

Together Towards Entitlement

*Delivering the Entitlement Framework
through Area-based Planning*

July 2009

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Central Group Chairperson's Foreword

The work which has been undertaken over the last year has focused on how best to ensure access for all young people aged 14-19 to the Entitlement Framework (EF) using this to test an area-based approach to planning.

Throughout the report, reference will be made to 'all young people' and this means exactly what it says. All young people - those in mainstream education, those with special educational needs, those receiving education other than at school and newcomers to the system - are entitled to the broad, balanced curriculum which meets their needs. The report also makes frequent reference to schools and by using this term we recognise that schools are communities in themselves comprising boards of governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, school principals and parents all of whom through their work or support enhance the life chances of young people and enrich the communities which they all serve.

This exercise has been remarkable in many ways and much has been learned about the system, its capacity for change and what might, in the future, constitute a system of education which is characterised throughout by excellence, equality of opportunity for all, high standards of achievement for young people and models of delivery which are area-based and premised on sharing across all sectors to build a better future for all young people.

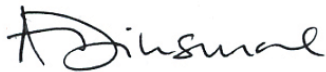
What is truly significant, but should not be surprising, is the high level of engagement with the process by representatives of all sectors and interests. Under the leadership of the five independent chairs, all of those who made up the five Area Groups have demonstrated a willingness to set aside sectoral or institutional interests and have engaged in a debate about future provision to which they brought long experience in the system, an acknowledgment that change is required and, that young people's rights, aspirations and interests must be at the heart of all that we do. I would wish to thank them all for the work they have done and for what they have achieved in a relatively short space of time. I would also wish to thank all those who made the submissions within a very tight time frame.

Thanks are also due to our colleagues in the Department of Education (DE), particularly Lorraine Finlay and her 14-19 Team who provided the secretariat for the exercise and to those from other departments who provided statistical analysis and data from a wide range of sources. The Area Groups also had invaluable support provided by colleagues from the five Area Boards and I know that the Chairs, in particular, would wish this to be acknowledged.

In setting out into new territory which has not been mapped or explored, we have perhaps journeyed 'more in hope than in expectation'. What we now have, though, is a very clear picture of how things are in the system. We have agreed a number of key recommendations and proposed a plan of action which has the potential to prepare the

ground and deliver a regional plan for the efficient and effective delivery of the EF. It identifies the ways in which we might move the system forward and what might be termed co-ordinates for future planning.

Finally, I would like to thank the Minister for Education, Caitriona Ruane for the trust she has placed in us and for giving us a little more space and time to conclude this first area-based planning exercise.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adeline Dinsmore', written in a cursive style.

Adeline Dinsmore

Chairperson
Central Group
July 2009

Part 1

Area-based Planning Exercise for Post-primary Education

1.1 The Context

In December 2007, the Minister made a statement to the Assembly in which she emphasised the role of area-based planning in relation to the delivery of her vision for the future of post-primary education. This centres on informed election by pupils at age 14, supported by their parents, within the context of the fully implemented Entitlement Framework (EF). The over-arching policy objective of the EF is to guarantee all young people registered in schools, aged 14 and above, greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend.

The Minister has indicated that her vision for post-primary education is anchored in a wider policy framework aimed at delivering successful learners, effective schools and solutions to tackle inequality and disadvantage in an efficient and effective manner, which also demonstrates value for money. It is within this wider context that the area-based planning exercise for post-primary education was conducted.

1.2 The Exercise

In subsequent statements in March 2008 the Minister outlined her proposal to commission a time-bound exercise to test the concept of area-based planning in the post-primary sector that was related to the efficient and effective delivery of the EF. It was her intention that the outcomes of this exercise would anticipate and inform the area-based planning exercise to be undertaken by the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). A Central Group with an independent chair and vice chair and five Area Groups, each chaired by an independent person were established. The DE provided secretariat support for the Central Group and the Education and Library Boards provided administrative support for the Area Groups. Full details of the membership of the groups and the support teams are outlined in Annex 1.

The task, derived from the Terms of Reference (detailed in Annex 2) for both the Central Group and the Area Groups was:-

- to seek agreed arrangements at local area level that will enable every young person at school to have easy access to a broad curriculum from age 14; and
- to bring these arrangements together into a draft regional plan setting out the ways in which all young people will be able to access the Entitlement Framework by 2013.

1.3 Principles and Methodology

In the period between the announcement of the exercise (March 2008) and the recruitment of representatives of all sectors and interests for the Central Group's first meeting in June 2008, the group of chairs explored the nature and scope of the task. Detailed briefings from a range of key policy-makers in the DE on all aspects of current policy and legislation and the wider policy context for area-based planning as well as the most up-to-date and accurate statistical data from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) provided valuable background information for the exercise.

This period also provided an opportunity for the Chairs' Group to seek clarification on some aspects of the Terms of Reference and reflect on the nature and scope of the exercise. Given the challenging timeframe and to ensure a positive start to the work of the Central Group, the Chairs' Group developed a set of underpinning principles and methodology for the exercise for consideration at the first meeting.

The agreed principles for the exercise were:

- the needs of young people should come first;
- the distinctive identity and values of each sector should be recognised;
- all stakeholders should have an opportunity to contribute;
- the aim should be to reach maximum consensus;
- the process should be characterised by openness, rigour, transparency and challenge; and
- any outcomes should be informed by up-to-date and accurate data.

The Central Group agreed a set of expected outcomes to enable those involved in the process to:

- understand - and test - a new approach to educational planning;
- seek to build trust and confidence across sectors and interests;
- maximise consensus;
- support and enable first steps;
- report best possible outcomes; and
- make recommendations for further work.

The methodology was designed to achieve consistency, coherence and consensus. A key element in helping the Chairs' Group to understand the nature and scope of the task was

the opportunity to engage closely with the relevant data. It was agreed that this information would be a key resource for the Area Groups and a starting point for their work.

The principles, methodology and protocols adopted were strongly influenced by the concept of 'engagement'. If people were to engage with the process, it was necessary for there to be a mechanism through which they could 'engage' and a language appropriate for that engagement. This led to the use of terms such as 'interested parties' which took it beyond the education sector, 'submissions' rather than 'bids' or 'proposals' which have altogether different connotations, and the idea of 'target group' rather than 'area' which allowed those making submissions to determine what constituted their 'area' rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

Meetings took place with representatives from all of the sectors and interests during the period March-June 2008. At these meetings, the vision and methodology for the exercise were explained, comments invited, clarifications given and engagement sought. In addition to these meetings, the chair and vice-chair of the Central Group and individual chairs of the Area Groups engaged throughout the process in a series of meetings and discussions with school principals, representative groups of principals, community groups and area learning communities and spoke at a variety of seminars and conferences.

All five Area Group chairs were present at the first meeting of the Central Group and were able to reflect on their early experiences of the process and to set out the vision, principles and mechanisms for engagement for The Central Group's consideration. The process of engagement between the Central Group and the Area Groups remained iterative, with shared understandings being developed through dialogue, discussion, reflection and challenge. The structure and interconnections are detailed in Annex 3.

A process for the exercise was proposed and offered to the Area Groups for comment and consideration. Guidance was given on the phases of the process, pro-formas to record findings and the format for recommendations.

An information pack of key data was prepared for use by the groups, which contained information on:

- the schools: their size, location, type, enrolment, travel times, age range, curriculum offer at 14 and 16, links with other institutions and sustainability;
- school performance data for 3 years;
- information about pupil flows and demographic trends to 2015 and beyond;
- information about home to school transport patterns;
- key policies and relevant legislation and their implications; and
- current and pending capital developments.

In the period between submissions being invited and received, the Area Groups were able to meet to examine the key data for their areas, identifying and discussing the issues emerging and establish a very clear picture of the current situation with regard to educational provision in each area.

A dedicated website, www.ef-abp-exercise.org was set up to support the process and enable interested parties to make a submission. Details of the submission process are outlined in Annex 4.

1.4 The Area Group Experience

Regular meetings of the chairpersons of the Area Groups with the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Central Group ensured that a consistent approach was maintained throughout. In developing their reports the Area Groups drew on 2 sources:-

- the findings which emerged from the analysis of the data (key facts on EF in Annex 5); and
- the detailed views within the submissions (details of the submissions and a summary of the responses to the questions are outlined in Annex 6).

While the Area Groups worked independently, they nevertheless followed the same procedure. Each Area Group:

- gathered detailed up-to-date information about the post-primary schools in its area and, in particular, the extent to which the EF was available to the young people attending them;
- analysed this information in order to identify the issues relating to area-based planning for the EF arising from it;
- considered and prepared commentaries on the submissions they received from interested parties;
- assessed the extent to which these submissions addressed the issues that emerged from the analysis of the information about current provision in the area; and
- drew conclusions from this assessment which formed the basis of its recommendations to the Central Group.

Five Area Group reports were received for consideration by the Central Group at its meeting in April 2009. The Five Area Group Reports form the main evidence on which this report is based and their findings are detailed in the next section.

Part 2

Summary of the Five Area Group Reports

The Area Group Reports are based on the analysis of the data, the issues this raised and the extent to which the submissions addressed these issues. Each of the five areas has its own distinctive educational characteristics, the number and range of the submissions received varied considerably and the number, size and stage of development of the area learning communities in each area was another significant variable, but, despite this, the findings of the Area Groups were remarkably consistent, all their reports emphasising the following:

2.1 Curricular Offer

A number of points emerged:

- the concept of an EF is broadly accepted;
- the EF applies only to those young people registered at schools and therefore does not extend to young people in FE Colleges or with other providers;
- schools and other providers are aware of and seeking to implement a range of individual policies but do not easily see how these policies fit together in the overall policy framework;
- schools generally want to offer their pupils a much wider and more balanced range of curriculum pathways from age 14 onwards;
- many schools currently offer worthwhile courses to their pupils which are not regarded as eligible for inclusion in the Entitlement Framework because they do not meet the EF criteria in terms of number of guided learning hours and/or the level;
- there seems to be a lack of understanding of the mechanism for rating and ensuring official recognition of qualifications other than GCSE and GCE;
- while much progress has been made in the past few years, a very small number of schools are able at this time to offer a fully developed Entitlement Framework;
- significant numbers of the courses currently offered have fewer than 10 pupils enrolled on them;
- the number of general courses currently offered significantly exceeds the number of applied courses;

- degree of variation in performance between schools with similar characteristics and how they use data effectively to monitor progress of young people and to identify when interventions are needed;
- there should be parity of esteem between qualifications of equal value and this should be reflected in the targets set by DE to benchmark the system;
- the acceptability and currency of applied courses needs to be better understood;
- there is considerable duplication in the courses offered, not only across schools in the same or adjoining area learning communities (ALCs) but also across schools and FE colleges;
- there is concern that pupils in special and Irish-medium schools and those for whom alternative educational provision is provided may not have appropriate access to a curriculum that meets their needs under the Entitlement Framework in their own areas;
- schools are concerned that there is more focus on the numbers of courses expected - 24/27 - than on quality and coherence, and the pace of implementation should reflect the latter;
- the extent to which further education colleges were involved in course provision varied from one area to another, but the overall picture suggested that the resources of this sector are not being fully exploited by schools;
- the FE sector has expert knowledge as well as specialist, industry-standard buildings, equipment and resources to deliver a wide range of professional, technical and applied courses: such courses, which are suitable for 14-19 pupils at all levels, up to and including level 4, can and should complement those delivered by schools; and
- the FE sector is actively involved in the development of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), workforce and economic development and in vocational qualification reform.

