

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT FORUM held 21 February 2012 at the Staff Commission, Forestview, Belfast

In attendance:

Paul Sweeney, DE
John McGrath, DE
La'Verne Montgomery, DE
Gavin Boyd, ESAIT
Barry Mulholland, WELB
Shane McCurdy, NEELB
Tony Murphy, SELB
Micheál Ó Duibh, CnaG
Noreen Campbell, NICIE
Jim Clarke, CCMS
Gerry Murphy, INTO
Seamus Searson, NASUWT
Paddy Mackel, NIPSA
Peter McMurray, GMB
Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU
Anne Millis, ATL
Raymond McFeeters, NAHT
Mark Langhammer, ATL
Sean Maguire, ASPECT
Anne Speed, UNISON
Fern Turner, NAHT
Denise Stockman, DE
Lorraine Finlay, DE

Apologies:

David Cargo, BELB
Stanton Sloan, SEELB
Eamonn Coy, GMB
Andrena Murray, DE

Paul Sweeney opened the meeting by welcoming all Members and introduced Denise Stockman who has joined the Department on secondment from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and will be working on Area Planning. Paul Sweeney also introduced Lorraine Finlay who would be giving a presentation on Area Planning and an overview of the Viability Audits.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of events. The action points from the previous meeting were progressed as follows:

| ACTION POINTS | Position |
|--|-----------------|
| Minutes 14 December 2011 to be amended | Completed |

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| | |
| Members to be contacted with propositions for sub-groups and for nominations for membership of sub-groups | Ongoing |

Viability Audits and Area Planning

It was agreed copies of this presentation would be disseminated to members after the meeting. DE Secretariat to arrange.

Lorraine Finlay provided a presentation on the Viability Audits. A copy of the presentation slides are attached at Appendix A. The main points highlighted were;

- The Sustainable Schools Policy, Viability Audits and Area Planning process are all interlinked. The Viability Audits and Area Planning are mechanisms for driving Sustainable Schools Policy.
- The Ministers Autumn Statement set out the Minister's priorities.
- The Terms of Reference for the Viability Audits were issued in October 2011 and the Terms of Reference for Area Planning were issued in December 2011.
- The Commencement Order for the Entitlement Framework has been signed and has triggered the requirement for all post primary schools to provide pupils at KS4 with access to 18/21/24 courses by 2013/14/15 and at Post 16 to 21/24/27 by 2013/14/15.
- Discussion regarding the 6 criteria for assessing the viability and long term sustainability of schools.
- Detail provided on the Viability Audit process.
- Detailed the number of Primary and Post-Primary schools categorised as being under stress.
- Set out the next steps which were to develop/refine the process of Area Planning, work with ELBs/CCMS to address any issues, support a common and consistent approach across all Board areas and maximise engagement with all interested bodies.

The members were invited to ask questions or seek clarification on any points.

Concern was expressed at the timescales for completing the process and at the level of engagement opportunities for organisations other than the ELBs/CCMS. DE confirmed **that** engagement would be **led by the**

| ELBs/CCMS and would be at all levels and with as many organisations as required.

A discussion took place around the Viability Audits and it was confirmed that this meeting of the Forum was to enable everyone to have a strategic overview of the viability audits at the earliest possible stage of the process. It was also confirmed the viability audits would be published shortly on the Departments website.

Mark Langhammer left the meeting at 3.10pm.

Lorraine Finlay then provided a presentation on Area Planning. A copy of the presentation slides are attached at Appendix B. The main points highlighted were;

- The context of area planning – i.e. Sustainable Schools Policy, ESAGS, the Revised Curriculum and Entitlement Framework, Count, Read, Succeed and Irish Medium & SEN Reviews;
- What Area Planning and Area Plans are;
- The geographical areas covered;
- The roles and responsibilities of DE, ESA, ELBs, CCMS and other sectors;
- Area Planning structure at regional and area levels including the roles of the Area Planning Co-ordination Group and the ELBs/CCMS.
- Factors to help develop coherent area plans, for example a common understanding of the shared vision, parent/pupil/young peoples preferences, views and advice of the educational interests and also value for money considerations;
- The Area Plan 8 steps;
- Details of the consultation process, and
- The indicative timeframe.

A discussion took place after the presentation. The importance of ensuring there was continued engagement with all those present was emphasised.

AOB

It was agreed it would be preferable for the working groups to be agreed and have met before the next Forum meeting and if possible the next Strategic

Forum meeting should take place before the end of June 2012. Secretariat will arrange.

Mr Sweeney closed the meeting by thanking Lorraine Finlay for the presentations and everyone for attending the meeting and for observing the confidentiality of the information on the Viability Audits presented.