

ARMAGH- A LEARNING CITY

A Locally Appropriate Blueprint for Shared Education

Stakeholder educational and local government institutions in the City of Armagh brought forward proposals for a model of Shared Education and Collaboration embodied in the document “Armagh – A Learning City”. The Chair of the Group submits the following comments for consideration by the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly in the light of the recently introduced Shared Education Bill

- The stakeholder group notes with pleasure and renewed enthusiasm the introduction of a “Shared Education” Bill to the floor of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly.
- We note that the Bill is remarkably succinct. We recognize in this the avoidance of an overly limited or prescriptive approach to the character of Shared and Integrated Education. Therefore, we welcome the space provided by the bill to imagine and design customized approaches to shared and integrated education that work positively and dynamically in differing local situations: rural towns and non-urban locations have distinctively differing circumstances, opportunities and requirements from, say, those existent in parts of the Belfast conurbation.
- We note the definition of shared education in the Bill and offer our own reflections below in the light of the considerable local experience we have gained through our interactions in Armagh.
- We applaud the powers given to an, admittedly, limited range of organisations to facilitate shared education. Although the range of such organisations is limited and does not represent the whole range of stakeholders in the field (for example, there is no reference to consultation with other “non-statutory” bodies intimately involved in education or to local authorities with their new overarching planning powers and functions). We look particularly to the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate discussions among schools – discussions that have been taking place in Armagh hitherto without statutory support.
- We note and welcome the reference to the role of the Education Authority which, among other responsibilities, has Area Planning functions. In our particular circumstances we are grateful for the support and encouragement we receive from the staff of the E.A.

The group also welcomes the iteration of the commitment by HM Government, originally set out in the Stormont House Agreement and renewed in Section D of “A Fresh Start”, to an additional £500m over 10 years for capital works in support of Shared and Integrated Education. We note and regret that the totality of this sum may have been compromised by the apparent intention to allocate part of these funds for other “shared” purposes such as housing. We trust that the high priority originally given, rightly, to the promotion of shared and integrated education outcomes will not be deprioritised, undermined or supplanted.

It may be worthwhile, at this juncture, to offer a non-exhaustive summary of the Armagh experience to date. In December 2013 a consensus group representative of schools in the City of Armagh submitted to the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly an initial outline of proposals for the creation of an Educational and Community Village in Armagh. The proposals arose out of the extremely positive experience of ever-closer collaboration at post-primary level among the schools in Armagh. This positive experience has engendered burgeoning mutual respect and increasingly congenial relationships, facilitated and forged through participation in the work of the Armagh Area Learning Community. It has led to the strong conviction that the mutual sharing of educational experience and expertise in schools of different traditions contributes both to the enrichment of the educational experience of all young people and to the increase of community cohesion. No threat is offered to the identity, autonomy or ethos of any of the partner institutions by the enforcement of a doctrinaire or narrow model of integration. Rather, an “organic” approach is adopted wherein different institutions invite one another into an exploration of each other’s true identity and ethos through the real time sharing of classroom excellence and the enhancement of the overall curriculum offer. The approach is best seen as a model of convergence - an “integrating” rather than an “integrated” model – characterized by the dynamics of a “continuous present” rather of an “aorist past”. Thus it is that varieties of educational experience are shared rather than constrained by the enforced homogeneity of a single, amalgamated, institution. This is of particular value because of the opportunity it

offers both to normalise and to model human and institutional relationships, respectful of difference, through an experiential rather than an artificially didactic portal.

Proposals originating as early as 2010 envisaged the development of a **shared educational campus co-located with new sporting and leisure facilities**, the latter to be provided and managed by Armagh City and District Council. The initial outline proposals were subsequently modified in significant ways in order to become wholly inclusive since it emerged that not all post-primary institutions were in a position to contemplate the abandonment of long established campuses. However, as a result of the commitment by all parties to enhanced and convergent models of sharing and mutual collaborative support, early proposals were transformed into a **development proposal that was subsequently submitted for consideration to the Department of Education under the masthead of “Armagh – A Learning City”**. It is important to note that the sustained and determined commitment to “a shared educational future” has not been abandoned as a result of initial difficulties. Rather it has been reaffirmed and transformed into an approach that establishes the model of educational collaboration and sharing as a leader and driver for city-wide community collaboration and cohesion.

Regrettably, the development proposal, as originally submitted, was deemed not to meet all the criteria set by the Department of Education and therefore could not immediately be taken forward in its original form. The Department did, however encourage the consensus group to refine its thinking and offered feedback to assist in that exercise. The original proposal is set out below in **Appendix 1**.

An overall strategy in response to the departmental feedback is under consideration by the consensus group. Members of the consensus group have reaffirmed their continuing commitment to the aims and objectives of the “City of Learning” proposals. However, they also recognize that **the most fruitful opportunities for collaboration with shared study and shared facilities, social and denominational inclusion, and the most numerous and profitable synergies, lie in the post-primary sector**. Indeed, the original shared campus aspirations had their genesis in the post-primary schools of the city with the support of the Southern Regional College. The feedback and comments on the original proposals are set out in **Appendix 2.1** an initial process of response for further discussion is set out in **Appendix 2.2**

Additionally, and in close consultation with the Southern Education and Library Board, (now subsumed into the Education Authority), it was recognized that the future of non-selective post-primary education in the Controlled Sector was in need of urgent address, and that this is a key component of the overall strategy for collaboration and shared education. Discussion involving representatives of the Education Authority, the Royal School, Armagh, the City of Armagh High School and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council were initiated during the spring of 2015 that resulted in the acceptance of the Memorandum of Understanding set out below:

Area Planning Context

1. *Studies have indicated that pupils in City of Armagh High School and Markethill High School have to attain a higher standard at GCSE in order to proceed to post 16 school based provision as compared to their counterparts in the maintained sector in the Armagh area.*
2. *Falling numbers at City of Armagh High School over recent years means that the school is far short of the Sustainable Schools’ threshold and it has accumulated a substantial deficit. This deficit severely limits opportunities for development of the curriculum to meet the needs of the existing pupils and it is not clear how it can be sustained as a free standing entity.*
3. *Review of post 16 provision in schools both locally and in other ELBs suggests that long term viability is increasingly difficult where the school size is less than 750 (including sixth form) and that co-operation with other schools is vital in order to facilitate the demands of the Entitlement Framework particularly at post 16.*

The following memorandum of understanding sets out the key elements required to initiate the development of a long term solution for the educational needs of post primary pupils (11 to 18) in the controlled and voluntary sector within Armagh City and its hinterland.

- *The Education Authority, Southern Region, will agree that it is preferable that Armagh City continue to be a location for non-selective post primary education in the controlled sector and that this is taken forward by a changed City of Armagh High School (CoAHS) through agreed innovative collaborative arrangements with*

Royal School Armagh (RSA) within the RSA stated non-negotiable principles of academic selection and voluntary status

- *RSA will agree in principle to participate in the development of an overarching Trust arrangement with CoAHS whereby the two schools remain separate with separate Boards of Governors but will form a Trust which will have responsibility to ensure that the highest educational quality is attained in their separate sectors by collaboration and working together for mutual benefit thus improving overall learning outcomes for their pupils.*
- *CoAHS will agree in principle to participate in the development of an overarching Trust arrangement with RSA whereby the two schools remain separate with separate Boards of Governors but will form a Trust which will have responsibility to ensure that the highest educational quality is attained in their separate sectors by collaboration and working together for mutual benefit thus improving overall learning outcomes for collaboration*
- *The Education Authority, Southern Region, will agree in principle to a Trust arrangement and in this context will develop proposals to provide enhanced 6th Form facilities with equality of access for the controlled sector of Armagh city and its natural hinterland which will be based on an increase in the current 6th Form provision at RSA as an environment which can offer the maximum educational opportunities.*
- *Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council will support the Trust proposals and will commit resources to assist in the Legal arrangements for such a Trust in the context that all parties will continue to support and develop the City of Learning proposals.*
- *All parties must support these proposals in principle and commit to working together to finalise arrangements in March 2016 at which time all parties will be required to formally sign up to an agreed Trust.*
- *A draft framework and timetable is attached for information and discussion by any steering group set up to take forward the above proposals.*
- *If all parties agree in principle to these proposals it is accepted that these arrangements for the enhancement of education can be made public.*

The Memorandum of Understanding was accepted by all participating parties and, in August 2015, the Right Reverend A.E.T. Harper, O.B.E., F.R.G.S., former Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland (in which capacity he was also Chair of Governors of the Royal School, Armagh,) was invited by the Education Authority to act as independent chair of a committee tasked with implementing the objectives of the Memorandum. Substantial progress has already been made in shaping specific proposals for consideration by the relevant authorities.

Resolution of outstanding issues will be followed by the submission of development proposals for a successor school to the City of Armagh High School, together with enhanced facilities and an enhanced curriculum offer in an enlarged Sixth Form at the Royal School. Significant additional opportunities for collaboration between the Royal School and the new non-selective post primary school will also be identified and pursued.

Meanwhile, the other partners in the consensus group are being kept informed of the current undertaking. Their insights will inform the final proposals, ensuring that a “shared education ethos” pervades not only the current discussions but also the delivery of post-primary, and especially Sixth Form, education going forward.

The resolution of the area planning issues associated with the post primary controlled and voluntary grammar sectors in Armagh will clear the way for further opportunities for shared education to be identified and addressed. An early draft of such a process was drawn up as a result of the feedback from the Department of Education. It is set out below in its un-amended form and forms Appendix 2.2. Timings are indicative and no longer relevant