2.2 Collaboration

The main points to emerge are as follows:

- the concept of collaboration in learning communities and the idea of area-based planning are new, unfamiliar and challenging for schools;
- schools do see the potential value and importance of collaboration with other schools and non-school providers in their areas as a means of providing access to a broad range of curriculum pathways available to their pupils;

- schools recognise that there are other benefits to be realised from collaboration such as the potential to make an impact on social cohesion;
- overall, progress towards the full implementation of the Entitlement Framework has been varied and a marked increase in development needs to take place if all the schools in every area to meet the target date of 2013;
- all the evidence indicates that, as long as competition between schools for pupils and resources continues to be the predominant policy, it will remain very difficult for them to develop a strong agreed vision for all the young people in their areas and for others to persuade them to collaborate so that the interests of all these young people can be fully and effectively served;
- some steps have been taken to develop more collaborative provision of Entitlement Framework courses, but it is still limited and remains largely confined to partnership arrangements with FE colleges and to the post-16 phase;
- collaboration with FE at KS4 is predominantly focused on Occupational Studies;
- the FE sector is working both at a strategic level to plan for developments in 14-19 provision and at the practical outworking of that strategy in considering the quality and appropriateness of curriculum delivery, assessment and support policies and practice. The available evidence suggests that this sector has a key part to play in supporting schools to make the EF a reality;
- schools and FE Colleges have been working to develop a greater understanding of the structures and processes necessary for collaborative working and these are reflected in the Service Level Agreements and protocols in use; and
- there has been some joint school/FE staff development. However further work needs to be done to enable both schools and FE Colleges to address the issues of shared curricular information, cultural differences, logistical difficulties and the quality assurance of practice and processes.

2.3 Area Learning Communities

This is potentially an important development in relation to area-based planning and the Area Group Reports noted the following:

- Area Learning Communities (ALCs) are at different levels of development and there is a direct correlation between the stage of development of the ALC and the collaborative activity to deliver the EF;
- it has been a challenge for all ALCs, and for some continues to be a challenge, to move from a single school or college focus to one characterised by shared responsibility for curriculum delivery for all young people in their areas;
- structures to facilitate the development of collaborative arrangements have either evolved as a result of previous partnerships or, where they did not exist, have been established at the suggestion of the Education and Library Boards;
- ALCs range in size from 2-16 schools and some have appointed co-ordinators to support the development of the arrangements but the role of these co-ordinators varies considerably from one ALC to another;
- all ALCs have representation from FE Colleges; and
- it is evident that many ALCs are currently building on well-established partnership arrangements with FE Colleges and other providers developed under the School Link Courses and the Vocational Enhancement Programme.

2.4 Professional Support

Some important issues were identified:

- the professional support for Area Learning Communities varies greatly in terms of quality and effectiveness;
- the capacity for collaborative leadership needs to be developed as very different skills are required to lead in a collaborative context than are needed to lead in a single institution; and
- schools need support to embed the EF across all their departments.

2.5 Area Specific Issues

Along side the common issues which were identified as impacting on all areas there were also issues which were area specific. These can be summarised as follows:-

- **Demography** - decline in enrolments is not evident in all areas or consistent across them;
- **Sustainability** - there is a number of schools with declining enrolments or small sixth form provision which will find it increasingly difficult to meet EF requirements;
- **Strategic Investment** - the impact, location and appropriateness of new builds in supporting future curricular design and planning vary from area to area;
- **Isolation** - geographical location and or social tensions cause some schools to feel isolated from others and the communities they serve;
- **Logistical issues** - there are problems in some areas with providing easy access to particular types of courses and providers, synchronising of timetables, and securing the availability of appropriately qualified staff;
- **Cost effectiveness** - not all arrangements made by schools to increase their curricular offer are cost effective and may not always be in the best interests of young people; and
- **Transport** - this is a more significant issue in rural areas. In addition the pastoral care of young people as they travel to and from different rural and urban locations may also be an issue.

2.6 Submissions

The Area Groups considered the submissions and made the following observations:-

- submissions generally reflected careful and thorough preparation, but tended to set out what those making them aspired to achieve within the next few years rather than describing what was already in place: a significant number of the questions on the pro-forma provided for submissions were less than fully answered and some were not answered at all;
- submissions generally showed a marked reluctance on the part of those making them to address a number of critically important, but also difficult and sensitive, issues: very few of them, for example, explained:
 - how they planned to increase the number of applied courses;

- what they expected to do about the large number of courses with fewer than 10 pupils enrolled in them;
- what they saw as the implications of small and/or declining enrolments for sustainability;
- how they envisaged quality assuring the courses they provided;
- how they propose to harness the potential of learning technologies to enrich and extend their curricular offer;
- what steps they planned to take to strengthen existing collaboration; and
- what other models of provision they were interested in exploring or saw as appropriate for their areas.

The Area Group reports indicated that some submissions displayed the potential to be implemented now and others to be implemented relatively quickly with refinement. It was evident from these submissions that schools and other providers had made the link between the delivery of the EF and planning on an area basis and considered the impact on others. A set of common characteristics was identified from these submissions:

- they were made by established learning communities in which there were high levels of trust, a strong sense of a shared identity and a clear and agreed vision for all the young people in their areas;
- they commonly came from learning communities made up of schools and other providers in and around small to medium sized towns;
- the schools in these learning communities seemed to be confident in and of themselves and did not regard their colleagues as threats;
- the schools and other providers were physically quite close to each other, allowing relatively easy movement between them;
- they had done more careful thinking about how they planned to develop their curricular provision over the next few years than others;
- they had begun to address the challenges associated with making the best use of the available learning technologies;
- they recognised and had made progress towards dealing with the important issues around quality assuring curriculum provision; and
- they were already sharing their facilities and resources, especially for post-16 pupils.

2.7 Area-based Planning

From the experience of the Area Groups a number of key themes have emerged about the process of area-based planning. In the future, this process would be greatly facilitated by an approach supported by the appointment of 'honest brokers' who would work with the schools to facilitate their planning and development for delivering the revised curriculum including the EF. Those appointed should have appropriate expertise and relevant experience at senior management level in school and be able to demonstrate that they have the respect of their colleagues at senior management level in other schools: they need such acceptability to be able to exercise a 'challenge' function in working with schools and to give advice that is trusted on matters including:-

- keeping the interests of pupils at the heart of the process of area-based planning rather than defending the interests of individual schools;
- planning and developing processes which will deliver a successful area plan;
- ensuring genuine benefits for learners and teachers, and, indeed, parents;
- providing opportunities for pupils from differing backgrounds to engage through the development of student forums;
- determining how best to deploy funding which encourages collaboration;
- ensuring quality assurance which adds to the effectiveness of the collaboration;
- encouraging a stepped approach which builds on 'small successes'; and
- addressing issues of governance in new and diverse arrangements.

This first non-statutory exercise which has focused on the ways in which an area-based approach might help to ensure that easy access to the EF, has highlighted that the curricular landscape at KS4 and Post-16 is much more complex than at other key stages primarily because young people exercise choice at these points and a wide range of pathways needs to be available to provide for this choice. It has therefore been a very challenging context within which to test such an approach to planning.

The exercise has provided valuable insights into this approach and greater knowledge and understanding of its potential to effect real and sustained improvements in the design and delivery of educational provision have been gained. We have learned that there are no easy, "one size fits all" solutions and that area-based planning can be perceived as a threat as well as an opportunity. However, the Area Group experience has proved that there is an appetite within the system for gathering and reflecting on objective data, interrogating it and considering workable solutions to address issues that arise.

The key question was whether or not access to a curricular offer that met the needs of all young people in an area could be enhanced through an area-based approach to planning. The answer is very clear - it can.

Based on the evidence of the five Area Reports the Central Group has been able to draw conclusions and offer recommendations that will set the strategic direction that will contribute directly to both full implementation of the Entitlement Framework and the introduction of an area-based approach to educational planning.

Part 3

Recommendations for the efficient and effective delivery of the EF

In relation to the delivery of the EF, the Central Group considers the following recommendations to be highly significant for the future development of an increased and enhanced curricular offer for young people. These recommendations taken together are aimed at ensuring that the implementation of the EF continues at an appropriate, manageable and sustainable pace and that quality of provision is central.

Recommendation EF 1: Promoting understanding of the policy context for the EF.

DE, in collaboration with DEL, should give priority to promoting a wider understanding of the rationale for and implications of the Entitlement Framework and its place within the overall 14-19 DE and DEL policy context to ensure high quality outcomes for this age group.

Rationale

It is clear from the evidence that there is a need for schools and organisations to reflect further on the rationale behind the EF, which emphasises quality, breadth, relevance and enrichment, if coherent, sustainable and achievable curricular provision for all young people within an area is to be achieved. Schools should develop further their understanding of the clear link between the EF and the wider policy context such as raising standards, school improvement and sustainability, all of which have as their central focus improved outcomes and high quality, sustainable provision to meet the needs of young people. Schools also should make themselves more familiar with the objectives of FE policies such as outlined in FE Means Business and the NI Skills Strategy. Evidence from the submissions suggests that there is a need for greater clarity and advice for schools and FE colleges on issues such as the:-

- range and currency of applied courses;
- development of an appropriate curricular offer which comprises general and applied courses;
- pastoral care arrangements that are needed in collaborative settings;
- service level agreements; and
- tracking of pupils.

The vision for ensuring sustainable provision and access to the EF by all young people was not explored sufficiently in the submissions and a shared vision for all the young people in an area was expressed only rarely. Given the focus on the interests of single institutions or organisations, there was little emphasis on promoting good relations and social and community cohesion.

Recommendation EF 2: Area learning communities fostering shared responsibility

DE and ESA should ensure that the concept of area learning communities is developed and that policies and funding are supportive of a collaborative approach. They should encourage schools to foster both a shared responsibility for the delivery of sustainable curricular provision and shared accountability for outcomes on an area basis by promoting the idea that every school or organisation will contribute to the education of all of the young people in an area leading to the efficient and effective delivery of the EF.

Rationale

The education system exists and is funded to serve all children. The 'area learning community' concept is relatively new and the nature and configuration of these communities is evolving. Evidence suggests that area learning communities have great potential when they consist of strong high quality schools with dynamic leadership. It also suggests that when they are configured properly, operate effectively and there is trust and confidence in a collaborative approach, good outcomes are achieved for young people. In the spirit of "Every School a Good School" and enabling all children to reach their full potential, school leaders have a key role to play in working together to develop a shared responsibility for raising standards for all within an area. There are well established links between school leaders and these should be built upon to ensure that the needs of all young people are identified and met.

For the majority of schools, the idea that they can deliver all of the requirements of the EF on their own is unlikely to be realistic. It could be argued that even where it is theoretically possible, there are compelling arguments in favour of widening the opportunities for young people through links with other schools and organisations. Currently, there is considerable duplication within the system, there are too many small classes, there is insufficient use of other providers and in some cases, there is a very narrow curriculum offer and poor use made of scarce resources. Evidence from the submissions suggests that there is a number of issues which help or hinder successful outcomes. Many of these are administrative such as timetabling, or logistical such as transport. While there are some examples of innovative and creative approaches to dealing with such challenges, alternative models and different ways of working could be further explored.

