

Consultation on the draft Strategic Area Plan 2022-27 'Planning for Sustainable Provision'

2. Please select the category that best describes you as a respondent (please choose one option only):

Union

3. Please indicate the local government district area to which your response refers (you may choose more than one):

General response only

4. Please select the category which best represents your sectoral interest:

Other

5. Please select the category which best represents your interest:

Post primary

Having read the draft Strategic Area Plan 2022-27 'Planning for Sustainable Provision'

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Vision of the draft Plan reflects the aim of area planning to ensure that all primary and post primary pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their educational needs in a school that is educationally and financially viable and sustainable?

Strongly Agree

7. Please provide additional comments

The vision encapsulates well the aim of area planning to ensure that all primary and post primary pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their educational needs in a school that is educationally and financially viable and sustainable

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Mission of the draft Plan reflects the aim of area planning to ensure that all primary and post primary pupils have access to a broad and balanced

curriculum that meets their educational needs in a school that is educationally and financially viable and sustainable?

Strongly Agree

9. Please provide additional comments

Everything in education is inextricably linked. If educational priorities are not put in sequential order, additional barriers will be created which have the potential to create even greater problems

To what extent does this draft plan interlock with or will be influenced by the Independent Review of Education or the recently enacted Integrated Education Bill?

The area planning process needs to go in tandem with any review of the Common Funding Formula.

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the four Key Themes meet the objectives of Area Planning for Primary and Post Primary Schools as outlined in Section 2 of the draft Plan?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

11. Please provide additional comments

Key Theme 2: There is an issue with pupils being involved in collaborative (shared) classes not being 'counted' as part of the 'sustainable number of viable VI Form provision- currently no 'credit' is given to enrolment figures

Key Theme 4: Inform strategic infrastructure planning and investment: to what extent will the recently enacted Integrated Education Bill change the landscape of investment across all sectors?

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Drivers for Change:

- Collaborative Working
- Supporting Integrated and Irish Medium Education
- Supporting Schools and Communities
- Engaging with Governors, Staff, Parents and Pupils
- Clearly Defined Aim, Policy and Statutory Process
- Established Partnership Working
- Community Planning
- Education Authority's School Improvement Strategy
- School Development and Self-Evaluation

Neither Agree nor Disagree

13. Please provide additional comments

Is there conflict in the Minister's comments 'Collaboration and Partnership' needs to be built into Area Planning 'recognising no sectoral boundaries' and then in the reference to 'to continue to encourage and facilitate Integrated and Irish Medium Education'?

We would contend that it is important that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that no child is disadvantaged by the promotion of particular sectors. There is a need for creative solutions to be found to encourage and facilitate designated sectors.

Supporting Schools and Communities is a laudable driver, but this needs to be more clearly defined

Engaging with Governors, Staff, Parents and Pupils; it is an unrealistic expectation of governors to consider whole area solutions rather than focusing on their own school. Any programme of Governor Training on Area Planning to be delivered throughout the lifespan of this strategy to enable governors to increase their awareness and understanding of Area Planning will need to be robust

Clearly Defined Aim, Policy and Statutory Process: As an association with members from all types of schools, it is clear that there are challenges for the controlled sector where the managing authority (EA) also has a statutory responsibility for Area Planning

The structures and processes referred to in 3.1.5 ii need to be revisited to ensure they are fit for purpose. There needs to be full transparency, as a lack of transparency does not sit well with the Principles of Good Administration/Nolan principles.

Community planning: we support the commitment to ensuring that administrative boundaries do not prevent the development of natural and logical solutions for effective and efficient delivery of education provision. It also takes account of the natural flow of pupils across administrative boundaries

EA's School Improvement Strategy. As of today, 0104 this is not available despite the plan stating this 'is in the final stages of drafting and it expected to be consulted on in early 2022'

14.To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Challenges to Change:

- Rural Provision
- Legislative Barriers to Innovative Solutions
- Alignment of Strategic Capital Development and Area Planning

Agree

15.Please provide additional comments

Rural schools: young people in rural schools deserve to have quality Vi Form provision and access to extra-curricular activities. This can only be provided, in instances, in fewer, larger VI Forms

2013 Rural Schools Research Paper (Perry and Love)for NI Assembly- identified a need for a 'small schools policy'. Has this been acted upon?

The current Sustainable Schools Policy is actually acting against rural schools who can't bring forward a development proposal which could make them more sustainable- this is a vicious circle which needs to be broken. In 2018 the Minister advised that rural schools should have a mechanism

to allow such schools to increase, modestly, school enrolments, without a development proposal.
Has such a resizing policy been implemented?

Legislative Barriers and Alignment of Strategic Capital Development and Area Planning Does the recently passed |Integrated Education Bill add complications to these?

Federations- these are complex issues, given variety of school types in areas where rationalisation of provision needs are greatest.

16.To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Key Themes Actions will 'Increase parity of access for all to appropriate pathways?'

Strongly Agree

17.Please provide additional comments

The detail of the operational actions and strategic direction will impact on this

18.To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Key Themes Actions will 'Promote cooperation, collaboration and sharing across all Sectors'?

Agree

19.Please provide additional comments

The impact of the Independent Review of Education and the Integrated Education Bill could impact on this.

20.To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Key Themes Actions will 'Maximise resources and sustainability'?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

21.Please provide additional comments

This is so conditional on so many points (above)

22.To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Key Themes Actions will 'Inform strategic infrastructure planning and investment'?

Agree

23.Please provide additional comments

This will inform, but the question is whether or not these key themes will enable strategic infrastructure planning and investment to be achieved.

24.To what extent do you agree or disagree with the suggested structure of the Operational Plans as set out in Section 7 of the draft Plan?

Agree

25.Please provide additional comments

The structures are sound, but all will be determined by the points expressed above.

Does current free transport policy impact on area planning? We would argue there is a need for transport policy to be reviewed with the fundamental question is this a good use of resources?

26.To what extent do you agree or disagree with the 'How will we know we have been successful' statements to measure success against the Key Themes?

Agree

27.Please provide additional comments

The criteria identified are largely quantifiable. Size of school provision will however in itself does not measure educational effectiveness. There will be a core role for ETI in evaluation quality of provision

28.To what extent do you agree or disagree that the draft Plan sets the strategic direction for Area Planning for Primary and Post Primary Schools for the next five years - 2022-27?

Agree

29.Please provide additional comments

The question does not ask about the realistic strategic direction. While it does set a strategic direction, there are issues of internal coherence and achievability as previously identified.

Submitted in discussion with representatives of ASCL Northern Ireland Executive by



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Wilson".

Robert Wilson
ASCL Northern Ireland Regional Officer

April 2022