APPENDIX 1

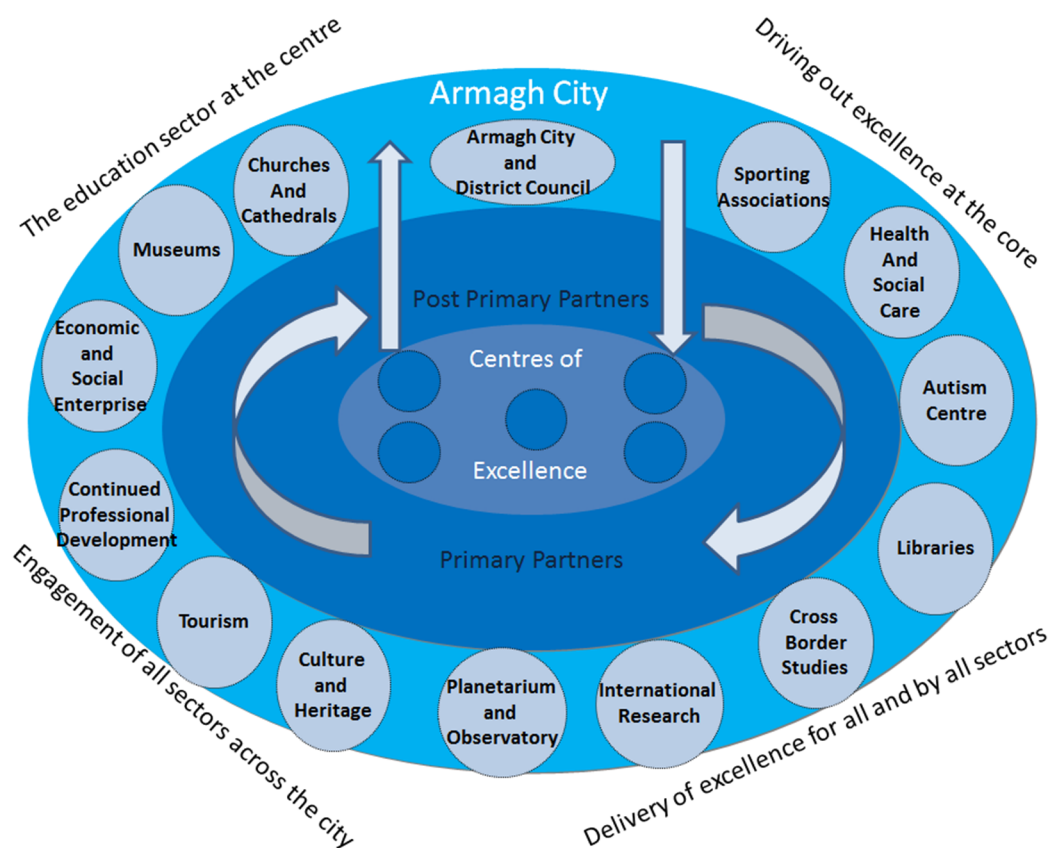
1.1 The Concept

Armagh City is well renowned as a “City of Saints and Scholars” with a longstanding reputation of excellence in education and learning. Since August 2012, a collaborative approach has been advanced by the primary and post primary schools in Armagh City, with input from Armagh City and District Council as the “honest broker/enabler” to develop a new vision and aspiration for the future which positions:

“Armagh as a Shared Learning City in which all citizens have access to educational opportunity at every age, to every age.”

This will be achieved by investment in new state of the art facilities to create ‘Centres of Excellence’ providing state of the art facilities for academic and sporting excellence. Access will be enjoyed by schools within the city to deliver shared learning, academic, vocational, performance and sporting excellence. This model of educational sharing will be further enhanced by receiving support from and affording support to key groups and sectors across Armagh City, thus fully integrating with the rich cultural, sporting, entrepreneurial, historical and academic resources outside of the schools sector proper.

Figure 1.1: ‘Armagh – A Learning City’



The aspiration outlined for Armagh is a far-reaching and ambitious one and one which involves a myriad of stakeholders. Whilst engagement has been ongoing and coordinated, this submission represents work in progress in arriving at the far-reaching vision for ‘Armagh – A Learning City’. This report sets out the strategic framework, direction of travel, engagement and journey to date by all participating stakeholders. It is fully recognised that further work is required to define detail and design of ‘Armagh – A Learning City’. The overall strategic framework for this submission will be centred upon an investment strategy which combines the development of new shared facilities with investment in existing facilities within the city boundaries. The core principle is that of establishing centres of excellence to be the drivers for significant

sharing of facilities by all schools (and indeed the community) and will be located at available lands within the City boundary. The current proposal is centred on lands at Mullinure (see **Appendix 1**), however a key first task of the Project Board when established will be to review and appraise other site options within the City. It is anticipated that shared facilities will focus on applied subject areas, where facilities are typically more technologically advanced, state of art and differentiated from the existing schools offering and which existing schools in their own circumstances could not achieve. The centres will focus on subject delivery that allows greatest interaction amongst students. It is envisaged at this stage that centres of excellence will provide facilities for: STEM and land economy, creative/digital media and ICT, culture, languages and the arts, enterprise, industry and innovation together with full access to dual use sports and leisure. Critically, there will be clear synergies across the centres of excellence thereby generating significant added value to learning and leisure experiences and facilitating integrated programming. A number of key drivers offer early opportunity to create the nucleus and include the planned leisure dual use investment by Armagh City and District Council and the new build development by the Southern Regional College.

The '*Armagh – A Learning City*' proposal has the potential to be first truly 'shared education' project that brings together all elements of the educational spectrum including early years, primary, special education, secondary, grammar, Irish medium and further and higher education. All within a unique learning environment that is enriched by a wealth of educational assets such as the Robinson and O'Fiaich libraries, museums and public, private and voluntary sector facilities and services that will provide support and deliver added value to shared education in Armagh.

1.2 Schools that are Viable and Core to Area Plan

The application relates to all schools within Armagh City including post primary and primary. The ambition to deliver shared education in Armagh is aligned with the area planning and the need to secure a future for a controlled post primary in the city. The vision for shared education within Armagh City is founded on involvement from all sectors – offering opportunity for young people from all ages, all community backgrounds and from all abilities. Integral to the aspiration for '*Armagh – A Learning City*' is the continuing provision of excellent education to all young people in the City and its hinterland. This will continue to be underpinned by collaboration between schools through the *Learning City*.

2 Rationale, Aims and Needs

2.1 Rationale for Shared Education

Armagh is not only recognised for the strength and breadth of its education provision but also for its positive cross community relationships which flow through many aspects of local life. The vision for shared education in the city seeks to build on both key elements to enhance the educational offering, delivery and opportunity through access to state of the art educational teaching and facilities for all, thereby, and in parallel encouraging and embedding a shared future.

Armagh, and particularly its educational community, has already travelled a significant distance along the road towards the advancement of the concept of shared education in our city. We enjoy the advantages of:

- **Shared Space** - Physical location, proximity and connectivity of the existing schools, to the community, to each other and to the proposed shared facilities;
- **Shared Activity** - Collaboration between schools in the active delivery of both the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities which has spanned several decades. This experience of collaboration leading to increased understanding, mutual and enhanced relationships is a strong foundation for further enlargement and enrichment;
- **Shared Ethos** - All participating schools have the commitment, ambition and the enthusiasm to deliver excellence in education for the young people of the City. This is reflected in the Guiding Principles (via infra) to which they are committed; and
- **Shared Future** - All participating schools desire and are committed to a shared future for the young people of Armagh. This shared education endeavour is seen as fundamental to Armagh 'together building a united community'.

Guiding Principles

The overall concept of 'Armagh - A Learning City' is firmly founded upon a number of fundamental principles (informed in part by the Department of Education, Ministerial Advisory Group's paper on Advancing Shared Education). These have been developed, agreed and accepted by all participating schools:

- **Clear Focus and Purpose** - There is full recognition and acceptance by all schools in the city that 'Armagh - A Learning City' - will have at its heart centres of excellence' offering specialist facilities which are available to all schools and accessible by all schools, and that provide a focus for life-long learning, academic excellence, cultural expression, social interaction and educational collaboration with quality leisure and dual use facilities. It is accepted that there is a need for a **significant strategic core linked to other potential satellite centres** to provide the overall capacity for learning in the City. Implicitly all partner schools will, in advancing any future investment plans for their own institutions, consider and review what enhanced facilities may be best placed to be delivered as shared resources and refine their own proposals accordingly and invest relevant resources to the shared facilities:
- **Strong sense of place and identity** - The centres of excellence will be recognisable as **shared central cohesive locations** for all schools within the city and provide a positive sense of place

where all individuals, schools and community can socialise, interact and collaborate together. At the same time the individuality and ethos of all participating schools will be respected and maintained;

- **A Model of Sharing** - A strategic approach to shared education will be underpinned by equality of access for all and a commitment to the maximisation of opportunity for each student to achieve his or her personal ambition and potential. The partners setting forward these proposals commit themselves to delivering educational excellence through schools working together to share resources and facilities, and to pioneering innovative approaches to the types of facilities and educational approaches that can be generated by the collective pooling of resources, both human and physical, and by collaborative investment planning;
- **Curriculum Advancement and International Linkages** – The partners are also committed to exploring and developing a clear, robust framework for academic and vocational based education which offers a **suite of options and choice to individual learners** – a ‘*Community Curriculum*’ - thereby positively enhancing overall learning outcomes. In addition the partners share the ambition of investigating, nurturing and developing third tier educational linkages to embrace the possibilities of a post graduate offering, and also of nourishing academic development through interaction with business and industry, to equip our young people to contribute to and enjoy the fruits of economic growth and development. Potential exists to build particularly upon Armagh’s sectoral business strengths in pharmaceuticals and the agri-food industry, and to establish a reputation as an innovation hub for the agri-food sector;
- **Relationships** - Leadership and commitment is strongly evident at all levels by participating schools to growing an ethos of sharing, and to building and nurturing personal and professional relationships between staff, governors, pupils and parents;
- **Education/Learning Excellence** – The vision of the partners is to secure educational excellence which will incorporate a maximising of academic achievement and skills development, and comprehensive sport and leisure opportunity with an emphasis on high moral and spiritual values informed by religious faith whilst emphasising tolerance and respect for diversity. We aspire to tailor our educational offering both to individual needs and aspirations as well as to the family business/community and voluntary sector needs;
- **Innovation** – Armagh – a Learning City aims to establish connections to and collaboration among existing and emerging sectors in Armagh to drive forward and promote a culture of innovation. Working across all partners and sectors opportunities for learning development in the form of work experience, apprenticeships and economic and social enterprise start-up will be explored and developed;
- **Connectivity, Integration, Quality and Sustainability** – Our proposals seek to develop quality well designed facilities with an integrated approach to connectivity amongst existing schools and integrate with the wider environs of Armagh; and
- **Openness, Accountability and Governance** – We seek the development of a strong governance framework to lead, and deliver the educational provision to which we aspire and which draws upon statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors and promotes inclusivity, accountability and sound financial management, and ensures long term sustainability.
- **Efficiencies** – Our model of shared education should provide the opportunity for capital and revenue cost efficiencies through the sharing of enhanced facilities across all schools and lead to collaborative

management and operational costs. Programming through timetables and holiday arrangements will be coordinated to maximise utilisation of shared facilities.

It is the strong view of the partners involved that the shared commitment to the delivery of outcomes informed by these principles, building upon the significant collaboration which already exists, provides a very powerful and indeed exciting rationale for shared education in Armagh City.

