

Advisory Group on
the Strategic Development of

Irish-medium Post-primary Education



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Chairperson's Foreword

The Minister for Education, John O'Dowd, MLA, established the **Advisory Group on the Strategic Development of Irish-Medium Post-Primary Education** in August 2013 and attended its inaugural meeting on 3rd September 2013.

In embarking on its task, the Group set out its overall vision for the Irish-medium education sector and composed a set of principles to guide its discussion towards recommendations. It was also of the view that clear and mutually held definitions of some basic terms would be a useful tool.

All members actively participated in the work of the Group and in the preparation of the report. The Group was also greatly assisted in its work by officials of the Department of Education, both through the very efficient and helpful secretariat provided and through briefing sessions organised with the various policy branches. In this context, appreciation is due to the members of the initial secretariat (Margaret Ann Corbett and Pamela McCormick) and to David Cully at a later stage; to Lorraine Finlay, Head of Area Planning Policy Team, who provided most useful guidance at all times and to Andrena Murray whose skills of synthesis and precision were invaluable as the work progressed. The Group was fortunate to have to hand the invaluable input of previous surveys and, in particular, the Review of Irish-Medium Education Report 2009.

Group members were at all times very aware of the genesis of Irish-medium education in the wishes of the Irish language community and, in particular, of parents who desired an Irish-medium education for their children. They also held in high regard the successes of these voluntary efforts as evidenced in the growth of the Irish-medium education sector over the years supported by official policy.

The Group was deeply impressed with the level of passionate commitment and informed analytic comment manifested by all who participated in the evidence gathering exercise. Many also subsequently provided briefing papers or letters of explanation.

As an immersion system, IME constitutes a unique feature of education in Northern Ireland, one which it shares with the other Celtic languages and one which is replicated in the international context.

A major consideration in any rapidly growing enterprise is the interplay of consolidation on the one hand and of development on the other. Both are required in the domain of education and may be best articulated through continuity both within, and through, the various levels of the education system. Continuity within levels is seen in both the judicious development of Irish-medium educational institutions and of the geographic spread of appropriate provision. Continuity throughout levels is seen in the possibility for parents and pupils to have uninterrupted access from preschool through primary to post-primary education.

Currently, Irish-medium provision at post-primary level may be considered under-developed, particularly in light of the expansion at the preceding levels. It could be added that, in fact, development beyond primary level is, in general, fairly recent and came rather late in the

day. Nevertheless, it must be noted that existing provision is successful and developing satisfactorily despite difficulties. It now finds itself in the middle of a period of no small change in the education sector overall, whether in demographic and ensuing structural trends or in more educationally based curricular transformation. Clearly, in order to succeed as a burgeoning part of the overall IME sector, the post-primary level will require comprehensive sustained and varied forms of support into the future. When the fact that Irish-medium education is, in itself, the fastest expanding sector of the moment is added to these other contextual factors; it would appear that the current time offers a unique opportunity for leadership and development in a strategically coherent manner.

It is our hope that, as Advisory Group, our recommendations contribute to that development. It was our privilege to have been asked to become involved in such a worthwhile project. The words of the late great County Derry man, Seamus Heaney, come to mind:

“Not to learn Irish is to miss the opportunity of understanding what life in this country has meant and could mean in a better future. It is to cut oneself off from ways of being at home. If we regard self-understanding, mutual understanding, imaginative enhancement, cultural diversity and a tolerant political atmosphere as desirable attainments, we should remember that a knowledge of the Irish language is an essential element in their realisation.”

Helen Ó Murchú
Chairperson

Advisory Group on the Strategic Development of Irish Medium Post-Primary Education
March 2014

(1) The Task

The Minister acknowledged that there was currently a gap in the strategic development of post-primary provision in the north of Ireland. In an attempt to bridge that gap he established the Advisory Group and commissioned this work.

The task for the Advisory Group was to look at the level of demand for post-primary Irish-medium provision and consider how best this could be met. In doing so, the Minister also requested that the Advisory Group assess how to deliver viable and sustainable Irish-medium post-primary education that is high quality, meets the needs of the pupils and commands the confidence of parents.

The Terms of Reference

The Minister set out the parameters for the task of the Advisory Group in the Terms of Reference. These were fully endorsed by the Group. The Terms of Reference were as follows:

Putting Pupils First: Shaping Our Future

Developing Sustainable Irish-medium Post-primary Education

Context

The Irish-medium pre-school and primary sectors have grown in recent years and there are now 3,055 pupils attending IM primary schools (Years 1-7) and this will lead to a demand for Post-primary places in the future.