Schools continue to offer courses to cover all the prescribed programmes of study specified under the previous curriculum arrangements and most schools offer the same or a very similar suite of courses. While most of these courses are still relevant, the introduction of the Revised Curriculum and the EF provide schools with the opportunity to develop a unique curricular offer that better meets the needs of their young people. It provides an opportunity for schools within an area to diversify and to build on their strengths and, by so doing they can greatly increase the range and type of courses available.

Recommendation EF 3: Curriculum design and planning

In order to consider the appropriateness of the existing curricular offer and to determine how best to meet the needs of all the young people in an area, schools and FE colleges, within an area-based context, and with the relevant support, should undertake a fundamental review of their curricular offer at 14+ and 16+ to ensure that it is high quality, broad, balanced, coherent and sustainable providing access to appropriate curricular pathways which are relevant to the needs of all young people and the economy.

Rationale

The EF requires that young people have a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum that meets their needs and provides clear pathways and progression. While the number of courses is important the numbers are a means to an end and not an end in themselves. The evidence about current practice suggests that schools are attempting to 'add on' courses to an existing curricular offer when much more could be gained by a fuller analysis of needs and how best to meet them. Future curriculum planning will be undertaken not just within the confines of a single school's resources but on the basis of the opportunities which the school can provide by working with others, disseminating best practice, building areas of strength within itself and accessing the strengths and capacities of other providers. An understanding of the wider economic context will also inform planning. The achievement of the full EF by 2013 will require a planned, stepped approach which takes account of the range of opportunities provided by cooperation and collaboration among schools and between schools and other providers. Individual schools and other providers have particular strengths that can and should be optimised in a collaborative milieu to provide more diversity and choice gaining strength and confidence from an area-based approach to sustainable curricular planning.

The schools development planning process is the vehicle for schools to give priority to designing and planning their curricular offer to meet the needs of the young people. It also provides an opportunity for them to embed the priorities for the work of the area learning community into the school development plan and to ensure these are aligned and taken account of when resources are allocated. Parents are key influencers of young people and the requirement to report to them on an annual basis will enable schools to set out their unique curricular focus and how they propose to offer access to a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum with a range of pathways which will meet the needs of all their pupils.

Recommendation EF 4: Curriculum pathways

A system-wide understanding of the full range of available courses must be developed by ESA and schools, working with FE Colleges, to ensure that all pupils can make informed choices which will result in a coherent combination of courses leading to appropriate pathways to further/higher education, training or employment.

Rationale

Relevance and coherence of offer are central to meeting the needs of young people through the EF. This exercise has shown that there is limited understanding of the range, diversity and value of courses that exist and that have not been part of the traditional offer of schools. FE colleges have detailed knowledge about and offer a wide range of applied courses which could complement and extend the offer which schools currently make. Young people need to understand which courses are available, the currency of these courses and the opportunities and pathways they open up. More needs to be done to promote knowledge and understanding of the type of courses available and their currency. Strong links need to be established with the HE Sector to ensure there is a shared understanding of the pathways available and the entry requirements for these degree courses.

In order to make effective career decisions young people need access to high-quality, independent careers information, advice and guidance as outlined in the Careers Strategy 'Preparing for Success' and to develop the skills that will help them to make effective career decisions. DE could assist this by developing system measures that promotes parity of esteem for general and applied courses by setting targets which specify level of course rather than GCSE and "equivalents".

Recommendation EF 5: Support services

ESA should provide an integrated, professional service which both supports and challenges curriculum development and planning and the development of collaborative arrangements to ensure better outcomes for young people.

Rationale

A new way of working will emerge following the establishment of ESA and it is essential that high-quality support is available to schools for curriculum development and planning. To date there has been a range of providers of support for schools and ESA presents the opportunity to develop a co-ordinated approach to the provision of responsive, flexible support to meet the changing needs of schools as they implement the revised curriculum and the EF. Support should be tailored to the needs of schools. Trust, confidence and mutual respect in the support being offered are key components in ensuring that schools in an area learning community move forward in a supportive environment where managed risks are considered the norm. Progress is more likely to be made when the support service and those planning the curriculum understand not only the local issues but also the wider strategic context within which they operate and the potential benefits that collaboration at all levels can bring. The technological infrastructure and associated training required to support learning and teaching and administration in a diverse learning landscape will need to be responsive and dynamic and capable of growth and development in a rapidly changing technological environment.

Recommendation EF 6: Professional Development

Programmes of continuing professional development should be developed by ESA for all teaching staff to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative working in area learning communities. There should be a strong focus on the development of collaborative leadership skills for leaders at all levels within schools to maximise the beneficial impact of collaborative working.

Rationale

Schools are at different stages of implementation of the EF, some are working alone and others are in collaborative arrangements of different kinds. A collaborative approach to the delivery of the curriculum requires additional skills to those required for leadership within a single institution. Teachers also need to understand the collaborative environment and the implications for their work. There is evidence that working in a collaborative environment presents particular challenges for leaders, teachers and other staff. Those already engaged in such arrangements have already begun the task of overcoming difficulties and they should be encouraged and supported to do more.

Recommendation EF 7: Harnessing the potential of Learning Technologies

More effective use of learning technologies should be promoted across the education system by ESA working with schools and other partners to ensure that it is integral to learning and teaching, the delivery of post-14 course provision and to developing and sustaining collaboration. This should include target setting and the identification and the sharing of existing good practice to maximise the impact of the investment in the Information and Learning Technology (ILT) infrastructure in the best interests of young people.

Rationale

DE has invested and continues to invest heavily in the ICT/ILT infrastructure for all schools which the evidence suggests has been underused to enhance the quality of learning and teaching experiences for a variety of reasons. There is a wealth of evidence to support the view that ICT/ILT enhances learning and empowers learners. It can be used as a powerful tool to promote communities of learners, locally, nationally and internationally. New and emerging technologies provide teachers with exciting pedagogical challenges and opportunities to build on the very worthwhile activities undertaken inside and outside the classroom which can make use of technology to deepen understandings and develop information handling skills. The whole process of personal and professional development to be undertaken by teachers is already being enhanced through e-portfolios and training in the use of interactive technologies. This process will be vital in ensuring that teachers make maximum use of technology for administrative purposes, the planning and delivery of the curriculum, support for learning and teaching and their own professional development. Promoting technological leadership - the ability to champion technology, to harness it to achieve school improvement, to engage learners and connect teachers, and to use it to promote communities of learners - will be a key area for future leadership programmes and will complement those skills developed under programmes which promote collaborative leadership skills. The pace of technological change is a real challenge and learners and teachers must be supported in adapting to a rapidly changing technological landscape by a support service which is innovative, creative, responsive to the needs of learners and teachers and capable of supporting leading and learning in a collaborative environment. Technology can provide very practical solutions to logistical problems such as timetabling, travel between institutions and transfer of data and, as indicated in the previous recommendation regarding support for the EF, be flexible, dynamic and responsive to change.

Recommendation EF 8: Sustainability

DE should take steps to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Schools policy with immediate effect.

Rationale

The EF can only be delivered efficiently and effectively within sustainable schools. The needs of young people are central to the EF. The EF on-line audit provides clear evidence that there is a wide differential in the curriculum offer available to some young people, particularly at post-16. This suggests that the offer is not equally broad and balanced for all but in some cases restrictive of opportunity and limits the number of pathways that lead to progression. Enhancing the curricular offer through collaborative arrangements will be a feature of the new educational landscape and it is therefore important that each partner in these collaborative arrangements demonstrates all the characteristics of a sustainable school. There is already evidence that there is a direct correlation between the strength of the partnership and the strength of the individual partners which make it up.

Recommendation EF 9: Progress towards EF

DE and ESA should regularly review the progress of schools and their partners as they work towards full implementation of the EF to ensure that the targets set are achievable.

Rationale

The concept of the EF has been widely accepted and the evidence from this exercise indicates that schools wish to provide a high-quality, coherent curricular offer for their young people that meets their needs and aspirations. This is a new and complex area and, while progress has been made, it is evident that it takes time to develop the arrangements necessary to secure access to the full range of courses that will meet the requirements of the EF. Reviewing the progress made by schools towards full implementation will ensure that both the policy and the support provided can be tailored to meet the changing needs of schools as they develop their curricular provision for all the young people in their areas. It will also highlight models of best practice which can be widely disseminated and celebrated.

In the lead up to 2013, DE will need further evidence that the curriculum offer, range of pathways and overall educational services available to the pupils in a school or through collaborative arrangements with other schools/FE colleges and other providers are of consistently high quality. The recommendations made in this section are based on the assumption by the Central Group that the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will in their school inspections continue to seek evidence of progress towards the delivery of the EF, of curricular quality, relevance and cohesion, and of the suitability of the arrangements for collaborative delivery of courses. Schools benefit from rigorous self-evaluation when assessing courses delivered in-house: the same rigour should be applied to courses that are delivered outside of the school. Ensuring this high quality will involve the adoption and application of a range of quality assurance mechanisms to achieve higher standards for all young people.

Summary of EF Recommendations

1. DE, in collaboration with DEL, should give priority to promoting a wider understanding of the rationale for and implications of the Entitlement Framework and its place within the overall 14-19 DE and DEL policy context to ensure high quality outcomes for this age group.
2. DE and ESA should ensure that the concept of area learning communities is developed and that policies and funding are supportive of a collaborative approach. They should encourage schools to foster both a shared responsibility for the delivery of sustainable curricular provision and shared accountability for outcomes on an area basis by promoting the idea that every school or organisation will contribute to the education of all of the young people in an area leading to the efficient and effective delivery of the EF.
3. In order to consider the appropriateness of the existing curricular offer and to determine how best to meet the needs of all the young people in an area, schools and FE colleges, within an area-based context, and with the relevant support, should undertake a fundamental review of their curricular offer at 14+ and 16+ to ensure that it is high quality, broad, balanced, coherent and sustainable providing access to appropriate curricular pathways which are relevant to the needs of all young people and the economy.
4. A system-wide understanding of the full range of available courses must be developed by ESA and schools, working with FE Colleges, to ensure that all pupils can make informed choices which will result in a coherent combination of courses leading to appropriate pathways to further/higher education, training or employment.
5. ESA should provide an integrated, professional service which both supports and challenges curriculum development and planning and the development of collaborative arrangements to ensure better outcomes for young people.
6. Programmes of continuing professional development should be developed by ESA for all teaching staff to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative working in area learning communities. There should be a strong focus on the development of collaborative leadership skills for leaders at all levels within schools to maximise the beneficial impact of collaborative working.
7. More effective use of learning technologies should be promoted across the education system by ESA working with schools and other partners to ensure that it is integral to learning and teaching, the delivery of post-14 course provision and to developing and sustaining collaboration. This should include target setting and the identification and the sharing of existing good practice to maximise the impact of the investment in the Information and Learning Technology (ILT) infrastructure in the best interests of young people.
8. DE should take steps to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Schools policy with immediate effect.
9. DE and ESA should regularly review the progress of schools and their partners as they work towards full implementation of the EF to ensure that the targets set are achievable.

Part 4

Recommendations for Area-based Planning

The process adopted for this exercise was devised with the aim of testing the area-based planning concept - its feasibility and potential impact on delivery of the curriculum on an area basis. In relation to the concept of area-based planning, the Central Group considers the following to be highly significant for the future development of the wider area-based planning approach.