2.2 Type of Sharing Proposed

The vision for '*Armagh – A learning City*' envisages the creation of centres of excellence providing access to state of the art teaching and facilities across a range of disciplines. Engagement among partners has identified the potential to create such centres in:

- **Sports and Recreation** – The partners acclaim the commitment of Armagh City and District Council to develop extensive sports and leisure provision on the Mullinure Lands for dual use with all schools. Existing plans include an eight court sports hall, dance studios, health and fitness suite including junior provision, a ten lane, 25 metre swimming pool, learner pool and steam/sauna, a sports excellence centre including strengthening and conditioning suite, sports medicine, lecture space, hydrotherapy pool, grass and 3G/4G pitches, athletics track, bridleways, cycle-ways, paths and sensory gardens. The facilities will provide for all types of sports and recreation activity across all schools;
- **STEM** – The partners advocate the development of cutting edge science, technology and engineering facilities to provide space for learning and innovation in STEM subject areas to include provision for food science to link with the local agri-food industry. It is envisaged that private sector involvement through research and development could also be leveraged in this facility and early conversations have been positive in this regard;
- **Languages and the Arts** – Armagh has a rich tradition in the arts and an Armagh 'Centre of Excellence' will seek to build on preeminent expertise and achievement through programmes and infrastructure delivery accessible by all young people. Linkages with existing arts facilities including the Marketplace Theatre will be explored, in particular as a showcase venue for programmes delivered through the shared education model. Furthermore, acknowledging the increasingly globalised world in which we live, where connectivity between people, across geographical and language boundaries is paramount, combined with the preeminent emergence of Armagh City as an Irish Language 'hub'¹ a Languages centre of excellence is proposed. The development of shared language facilities provides a unique opportunity for Armagh to extend its offer of other world languages to all learners to include languages not presently on offer;
- **ICT, Digital Media and Creative Media Zone** – The partners recognise the burgeoning importance of providing access to extensive ICT resources as well as state of the art advanced technologies to provide students, schools, communities, businesses and entrepreneurs the tools to turn ideas and concepts into reality;
- **Business Institute** – The partners also strongly advocate the development of a local Business School in order to provide shared learning and development facilities to embed an entrepreneurial culture and associated skills among students, the community and business

¹ The Irish language is experiencing a growth in Armagh City over and beyond that being experienced in other areas. Gael Linn who have been mounting their provincial operations from Armagh City for over half a century have just been appointed lead organisation for the promotion of the Irish language in the English medium schools sector at primary and secondary levels and amongst adult learners of Irish. Armagh City will soon have an Irish language hub, 'Aonach Mhacha' which will open in 2015. The City of Armagh has been shortlisted for a prestigious Glór na nGael award for the promotion of Irish and are now vying with two other areas for this award; Carntougher in Co. Derry and the Conamara Gaeltacht in Co. Galway.

generally. It would further provide collaboration between partners to advance both economic and social enterprise, provide a hub for research and development and directly support the development of business and social economy organisations. In particular the centre would aim to provide state of the art shared facilities for the travel and tourism and catering curriculums congruent with the specific context of Armagh and its particular learning environment including the development of a new SRC campus. Furthermore, this 'Centre of Excellence' will offer significant development opportunity for the post 19 year old student base who wish to pursue vocational careers. We particularly note the importance of such transitions for young people with special educational needs. The aim is to form and promote greater social inclusivity across the spectrum of enterprise activity; and

- **Ecclesiastical Heritage Studies** – We propose the development of a centre of excellence to build on Armagh's uniqueness and international reputation as the Ecclesiastical /Christian Capital of Ireland resonating with the spiritual legacy of St. Patrick in Armagh. St Patrick's heritage would be the foundation for a new 'Centre of Excellence' in the study of Christian spirituality and of comparative religions. The Centre would be shared by all the schools in specific areas of the curriculum and the development of mutual understanding. The intention is to build on the foundation work already established in the City through the joint Clergy Partnerships.

Facilities to nurture **personal development** will also be a key component of the shared model. Opportunities for personal development across both pupils and teachers will be explored with a vision for a personal learning environment which draws upon concepts of "**next practice**" drawing upon shared experience from across the partner organisations. Provision may include CPD activity, careers advice, personal awareness, health and wellbeing, behaviour and relationship, counselling and welfare.

We envisage the sharing of a range of bespoke, accessible and attractive facilities which will provide enhanced opportunities for young people from all socio-economic and community backgrounds. In addition to the shared facilities it is acknowledged that several of the partner schools within Armagh City are in need of a core new build facility. The current intention is for these redevelopments to progress on existing school sites which already provide good connectivity to other schools within the city and to the shared facilities. The core new builds would not replicate the facilities provided through the shared hub and thus significant savings on individual school builds could be realised.

2.3 Aims and Objectives

The evolution of 'Armagh – a Learning City' has the potential to deliver significant educational, societal, health, economic and regeneration benefits.

The **overall aim** of the project is to:

"Establish Armagh as a Shared Learning City in which all citizens have access to educational opportunity at every age, to every age."

Underpinning this overall aim is a wide range of intended **objectives**:

- **Better Outcomes:**
 - The creation of '**Centre of Excellence**' and a model of sharing which will promote maximum academic achievement and skills development for all;
 - Enhanced professional development opportunity for teachers;

- Collaboration between education, enterprise, community to evolve best practice (“next practice”) and more efficient and effective delivery;
- **A Shared City embodying:**
 - High moral values and a faith based ethos for learning and development;
 - Tolerance, respect for diversity and inclusiveness and promotion of opportunities for young people with special needs;
 - The creation of natural relationships among pupils, parents, teachers and the community through an ethos and environment shaped by shared education;
- **Increased Access:**
 - Enhanced opportunity for participation, achievement and excellence in the sports, culture and the arts and enterprise by students and the community;
 - The offering of a broader ‘community curriculum’ focused on the learner and not on any individual provider;
 - The opportunity through significant critical mass of pupil numbers to secure tertiary education provision in Armagh City;
 - The provision of greater family learning and participation opportunities across all age and ability spectrums;
- **Regeneration:**
 - The regeneration of Armagh City and the promotion of it as a place to live, work, play and invest with state of the art facilities and a fully integrated ‘community’; and
- **Increased Efficiency:**
 - The realisation of resource savings through an agreed model of collaboration.

2.4 Management Type of Schools

The schools partnering in this expression of interest are representative of all sectors within Armagh including controlled, voluntary grammar, maintained, integrated and special educational needs. Represented in percentage terms of the total population of the City’s schools (excluding further education and the private sector) 48% of all pupils are in the Maintained Sector, 32% are in the Voluntary Grammar Sector, 13% in the Controlled Sector, 2% are in Special Needs Education and 4% in the Integrated Sector. The schools partnering in this expression of interest are set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Partners

Management Type	School	Pupil Numbers*
Voluntary Grammar	Royal School Armagh	706
	Royal School Armagh Preparatory	43
	St. Patrick’s Grammar School (including St. Brigid’s High School	1,004
Maintained	St. Catherine’s College (including Irish Medium school)	1,182
	Mount Saint Catherine’s Primary School	219
	Christian Brothers Primary School	408
	St. Malachy’s Primary School	209
	St. Patrick’s Primary School	448

	Dreincourt Primary School	20
Controlled	City of Armagh High School	260
	Armstrong Primary School	490
Special School	Lisanally Special School	100
Further Education	Southern Regional College (Armagh Campus)	1300
Integrated	Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School	219
Private Sector	Crèche ² /After Schools Facilities	N/A
TOTAL		6,608

*2013 enrolment numbers.

2.5 Educational Benefits

The sharing of expertise through teaching and leadership resource, the evolution and acceptance of best practice and the collaboration of teachers and pupils at all levels combined with access to and delivery through leading edge facilities, has the potential to deliver significant additional educational benefits. In particular, partners are strongly encouraged and incentivised by the opportunity to:

- Enhance the curriculum offering in academic and vocational study areas;
- Raise the standard of teaching across all partners;
- Increase participation in academic life, sports, culture and enterprise;
- Raise the expectation and achievement level of both pupils and parents from all socio-economic backgrounds;
- Encourage and deliver life-long learning for all; and
- Ultimately enhance academic, vocational and sporting achievement.

Educational benefits are supported by research literature which strongly suggests that collaborative activity between schools is widely recognised as activity which is directly beneficial for schools. In effect the data exploring this relationship appears to define school improvement in a broad sense. By working in partnership and drawing upon more institutional interdependence, the schools in Armagh intend to continue to focus energies on school improvement. A number of thematic areas emerge:

- **Pupil attainment, engagement and performance** (Chapman et al. 2009; Chapman et al 2011; Hadfield et al. 2006; CUREE, 2005; Hadfield and Chapman, 2009; Chapman and Muijs, 2013)
- **School leadership** (Ofsted, 2011; Hargreaves, 2010; Kubiak and Bertram 2010; Chapman et al. 2008; Hadfield and Joplin 2012)
- **Teacher development, performance and motivation** (Hadfield et al. 2006; Harris and Jones, 2010; Chapman, 2008; Ofsted, 2011; Muijs, et al. 2010; Chapman et al. 2009; Hadfield and Jopling, 2012; Ainscow et al. 2006)
- Offering wider **curricular choice** and broadening opportunity (Pring, 2009; Muijs et al. 2010)

Others demonstrable benefits of collaboration and networking include: motivating disengaged and at risk students (Hadfield et al. 2006); helping schools cope with challenging circumstances (Ainscow et al. 2006);

² See letter of support at Appendix III.

combatting negative effects of competition (Hodgson and Spours, 2006; Ainscow and West, 2006); and helping schools make more effective use of resources by providing economies of scale. Research from Bell et al. (2006) argues that collaborative arrangements between schools tend to be more effective when there is specific and focused goal driving partnership. By extension, Chapman and Muijs, (2013) demonstrate that impact is strongest in federated arrangements which had an explicit focus on student performance and school performance.

The proposed centres of excellence will be designed and delivered in a manner promoting participation and excellence. Young people will be offered opportunities not currently available within any single school and through interaction and learning across all sectors it is the belief of partner schools that the 'equilibrium' of participation and achievement for the City will increase.

2.6 Societal Benefits

The proposal for '*Armagh – A Learning City*' is not purely founded on the aspiration for educational benefits. Rather the potential to deliver much greater positive impact in terms of wider society is envisaged as a direct result of the investment proposed. The evolution of a shared education model in itself has the potential to deliver benefits far beyond the classroom in terms of: respect for diversity, tolerance and understanding of background and belief; free expression of culture and social interaction.

The establishment of the infrastructure associated with the shared learning also has the potential to offer significant societal benefit in terms of: the creation of truly non-contested shared spaces for all to enjoy; the regeneration of Armagh City with the potential for road network improvements; the enhancement of the economic and development appeal of Armagh city on a regional and national scale; the creation of employment and the opportunity to significantly to shape the future of Armagh City, its environs, its people and its communities.

The '**layered model**' (See Figure 1.1) upon which the concept for '*Armagh – A Learning City*' is formed provides the opportunity for benefits to flow beyond the primary educational partners to the wider sectoral interests in Armagh. As an example: the opportunity exists to establish best practice ("next practice"?) through collaboration in applied research by local industry and schools, with use of state of the art facilities within centres of excellence.

As noted earlier the evolution of a shared education model in Armagh City is deemed fundamental to the emergence of a truly 'shared future' for all people in the City and beyond. Engagement among partner schools originated and continues to be founded on the principle of a 'shared future'. What has become apparent to all however is the impact of shared education will be much greater than bringing all communities together.