To date there is only one standalone Post-primary School, Coláiste Feirste, located in Belfast with 541 pupils enrolled in 2012/13. In addition there are 2 Irish-medium Units attached to English medium host schools, St Catherine's College Armagh with 169 in the IM Unit and St Joseph's College Donaghmore with 56 in the IM Unit. A further unit was approved for St Malachy's College, Castlewellan.

The recent focus on "Putting Pupils First" and the emphasis on raising standards for all children through the provision of high quality education at all schools also make it vitally important that any new IM Post-primary provision must be educationally and financially viable going into the future. Any developments in the IM sector must be taken forward within the context of area planning, the Sustainable Schools Policy and the Department of Education's duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education.

The Review of Irish Medium Education Report (Chapter 12) outlines in detail the aspiration of parents and the issues facing the development of the IM Post-primary Sector in the current policy context. The challenges are linked to:-

- the efficient and effective delivery of the Revised Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework;

- the supply of specialist teachers and support services; and
- The optimum geographical location of post-primary provision to serve the widening catchment area of the primary schools.

Task

In recognition of the specific needs of the IM sector, and the challenges it faces, the Minister is commissioning a specific piece of work to consider in detail how to deliver viable and sustainable IM Post-primary education that is high quality, meets the needs of the pupils and commands the confidence of parents.

The task will be undertaken by an advisory group comprising educational, IM and linguistic specialists. The members of the groups are:-

Helen Ó Murchú – Independent Chairperson
 Paul McAlister – Education and Training Inspectorate
 Paul O’Doherty – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
 Micheál Ó Duibh – Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
 Breandán Ó Dufaigh – Principal, Coláiste Oiriall (wef 4/11/2013)¹

Scope

The work of the Group should focus on the development of practical and deliverable solutions to increase access to IM Post-primary Education. It should assess the challenges facing future development of the sustainable provision and in doing so the following should be considered:-

- Experience and models of best practice in the other local jurisdictions of the ROI, Scotland and Wales;
- Current and projected level of demand for IM post-primary education within the context of area planning;
- Potential models for delivery in the short and medium term based on current legislation and taking account of current financial constraints;
- Long term delivery models that may require new legislation;
- The optimal geographical location of such provision taking account of the distribution of IM pre-school and primary provision; and
- The implications of the recommendations contained in the Salisbury Report on Common Funding Scheme.

The Advisory Group should aim to provide advice and guidance that will form the basis of a strategic plan for the development of IM Post-primary Education. The advice and guidance should be brought forward in a manner that will manage the expectations of parents and pupils.

¹ At the request of the Chairperson, the Minister agreed to supplement the Advisory Group membership and Breandán Ó Dufaigh, Principal of Coláiste Oiriall was appointed. However, due to unforeseen work pressures, Breandán was unable to attend any of the pre-planned group meetings.

Timeframe

It is envisaged that the work of the Group would be completed within six months of commencement.

Guiding Principles

In order to deliver the objectives of the Terms of Reference, the Group agreed a set of principles to guide their work.

The Advisory Group will:

- (a) draw on appropriate research in constructing proposals;
- (b) speak to a range of appropriate individuals and groups who have an interest in Irish-medium education;
- (c) take account of Area Learning Communities and previous Area Planning for IME in its proposals for IM post-primary provision for specific geographic locations;
- (d) take account of the recommendations of the DE Review of Irish-medium education;
- (e) be mindful of current financial constraints in setting out its proposals;
- (f) design IM provision which will:
 - i. provide a high quality of education for all children who wish to avail of IM post-primary education;
 - ii. be cost-effective, efficient and sustainable;
 - iii. make effective use of ICT to support and enhance teaching and learning;
 - iv. be flexible to meet the changing demands for IM post-primary education across NI;
 - v. reflect the principles of inclusion;
 - vi. have the confidence of parents;
 - vii. allow greater choice for parents in accessing post primary education; and within that, ensure that children have access to a range of options within Irish-medium post-primary settings that can either deliver full immersion education or can develop towards that end; and
 - viii. promote partnership

2 Methodology

A key aim of the Advisory Group was to actively engage with a wide range of key stakeholders and other interested parties. To fully understand the policy context and current environment that schools were operating in, the Group received detailed briefing from a range of key policy makers in DE on current policies. Statistical data from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) also provided valuable background information for the exercise.

The Group met on 16 occasions during which they conducted extensive evidence gathering sessions to inform its deliberations. They met with key stakeholders and other parties of interest, including educational representatives from other Celtic languages, and set up two focus groups, (list given at **Appendix 1**).

