

PART I

THE NEED FOR CHANGE?

Part I of our Report sets the scene for the Review of Post-Primary Education. We describe the circumstances which gave rise to the existing education system at post-primary level and the context within which any revised system would have to operate.

The public consultation process has been of crucial importance in guiding the outcomes of this Review. The consultation has taken different forms because we have sought to reach out to the whole community and to provide easy access for everyone to participate. There have been rewards in doing this and our Report shows that all contributions, both written and oral, have been of real value.

The consultation process has highlighted a significant consensus on what is important in terms of education provision in the 21st Century. This has given us a vision for the future and has enabled us to identify the guiding principles upon which our public education system should be based. It is in this context that we have reviewed the scope for meeting pupils' needs and developing their potential across the whole spectrum of education.

Against this background, we have undertaken an evaluation of our existing education system and a number of alternative models, in order to determine how to deliver the best possible education provision for young people in Northern Ireland. Our proposals for the way forward are set out in Part II.