This exercise has highlighted the impact of a range of DE policies on the efficient and effective delivery of the EF and on the area-based approach. The importance of a supportive policy framework aligned to an area-based planning approach cannot be underestimated.

Two Government Departments, DE and DEL are responsible for provision for the 14-19 cohort and aim to develop high-quality education services for young people. A joint policy framework will provide a supportive context within which area-based planning and the delivery of the EF can take place.

Recommendation ABP 1 - Promoting understanding of the policy context for Area-based Planning

DE, in collaboration with DEL, should give priority to promoting a wider understanding of the rationale for and implications of an area-based approach to planning for the delivery of the curriculum and the ways in which their other policies support this approach.

Rationale

To be successful area-based planning needs to take place in a supportive policy and funding context. Policy creates the framework for practice and it is apparent that some policies result in practice which does not facilitate an area-based planning approach or promote a widely shared responsibility for the delivery of high-quality education to all young people in a local area. This exercise has highlighted the practical difficulties occasioned when more than one policy has an impact on a given area. For example, there is a tension between the degree of competition currently in the system to secure pupil numbers (with the associated LMS funding for these pupils) and the potential for greater collaboration within an area.

Recommendation ABP 2 - Policy driver

When developing the area-based planning policy to be implemented by ESA, DE should ensure that it is informed by the principles that a curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of young people is a key driver in this process and schools are the principal providers by and through which access to this curriculum is made available.

Rationale

It is evident that where the curricular needs of the young people in an area are placed at the centre of the planning process the appropriate infrastructure to deliver the curriculum can be determined. For many the local school is the provider of first choice to meet the needs of young people in a local area. Schools provide the principal infrastructure through which the curriculum is delivered. However, the traditional model of the local school expecting to provide the full range of provision alone must be challenged. Schools as the principal providers should have a facilitative role in sourcing high quality provision for their pupils, particularly in the area of professional, technical and applied courses and qualifications. Schools working together and with FE Colleges and other providers can increase the range and diversity of available courses to meet the needs of young people.

Recommendation ABP 3 - Area-based curriculum delivery

DE and ESA should seek, through area-based planning, to enable schools to build a shared vision for a wide range of educational experiences that meets the needs of all the young people and leads to both a shared responsibility for the delivery of sustainable curricular provision and shared accountability for the outcomes achieved on an area basis.

Rationale

Working together, schools from all sectors, FE colleges and other providers can significantly extend and enrich the curricular offer available to young people. The process of developing a shared curricular vision will be enhanced significantly if decisions are based on evidence. The Area Group experience highlighted the benefits to be derived when intelligent use was made of robust, verified and up-to-date data. The collective analysis of this data leads to more penetrating insights into the reality of local circumstances and creative solutions are more likely to emerge when all perspectives are fully understood. The vision and potential outcomes are also more likely to be socially cohesive, inclusive and sustainable.

Any future area-based planning should seek to foster engagement with the widest possible representation in the development of an area plan.

Recommendation ABP 4 - Forum for engagement

The area-based planning process to be implemented by the ESA should include a “forum for engagement” with all key educational stakeholders in an area.

Rationale for Recommendation

At present the development proposal process, while it requires consultation, does not necessitate discussions with other sectors, nor does it require any consideration of the potential impact of a proposal on them. A “forum for engagement” would provide a mechanism for ESA to bring all sectoral interests together to discuss and provide for the needs of all young people in an area.

The “forum” is broadly based on the “Area Group” approach developed in this exercise and the key purpose of such a forum is the sharing and analysis of information, the identification of issues that are barriers to sustainable curricular provision and the development of creative, value for money solutions which would result in the provision of high-quality accessible education for all young people. This concept involves much more than consultation: it is about ongoing engagement with key stakeholders to ensure that all views are considered within the DE policy framework from the outset. One of the great strengths of this exercise was the fact that the participants believed they had an opportunity to influence and shape the future delivery of education to meet the needs of young people taking account of local circumstances.

Area-based Planning is a complex and sensitive process which requires underpinning knowledge and skills of all those involved to ensure the issues are identified and addressed creatively in the best interests of young people. The following characteristics facilitated engagement and maximised the potential for innovative solutions:-

- an independent Chair with credibility within the education sector, experience of curricular planning and detailed knowledge and understanding of education policy and practice;
- representation from all the sectors; and
- representatives with a proven track record in curricular planning; with detailed knowledge of the aims, objectives and interconnectedness of DE policies and a detailed knowledge of the vision and policies within their own sector.

The timescale for this process was very challenging and may well have restricted the number and degree of development of the submissions. Only with sufficient support and time can schools and other interested parties develop evidence-based, well-reasoned arrangements for the delivery of sustainable curricular provision which will have local support.

Recommendation ABP 5 - School owners and promoters should explore innovative, creative and shared solutions for sustainable school provision on an area basis by engaging collaboratively in the planning of such provision from an early stage.

Rationale

School owners and promoters have a key leadership role in the development of school provision. Current practice does not facilitate a collaborative approach to planning and therefore can lead to missed opportunities to address issues relating to high quality accessible education in an area on a wider basis. The experience of the Area Groups demonstrated the great benefit to be derived from a detailed analysis of all relevant data which led to a shared understanding of all of the issues pertaining to an area. The kind of approach is more likely to lead sectors working together to devise solutions that better meet the needs and aspirations of all young people in an area.

Recommendation ABP 6 - Wider engagement

ESA should also use the recommended “forum for engagement” to secure wider participation in the area planning process by interested parties, such as local councils, the business community and other community and voluntary groups.

Rationale for recommendation

It is clear from this exercise that interested parties welcomed the opportunity to submit their views to the process. A forum should seek to engage with a wide range of interested parties to disseminate information and to obtain their views, ideas and proposals for the future delivery of sustainable curricular provisions.

Recommendation ABP 7 - Building capacity for participation in area-based planning

The DE and ESA, in their respective roles and in the initial stages of the implementation of area-based planning should assist the key stakeholders and other interested parties to understand the area-based planning process and how they can best participate in it.

Rationale

There is mutual benefit to be gained from engagement. The submissions received during this exercise clearly indicated a willingness to participate. However, many organisations would benefit from information and dialogue to encourage them to develop further their ideas for future delivery of sustainable curricular provision and to build the capacity for engagement with area-based planning across the system.

Recommendation ABP 8 - Use of technology to support area-based planning

The DE and ESA, in their respective roles, should ensure that the maximum use is made of technology in the development of the area-based planning approach.

Rationale

The ICT infrastructure has the capacity to support, and the potential to further develop:-

- effective use of data to inform planning at local and regional levels;
- effective communication;
- collaborative arrangements, including the development of virtual environments;
- scenario planning/modelling curricular needs and delivery; and
- sharing of good ideas/examples best practice.

As the ICT infrastructure is enhanced and new technologies emerge, their potential should be harnessed to support engagement and planning in the area-based approach.

The experience of this exercise suggests that area-based planning as an approach has great potential to deliver a system of education which is more coherent, which gives value for money and which, above all, enhances the life chances of young people. However, it will be clear from the recommendations made above that certain conditions must obtain to enable these goals to be realised. We would commend wholeheartedly to the Minister and to the ESA the recommendations made about the process of area-based planning in this report.

Summary of ABP Recommendations

1. DE, in collaboration with DEL, should give priority to promoting a wider understanding of the rationale for and implications of an area-based approach to planning for the delivery of the curriculum and the ways in which their other policies support this approach.
2. When developing the area-based planning policy to be implemented by ESA, DE should ensure that it is informed by the principles that a curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of young people is a key driver in this process and schools are the principal providers by and through which access to this curriculum is made available.
3. DE and ESA should seek, through area-based planning, to enable schools to build a shared vision for a wide range of educational experiences that meets the needs of all the young people and leads to both a shared responsibility for the delivery of sustainable curricular provision and shared accountability for the outcomes achieved on an area basis.
4. The area-based planning process to be implemented by the ESA should include a “forum for engagement” with all key educational stakeholders in an area.
5. School owners and promoters should explore innovative, creative and shared solutions for sustainable school provision on an area basis by engaging collaboratively in the planning of such provision from an early stage.
6. ESA should also use the recommended “forum for engagement” to secure wider participation in the area planning process by interested parties, such as local councils, the business community and other community and voluntary groups.
7. The DE and ESA, in their respective roles and in the initial stages of the implementation of area-based planning should assist the key stakeholders and other interested parties to understand the area-based planning process and how they can best participate in it.
8. The DE and ESA, in their respective roles, should ensure that the maximum use is made of technology in the development of the area-based planning approach.

Part 5

Together Towards Entitlement

The Terms of Reference for the Central Group stated that:

“The process should result in a draft regional plan for the most efficient and effective arrangements to provide access to the Entitlement Framework for young people, from 2013 on a regional basis.”

From the outset, all involved in the process recognised that this expectation was a very challenging objective, particularly since this had never been attempted before and the exercise was tightly time-bound. However, the experience we have had during this exercise has led us to believe that, with more work, this approach has great potential to deliver a regional plan for the delivery of the EF and, indeed, the curriculum across all key stages. We also believe that there is the potential to lead to greater collaboration across all sectors to provide opportunities for young people to learn together.

We have seen from the submissions which came from individuals, schools, partnerships, ALCs, FE Colleges, regional representative bodies and other interested parties that there already exist encouraging examples of planning for the efficient and effective delivery of the EF on a local area basis. While they were insufficient in number to enable us to prepare the regional plan envisaged by the Terms of Reference, tantalising glimpses of a new future were detected.

We have learned a great deal about the system, its evolution, the issues which have impacted on planning in the past and those which are impacting on it currently. We took heart from the many formal and informal links which have been made over many years between school leaders and schools and there is no doubt that the will exists to plan for a future which builds on the many strengths of the system but which will be radically different from what has gone before.

The key to developing a new strategic intent for education in the future will be the capacity of area-based planners to envision what a radically different future might look like. The recommendations made in this report and the planning approach it suggests will, we believe, help to define what that future will offer. It is a future characterised by a shared curricular vision for all young people and a coherent, inclusive and collaborative approach to planning and delivery.

The Central Group believe that a fully developed regional plan will only be achieved through a partnership approach which is built on 4 main pillars:-

- **DE - working with other Government Departments** - which is asked to set a clear 14-19 policy direction within which all relevant policies are aligned to and supportive of the desired outcomes of the 14-19 policy in the best interests of young people;

- **School owners and promoters** - who, in the clear acceptance of the centrality of ethos to their school/s, and acknowledgement of the benefits of diversity within the system, are asked to exercise a leadership role in ensuring support for the development of more collaborative and inclusive forms of working;
- **Schools - each strong and sustainable and working together in the local areas** - which are asked to take shared responsibility for delivering high-quality curricular provision to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of young people in the area and to be accountable collaboratively for positive outcomes which result in progression for all; and
- **ESA - focused on positive outcomes for young people** - which is asked to provide a responsive professional support service to work with schools to help them design the provision that is needed, build their partnerships, develop a shared vision and responsibility for the curriculum for all the young people in their areas and which also hold them accountable for what they achieve.

The Central Group has sought, through its recommendations, to provide a strong strategic lead which will enable all the partners to recognise the contribution they can make and to play a full part in achieving the desired outcomes. The vision outlined below for 2013 draws from the aims and objectives of both the Entitlement Framework and the concept of area-based planning.