The concept of shared education is supported by a number of theoretical perspectives including: inter-group contact theory which explores the context and the quality of contact between pupils who engage in shared educational activities. This body of literature (Hughes, 2010; Hughes et al. 2012; Hughes, 2012; Hughes 2012a; Hughes and Donnelly, 2012; Hughes and Donnelly, 2012a) indicates a number of important findings (i) separate schooling can be divisive whereby minimal and superficial contact between pupils can lead to physical and cultural isolation (ii) sharing offers a potentially more effective contact model than previous educational initiatives (iii) sharing offers significant community relations benefits and improved intergroup relations and (iv) pupils who engaged in shared education demonstrated reduced levels of anxiety; demonstrated positive action and more trust towards one another other.

2.7 Parent and Pupil Support

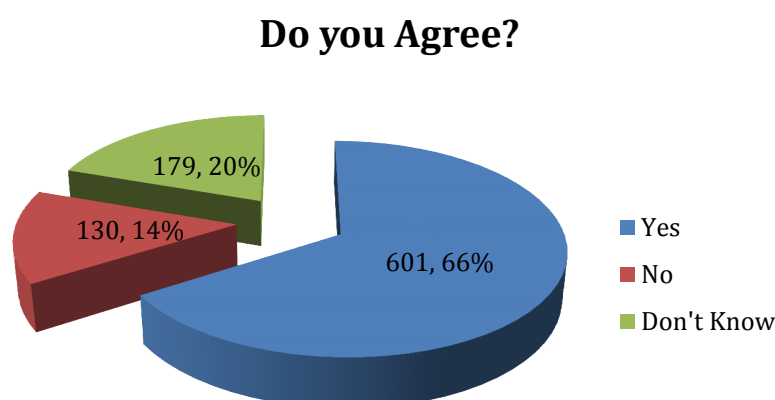
The schools within the shared education endeavour commissioned a research study to assess views from parents and the community of Armagh with regard to proposed shared learning opportunities in the City.

The research was undertaken by LucidTalk and collected views from over 900 people across Armagh from both Roman Catholic and Protestant community backgrounds. The following question was posed to respondents:

“The Consensus for Post Primary Education proposes that post-primary schools in the Armagh City and district share both physical and teaching resources as part of a shared campus ‘Educational Village’, whilst also maintaining the independent educational ethos, selective/non-selective criteria, and character of each institution. Do you agree that the above plan is the best approach?” [LucidTalk Survey, 2013]

The responses are outlined in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Survey Responses



Two thirds of all respondents indicated a preference for shared education in Armagh. Whilst not able to directly relate these results to the parent and pupil population of Armagh, the sampling techniques applied should appropriately reflect this grouping also.

2.8 Location

The proposal for ‘*Armagh – A Learning City*’ is strengthened by the availability of lands within the boundaries of Armagh City which provide excellent linkages to existing educational establishments, the City Centre and the local road and transport network. The current proposal is based on the development of centres of excellence at land referred to as the ‘Mullinure Lands’. A key first task of the Project Board when established will be to review and appraise other site options within the City. The Mullinure lands are strategically and centrally located in Armagh, in close proximity to existing post primary and primary schools and with further planned connectivity generated by new link road investment. See **Appendix I** for an outline of the site alongside the existing school estate. **Appendix III** includes a letter from the commercial agents responsible for the sale of the land, outlining its availability for this proposed use. This proposal and other sites will be subject to a full site investment appraisal.

2.9 Existing Sharing

Shared education is a long established concept in Armagh and is very much accepted as a core element of educational delivery within the City. Sharing has been extended and formalised in recent years through the Armagh Area Learning Community (ALC). The success of the Armagh ALC demonstrates how effective collaboration between schools can help deliver a broader educational offering for all.

Established shared learning experiences in Armagh exist through:

- The St. Catherine's College and St. Patrick's Grammar Consortium which has been successful in offering a shared learning experience to pupils in both schools for more than 30 years;
- The St Catherine's College, St. Patrick's Grammar, City of Armagh High School and the Royal School ALC which includes shared learning experiences across a number of subject areas including construction, French, Irish, Spanish, Home Economics, Music and Sports Studies, Health and Social Care. The ALC also extends to a number of additional activities and initiatives including collaboration between St. Patrick's Grammar and St. Brigid's High School in Home Economics and Music at Key Stage Three;
- Twilight provision in computer aided design (CAD) and journalism for students from City of Armagh High School, St. Catherine's College and St. Patrick's Grammar;
- Engagement across schools in teacher CPD activity, sporting tournaments and training and development initiatives, reading partnerships;
- Extra-curricular, social and sporting events are often organised across schools e.g. school formals, sporting tournaments etc. As an example, a single GAA Team was established combining pupils from St. Patrick's Grammar, City of Armagh High School, St. Brigid's High School and the Royal School to compete in a tournament held in San Francisco in 2009³;
- An Armagh Learning Choir has been established with representation across all post-primary schools to perform during the forthcoming Giro d'Italia cycle race this May;
- Lisanally Special School collaboration currently involves links with City of Armagh High School, St Patrick's High School, Keady, St Catherine's College, Armstrong Primary School and Mount St Catherine's Primary School. This is focused on activities such as 'All Sets' Music and Dance Workshops; academic sharing and social integration; Health and Social Care; Sentinus Day and Link courses offered as part of the Schools Partnership Programme;
- City of Armagh High School and in particular Learning Support and Autism Support Centre has strong links with Southern Regional College and Lisanally Special School resulting in pupil learning exchange between each schools;
- Primary schools have access to and use of science labs, ICT facilities and sports facilities; and
- A range of extended shared opportunities are in development including twilight GCSE study between St. Catherine's College and St. Patrick's Grammar, Music links between St. Patrick's Grammar, St. Catherine's College and Lisanally Special School, shared Health and Social Care delivery by St. Catherine's College, City of Armagh High School and the Royal School;
- Southern Regional College also supports schools in the Armagh Area Learning Community in the delivery of the entitlement framework, these include:
 - City of Armagh High School
 - Markethill High School
 - St Brigid's High School
 - St Catherine's College
 - St Patrick's High Schools Keady
 - St Patrick's Grammar School
 - Royal School Armagh
 - Lisanally Special School

2.10 Area Planning Context

The vision for '*Armagh – A Learning City*' has to an extent been born of the area planning study for post-primary provision in Armagh. The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) Area Plan clearly identified the need for greater collaboration particularly in the context of continued Controlled provision within Armagh City. Undeniably, the realisation of the Area Planning conclusion and recommendations

³ See hyperlink for video.

encouraged schools within the City to come together to find innovative and workable solutions to protect and grow post-primary provision across all sectors.

To date, collaboration between the City of Armagh High School and the other post-primary providers within the city, most notably the Royal School has helped sustain its position.

3. Constraints

3.1 Constraints

The '*significant distance already travelled along the road towards the advancement of the concept of shared education*' referred to earlier has allowed the vision for '*Armagh – A Learning City*' to evolve within broad boundaries, without the instance of any significant constraints. The partners involved however understand the importance of progressing the vision with understanding and acknowledgement of any constraints. In particular, considerable work has been advanced to this point which has helped mitigate/reduce potential constraints, including:

- Ongoing and coordinated engagement among key stakeholders; and
- A development of a concept masterplan by Armagh City and District Council.

The collaborative engagement of all stakeholders throughout the process has demonstrated an overwhelming commitment to achieve shared education in Armagh through the creation of a Learning City. This vision will be underpinned by strong leadership and a strategic investment framework which will focus development of new facilities whilst also enhancing existing facilities.

Constraints upon the scale and extent of shared education may however arise as plans are further advanced. In particular the degree to which individual educational providers are willing to share students, teachers, facilities etc. will need to be formally agreed. Such constraints are not deemed prohibitive to the overall success of the shared education proposal in delivering far reaching educational and societal benefits for Armagh and beyond. It is evident that all partners want to see significant enhancement and enrichment of sharing and collaboration.

The current proposal based on Mullinure land that has been subject to an initial feasibility study through the work on a Concept Masterplan, commissioned by Armagh City and District Council. The Concept Masterplan was able to successfully align the vision of an '*Armagh – A Learning City*' with the planning context, site characteristics and development potential of the Mullinure lands. In doing so however it did acknowledge some development constraints relating to this site which include the challenging topography consistent with the wider Armagh environment; absence of specific land zoning on aspects the site; the need for supporting road infrastructure investment and the need to preserve ecology on the site.

The intention to establish a Learning City with core schools remaining on existing sites but accessing shared facilities implies the need for improved transportation corridors and methods. Connectivity is currently good but to promote and underpin a greater degree of sharing it is envisaged that a Transport Masterplan will need to be developed. Early discussions have mentioned the installation of a roaming bus service between schools and shared facilities and the Council has further outlined road improvements planned for the City. Based on early work and ongoing commitment from all involved, connectivity and travel within the shared model should not be a major constraint.

A key first task of the Project Board when established will be to review and appraise other site options within the City.

4. Stakeholder Issues

4.1 Key Stakeholders

An outline of the key partners and an indication of their commitment to the project are below.

- **Royal School Armagh** – the Royal School will remain as an academically selective school and will seek financial investment in core facilities on its existing site which is on the boundary of the Mullinure lands and allows good connectivity to proposed developments within a shared ‘Centre of Excellence’. The Royal School will continue to offer boarding facilities which in the context of *Armagh – A Learning City* has the potential to increase the cultural exchange among all learners with pupils from across the globe boarding in Armagh and participating in a shared education programme;
- **St Patrick’s Grammar** – It has been approved by the Education Minister that St. Brigid’s will merge with St. Patrick’s, paving the way for the establishment of an all-ability, 11-18 school for boys. St Patrick’s at present have indicated a preference to develop a new school build to accommodate the increased pupil numbers on their existing site;
- **St. Catherine’s College** – St. Catherine’s College is an all ability, all girls, 11-19 school. The school encompasses a growing co-educational Srúth, which provides the post primary curriculum bilingually and has grown substantially from its first intake of 10 in 2002 to over 200 in September 2013. St. Catherine’s is pursuing a new build option on their existing site, reflecting the strong links the school holds with the local community in the west of the city;
- **City of Armagh High School** – the High School will seek to consolidate its position in Armagh City building on its collaboration with the Royal School. The SELB will continue to work with the school and the other partner schools to develop plans for future provision including extending access to the Learning Support Unit⁴ to all schools in the city.
- **Lisanally Special School** – The Special School is presently located within the core of the proposed shared facilities at Mullinure and is central to the future shared learning plans. Young people in Lisanally Special School will be offered opportunities to access curricular and extra-curricular offerings through mainstream schools and other partners e.g. access to broader shared curriculum offerings and state of the art sports and leisure facilities. In particular, opportunities for post 19 students will be sought among the partners through work experience, apprenticeships and social enterprise. The creation of a shared model of education with Lisanally Special School at its core will be instrumental in integrating the School and it’s pupils within the community of Armagh from early years onwards;
- **Southern Regional College (SRC), Armagh Campuses** – The SRC is currently advancing plans to develop a new consolidated facility for the Armagh Campus on lands along the boundary of the proposed shared site (Mullinure lands). It is hoped this development will serve as an early mover in the shared education endeavour for Armagh City. Once established the SRC has indicated that the shared education model with associated centres of excellence may provide additional support for the delivery of professional and technical training;

- **Armstrong Primary School** – The Armstrong School is presently located along the site boundary, adjacent to the Royal School and has expressed a strong commitment and desire to be part of a shared learning experience within the city; and
- **Saints and Scholars Primary School** – Saints and Scholars has indicated a desire to relocate to the proposed shared site and enter into a meaningful programme of sharing with other schools across the city. A private day care/after schools provider has also indicated a desire to relocate alongside Saints and Scholars on a shared site. The Fun 4U Club is already providing day care and after schools care for children across the schools estate in Armagh and a location on a shared site would significantly increase the accessibility and convenience of such provision going forward (see **Appendix III**).

