfully present authoritative information. In the context of this resource, balance should be an objective test - what an objective third party might consider balanced and accurate.
	Need introduction to outline background, purpose, guiding principles and aim of materials.	Rationale and teacher guidance produced.
Possibility of IDL opportunity to bring in Geography – land use, water, counties etc	Further information added on water and land use. Teachers will develop their own approach to how they use the material. Key questions	

		have been added to ensure balance is maintained.
	Most of human rights section is fine as it stands but presentation is a bit wordy.	Presentation replaced by film clip.
Stakeholders from Israeli/Jewish community in Scotland 29 November 2016 – Scottish Council for Jewish Communities, Scottish Friends of Israel, Scottish Jews for a Just Peace and Glasgow Representative Jewish Council	<p>No need for such a resource in schools as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would give rise to anti-Semitism • There is no way of teaching this topic well or right • There can be no balance when children feel threatened by a topic they are taught • The topic is too complicated to be understood by school children • The Jewish community, especially children, would be threatened <p>The content of the resource is flawed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘omission after omission’ • Bias towards Palestinian perspective • Sources such as the UN are not reliable • Lack of robust quality assurance • The definition of Islamophobia refers to terrorist/Muslim conflation but has no reference to Israel/Jewish conflation 	Bearing in mind that this resource has been approved by educators and any decision about its introduction to schools will be made on the basis of its educational value, consideration will be given to points made.
¹ Further comments following 29 November 2016	<p>Scottish Jews for a Just Peace</p> <p><i>Although there are claims that this resource will fuel anti-Semitism, all evidence from virtually all research groups is that anti-Semitism is fuelled by the events in Israel/Palestine. Therefore, a balance pack such as this can only help.</i></p>	No action
	<p>Scottish Council for Jewish Communities, Scottish Friends of Israel, Glasgow Representative Jewish Council, Scottish Association of Jewish Teachers responded–</p> <p><i>...the project is compromised beyond redemption by its failure to provide a fair and objective presentation of a very complex</i></p>	No action

¹ At the request of the Israeli/Jewish community representatives, home access to the resource was provided to allow more time for further comment

	<i>conflict. ... the subject is fundamentally divisive, potentially harmful not only to community and school relations but also potentially to individual pupils... We remain strongly of the opinion that this project should under no circumstances be made available as a resource to schools.</i>	
	Personal comment provided by one individual who attended the consultation event but did not wish to represent any organisation- <i>I don't have any suggestions for improvements simply because I found the material we were given very biased. Any comment on this material might be used as an attempt to legitimise this imbalanced teaching resource.</i>	No action
Stakeholders from the Palestinian community in Scotland 6 December 2016 – Association of Palestinian Communities, Scottish Friends of Palestine, Scottish Palestinian Forum	The resource is more favourable to Israel than to Palestine.	When amendments have been made, further checks will be done to ensure as much balance as possible.
	Need for the resource to be more accessible and child-friendly.	Will seek more visual materials and teachers will adapt to suit needs of learners.
	Description of 2014 incursion into Gaza was too bland and did not show human rights abuses.	Consideration will be made to adding visual material relating to Gaza such as the BBC documentary <i>Children of the Gaza War</i>
	Teacher notes from 'One Voice' biased in favour of Israel.	Material will be reviewed.
	It is not a 'Jewish/Muslim' conflict but an Israeli/Arab one	Material will be reviewed.
	One map wrongly showed Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.	Map will be changed.
	An important strength is that the resource tries to find common ground and looks at how people are trying to work together to move forward rather than always looking back.	
	This is a useful step in providing an opportunity for children to learn about this issue.	
	Omissions: house demolitions, two systems of law in West Bank, effects of wall, land ownership, media bias, future of Gaza, British Mandate, world-wide Palestinian refugees with no right of return, international law eg UN resolutions and Geneva Convention, important omission in Balfour Declaration statement - 'no prejudice to the indigenous peoples', settler violence, blockade of	Within the constraints of appropriate age and stage and time restrictions, consideration will be given to points made.