In an effort to determine the point of view of parents, they carried out 2 surveys by issuing a questionnaire to parents of Irish-medium primary school children and to parents of Irish-medium nursery school children (**Appendix 2**).

Throughout the process, a key driver was the need to develop practical and deliverable solutions to meet the needs of pupils. The 6 criteria for **Sustainable Schools** provided the overall guiding context for all deliberations of the Advisory Group:

- the educational experience of the children
- enrolment trends
- financial position
- school leadership and management
- accessibility
- strength of community links

3 The Context

When considering IM sector issues in the North, it is useful to draw on experience in the global context.

Despite being not only universal phenomena but phenomena which are more widely encountered in the world context than monolingualism, the two most elusive terms in the context of education and society – with regard to mutual understanding - may well be *immersion* and *bilingualism*. The June 2011 report from HM Inspectorate (Scotland) comments:

Lack of a shared understanding remains about terminology and this is linked to inconsistencies in practice.

At its simplest level of definition, *immersion* is generally taken to mean education through a language which is not *necessarily* the home language of pupils. However, some pupils may also attend for whom the language of school and the language of home is the same. Some experts (Skuttnab-Kangas) would argue that if introduced at an early age (3/4 years), the second language may be considered in fact a second first language or home or mother tongue.

The report, *Languages for the Future: Northern Ireland Languages Strategy*, was published in 2012. In general it recommends extension of languages throughout the education system. The successes of the Irish-medium system are cited as examples of encouraging and producing bilingualism.

The *extent* of immersion arises from the curriculum, which may be offered totally or partially through the second language. While expert opinion again argues, in terms of the efficacy of results, for total immersion begun at an early age when children are still in process of language acquisition, late immersion is also a feature of some education systems (although more often with the introduction of a majority language). In this regard, several constraining issues require to be considered with regard to the strategic development of IME at PP level in NI.

In terms, however, of all the Celtic languages, and of lesser-used languages in particular, education and *community* are very closely linked. Immersion education is viewed not only as contributing to the individual's overall development, but also to his unique cultural identity. On the *cultural continuum*, this may mean, on the one hand, being at ease in an understanding of one's physical environment. On the other, being or becoming an actual or a potential member of a language community.

The future development of IM post-primary provision is therefore one of vital importance for children in the IM sector and for the future development of the Irish-medium sector for a number of reasons:

- International research proves that the longer the period children spend in immersion education the better their language acquisition and the more likely they are to use the target language;

- In light of protections offered under the Belfast Agreement and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, children and parents have a justifiable expectation of continuity of high quality IM provision where sufficient demand exists. Experience and research have shown that the linguistic outcomes of immersion education are less favourable where children do not have access to immersion provision at post-primary level;
- Post-primary education plays an important role in the status of a language and in perceptions relating to the language. Children and the wider community attach particular status to post-primary education in society as being an essential prerequisite of economic and social progress. The absence of viable, high quality post-primary provision in a minority language is likely to create negative perceptions among children and society in general in relation to the role of the minority language in society; and
- The development and maintenance of a vibrant, confident society and community is dependent on children and young people being empowered to become active participants in their societies. Children in IM primary schools are part of emerging Irish-speaking communities. They need access to the learning opportunities provided by IM post-primary education to enable them to become active and productive participants in those Irish-speaking communities.

4 Résumé of Recommendations

This series of recommendations proposed by the Advisory Group comprise three overall constituents:

- the required elements of a strategic approach to planning for IME by the authorities;
- a pathway for development at PP level; and
- a series of recommendations to help obviate the constraining factors which hinder the continued development of IME at PP level.

4.1 Elements of a Strategic Approach

The Group **RECOMMENDS**

4.1.1 that the Department require the appropriate planning authority to develop a mechanism to identify the numbers of children wishing to go into IM education at every level so that the demand could be met and planning would be on a long-term basis. This may be done in collaboration with CnaG;

4.1.2 that **the planning authorities be required to take particular cognisance of IME** in any and all current and future local planning and reconfigurations;

4.1.3 that a **Statement of Intent** be made by the Minister;

4.1.4 **appropriate implementation structures be established** at both official (top down) and sectoral (bottom up) level;

4.1.5 **initial language proofing** of the implications of *all* education policy proposals; and **continuous monitoring of specific policy** as implemented in the IM sector to ensure it is fit for purpose and to allow for any required tweaking;

4.1.6 that a separate voluntary coalition of IM Post-primary providers should be established, along the lines of the current area learning communities, to provide a **dedicated space** within which IME schools and personnel work together on the challenges posed;

4.1.7 that all forms of current provision be enabled to devise **communication strategies** to ensure increased retention;