In accordance with an underpinning principle for *'Armagh – A Learning City'*, investment in core school/college facilities will not replicate facilities provided at shared centres. Rather partners commit to further working together to shape, develop and use enhanced facilities within centres of excellence. It may also be noted that at the time of making this submission there is also strong positive interest from the remaining primary schools⁴ based within the city, higher education providers and the private sector. Delivering this vision will require significant leadership, proof of concept and development of appropriate governance/arrangements. Fortuitously a number of key drivers offer early opportunity to create the nucleus for centres of excellence' and include the planned leisure dual use investment by the Council, as well as planned capital developments by SRC on the proposed site.

4.2 Consultation

The submission of an expression of interest for *'Armagh – A Learning City'* is the culmination of long series of structured and genuine consultations with all relevant stakeholders since August 2012. St Catherine's College, while not associated with the earlier proposal, would now express interest and support for the current vision. In particular:

- The launch of a public campaign and website seeking views on the concept of a shared education model in Armagh City;
- A Masterplan for the Mullinure Lands commissioned by Armagh City and District Council in May 2013; the development of which involved consultation with schools, lands owners and relevant statutory agencies (Planning Service, Roads Service, Southern Health and Social Care Trust);
- A public information evening in the Marketplace Theatre to which all interested members of the public were invited in June 2013. The evening provided an opportunity for project partners to share their commitment towards a shared education programme, outline the nature of the concept evolving and seek views and challenges from the audience;
- The establishment of a Steering Group including representatives of all partners which has continued to meet on a frequent basis to evolve the concept for shared education in Armagh City and ultimately to submit this expression of interest;
- An Education Symposium was held on the 10th January 2014, at which all relevant partners and key stakeholders to the concept of a shared education vision in Armagh were invited. The Symposium which was attended by over 100 people offered an opportunity to hear experiences from principals, staff and pupils involved in the Shared Education Programme (SEP) supported through Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and for principles, staff and pupils from the Armagh schools to work through key aspects of a shared education model for Armagh; and
- A visit to Armagh to discuss the vision for shared education in the City by the Consul General at the US Consulate in Belfast, Gregory Burton.

⁴ St. Patrick's Primary School, St. Malachy's Primary School, Mount St. Catherine's Primary School, Christian Brothers Primary School and Drelincourt Primary.

The primary partners have worked, and continue to work closely in a concerted effort to see the delivery of a vision for shared education in Armagh City.

4.3 Outstanding Stakeholder Issues

All partners to this proposal are committed to its delivery. The definition of all aspects of the sharing model are however, not yet well defined. It is crucial that recognition of the significant positive strides that have been made is given, alongside the additional investments in time and finance required to allow plans to be progressed and defined further. Much work remains to be done among all stakeholders if the vision in its entirety for Armagh is to be realised.

Should this submission be positively received and accepted by the Department of Education (DE) early work with all partners will be advanced to:

- **Define ‘Community Curriculum’** – partners working together to identify and define how the curriculum offer can be streamlined and extended at different Key Stages to focus on increasing access and excellence for the learner, regardless of the institution to which they belong. This has the potential strongly to influence the evolution of a joint 14-19 strategy through the combined reviews underway by DE and the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) into the future of GCSE/A Level, Apprenticeships and Youth Training; and
- **Evolve the centres of excellence’ Model** – further define and design the curriculum and community offer from within the shared facilities, acknowledging the earlier movers potential offered by Armagh City and District Council and SRC. To help design the shared facilities, research will be undertaken across the globe to identify globally leading educational facilities that are recognised as offering potential for excellence.
- **Further Site Investigation and Appraisal** – to further assess the feasibility of all potential sites within Armagh City for shared learning facilities

4.4 Endorsement

Please see **Appendix II** for endorsements from the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB), Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), Royal School Armagh, St. Patrick’s Grammar Armagh, City of Armagh High School, Southern Regional College, Lisnally Special School, Armstrong Primary School, Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School and Armagh City and District Council. In addition the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) has provided a letter of support to this submission.

5. Management and Implementation

5.1 Project Management Arrangements

The importance of appropriate governance particularly given the complexity of stakeholder involvement in this proposal is well understood. The proposed management arrangements, operating within the guiding principles referred to above will seek to:

- Acknowledge and build from the positive engagement and commitment established by all schools in the partnership;
- Align with the principle of sharing through the establishment of a coherent and structured governance model allowing all relevant stakeholders to understand and inform the concept and benefit from its realisation;
- Learn and embed good practice from other projects including the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus and look outwardly nationally and internationally through research and exploratory visits;
- Acknowledge the importance of and thus provide a voice to young people;
- Provide clear mechanisms for engaged and timely decision making and for resolution to operational issues; and
- Establish and maintain ownership of the Shared Education vision with the local schools themselves.

The proposed project management arrangements include:

- **A Project Board** – tasked with providing advice as necessary but ultimately ensuring the vision for shared education in Armagh is realised. This will be led by the Department of Education (DE), or its representative, and will include a representative from each educational institution within the partnership, SELB, CCMS, Armagh City and District Council and two local community representatives (voluntary, non-affiliated members representing the wider Armagh community). Decision making rights will be agreed among members thus allowing the Board to take key strategic and management decisions in respect of the project. The requirement to establish a Trust will be examined by the Board in accordance with potential acquisition of lands;
- **A Quality Assurance Board** – this forum will include representatives of the Boards of Governors of each partner school/college, whose role will be to quality assure proposals and recommendations prior to formal submission to the Project Board for a decision;
- **Working Groups** – combined by school principals and other stakeholders as relevant who are responsible for bringing ideas, developing concepts and advancing design. It is expected that distinct Working Groups will be established with defined lifespans to address issues such as: timetabling; payment mechanism; community curriculum, shared learning programme and stakeholder engagement;
- **A Project Manager** – to date a considerable level of effort has been expended on moving the shared education concept further in Armagh City. It will be important should the project secure the formal backing of DE that a full-time Project Manager be appointed to oversee the concept from evolution to reality; and

- **A Youth Council** – bringing together young people from across Armagh and across the partner institutions to discuss and recommend ways forward on the model of sharing.

5.2 Consultancy Support

It is envisaged that consultancy and professional support will be required to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project. An integrated financial and technical design team will be required to develop the case for change and design options for a shared education model in Armagh City.

Other consultancy / professional expertise may be required in the form of:

- Professional legal advice to resolve the partnering of separate legal entities;
- Procurement advice to support the procurement of professional expertise; and
- Public relations to support the comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement which will be necessary to ensure the Learning City is aligned with and informed by input from all relevant stakeholders.

5.3 Legal or Contractual Issues

Separate legal entities are involved in the proposed partnership and in particular the legal title and control of shared facilities will have to be agreed across all partners. Furthermore the operation of shared facilities, liabilities and costs across all partners will need to be agreed based on an equitable apportionment model. Acquisition of the proposed Mullinure Lands will need to be resolved early on to secure its future use for shared education purposes.

5.4 Outstanding Management / Implementation Considerations

As the vision for shared education in Armagh City evolves, so too does the range of schools and stakeholders who wish to become involved. Considerable engagement across a wide range of schools has taken place in advance of this expression of interest and key partners have been identified. It will be important that any additional partners are identified and formally engage in the proposal from this point forward. Equally for those already engaged and committed it will be important to maintain their commitment as the proposal advances.

The current partners recognise the importance of formally planning for the delivery of the Learning City and have identified key activities to be delivered over the coming months. Table 5.1 outlines.

Table 5.1 – Implementation Plan – Immediate Next Steps

Activity	Due Date
Approval of Expression of Interest (Subject to Approval by DE)	June 2014
Formally establish Project Governance arrangements, including appointment of Project Manager	July 2014
Further site identification and investigation	December 2014
Identify best practice in educational design to inform centres of excellence	January 2015
Develop and agree 'Community Curriculum' across age spectrum	March 2015
Develop Outline Business Case (OBC) and Technical Design (with associated transportation plans)	June 2015
Acquire land (or options)	September 2015
Stakeholder engagement and communication	Ongoing

6. Costs, Benefits and Risks

6.1 Costs

It is difficult at this strategic outline stage to identify with any certainty the costs for the proposal. In particular detailed design of the shared facilities will be necessary to allow costs to accordingly be measured. It is envisaged that this would form part of an outline business case (OBC).

For the purposes of this application, costs have been classified within two phases:

- **Phase 1: Outline Business Case** – costs required to advance the proposal for shared education in Armagh City to the next stage (assumed as submission of an OBC); and
- **Phase 2: Development** – potential costs associated with the development of the shared education proposal.

Phase 1 – Outline Business Case (OBC)

Indicative costs for the period to the submission of OBC (assumed to cover period July 2014 – March 2015) are outlined in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 – Phase 1 Indicative Cost

Cost Category	Cost Description	Cost (£)	Detail
Revenue	Project Manager	£60,000	£60,000 per annum
Costs	Project GAE	£10,000	To cover general expenses including office running costs, venue hire, advertising, procurement etc.
	Accommodation	£0	It is proposed that the Project Manager would be accommodated in existing accommodation.
	Consultancy – Outline Business Case (Financial and Technical)	£150,000	To secure an external team of professionals to develop a NIGEAE compliant OBC and advance design to RIBA Stage B, including Transport Masterplan.
	Best Practice Research	£10,000	To cover travel and research fees.
	Legal Advice	£25,000	Allowing for potential legal title issues and acquisition of land.
Total Revenue Costs		£250,000	
Capital Costs	Land Acquisition	£1,500,000 (indicative only)	Early discussions with land owners have been positive, however there remains a risk that the land is developed for alternative means or sold. It is therefore proposed that subject to the approval of this application that acquisition options for the land could be advanced alongside the development of the OBC.
Total Capital Costs		£1,500,000	

Phase 2 – Development

It is much more difficult to estimate with any degree of certainty what the costs of the proposed development might be. A range of new facilities are proposed however the technical scale and design of these has not yet been determined. Similarly it is envisaged that several individual partner schools are in need of redevelopment. It is thus envisaged that the capital cost associated with the Armagh City proposal could be significant i.e. in excess of £100 million accounting for new school development for five primary and post primary schools and a range of new shared and enhanced facilities.

