

Minutes of 1st Meeting of Strategic Advisory Group

9:00am Thursday 24 June 2004, Belfast Castle

Present:

Minister for Education ¹

Chairperson

Members

DEL Observer

Secretariat

Apologies

Minister's introduction

1. The Minister welcomed members to the first meeting. He emphasised the importance of putting the needs of children first and that this should underpin the consideration of issues by the group. He outlined the Department of Education's role in providing strategic leadership for implementation and the role of the Group in providing advice to the Department on the practical steps needed to take implementation forward. He emphasised that the group would be providing advice on specific issues at the request of the Department rather than producing a report. The Minister wished the group well in its work and looked forward to receiving its advice as key policy areas are developed.

Chairman's introduction

2. In welcoming members, the Chairman said that he was looking to draw on the experience and expertise of members and reassured members that all the views expressed about specific issues under consideration would be carefully considered as the Department prepared its advice to the Minister. In response to the Chairman, members introduced themselves and indicated what they regarded as success for the group.

Paper 1.1 Protocols

Form of minutes

3. Members agreed that these should be short with a focus on what is agreed and action required. At the request of members, individual views on specific issues would be recorded. The form of minutes would be reviewed in the light of experience.

¹ The Minister left the meeting at 10:00am and

left at 11:00am

Confidentiality

4. Members noted that the work of the group will involve the consideration of papers and issues at a very early stage of development and it would not be helpful for these to be debated in the public domain. It will be important that members are able to discuss issues with colleagues in their respective organisations in order to contribute a wider perspective to the Group and this facility has to be balanced with the need to maintain confidentiality.

5. Members agreed that they should be able to discuss issues with colleagues but that the group's papers and business would remain confidential.

Quorum

6. The Chairman explained that the Minister/Department needs advice from all the groups represented and that a quorum would not be used to exclude members from discussions.

Paper 3.1 Terms of reference

7. Members discussed and agreed minor amendments to the Terms of Reference as shown in Annex 1.

Paper 4.1 Implementation

8. _____ outlined the Department's approach to the implementation process as shown in paper 4.1 which takes account of the full range of implications including the wider agenda of the curriculum, C2K, and the capital investment programme.

Paper 5.1 Future agenda

9. Members considered that discussion of specialist schools, the Entitlement Framework, 6th forms and interim arrangements should be the first substantive items for SAG to consider. Consideration of these issues can inform thinking on area and local arrangements. Members agreed to re-order the sequencing and dates of business as set out in Annex 2.

Chairperson's signature _____ Date _____

Strategic Advisory Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To provide advice at strategic level to the Department of Education on the implementation of the Costello recommendations for new arrangements for post-primary education and in particular on:

- the development of new arrangements, including
 - securing coherence and consistency of provision and access to the Entitlement Framework for all pupils;
 - arrangements for cooperation and collaboration among schools and with the FE sector and others;
 - securing the involvement of all schools; and
 - consultation with parents and others.
- the arrangements to support and facilitate the development of new arrangements at local level including the role of LPDPs and APDPs, guidance for schools, FE etc;
- the coordination and monitoring of the implementation process;
- proposals for new arrangements referred to it by DE;
- the efficient and effective use of resources necessary to implement change;
- other related strategic and policy issues referred to it by DE; and
- other issues raised by Government Departments, in particular DEL, and submitted for consideration through DE.

Strategic Advisory Group

Future Agenda

Date in 2004	Issue	Duration	Location
24 June	Inaugural meeting	½ day	Belfast Castle
17 August	Operation of area and local arrangements	1 day	
8 September	Specialist Schools	1 day	
22 September	Sixth Forms	1 day	
19 October	Entitlement Framework	1 day	
23 November	Pupil Profile	1 day	
7-8 December	Admission Arrangements	2 days	