5.1 Vision for 2013

All parties will ensure, through its area-based planning process, that a shared vision for a curriculum offer that meets the needs and aspirations of all young people in an area, is shaped by and through a process of engagement involving all interested parties. This process will result in an agreed regional plan for the efficient and effective delivery of the Entitlement Framework which will be presented to the Department of Education for approval.

The Curriculum Offer for each area will:-

- meet the needs all young people;
- be broad, balanced, coherent and relevant;
- exceed the minimum EF requirements;
- comprise general and applied courses which are equally valued;
- include objective and independent careers information, advice and guidance;
- provide ease of access to the full range of general and applied courses; and
- be consistent with the delivery of other key stages of the curriculum.

Delivery of the curriculum will:-

- make schools the principal points of access for all young people;
- rely upon a highly professional, well motivated and flexible teaching force;
- assume partnership and collaboration to be the norm;
- build on the strengths of individual providers to ensure complementarity of provision;
- fully harness the potential of learning technologies; and
- maximise the impact of available resources

Quality assurance of the curriculum and its delivery will be predicated upon:-

- high expectations for all young people;
- open communication amongst all partners;
- effective use of data to inform decision making;
- robust target setting;
- regular monitoring and review;
- shared responsibility for provision;
- shared accountability for outcomes;
- sustainable courses, schools and collaborative arrangements; and
- high-quality continuous professional development.

5.2 Priorities for Action

All partners making up the 4 pillars have a responsibility to take action now to create the conditions that will enable this vision to become a reality. They need to move forward together, each making a vital contribution to securing the desired outcomes which will benefit all young people in an area.

DE should ensure that the:-

- 14-19 policy context, priorities and benchmarking measures are clearly defined and understood across the system;
- area-based planning policy context is also clearly defined and understood across the system:

- implementation of the Sustainable Schools Policy is accelerated;
- momentum generated by ABP exercise is sustained until ESA is established; and
- mechanisms and targets to monitor progress towards full implementation of EF are appropriate.

School Owners and promoters should:-

- explore options, consistent with the ethos of their school/s, for innovative, creative and appropriate shared models of delivery;
- share ideas about planning from an early stage; and
- exercise their leadership role to encourage and support schools as they work together.

Schools and partners should:-

- develop a detailed understanding of their local area using robust up-to-date data;
- contribute to the development of a shared vision for delivery of EF to all young people in their local areas;
- identify the contribution that individual providers can best make to the delivery of the vision for the area;
- review their current curriculum offer;
- design and plan the curriculum offer to be delivered by 2013;
- provide objective and independent careers information, advice and guidance for all pupils;
- identify staff development and training needs;
- establish robust and effective collaborative arrangements; and
- identify how best to maximise the use of learning technologies to support learning and teaching.

ESAIT (ESA from 2010) should:-

- use the experience of the ABP exercise to inform the development of the area-based planning process; and
- maintain service delivery to support EF implementation.

5.3 Underpinning Principles

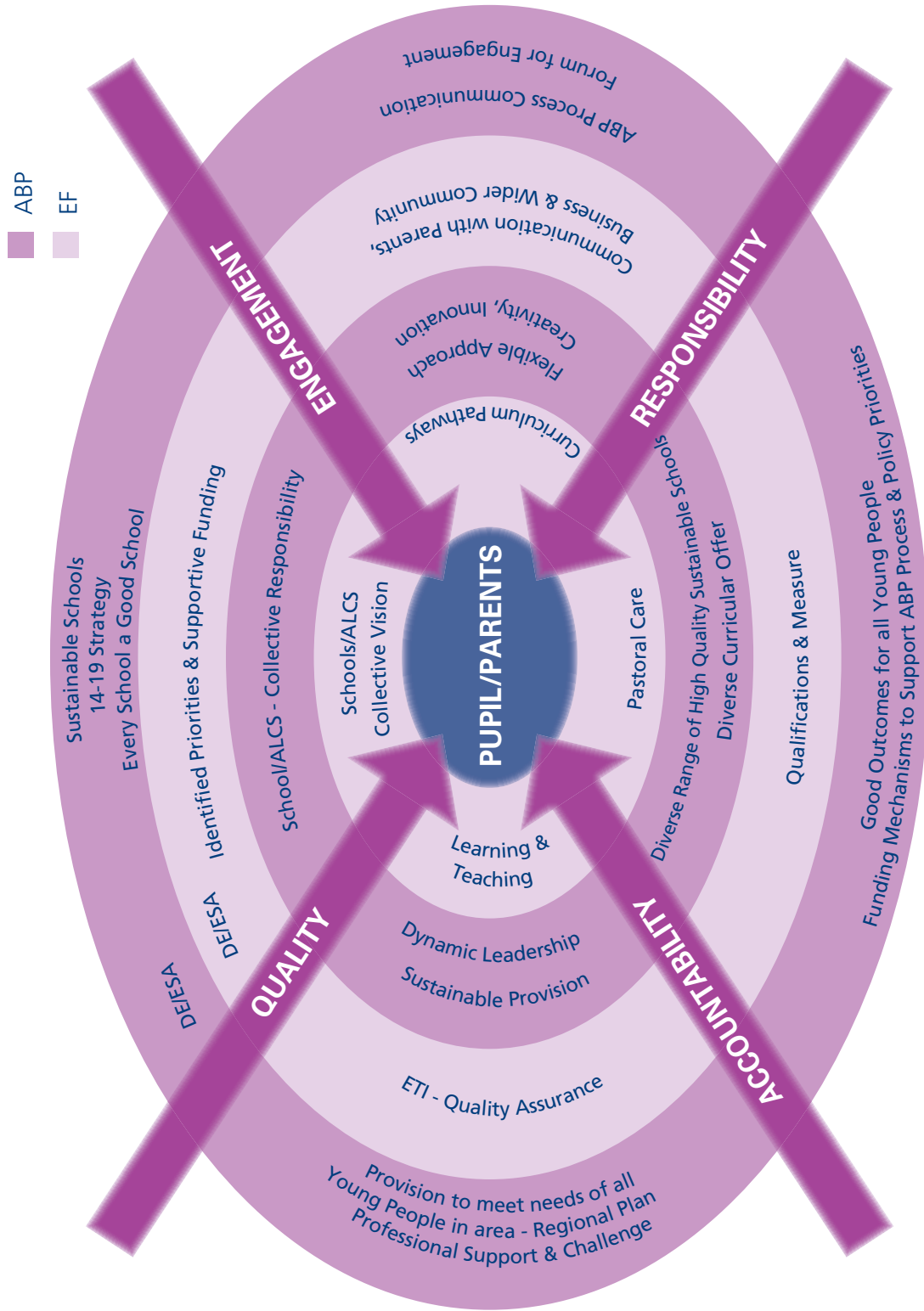
The Central Group considers that, to create the right climate and context for planning sustainable curricular provision on an area basis, the actions taken by the partners need to be informed by the following set of principles:-

A high level of ENGAGEMENT	trust, mutual respect, honesty, openness and transparency
A strong focus on QUALITY	knowledge, expertise, commitment, advice and support
An acceptance of RESPONSIBILITY	clearly defined and met
A clear understanding of ACCOUNTABILITY	evident at every level

The needs, interests and aspirations of all young people aged 14-19 have been at the heart of this exercise and the necessity to ensure equality of access for all. The recommendations, priorities for action and underpinning principles set out in this report offer a means of ensuring that these needs, interests and aspirations can be fully met.

The diagram overleaf has the young person at the centre and shows how the policy, practice and process delivered by the DE, schools and ESA will enable them to move **“Together Towards Entitlement”**.

Entitlement Framework through Area-based Planning



Central Group Chairperson's Afterword

I have been reminded often during this exercise of comments made in a letter dated April 1651 from Thomas Hobbes, commending his great work, 'Leviathan', to Francis Godolphin.

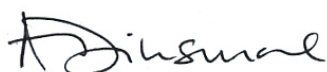
"For in a way beset with those that contend, on the one side for too great Liberty, and on the other side for too much Authority, 'tis hard to passe between the points of both unwounded."

This exercise, involving as it did representation from all sectors, has raised some very challenging issues - issues which go to the heart of the diverse and sometimes conflicting beliefs, strongly held by each of us, about what constitutes the best educational provision for young people. It has been a challenge in itself to capture all of these issues in this report. However, I hope that the report, written in good faith and in the earnest hope that the recommendations made will result in real and sustained improvement across the whole system, will find wide acceptance.

In the future, it will be necessary to continue the debate and provide opportunities for all sectors and interests to shape the educational landscape. This is one of the main lessons to be learned from this exercise - change cannot and should not be imposed in a 'top down' manner but should instead be informed, driven and delivered by the people in the system working with policy makers and government to provide the highest quality of educational experience for all of our young people.

There is enormous potential in the system for forward-thinking, dynamic leaders, whether in individual schools or those representing sectors and interests and indeed, those who formulate policy, to promote innovative, imaginative and deliverable approaches to support young people to succeed in a knowledge based economy and in an increasingly changing world.

The EF has, at its heart, the interests of all young people: its spirit and content provide direction for the future not only for them but also for the communities to which they belong. Quality of educational provision is also central to the EF: this quality will be ensured not by concerns about a minimum number of courses to be made available - in a collaborative milieu which provides wide access to a range of courses numbers will become largely an irrelevance - but by a focus on the enrichment of experience to be gained from breadth, balance and coherence and the sense which this will make to each young person who sets out, not just to make a living but to make a life in a society characterised by sharing and working together for the greater good of all.



Adeline Dinsmore

July 2009

Annexes

ANNEX 1

Central Group and Area Groups Membership

Central Group Chairperson - Adeline Dinsmore Vice Chair - Joe Martin	
Organisation	Member
Education and Library Board	David Cargo BELB Helen McClenaghan SELB (March 2009) Tony Murphy (April 2009)
Commission for Catholic Education	Bishop Donal McKeown Gerry Lundy
Transferor Representatives' Council	Rev Ian Ellis
NICIE	Michael Wardlow
CnaG	Seán Ó'Coinn
Governing Bodies Association	Wilfred Mulryne Father Patrick Delargy Finbar McCallion (substitute for Father Delargy)
FE Sector	John D'Arcy
Interfaith Forum	Dr Mamoun Mobayed (non participant)
Department of Employment and Learning	Richard Kenny
Department of Education and Science Ireland	Frank Wyse Frank Murray
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Kevin Smyth
Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team	Gavin Boyd
Department of Education	Lorraine Finlay (Secretary)

Area Groups Membership

Belfast Chairperson - Tom Shaw	
Organisation	Member
Education and Library Board	Gerry McGuinness Paul Lawther
Commission for Catholic Education	Terry Murphy Brother Denis Gleeson
Transferor Representatives' Council	Rosemary Rainey
NICIE	Michael Wardlow
CnaG	Michael O'Duibh
Governing Bodies Association	David Manning Carol McCann
FE Sector	Trevor Smyth Bernie McCann, substitute for Trevor Smyth
BELB	John McCullough (Secretary)