Financial savings are expected to be delivered through collaboration between all the schools. In particular it is agreed by partners will define and agree central sports, arts and science resources that will be provided for within the centres of excellence.

6.2 Non-Monetary Benefits

Significant non-monetary benefits are anticipated from this proposal including:

- Enhanced educational offering and achievement for young people of Armagh area;
- Social and economic regeneration of Armagh City;
- Improved community relations across the City and beyond;
- Greater access to more and better sports and recreation facilities for the school children and people of Armagh, helping to promote participation, development and achievement in sport;
- Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- Enhanced opportunities for young people in Armagh through greater linkages between schools and employers, aided by a growing skills base in the City;
- Job creation both through short-term development works but also longer terms as Armagh establishes itself as a powerful skills base;
- The development of a 'shared space' for all; and
- The establishment of a reputation and brand associated with Armagh as a learning city and a city of Saints and Scholars.

6.3 Risks

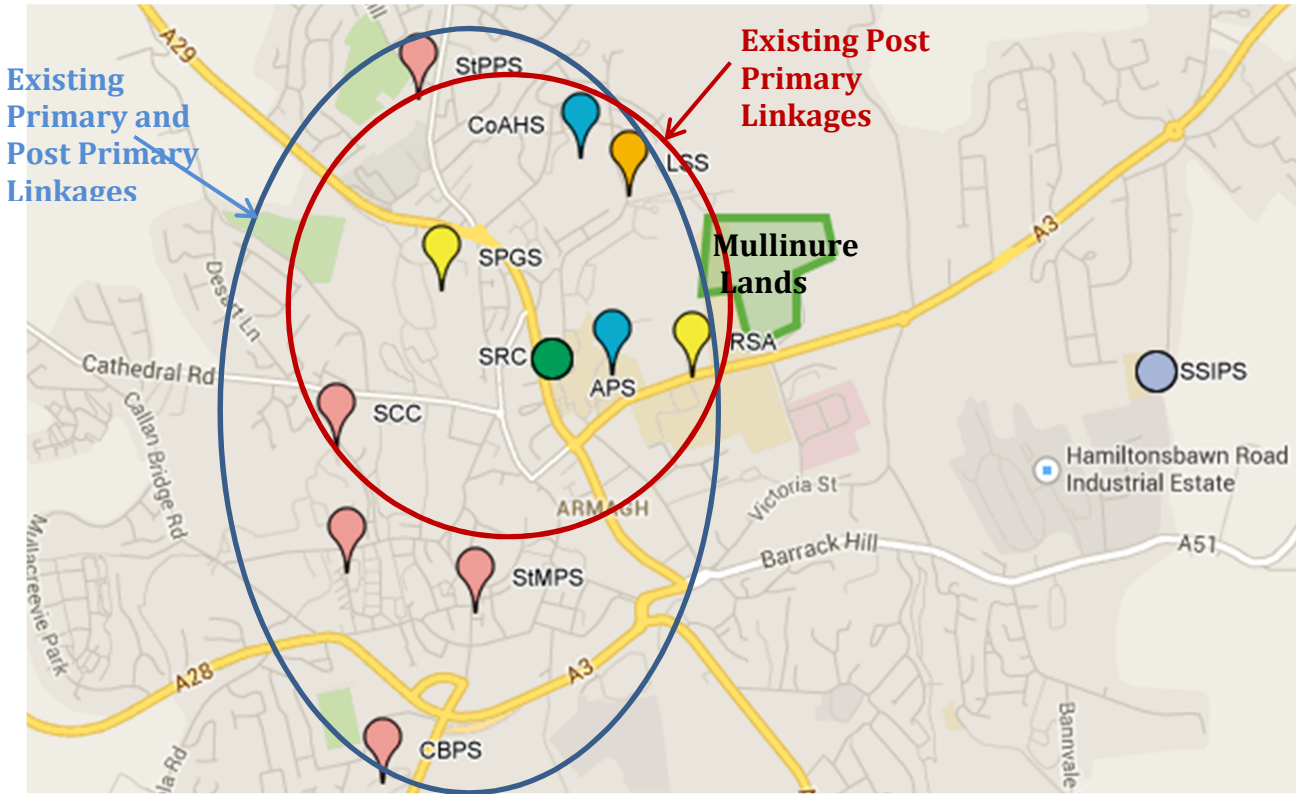
The achievement of an ambition for shared education in Armagh City will be complex. Along the way risks will present and will need to be mitigated so as never to undermine the journey towards the end vision. At this early stage, high level risks have been identified alongside mitigating actions. These are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 – Risks

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Strategy
One or more of the schools move away from the commitment to shared education in Armagh City	High	Low	Continue to engage closely and routinely with all key partners and provide a forum within which partners can express concerns in an open and transparent manner. Establish formal commitment to the shared vision, potentially through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
A proposed site for shared facilities at Mullinure, become unavailable.	High	Low	Armagh City and District Council should continue to engage with land owners and move as quickly as possible to formally secure options for the purchase of the land.

APPENDIX I

Armagh Map – Existing Schools Connectivity and Mullinure Lands



Key:

Controlled Sector	APS – Armstrong Primary School
	CoAHS – City of Armagh High School
Voluntary Grammar	RSA – Royal School Armagh
	SPGS – St. Patrick’s Grammar School
Maintained	CBPS – Christian Brothers Primary School
	MstCPS – Mount Saint Catherine’s Primary School
	StMPS – St. Malachy’s Primary School
	SCC – St. Catherine’s College
	StPPS – St. Patrick’s Primary School
Integrated	SSIPS – Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School
Special School	LSS – Lisanally Special School
Further Education	SRC – Southern Regional College

APPENDIX II

Managing Authority Endorsement

I endorse this expression of interest as a reflection of our intention to work together in the evolution of 'Armagh – A Learning City'. I am committed to ongoing engagement with all other partners and relevant stakeholders to advance the development and realisation of 'Armagh – A Learning City'.

Managing Authority **Southern Education and Library Board (SELB)**

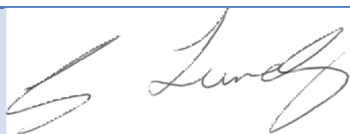
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Position

Date

Managing Authority **Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)**

Signature

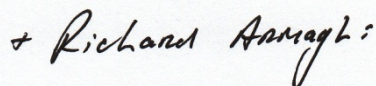


Position Deputy Chief Executive

Date 31 March 2014

Managing Authority **Royal School Armagh, Board of Governors**

Signature



Position Chairman of the Board of Governors

Date 31 March 2014

Managing Authority **St. Patrick's Grammar Armagh, Board of Governors**

Signature



Position

SECRETARY TO BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Date

31. 03. 2014


Managing Authority **St. Catherine's College, Board of Governors**

Signature





Position	Principal
Date	31 March 2014


Managing Authority	City of Armagh High School, Board of Governors
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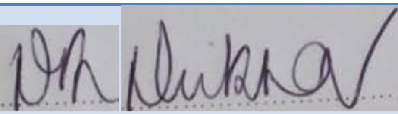
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Position	Principal
Date	31 March 2014

Managing Authority	Southern Regional College
Signature	
Position	Chief Executive
Date	31 March 2014

Managing Authority	Lisanally Special School, Board of Governors
Signature	
Position	Principal
Date	31 March 2014

Managing Authority	Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School, Board of Governors
Signature	
Position	Chairman of Board of Governors
Date	31 March 2014

Managing Authority	Armstrong Primary School, Board of Governors
Signature	
Position	Principal
Date	31 March 2014

Managing Authority	Armagh City and District Council
Signature	
Position	Chief Executive
Date	31 March 2014

APPENDIX III
Letters of Support

GL/AR
25 March 2014
Mr Gavin Boyd
Chief Executive
SELB
3 Charlemont Place
Armagh
BT61 9AZ

Dear Gavin

Re: Armagh – proposal for a Shared Learning City - Shared Education Campuses Programme

I write in respect of the above to advise that the proposal has been considered carefully by CCMS. It is considered that the project has significant merit in principle and that, subject to agreement with the SELB, CCMS is open to committing appropriate resources to support the Maintained schools in Armagh and to work with the SELB and other stakeholders to develop a future potential bid for shared education facilities across the city.

This offer of support is given under the following conditions:

- The role of Senior Responsible Officer for the CCMS schools in the project will be exercised by CCMS;
- The proposal will be reviewed at each stage and will be brought back to the Trustees and CCMS for endorsement before moving to any further stage within the project; and
- That an agreed Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement will be developed and approved for the project between the Trustees and the Department of Education.

Yours sincerely



Gerry Lundy
Deputy Chief Executive

CC: Mr P Carlin, Principal/Mrs D McDonald, Principal
Very Rev P McAnenly, Trustee
Very Rev E Sweeney, Chair of Governors
Mr P Brannigan, Chair of Governors
Archbishop E Martin
Mr J Briggs, CEO Armagh City Council



Principal: Mrs Julie Macartney B Ed (PGH)

It takes a world of differences to make a different world

**Saints and Scholars
Integrated Primary and Nursery School**

Killuney Park Road, Portadown Road
Armagh BT61 9HG

Telephone: 028 3751 0113

Facsimile: 028 3752 2300

Email: jmacartney985@c2kni.net

Dear Sir or Madam,

Fun 4U is a registered Child Care Provider which is located within the Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School and Nursery Class site. Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School and Nursery Class have established an effective public/private partnership with the aim of providing strong bonds to enhance childcare provision in a safe, secure, stimulating, integrated and caring environment.

Fun 4U is a registered out of school provider which presently provides childcare during term time from 2:00-6:00pm and from 8:00am-6:00pm during all school closures.

The Board of Governors of Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School and Nursery Class support the relocation of Fun 4U to the proposed Education Village and request that they are relocated within any new site proposed for Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School and Nursery Class.