	<p>Gaza, peaceful, non-violent protests such as BDS (especially as violent protest is prominent), economic and social effects of separation barrier</p> <p>The description of the climate (quite warm) could include that there is no rainfall throughout the summer, making access to water an issue.</p> <p>The card recalling the Kibbutz movement should make clear that it now has a minor role, if any.</p> <p>The card referring to the 2nd Intifada mentions casualty figures. It would be interesting to have the same information on the 1st Intifada card.</p> <p>Teachers and pupils may not understand how to fill in the Venn diagram as no longer taught in maths.</p> <p>There are different narratives of immigration quotas. The British introduced strict quotas just before WWII to end the rebellion that had broken out in 1936.</p>	<p>Within the constraints of appropriate age and stage and time restrictions, consideration will be given to points made.</p>
<p>¹Further comments following 6 December 2016</p>	<p>The card referring to the 2nd Intifada mentions casualty figures. It would be interesting to have the same information on the 1st Intifada card.</p> <p>The heading "Bombing by Palestinians" out-of-date and not balanced.</p> <p>'invading Arab armies' presents an inaccurate picture</p> <p>Land ownership relative to the UN Partition Plan is complicated.</p> <p>The 1943 '<u>A Survey of Palestine</u>', produced for the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry by the <u>British Mandatory</u> authorities, 34% of land Jewish owned with 32% of the population Jewish – <u>The Jewish Virtual Library</u> gives the percentage of the Jewish population as 30%.</p>	<p>Within the constraints of appropriate age and stage and time restrictions, consideration will be given to points made.</p>
<p>Students 2 December 2016</p>	<p><i>Too much information at the beginning before getting to the actual topic.</i></p> <p><i>Level fine for most but some pupils may find it difficult</i></p> <p><i>Welcome thought provoking aspect and that questions must be</i></p>	<p>These points will be considered in a review of the material.</p>

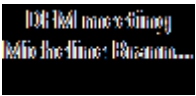
North Lanarkshire arranged a consultation meeting with six secondary students.	<i>grappled with - no easy answers.</i>	
	<i>Important to study this topic in school.</i>	
Parents 7 December 2016	<i>Well thought out with lots of information from different viewpoints.</i>	No action
North Lanarkshire arranged a consultation meeting with parents representing 4 primary and 3 secondary schools from both the denominational and non-denominational sectors	<i>There is a lot of written material, children are expecting more interactive and visual stimulus especially in primary. A child with dyslexia would find the text difficult. Although teachers will take what is there and make sure the activities suit the needs of the children in their class. There is enough there to make teachers feel confident about the content and they would just have to add activities.</i>	Consider adding more visual and interactive material. Teachers will make adaptations to meet the needs of learners.
	<i>Children should learn about real situations in the world and be aware that the media might not always show full, unbiased facts. Comes across as truthful, it is important for children to learn that the truth will not always be evenly balanced.</i>	No action
	<i>Would like to see more on media bias.</i>	Consider enhancing section on media.
	<i>Anti-Semitism cards too difficult for younger pupils. Case studies too long, should be reduced.</i>	Consider reducing content of both.
	<i>This is a topic I would like my child to learn in school.</i>	No action
	<i>I would not have any worries about my child studying this topic. Care has been taken to ensure children respect the views of others. It doesn't ask children to take sides but to learn that different people see things differently.</i>	No action

[Redacted]

From: Bruce A (Andrew)
Sent: 08 May 2017 12:21
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Cc: Armstrong A (Alan); [Redacted] FMG (Fiona); [Redacted]
McAllister C (Colin); DG Learning & Justice; [Redacted]
Subject: religious and moral education - revised briefing for DFM meeting SCoJeC - 11 May 2017

Please find attached updated briefing for DFM's meeting with Micheline Brannan on Thursday.

Andy



Andy Bruce
Deputy Director, Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic
Scottish Government

[Redacted]

From: Bruce A (Andrew)
Sent: 03 May 2017 13:24
To: [Redacted] Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Cc: Armstrong A (Alan); [Redacted] Robertson FMG (Fiona); [Redacted] McAllister C (Colin); DG Learning & Justice
Subject: RE: DFM meeting SCoJeC - 11 May 2017

I had a word with [Redacted] earlier today to confirm that I will send an updated briefing by the end of the week to reflect a telephone conversation I had with Micheline on Friday.

Thanks

Andy

Andy Bruce
Deputy Director, Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic
Scottish Government

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 02 May 2017 14:36

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Cc: Armstrong A (Alan); Bruce A (Andrew); [Redacted]

Robertson FMG (Fiona); [Redacted]

McAllister C (Colin); DG Learning & Justice

Subject: DFM meeting SCoJeC - 11 May 2017

Please find attached briefing for the above meeting. [Redacted] I am on annual leave until the 18th but Andy Bruce is very well versed on the issues.

<< File: DFM meeting Micheline Brannan - SCoJeC - 11 May 2017.doc >>

Best

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Unit | Learning Directorate | Director-General Learning and Justice | The Scottish Government | Area 2B (South) | Victoria Quay [Redacted]

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