North Eastern Chairperson - John Young	
Organisation	Member
Education and Library Board	Gilly Irwin Gerry Kelly
Commission for Catholic Education	Paul O'Doherty Una Duncan
Transferor Representatives' Council	Rev Selwoode Graham
NICIE	Lorna McAlpine
CnaG	Padraig Mac an tSaoir
Governing Bodies Association	Ronnie Hassard Bob Cummings
FE Sector	Trevor Neilands
NEELB	Verona Hassan (Secretary)

South Eastern Chairperson - Margaret Martin	
Organisation	Member
Education and Library Board	Alice Lennon Paula Smith
Commission for Catholic Education	Frances Butler Dr Aidan Hamill
Transferor Representatives' Council	Mary Robinson
NICIE	Frances Donnelly
CnaG	Pol O'Mordha
Governing Bodies Association	John Stevenson Dermot Mullan
FE Sector	Ken Webb
SEELB	Nicky McBride (Secretary)

Southern Chairperson - Pat McAleavey	
Organisation	Member
Education and Library Board	Gregory Butler Esther Ross
Commission for Catholic Education	Kevin O'Hara Kay McCaul
Transferor Representatives' Council	Rev Canon John McKegney (to Oct 2008) Kenneth Twyble (from Nov 2008)
NICIE	Ivan Arbuthnot
CnaG	Sean O'Coinn
Governing Bodies Association	Fr Kevin Donaghy Paul Crute
FE Sector	Brian Doran
SELB	Margaret Patrick (Secretary)

Western Chairperson - Robert Herron	
Organisation	Member
Education and Library Board	Rosemary Watterson Alison Smyth
Commission for Catholic Education	Martin Donnelly Kevin Burke
Transferor Representatives' Council	Bertie Faulkner
NICIE	Cliodhna Scott-Wills
CnaG	Liam Mac Giolla Mheana
Governing Bodies Association	John MacCrossan Neil Morton
FE Sector	Seamus Murphy Victor Refausse
WELB	Iris Barker (Secretary)

Additional Support

Gary Donaldson	Ashfield Girls School
Colin McCausland	Ashfield Girls School
Laverne Bradley	DE 14-19 Team
Jill Caldwell	DE 14-19 Team
David Gibson	DE 14-19 Team
Deirdre McDonnell	DE 14-19 Team
Fiona Montgomery	DE 14-19 Team
Carl Savage	DE 14-19 Team
Ivor Graham	DE Statistics and Research Team
Liz Armour	Education and Training Inspectorate
Maurice Lynch	WELB ICT Team
Jacqueline McClintock	WELB ICT Team

ANNEX 2

Central Group's Terms of Reference

1. The Minister has set out proposals for the future of post-primary education on which she will be seeking agreement with the Executive and Assembly, including the matter of transfer at 11. The Minister's proposals include informed election by young people of an appropriate curriculum pathway at the age of 14. This process will build on existing good practice in schools. This is linked to the implementation of the Entitlement Framework; the curriculum structure set out, for young people aged 14 to 18, in the Education Order 2006.
2. The Minister accepts that informed election at 14 within the Entitlement Framework may require structural changes and that these should be considered on an area basis, involving the school owners and promoters. The key objective of this exercise, for the central group, is to work with the sectors to recommend the most efficient and effective arrangements for the post-primary phase of education to deliver the Entitlement Framework to young people, from 2013 onwards, on a regional basis. The Minister wishes the full Entitlement Framework to be in operation from 2013. While the issues around transfer at 11 are not within the remit of this exercise, it will be important that the group's proposals are consistent with any resolution reached.
3. In her statement on 4 December 2007 the Minister suggested the following structural possibilities:
 - access within a 11-19 school;
 - transfer to an alternative school at 14;
 - access within a learning community ie collaborative arrangements across groups of schools and the FE Sector;
 - provision of 11-14 and 14-19 schools within an area.
4. The work entailed in this exercise will be expected to be fully consistent with the wider area-based planning approach which is being developed this year for use, from April 2009, by the Education and Skills Authority. The Department will ensure that the group is informed about the wider area-based planning process.
5. Through the Revised Curriculum and, in particular, the Entitlement Framework the task is to ensure that young people attending the schools in an area can have access to suitably broad curricular provision either through the individual institution or through collaboration with other institutions such as schools or further education colleges. Young people include those pupils of post-primary age in attendance at Special Schools. The group may take account of the existing structures, plans and approvals but should not be restricted by them. These need to be considered

in accordance with the Sustainable Schools policy and the capacity to deliver or contribute to the delivery of the Entitlement Framework. The group should also consider, with the sectors, proposals for change including potential mechanisms for collaboration and potential short and longer term options for the more efficient and effective use of resources. Proposals for collaboration should be designed to meet specific curricular or other requirements.

6. The process at central and local levels should take fully into account the policy framework being established by the Department including:
 - The Entitlement Framework;
 - Sustainable schools;
 - The Review of Irish Medium education; and
 - The Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Review.
7. It should also take fully into account:
 - existing and planned Further Education and Training provision;
 - the NISRA 2006 population projections;
 - area-based data and data on recent, existing and projected enrolments;
 - data on performance and other aspects of quality;
 - progress towards the provision of the Entitlement Framework;
 - the impact of and on transport policy;
 - opportunities to promote sharing between schools in order to provide access to the full Entitlement Framework; and
 - the opportunities made available by information and learning technologies.
8. The process will recognise the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Education and Library Boards in relation to school planning and the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. It should also reflect the Department's statutory duty to "encourage and facilitate" Integrated and Irish Medium Education and the respective roles of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta. It will recognise the importance of sectoral ethos in the school system. The school owners and promoters, who are the key participants in the process, are asked, in turn, to work closely and positively with the process. The Minister wishes to see a regional plan to which all those contributing can subscribe.

9. The central group will:
 - determine, with the chairs of the area-based groups and in consultation with the school owners and promoters, the methodology to be used in the process;
 - work with the area groups to define boundaries;
 - exercise oversight of the process;
 - act as the decision-maker in the resolution of disputes;
 - provide advice and guidance to the area groups on any significant issues;
 - keep the Department informed of progress;
 - receive interim and final reports from the area groups; and
 - devise and implement a communications and information strategy.
10. The process should result in a draft regional plan for *the most efficient and effective arrangements to provide access to the Entitlement Framework for young people, from 2013 on a regional basis*. The group should offer comment on any areas of significant opportunity and difficulty. This regional plan and the associated area-based plans will feed into the full area-based planning process. The plans should:
 - outline the existing nature of the educational estate;
 - provide details of past, current and projected enrolments/demand for the facilities in the area and assess how demand may change, if at all, over the period;
 - describe the demographics of the area and assess how the demographics of the area are likely to change, if at all, over the planning horizon;
 - identify any deficiencies in existing provision;
 - assess how existing provision is likely to service anticipated demographic changes over the planning horizon; and
 - analyse and assess the available information and data, and recommend how the landscape should be configured;
 - identify any relevant cross-border issues; and
 - offer thoughts on potential new governance and structural arrangements.
11. The draft regional plan should be completed by end February 2009.

Area Groups Terms of Reference

1. The Minister has set out proposals for the future of post-primary education on which she will be seeking agreement with the Executive and Assembly, including the matter of transfer at 11. The Minister's proposals include informed election by young people of an appropriate curriculum pathway. This process will build on existing good practice in schools. This is linked to the implementation of the Entitlement Framework; the curriculum structure set out, for young people aged 14 to 18, in the Education Order 2006.
2. The Minister accepts that informed election within the Entitlement Framework may require structural changes and that these should be considered on an area basis involving the school owners and promoters. The key objective of the exercise, for the area-based groups, is to work with the sectors to recommend the most efficient and effective arrangements for the post-primary phase of education to deliver the Entitlement Framework for young people, from 2013 onwards, on an area basis. The Minister wishes the full Entitlement Framework to be in operation from 2013. While the issues around transfer at 11 are not within the remit of this exercise it will be important that the groups' proposals are consistent with any resolution reached.
3. In her statement on 4 December 2007 the Minister suggested the following structural possibilities:
 - access within a 11-19 school;
 - transfer to an alternative school at 14;
 - access within a learning community i.e. collaborative arrangements across groups of schools and the FE Sector;
 - provision of 11-14 and 14-19 schools within an area.
4. The work entailed in this exercise will be expected to be fully consistent with the wider area-based planning approach which is being developed this year for use, from April 2009, by the Education and Skills Authority. The Department will ensure that the group is informed about the wider process.
5. Through the Revised Curriculum and, in particular, the Entitlement Framework, the task is to ensure that young people attending the schools in an area can have access to suitably broad curricular provision either through the individual institution or through collaboration with other institutions such as schools or further education colleges. Young people include those pupils of post-primary age at Special Schools. The group may take account of the existing structures, plans and approvals but should not be restricted by them. These need to be considered in accordance with the Sustainable Schools policy and the capacity to deliver or contribute to the

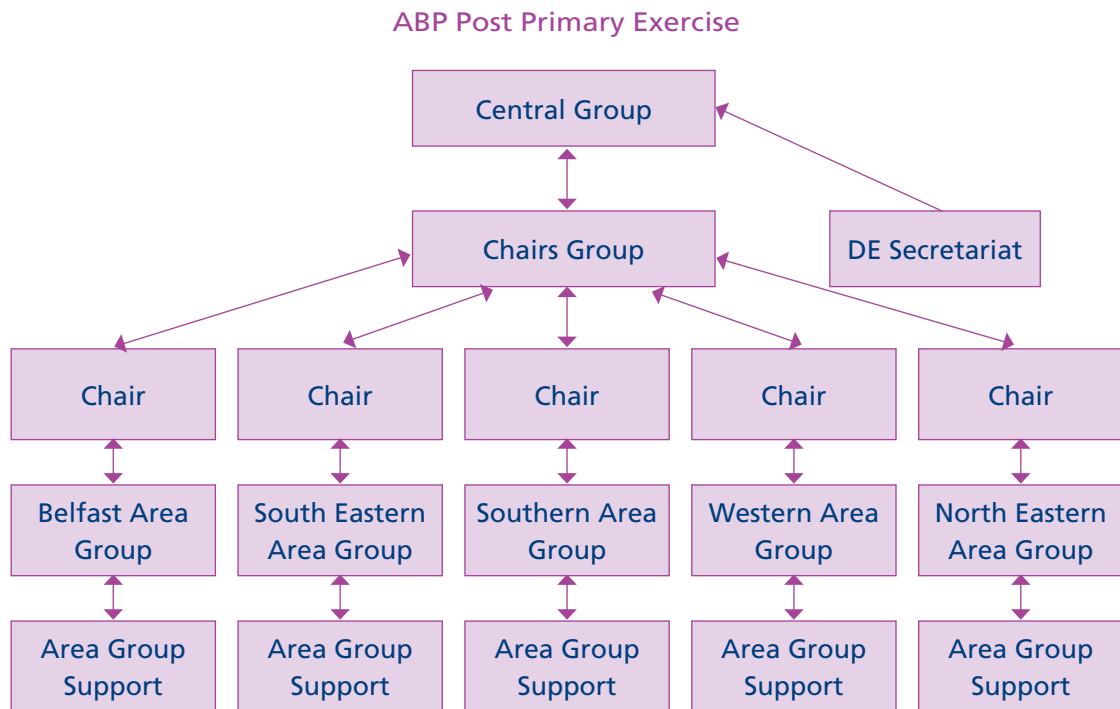
delivery of the Entitlement Framework. The group should also consider, with the sectors, proposals for change including potential mechanisms for collaboration and potential short and longer term options for the more efficient and effective use of resources. Proposals for collaboration should be designed to meet specific curricular or other requirements.