Yours faithfully

David Millie
(Chairman)

www.saintsandscholarsips.org



**International
School Award**
2010-2013



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**



Fun 4U Club
(Out of School Care Provider)
78 Gosford Road,
Markethill,
Co. Armagh.
BT60 1RH
Phone 028 3755 2713
E-mail: fun4uclub@tesco.net

Dear Sir or Madam

- Fun 4U club is a registered Child Care Provider; our ethos is to provide a safe, secure, stimulating and caring environment for all children. We are members of Play Board NI, who are the lead agency for promoting the child's right to play. We are presently engaged in a well established Public / Private partnership with Saints & Scholars Integrated Primary School. This partnership has grown and strengthened year on year creating strong bonds with our working parents their children and the school's staff and Governors.
- Provision at present.
Registered Out of School Care Monday to Friday term time, 2pm to 6pm.
School closures Mon to Fri 8am to 6pm.
Full summer scheme during July & August.
Available for children 5 to 12 years of age.
- Cross community.
We accommodate children from Saints & Scholars IPS and from various other surrounding Primary and Secondary Schools, these have included:
Armstrong PS.
Drelincourt PS.
Saint Patrick PS.
Lisnadill PS.
Hamiltonsbawn PS.
Saint Catherines College.
City of Armagh High School.
- Flexibility
Full and part time spaces.
Half day sessions available.
No retainer fees imposed.
Pay only for the days booked.
Free collection service for surrounding schools.
- Proposal
Relocate with Saints & Scholars IPS to the newly proposed Educational Village.
To expand and provide a full day care facility (0yrs to 5yrs) while retaining and developing the Out of School Care facility (5 to 12yrs).
This will provide working parents with the convenience of one drop off and collection point each working day, for all the children in their family, regardless of age.
Concentrating all their family child care needs in one location.

Pauline & Stephen Martin

Pauline Martin . Stephen Martin .
Fun 4U Club

Dear Julia,

Re Armagh Educational Village

I am writing on behalf of Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to indicate NICIE's support for the involvement of Saints and Scholars IPS in the Armagh educational village.

This is an innovative project which has the potential to transform educational performance in the Armagh area and to make a significant contribution to community relations.

Bringing together a range of schools of different management types, both primary and post primary, has the potential to create a model of educational excellence for the 21st century.

There will be obvious economic savings in such a campus. However the contribution to educational performance will be significant and important. The underachievement in our educational system, particularly as it affects protestant boys, is well documented. The proposed campus will raise aspirations and normalise the value of education for all by bringing together a diversity of schools, providing a social blend and a range of positive role models.

Armagh remains a town divided. The educational campus, embracing all types of school management and educating together all children from the town has the potential to play a significant role in healing division.

This proposed campus will benefit from collaboration across schools, sharing teaching expertise and resources and creating opportunities for children and young people to be share educational experiences.

NICIE will support this proposal in practical terms though offering training for staff involved through our Sharing Classrooms :Deepening Learning Project and our anti -bias training.

NICIE is pleased to register its support for the Armagh Educational Village proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Our Ref: SD/LB

25 March 2014

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E-mail: info@btwshiells.com

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

I would advise that negotiations are currently taking place regarding the sale/option to buy the land identified on the attached map from the Armstrong Family to Armagh City and District Council.

I/We are happy to confirm that the land that is available for sale for intended use of recreation, community and education land and the Armstrong Family remain enthusiastic to see the land put to this use.

I trust this brief note is satisfactory for your purposes at this stage, however, should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Kind regards

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stuart Draffin', written over a light blue horizontal line.

STUART DRAFFIN MRICS

Direct Line: 028 9028 9215
Email: sdraffin@btwshiells.com

Enc

Headmaster:

P. CRUTE, M.A., B.A., P.G.C.E.

Bursar:

S. T. H. McCONNELL, LL.M., M.B.A., F.C.I.S.

31 March 2014



THE ROYAL SCHOOL

ARMAGH

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Mr John Briggs
Chief Executive Officer
Armagh City and District Council
Gosford Place
Armagh

Dear Mr Briggs

"Armagh – A Learning City"
Expression of Interest to the Department of Education

We refer to the above document (which was received at 13:39hrs on 31 March 2014) and would make the following comments by way of a response.

The Royal School is proud to have been at the centre of the 'City of Saints and Scholars' for over four hundred years.

The document was considered by the Chair of Governors and a sub-committee of the Board and it was agreed that we offer our support for the broad principles which were outlined in the document, subject to the following conditions:

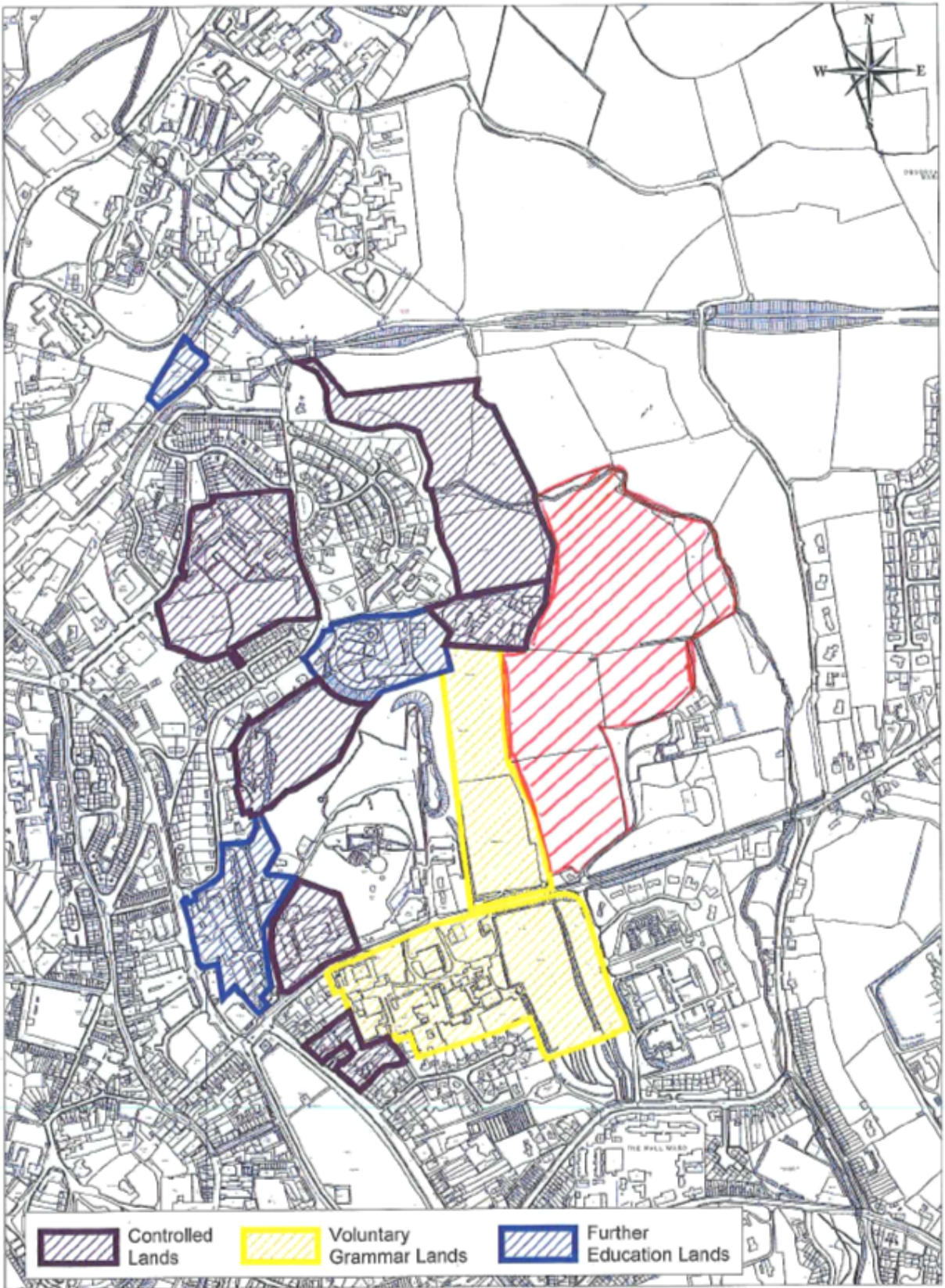
1. That the constitutions of the Project Board, Quality Assurance Board and Working Groups have equal representation from all sectors.
2. That there is a clear understanding that any decisions reached by any of the Boards cannot be taken by means of a simple majority.
3. That a clear rationale is established for the locations of hubs or centres of excellence and that no hub or centre of excellence will be sited without the full agreement of the schools involved.
4. That opportunity will be afforded to the Board of Governors of the Royal School Armagh to regularly review the proposals as the project progresses in order to make recommendations and apply alterations that are considered necessary.

Yours sincerely

Richard Clarke
..... Chairman of the Board of Governors
Archbishop Richard Clarke

Paul Crute
..... Headmaster
Paul Crute

Stephen McConnell
..... Secretary to the Board of Governors
Stephen McConnell



APPENDIX 2.1

6.4 Department of Education Feedback

The Department of Education concluded that the expression of interest for '*Armagh – A Learning City*' did not sufficiently meet the essential criteria for selection. In particular the following feedback needs to be addressed:

- Whilst there is acknowledgement of some education benefits, there was felt to be limited evidence of sharing together through proposed centres of excellence;
- There was no evidence of how primary schools involved would benefit;
- There is no reference to how the proposal for a centre of excellence in ICT, digital media and the creative media zone would link with the work of AMMA;
- Further work would be necessary with Southern Regional College to ensure no duplication in provision of further education; and
- There remain area planning issues to be resolved with the City of Armagh High School currently being under the enrolment threshold of 500 pupils for 11-16 (219 in 2013/14) and 100 in sixth form (19 in 2013/14) and with viable alternative schools in the locality for pupils. SELB would need to clarify the position for controlled provision in the area within an area planning context.

Against defined desirable criteria the following comments for consideration were made:

- Pupils would be required to travel up to 1.5 miles between shared facilities;
- A number of sharing practices between schools are for one-off events rather than over a sustained period of time and are often within sector rather than across the religious divide.

The feedback also questioned the extent to which a shared campus would be achieved given new build facilities for individual schools were being proposed.

It is timely and necessary in moving forward with a vision for shared education in Armagh that the feedback comments received be addressed. In summary the key considerations which remain to be resolved are:

- How can duplication in provision be avoided i.e. within further education and with existing facilities i.e. AMMA?
- What is the model of sharing - how will centres of excellence as proposed deliver shared learning opportunities?
- How can schools demonstrate a sustained commitment to sharing across educational and religious sectoral divides?
- What is the role of the primary sector in the proposals?
- What is the future position of City of Armagh High School given viability concerns and the area planning context?

APPENDIX 2.1

STAKEHOLDER GROUP RESPONSE PROCESS: EXTRACT

It is important that all key partners reflect on the commitments made through the Expression of Interest and the feedback received from the Department of Education. In doing so each partner should examine their continued commitment to the vision and to its delivery. Once reaffirmed a series of important practical next steps need to be agreed to move towards realisation.

This section sets out proposed next steps for discussion.