4.1.8 that **the key elements for a Development Proposal for forms of IM PP** provision include:

- Identified demand from the community
- Be within area planning requirements (geographical location and with regard to other forms of provision in area)
- Initial intake for an IM PP school of 35 in year 8 rising to 65/80 by the fifth year to ensure sustainability
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to increase intake

- Governance and management structures in place
- Teaching staff available (including the principal)
- Arrangements in place re physical location
- Transport arrangements in place
- Evidence of manifestation of ethos
- Immersion (50% plus)
- Agreed monitoring process by DE
- In the case of a Unit, Co-ordinator post (with representation) on subcommittee/SMT
- Commitment to progress on pathway
- Protocols for units should be examined and accepted by DE

4.1.9 that the criteria for a **protocol/service level agreement** should be clearly laid out and agreed in advance and cover the following items:

- Governance and funding arrangements
- Level and continuity of immersion
- Progression issues, whether in terms of Key Stages or model type
- Clarity on issues of IM identity and integration with host school
- Admissions policy
- Local circumstances

4.1.10 in order to ensure fruitful collaboration into the future and that a structure is available for the dissemination of ideas and good practice, that **DE takes the initiative**:

- (1) in establishing an informal group with Celtic colleagues which might meet twice yearly to exchange views and information on a particular aspect of immersion education across the Celtic languages;
- (2) in formally hosting a seminar under the auspices of the British-Irish Council on immersion education.

4.2 Pathway for Development at PP level

The Group **RECOMMENDS**

4.2.1 on location and accessibility for future provision that the optimum location for PP provision is to serve the largest number of IM primary schools in the surrounding catchment area and on this basis, that the 8 IM planning areas and PP locations identified by CnaG in the accompanying map be accepted in principle;

4.2.2 on models, a clearly defined pathway of interim Level 0 Unit→Level 1 Unit→school;

4.2.3 that standalone immersion education of the kind experienced (offered) in other jurisdictions should remain the goal of whichever provision prevailing circumstances allow, subject to parental wishes; the **aim** would be to have **full immersion** and where this is not possible on the required criteria, the fall back position would be a unit where a large percentage of the curriculum would be delivered through Irish;

4.2.4 that the model will also depend on the level of immersion to be offered;

4.2.5 that development be encouraged through incentives of movement upward along a pathway from interim **Level 0 Unit→Level 1 Unit→school**; there will be a need for **a change in the legislation to ensure that incentives for development can be provided on a statutory basis.**

A diagrammatic representation of the proposed Pathway is given below.

Unit to School

Level	Immersion	Key Stage	Incentive (includes AWPU element and an administrative element)
Level 0 (interim)	25-50% over 3 years	3	✓
Level 1	50+-70%	3 4*	✓
School	50+% to full curriculum	All	✓

*At KS4 the host school should offer a sufficient number of subjects through the medium of Irish to allow pupils to study at least 50% of their subjects through the medium of Irish. This allows for individual pupil choice and compliance with the Entitlement Framework by the School.

If it becomes quite clear towards the end of the 3 year cycle that the school cannot satisfy the criteria/conditions of the initial proposal, then special funding lapses.
In exceptional circumstances where sufficient progress has been demonstrated, the Department may renew special funding for 1 additional year.

4.2.6 That DE set a lower intake rate for the first and subsequent five years of any form of new provision; **initial intake for an IM PP school of 35 in year 8 rising to 65/80 by the fifth year** to ensure sustainability; the Minister might take rural factors into account.

4.2.7 with regard to specific areas, the Group RECOMMENDS:

4.2.7.1 Derry City: if it is found that the present host option preferred by the community cannot currently take on the responsibility, the Group would urge the Department to seek responsiveness from all schools in the catchment area to house the IM provision to determine how suitable it deems the provision offered and how it meets the needs of the parents.

4.2.7.2 following this precedent, **in the case of a community wishing to establish a unit in a host school, that DE will formally initiate a process of consultation with all post primary schools in the area** to seek their views on their willingness or otherwise to host IM provision and requesting that they set out their case to do so against agreed criteria and will request CnaG to arrange for this.

4.2.7.3 South Derry: from study of the current intake figures, South Derry did not appear to be in a position to have a sustainable (ie 65+ pupils per year) independent school at the moment; from the figures available, sustainability (ie 65+ pupils per year) for an IM PP school would not be reached until approaching 2020. Given the level of preparatory work, the community might be in a position to have some form of provision with a degree of autonomy; a unit might be a feasible solution for the interim. Intake figures available indicate that 35 pupils in year 8 would appear to be achievable by 2016/17. Current intake figures would also suggest that a unit is currently a feasible solution for the interim. The Group was of the view that some solution should be sought to capitalise on community effort before it dissipates into unfruitful disappointment. An independent federated unit did not, however, appear feasible.