6. While, for ease of administration, the area-based groups are organised using Education and Library Board boundaries attention should be paid to the inter-Board and other boundaries (for example diocesan or parish as well as natural hinterlands) to ensure that the most effective and coherent models are developed which take account of the levels of cross-boundary flows. They should take account of school catchment areas in relation to Integrated and Irish Medium schools. This means also that each area-based group should work closely with those others with whom they have a boundary. Existing boundaries should be perceived as a starting point and not as a block to wider considerations. The groups should use a sub-area approach that reflects the distribution of post-primary schools. Where necessary, sub-areas may cross area boundaries. The area-based groups should ensure that the central group is content with the approach being taken in the interest of consistency and coherence.
7. The process at central and local levels should take fully into account the policy framework being established by the Department including:
 - The Entitlement Framework;
 - Sustainable Schools;
 - The Review of Irish Medium Education; and
 - The Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Review.
8. It should also take fully into account
 - existing and planned Further Education and Training provision;
 - the NISRA 2006 population projections;
 - area based data and data on recent, existing and projected enrolments;
 - data on performance and other aspects of quality;
 - progress towards the provision of the Entitlement Framework;
 - the impact of and on transport policy;
 - opportunities to promote sharing between schools in order to provide access to the full Entitlement Framework; and
 - opportunities made available by information and learning technologies.

9. The process should take account of issues around rural areas bearing in mind issues such as time to travel, available transport and existing and emerging patterns of enrolment.
10. The process will recognise the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Education and Library Boards in relation to school planning and the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. It should also reflect the Department's statutory duty to "encourage and facilitate" Integrated and Irish Medium education and the respective roles of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta. It will also recognise the importance of sectoral ethos in the school system. The school owners and promoters, who are the key participants in the process, are asked, in turn, to work closely and positively with the process. The Minister wishes to see a set of area-based plans to which all those contributing can subscribe.
11. The area groups will receive and follow guidance from, and report to the Central Group which will exercise oversight of the whole process. They will follow the agreed methodology. The area groups will report at intervals and submit a final report to the Central Group.
12. The process should result in a draft area plan for the most efficient and effective arrangements to provide access to the Entitlement Framework for young people, from 2013, on a regional basis. The group should offer comment on any areas of potential opportunity and difficulty. The plan should:
 - outline the existing nature of the educational estate;
 - provide details of past, current and projected enrolments/demand for the facilities in the area;
 - describe the demographics of the area and assess how the demographics of the area are likely to change, if at all, over the planning horizon;
 - identify any deficiencies in existing provision;
 - assess how existing provision is likely to service anticipated demographic changes over the planning horizon;
 - analyse and assess the available information and data, and recommend how the estate should be configured going forward;
 - offer thoughts on potential new governance or structural arrangements; and
 - identify, where relevant, any cross-border issues.
13. The draft area plan should be completed by end December 2008.

ANNEX 3

The Structure and Inter-connections between the Groups and the Support



Functions of the Central Group

- Developing shared understandings of the nature and scope of the task
- Agreeing a way of working and all relevant protocols
- Providing a common framework for submissions
- Reviewing all relevant data
- Liaising with the Area Groups, monitoring their progress and receiving and reviewing their reports
- Preparing a draft regional plan

Functions of the Area Groups

- Building a shared understanding of the nature and scope of the task
- Following the agreed way of working and all relevant protocols
- Reviewing all relevant data about each area
- Inviting, receiving and considering submissions from stakeholders in each area
- Preparing and submitting an area report

Phases of the Exercise

Period	Activity	Group
Mar 08 - Jun 08	Establishing and disseminating the vision for the exercise through engagement	Chairs
Jun 08 - Sept 08	Developing a shared understanding of the task and the process for the exercise	Central Chairs Area
Sept 08 - Jan 09	Inviting Submissions Feedback to Central Group on process Establishing the baseline position in each of the Area Groups	Central Chairs Area
Feb 09 - Apr 09	Consideration of Submissions and preparing local report	Area
Apr 09 - July 09	Preparation of Central Group Report	Central Chairs

ANNEX 4

Making a Submission

A common framework for submissions to the process was devised and approved by the Central Group together with advice and guidance on making a submission. 'Expressions of Interest' were invited via the ABP website. The pro-forma for making the submission and accompanying advice and guidance were also available online. A date for receipt of submissions, 30 January 2009 was also agreed.

Those making submissions were invited to consider under a number of key headings on the pro-forma for submissions and using the advice provided the following:-

- the assumptions made about the area and any sub-areas on which the submission is based;
- number of schools/providers involved;
- number and age range of young people provided for;
- range and quality of the provision offered;
- sustainability of this provision over a five-year period;
- expected impact of the submission on other schools/providers in or close to the area;
- expected impact on travel times;
- the use expected to be made of learning technologies;
- potential for further collaboration and/or cross-community partnerships; and
- the main financial implications.

The common template for making submissions was used to ensure that we had the right information for the central and local groups to deliver on their objectives and compile their reports. This also addressed the issue of manageability and consistency of approach. Key considerations in the design of the template were:-

- accessibility
- uniformity of approach
- facilitative language
- generic questions linked clearly to the Terms of Reference.

Accompanying guidance was provided as well as a Frequently Asked Questions facility on the website to provide further clarification as issues were raised. A copy of the template and the guidance issued may be found on the website www.ef-abp-exercise.org

ANNEX 5

Entitlement Framework Headline Statistical Data

The following data has been taken from the EF Online Audit 2007/08 and 2008/09.

More detail can be found in "Entitlement Framework Audit Report 2008/09" (WELB CASS Research and Development unit) at www.efaudit.org/site/

1. Year 11 (Key Stage 4) Total Courses Delivered in Northern Ireland

Course Type	2007/2008	2008/2009
General	73%	70.8%
Applied	27%	29.2%

2. % Year 11 Courses Delivered In Northern Ireland¹

Delivery Method	2007/ 2008	2008/2009
Own School	95.4	94.1
FE ²	3.2	3.9
School Collaboration	0.4	0.6
Hosts for other pupils	0.3	0.5
Other training providers	0.6	0.8

3. Year 13 (Post 16) Courses Delivered in Northern Ireland

Course Type	2007/2008	2008/2009
General	68%	66.2%
Applied	32%	33.8%

4. Year 13 Courses Delivered In Northern Ireland³

Delivery Method	2007/2008	2008/2009
Own School	85.8	79.4
FE ⁴	2.8	4.9
School Collaboration	5.9	7.5
Hosts for other pupils	4.4	7.4
Other training providers	1.2	0.8

1 Total courses counted: N:4324 (2007/2008), N:4412 (2008/2009).

2 This includes whole and partial FE delivery of a course.

3 Total courses counted: N:2925 (2007/2008), N: 3123 (2008/2009).

4 This includes whole and partial FE delivery of a course.

5. Number of schools delivering courses of which 33% are applied

Number of Courses delivered (of which 33% are Applied)	Number of Schools			
	KS4	KS4	POST 16	POST 16
	2007/2008	2008/2009	2007/2008	2008/2009
15+	70	82	26	45
18+	57	73	20	32
21+	37	45	13	24
24+	18	29	5	12
27+			2	8

ANNEX 6

Submissions Grid and List of Submissions

There were 76 submissions and these are listed below. In addition the Commission for Catholic Education submitted its over-arching policy statement which applied to all areas and helped to set the wider context. The number of submissions varied considerably from one area to another. Not all schools were included which resulted in significant gaps in identifying how the needs of all young people would be met. The Area Groups' main aim was to establish how well the submissions addressed the issues relating to the delivery of the EF identified from the analysis the Groups made of the data about their areas. This was reflected in the Area reports which in turn informed the discussions and recommendations made by the Central Group.

The strengths of the submissions were seen in the responses that the great majority of them made to the first two questions on the pro-forma, which were about the vision and values on which each submission was based and the target group to whom the proposals in the submission applied. They were also seen in the efforts the schools and learning communities had made and planned to make to enable a fully developed Entitlement Framework to be available to all the young people in their target groups and in the commitment that so many demonstrated to the ideas of partnership and collaboration.

Analysis of the responses to the key questions in the pro-forma used for the submissions provided a number of key messages about the current capacity to plan for the delivery of the EF on an area basis. These key questions and the related key messages are detailed in the table below.

Table: Summary of the Key Issues in the Submissions

Key Question & Guidance	Key Message
<p>Key question: Vision What principles underpin and inform your submission?</p> <p>Respondents should explain the principles and values that underpin their submission. This requires an explanation of the broad purposes that the submission is designed to achieve for young people. The submission should address issues such as equality of access, quality of teaching and learning, relevance, collaboration, sustainability, inclusion, the promotion of good relations and social and community cohesion.</p>	<p>The responses to this section of the submission pro-forma were, on the whole, strong with regard to a vision for an individual institution or organisation. Clearly, the focus is still very much on the needs of individual institutions. This is not surprising given the competitive milieu in which schools have operated. In some instances and under some circumstances, young people from other schools are invited to share in what a host school might have to offer. The vision for ensuring sustainable provision and access to the EF by all young people in an area has not yet developed and a collective vision for all the young people in an area was expressed only very rarely. It is also worth noting that given the preoccupation with single institutions or organisations there was also little emphasis on promoting good relations and social and community cohesion.</p>
<p>Key question: Target Group What is the target group covered by your submission?</p> <p>The submission should clearly identify the target group of young people expected to benefit from it and should state their number and age range and the names of the schools at which they are registered. There is no standard definition of target group. This will be determined by respondents, much depending on whether the submission involves a major sector or an individual school or group of schools working together in a collaborative arrangement. This may also be defined as the young people in a geographical area such as a district council area or a distance determined geographical area. However you should explain what gives it identity and whether or not you believe it includes sub areas of some kind.</p>	<p>Target groups of pupils were generally not precisely identified or defined because the emphasis was mainly placed on individual schools or organisations. The concept of a collective responsibility for ensuring appropriate provision for all young people in an area which is shared among a number of schools and organisations is not common in the thinking of most schools. Again, this is hardly surprising given the historic patterns of delivery of the curriculum and current policy and practice arrangements. No significant evidence of any awareness or understanding of an 'area' beyond the most immediate and familiar or of what the needs of the young people in such an area might be or how they might best be met.</p>

Key Question & Guidance	Key Message
<p>Key question: Current Provision</p> <p>What are the principal features of existing curricular provision for the target group in the area covered by your submission?</p> <p>The submission should describe how the current provision is made for the target group in the area, including information on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the number of schools and FE campuses included in your submission; ■ the types of schools involved, with details of their age-ranges, enrolment numbers and locations, their enrolment patterns in the past 3 years and their projected enrolments for the next 7 years; ■ the existing nature of the educational estate and the fitness for purpose of the facilities and accommodation available in these schools for the delivery of the Entitlement Framework; ■ the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum provision currently available for pupils aged 14 to 19 including the role of the FE College/s; ■ the number of schools which are working in collaboration with other schools and/or with the FE College and other providers; ■ the home to school travel patterns of the pupils in the schools involved; ■ the extent to which pupils come to these schools from ‘outside the area’ or travel to ‘another area’ from the one in which they live; and ■ any capital development projects expected in the next 3 years or already underway. <p>Those making submissions should note that the dedicated area-based planning website contains information which may be helpful.</p>	<p>Current curricular provision was evidently considered to be unproblematic. It was clear that most schools have extended what might be termed as a “traditional” curricular offer to include relatively new subjects such as Learning for Life and Work at KS4 and some tentative steps towards newer applied courses. However, as well as considerable duplication across schools and FE colleges, there is little evidence of a coherent, planned and deliverable curriculum offer, at area level, that is based on an audit of pupil needs, the needs of business and the economy or indeed, the potential of the EF to extend and enhance the educational experience of young people in the 21st century.</p>