6.5 Reaffirm Commitment to the Vision

There is acknowledgement that the vision for shared education in Armagh City will require a journey with commitment and belief along the way from key partners. The vision outlined through the expression of interest whilst undoubtedly far-reaching was, nonetheless, underpinned by basic principles. It is necessary at this stage on the journey to reassess commitment and belief in these principles:

- **Clear Focus and Purpose** - Recognition and acceptance by all schools that *'Armagh – A Learning City'* – will have at its heart **centres of excellence** offering specialist facilities which are accessible by all schools and provide a focus for life-long learning, academic excellence, cultural expression, social interaction and educational collaboration enhanced by quality leisure and dual use facilities. It is accepted that there is a need for **a significant strategic core** linked to other potential **satellite centres** to provide the overall capacity for learning in the City. Implicitly all partner schools will, in advancing any future investment plans, consider and review what may best be delivered as a shared resource, re-align and refine their own proposals accordingly and make provision for the designation of such resource contributions as shared facilities;
[Clear Focus and Purpose – The model of Shared Education herein proposed rests upon
 - a) The **recognition and acceptance by all schools** that *'Armagh – A Learning City'* has at its heart **the sharing of 'Centres of Excellence'** offering specialist facilities to be accessed by all schools.
 - b) The recognition that, whereas use of such centres of excellence **will be largely associated with provision for Key Stages 4 and 5 of the NI curriculum**, but will also provide resources for life-long learning, academic excellence, cultural expression, social interaction and educational collaboration that are not limited by the requirements of the post primary curriculum and include enhanced quality leisure and dual use facilities.
 - c) The model also assumes provision of **a significant strategic core with associated satellite centres** that together enhance the overall capacity for learning in the City. All partner schools as stakeholders in the shared facilities will therefore, in advancing future development plans, take particular account of what may best be delivered as a shared resource - either part of the strategic core or as a satellite - and make appropriate budgetary accommodations in consultation with fellow stakeholders.]

Strong sense of place and identity - The centres of excellence will be recognisable as central, cohesive locations for all schools within the city and provide a **positive sense of place** where all individuals, schools and community can socialise, interact and collaborate. At the same time the individuality and **ethos of all participating schools will be respected and maintained**;

- **A Model of Sharing** - A strategic approach to shared education underpinned by **equality of access for all and opportunity to achieve personal ambition and potential**. Commitment to delivering educational excellence through schools working together to **share resources, facilities**, and achieving greater innovation in the type of facilities that can be created by collective pooling of resources and shared investment planning;
 - [A Model of Sharing specifically implies
 - a) the adoption of a **strategic approach to provision for education** informed by the principle of **equality of access for all with enhanced opportunities for the maximising each individual's human potential and achieving personal aspiration**;
 - b) a commitment to excellence through **the sharing of professional expertise, resources and facilities**;
 - c) enhanced opportunity for innovation in the provision of educational facilities through **pooling of resources with cooperation and consultation in matters of strategic investment planning**;
- **Curriculum Advancement and International Linkages** - Exploring and developing a clear, robust framework for academic and vocational based education which offers a suite of options and choice to individual learners – a '**Community Curriculum**' thereby positively enhancing overall learning outcomes. In addition investigating, nurturing and developing **third tier education linkages to post graduate offering, linking academic development with industry** experience thereby generating economic growth and development. The potential also exists to build upon Armagh's sectoral business strengths in the agri-food industry and to establish a reputation as an innovation hub for this sector;
[Curriculum Advancement and International Linkages offer fresh opportunities to explore and develop
 - a) a robust framework of academic and skills-based/vocational education capable of affording a **broad suite of choices – a Community Curriculum - capable of being individually tailored to meet individual needs**;
 - b) **third tier education** up, to and including post graduate study, **linking learning with business and industry**, and thereby enhancing the potential for economic development and growth initially building upon Armagh's existing sectoral strength in the agri-business with an aspiration to establish a reputation as a hub of innovation for the whole agri-business sector;]

Relationships - Leadership and commitment at all levels by participating schools to growing a sharing ethos, building and **nurturing professional relationships** between staff, governors, pupils and parents;

[Relationships are key educational and social components of the "Learning City" proposals, recognising that socially responsible citizenship requires a commitment to living positively with difference in relationships that exhibit equality of opportunity, parity of esteem, and mutual respect for individual ethnic, religious, social and intellectual diversity. Therefore, **leadership at all levels in participating schools will show dedicated commitment to building an ethos of sharing by nurturing wholesome professional relationships** among staff, governors, parents and pupils.]

- **Education/Learning Excellence** - Secure educational excellence that incorporates maximising **academic achievement and skills development, comprehensive sport and leisure opportunity, high moral values and faith based ethos**,

tolerance, respect and diversity, tailored to individual needs and aspirations, relates to the family business/community and voluntary sector needs; **[Education/Learning Excellence** for all is the principle goal and objective of the “Armagh – A Learning City” project. The breadth and holistic character of the project incorporates commitments to

- maximise academic achievement and skills development,
- offer comprehensive sport and leisure opportunities for all,
- maintain high moral values drawing inspiration from a faith based ethos,
- model tolerance and respect through a positive approach to diversity and difference,
- tailor the educational offering to individual needs and aspirations as far as practically possible,
- and
- relate the educational experience to family, business, community and voluntary sector needs.]

- **Innovation** – establishing a Learning City with connections to and collaboration between existing and emerging sectors in Armagh to drive forward and promote a **culture of innovation**. Working across all partners and sectors, opportunities for learning development in the form of work experience, apprenticeships and economic and social enterprise start-up will be explored; **[Innovation** is at the heart of the “Learning City approach. The very concept is itself, innovative exemplified by the creative and mutually beneficial interaction between schools and local government of the city. Furthermore, **the existing partners are committed to exploring greater innovation through collaboration among not only the schools of the city but also other, existing and emerging, academic, business and community sectors**, to drive forward a **culture of innovation**].
- ; and **[Connectivity, Integration, Quality and Sustainability** through partnership are key concepts that underpin proposals to develop **high quality, well designed facilities with well established connections to existing schools thus ensuring maximal – and therefore efficient –use of resources** with additional opportunities for **integrated use by other educational establishments** in the wider environs of Armagh;]
- **Openness, Accountability and Governance** - Development of a **strong governance framework** to lead, and deliver and which draws upon statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors and promotes inclusivity, accountability, sound financial management and sustainability. **[Openness, Accountability and Governance** imperatives will require the development of a **strong governance framework** embodying a commitment to **continually monitored consultation among stakeholders** with the object of leading the delivery of the emerging project and which draws upon **statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors** and promotes **inclusivity, accountability, sustainability and sound financial management**].
- **Efficiencies** – a model of shared education should provide the opportunity for capital and revenue **cost efficiencies** through the shared facilities across all schools and shared management and operational costs. **Programming through timetables and holiday arrangements will be coordinated to maximise utilisation of shared facilities.**

Action: Partners should examine the principles set out and confirm or amend these to reflect the proposed way forward.

Timing: Immediate

On the basis that belief in and commitment towards shared education principles, remains it is now necessary to outline practical steps towards their realisation.

7.1 Confirm Shared Education Parameters

Figure 1.1 set out a wide range of stakeholders with involvement within 'Armagh – A Learning City' including the primary and post primary education sectors, third level education and training providers, businesses, statutory agencies, churches, sporting associations and local societies and institutions. The vision for the City in its entirety therefore spans beyond the core education and learning curriculum as defined by Department of Education and Department of Employment and Learning.

Action: Confirm that the breadth of vision for 'Armagh – A Learning City' remains and consider how best to structure and phase the vision in terms of shared education i.e. is priority given to post primary, post sixteen, core curriculum or extra curriculum?

Timing: Immediate

7.2 Governance

The aspiration outlined for Armagh is a far-reaching and ambitious one involving a myriad stakeholders. It is important therefore that a delegated interim governance structure is established, representative of the interests of all stakeholders, to provide a forum in which decisions can be taken and action can be progressed.

To date the Consensus Group has provided the forum through which the vision for shared education in Armagh City has been advanced. This has also been reinforced by the role of Armagh City and District Council.

Armagh City and District Council will cease in its existence post 31st March 2015, after which a newly formed enlarged Council of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon will exist. The formation of the new Council will see a change in leadership and potentially strategic direction. It is important therefore that a defined governance structure is put in place prior to April 2015 to cement the interest and commitment of the Council to bring forward the vision for 'Armagh – A Learning City'.

Action: Key Partners need to agree and establish a defined governance structure including terms of reference and a memorandum of understanding for the advancement of shared education in Armagh.

Timing: 31 January 2015.

7.3 Area Planning Context

As referenced in the feedback from Department of Education, the area planning context for Armagh continues to present challenges. There is a need to continue to work towards resolving, post primary provision within the controlled sector.

Action: Continue to engage with the Southern Education and Library Board in relation to the sustainability of City of Armagh High School.

Timing: 31 March 2015.

7.4 Capital Development Assessment

Armagh City and District Council remains committed to the development of dual use leisure and recreational facilities within Armagh City. In line with government protocols on securing approval for capital and revenue spend⁵ and the need for detailed planning, the Council expect that capital development works on a new leisure facility will commence in 2018.

In parallel it is understood that many of the partner schools as well as Southern Regional College has plans for capital development work. An assessment of proposed capital development works across the education sector (both through the School Enhancement Programme and new capital build) will be necessary to identify opportunities for sharing and collaboration and importantly to reduce duplication.

Action:

Armagh City and District Council to commission an Outline Business Case for the development of a dual use leisure facility to replace the Orchard Leisure Centre.

Timing – 31 December 2015

An assessment of proposed capital works within the education sector to be developed with exploration of opportunities for facilities to be shared.

Timing – 31 March 2015

7.5 Pilot Programmes Design

To further test the feasibility of sharing, including management, governance and operational arrangements, it is considered that pilot programmes may be desirable. This should also provide valuable experience in addressing potential pitfalls and challenges in the operation of shared facilities and provide an informed response to the

⁵ Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation

Department of Education feedback in terms of collaborating and demonstrating sharing on a sustained basis.

As an example only, these pilots may include:

- Sixth form sharing programme;
- Use of city centre based facilities to deliver shared programmes;
- Engagement between schools and AMMA; and
- Work between post primary schools and SRC on a community curriculum offering to reduce potential for duplication.

Action: Armagh City and District Council to commission an Options Appraisal for the definition and advancement of pilot programmes aligned with the vision for 'Armagh – A Learning City'.

Timing – 31 March 2015

7.6 Exploration of Funding Opportunities

It would be prudent to continue to engage with potential funders to explore funding opportunities for elements of 'Armagh – A Learning City'. In particular opportunities may exist with core Northern Ireland Government Departments, Atlantic Philanthropies and the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) through the Peace IV Programme.

Action: Once agreed the Governance Body is to agree approach to engagement with potential funders.

Timing – 30 June 2015

7.7 Expression of Interest to Department of Education

Whilst it is possible to resubmit an expression of interest for 'Armagh – A Learning City' at present, it is considered that further work, as outlined above, would be beneficial, to address the areas of feedback received on the initial application. It is likely however that, in light of progress on the actions outlined above, a further expression of interest could be developed for inclusion with the Department of Education Shared Education Programme.

Action: Once agreed, the Governance Body is to engage with the Department of Education to provide updates on progress and discuss opportunities for 'Armagh – A Learning City' within the Shared Education Programme.

Timing – 30 June 2015