Key Question & Guidance	Key Message
<p>Key question: Curriculum Offer</p> <p>How does your submission contribute to ensuring that every pupil attending the school or schools which it covers will have full and easy access to the Entitlement Framework by 2013?</p> <p>In this section, you should demonstrate how your submission will ensure that every pupil, including those with Special Educational Needs attending the schools to which it applies, will have easy access to the Entitlement Framework by 2013. It should indicate the steps to be taken to progress from the current level of curricular offer (number of courses and balance between general and applied courses) to delivery of the full Entitlement Framework. It is important to note that it will be the statutory duty of each school to provide its registered pupils with access to the full range of the Entitlement Framework in a way which best meets the interests of pupils.</p>	<p>On the evidence from the submissions, it is clear that much more remains to be done to help schools and organisations to realise the potential of the EF and the development of complementary provision across an area. There was little evidence that curriculum planning is a dynamic process, at area level, that takes account of the varying needs of young people and the changing needs of society. Some submissions made reference to the need for up-to-date information about course type and availability and the need to provide sound careers information and guidance. However, there was recognition that much more needs to be done to embed the identification of progression pathways into curriculum planning. There is also evidence that the needs of young people with special educational needs and those in receipt of alternative educational provision have not been fully explored.</p>
<p>Key question: Demographic Developments and Sustainability</p> <p>What are the anticipated demographic trends over the next 7 years for the area covered by your submission and to what extent does your submission take these trends into account?</p> <p>The submission should set out the anticipated demographic trends in the specified area (however defined) in the next 7 years. It should also indicate the extent to which it has taken the implications of these changes into account for the delivery of the Entitlement Framework.</p>	<p>It is clear from the submissions that much more use needs to be made of relevant statistical and other data when planning on an area basis. There was limited evidence of an appreciation of the wider demographic context within which schools operate. The relevant data was made available on the ABP website but its potential for informing and illuminating has not been realised through this exercise. In the future, there would be a case for much more widespread dissemination of this kind of information to ensure that all schools are fully aware of the demography in their area that impacts upon them.</p>

Key Question & Guidance	Key Message
<p>Key question: Quality of Provision</p> <p>What specific arrangements does your submission include to ensure that the curriculum pathways and overall educational provision available to the pupils in the school or schools concerned will be of consistent high quality?</p> <p>Whether or not your submission involves or depends on collaboration between institutions, you should describe the mechanisms to be used for quality assurance.</p> <p>Arrangements for collaboration should be in line with the requirements of Article 21 of the Education (NI) Order 2006.</p>	<p>The key message emerging from the evidence is that schools and institutions need to give more thought to the ways in which provision for EF may be quality assured. The need to develop and use robust quality assurance mechanisms both within the school itself and between an individual school and other providers will be essential. The development of service level agreements for those working in collaboration with others was not mentioned in many submissions. There may be particular issues that would need to be addressed to meet legislative requirements.</p>
<p>Key question: Learning Technologies</p> <p>How does your submission seek to harness the potential of the learning technologies currently available to deliver the Entitlement Framework to the target group of pupils?</p> <p>There has been significant investment across the education system for development of a technological infrastructure to support learning, teaching, school development, management and administration across the school system. The systems that have been developed have the potential to offer a great deal more support to schools and their pupils. Submissions should indicate how such technologies will be used to enhance student learning and the delivery of curricula; how they will foster collaboration and sharing; how they will broaden the range of educational experiences available to students; minimise travel and provide support for Area-based Planning.</p>	<p>The responses to this section were almost universally disappointing given that we have had a strategy for educational technology since 1998 and an ICT infrastructure since the early years of this century. Submissions focused on resources (or lack of resources) and equipment. There was very little understanding shown of the link between ICT or ILT (information and learning technologies) and learning. The capacity of ICT to enhance learning and empower learners was not explored to any significant degree. The potential of ICT to solve logistical problems, the ways in which it could be used to foster collaboration and sharing, to support staff development and training, to disseminate good practice, to create communities of learners and learning, was not understood or exploited.</p>

Key Question & Guidance	Key Message
<p>Key question: Impact</p> <p>How do you expect the proposals in your submission to impact on (a) other schools in the area but outside the target group, (b) schools in other sectors and/or (c) schools in adjoining areas?</p> <p>It is likely that some elements of the submission will have implications for those not identified as part of the target group. Your submission should include your assessment of the impact it will have on some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ another school and/or other schools in the area; ■ schools adjoining the area; ■ proposals for making the Entitlement Framework a reality in adjoining areas; ■ schools in the same sector; ■ schools in other sectors; ■ school staff; ■ the potential for partnership and collaboration with other schools and FE Colleges; ■ the potential for improving community relations and social cohesion; and ■ the potential for the wider social and economic development of Northern Ireland and the well-being of the community. <p>These issues should be considered taking account of the 6 criteria outlined in the Sustainable Schools Policy. These are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quality Educational Experience; ■ Stable Enrolment Trends; ■ Sound Financial Position; ■ Strong Leadership and Management; ■ Accessibility; and ■ Strong Links with the Community. 	<p>This is a sensitive area and for the most part submissions largely avoided the issue of impact on other schools. Many claimed that their plan would have no impact on other schools or, optimistically, that everyone in close proximity could benefit.</p> <p>It is perhaps not surprising that this section of the submission contained little comment on the impact of the proposals being made since the prevailing ethos of the system is one of competitiveness between individual institutions. However, in the future, as schools develop more collaborative arrangements with other schools and providers, it will become the norm to look beyond the single institution to ensure efficient and effective curriculum provision and to seek to forge partnerships with others in the interests of young people. In the future, forums for local engagement could help to develop common understanding about the needs of all young people in an area and help to develop collective solutions to sensitive issues.</p>

List of Submissions

Body - A = ALC S = School/s O = Other Bodies/Organisations

The Commission for Catholic Education submitted a policy statement which applied to all Area Groups.

BELFAST ABP SUBMISSIONS	BOARD	BODY
Alternative Education Provider’s Forum	BELB	O
Ashfield Girls’/Ashfield Boys’ High School	BELB	S
BELB Controlled Sector Post Primary Schools	BELB	O
Belfast Boys’ and Girls’ Model Schools	BELB	S
Belfast Metropolitan College	BELB	O
Bloomfield Collegiate School/Campbell College/Strathearn School	BELB	S
C na G	BELB	O
Educational Task Group	BELB	O
Fleming Fulton School	BELB	S
Grosvenor Grammar/Our Lady and St Patrick’s College/ Knockbreda High School	BELB	S
Loughshore Educational Resource Centre	BELB	O
Methodist College	BELB	S
North Belfast ALC	BELB	A
Park Resource Centre	BELB	S
South Belfast Area Learning Community	BELB	A
South Eastern Regional College (South Belfast)	BELB	O
South Eastern Regional College (West Belfast)	BELB	O
St Rose’s High School	BELB	S
St Dominic’s High School	BELB	S
Victoria College Belfast	BELB	S
Wellington College	BELB	S
West Belfast ALC	BELB	A

NORTH EASTERN ABP SUBMISSIONS	BOARD	BODY
Antrim Learning Community	NE	A
Ballycastle Learning Community	NE	A
Ballyclare Secondary	NE	S
Ballymena Learning Community	NE	A
Ballymoney Learning Community	NE	A
Belfast High School	NE	S
Belfast Metropolitan College	NE	O
Bunscoil an Chaistil	NE	S
C na G (Ballycastle, Carnlough)	NE	O
C na G (Maghera, Dungiven, Draperstown)	NE	O
Cambridge House Grammar School	NE	S
Carrickfergus Learning Community	NE	A
Coleraine Academical Institution, Coleraine College and Coleraine High School	NE	S
Larne Grammar School	NE	S
Larne Learning Community	NE	A
Magherafelt Learning Partnership	NE	A
Monkstown Community School	NE	S
NEELB	NE	O
Newtownabbey Community High School	NE	S
Newtownabbey Learning Community	NE	A
North Coast Integrated College	NE	S
South Derry Rural Learning Partnership	NE	A
South Eastern Regional College	NE	O
St Comgall's College Support Group	NE	O
St Patrick's College, Maghera	NE	S

SOUTH EASTERN GROUP ABP SUBMISSIONS	BOARD	BODY
Bangor Learning Partnership	SEELB	A
Belfast Metropolitan College	SEELB	O
C na G (East Down)	SEELB	O
Down High School	SEELB	S
Grosvenor Grammar/Our Lady and St Patrick's College/ Knockbreda High School	SEELB	S
North Down Area Learning Community	SEELB	A
Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock and St Columbanus' College, Bangor	SEELB	S
Priory Integrated College/Sullivan Upper School	SEELB	S
Shimna Integrated College	SEELB	S
South Eastern Regional College (Ballynahinch)	SEELB	O
South Eastern Regional College (Castlereagh)	SEELB	O
South Eastern Regional College (Lecale)	SEELB	O
South Eastern Regional College (Lisburn)	SEELB	O
South Eastern Regional College (North Down and Ards)	SEELB	O
St Columba's College	SEELB	S
Strangford Integrated College	SEELB	S
The Wallace High School and Friends' School	SEELB	S
SOUTHERN GROUP ABP SUBMISSIONS	BOARD	BODY
Brownlow Integrated College and Lismore Comprehensive	SELB	S
C na G	SELB	O
Markethill High School	SELB	S
Sean O'Coinn (C na G)	SELB	O
South Eastern Regional College	SELB	O
Southern Regional College	SELB	O

WELB ABP SUBMISSIONS	BOARD	BODY
C na G (Lisnaskea)	WELB	O
C na G (NW Derry/West Tyrone)	WELB	O
Derg Mourne Learning Community	WELB	A
Fermanagh Learning Community	WELB	A
Omagh Learning Community	WELB	A
Roe Valley Learning Community	WELB	A
The Foyle Learning Community	WELB	A

Glossary

ABP:	Area Based Planning
ALC:	Area Learning Community
CnaG:	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
DE:	Department of Education
DEL:	Department of Employment and Learning
EF:	Entitlement Framework
ELBs:	Education and Library Boards;
BELB:	Belfast Education and Library Board
NEELB:	North-Eastern Education and Library Board
SEELB:	South-Eastern Education and Library Board
SELB:	Southern Education and Library Board
WELB:	Western Education and Library Board
ESA:	Education and Skills Authority
ESAIT:	Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team
ETI:	Education and Training Inspectorate
FE:	Further Education
GCSE:	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GCE:	General Certificate of Education
HE:	Higher Education
ILT:	Information and Learning Technology
KS4:	Key Stage 4
LMS:	Local Management of Schools
NICIE:	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
NISRA:	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
STEM:	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SLA:	Service Level Agreement