Earlier proposals by South Derry had identified Maghera as a potential site. With regard to location, the potential for Dungiven as a site would have implications for the adjoining Derry City area which would need to be investigated. It would also have implications for addressing the needs of the children from Cookstown in relation to IM education.

4.2.7.4 That DE should look urgently at the need for **cross border PP provision for IM primary children in Co Fermanagh.**

4.2.7.5 In the case of **South Tyrone** and in order to facilitate easy access to IM post-primary provision where travel distance to current or proposed provision in Derry or Donaghmore is restrictive, the option of IM post-primary provision in Omagh should be considered. In this context, appropriate consideration should be given to the Lisanelly campus as a suitable location.

4.3 Obviating the constraining factors which hinder the continued development of IME at PP level

The Group **RECOMMENDS**

4.3.1 on the issue of **teacher supply, for the immediate short term,**

- (i) that information be gathered from the *substitute records* where a teacher has stated that they teach Irish – if they can teach up to A-level and what other subject can they teach;
- (ii) that the information currently used to register a substitute teacher should be collected for all teachers;
- (iii) that, following an open call to retired or other teachers, bursaries be offered to enable those willing to undergo *transition/conversion* courses for inclusion on panel for urgent substitution in schools.

In addition, the Group **RECOMMENDS**

- (iv) that bursaries be publicised and provided for practising teachers across the English-medium sector
 - (a) with Irish and STEM subjects who are willing to undergo *transition/conversion* courses;
 - (b) who are willing to undergo *transition/conversion* courses for specific learning areas;
- (v) that incentives be provided to all schools which encourage and provide the uptake of GCSE and A-Level Irish (this might take the form of either best achieving pupil bursary or school fund to be expended on Gaeltacht scholarships);
- (vi) that FE Colleges be incentivised to offer some courses through Irish.

4.3.1.2 for the *medium and for the longer term*, the Group **RECOMMENDS** the incentivisation of entrants to courses in education, students following courses in education and providers of courses in education through:

- (i) bursaries for existing teachers in PP IME - targeted at specific learning areas/ pedagogic skills and with 'cascade effect' built in (recipients sharing added expertise with others);
- (ii) bursaries for 3rd level institutions directed at specific research and provision of IM targeted courses following needs analysis; (such institutions cannot offer bursaries unless there exists an identified demand of sizeable proportions);
- (iii) bursaries for students with Irish and a STEM subject area on entry to third level/ teacher education to encourage their taking a joint honours course.

4.3.1.3 In the matter of **Continuing Professional Development** (CPD), the Group **RECOMMENDS** on a regular basis throughout the school year weekend and week-long courses:

the approach currently devised by COGG in the RoI, which concentrates on upskilling I-medium and E-medium teachers, for teaching in the IM sector, whether through training in the classroom language required for specific areas of the curriculum or through transition/conversion courses.

4.3.1.4 In the matter of **N/S cooperation**, the Group **RECOMMENDS**

- (i) a joint interdepartmental approach, north and south, to the provision and funding of appropriate teacher education for IME at PP level, whether initial, conversion or CPD, to include training as examination assessors;
- (ii) the establishment of a representative body within six months to research, plan and implement this cost-effective approach, possibly through the existing structure of the NSMC.

4.3.1.5 With regard to the **encouragement of Irish in the EM sector as an aid to IME**, the Group **RECOMMENDS** that DE and DCAL should encourage through incentive(s) Irish as subject especially for:

- (i) GCSE and A Level plus
- (ii) A Level in conjunction with priority subject needs for IME in order to ensure teaching/administrative/management personnel for IME, i.e. to encourage through incentive the teaching of Irish to the highest level and the teaching through Irish of any of the priority subjects, STEM in particular.

4.3.2 On the matter of **resources**, the Group **RECOMMENDS**:

- (i) a realistic budget to IM schools and units, based on a clear school plan;
- (ii) that DE commission a piece of work to map the outline of a strategically oriented approach to the provision of resources for the IM sector in a widely collaborative context;
- (iii) a joint high level interdepartmental approach, north and south, through the establishment of a representative body within six months to research, plan and implement this more cost-effective approach to areas of joint operation or need, possibly through the existing structure of the NSMC (see **4.3.1.4**).

4.3.3 On the issue of **ICT**, the Group **RECOMMENDS**:

- (i) In the *short term*, planning towards the provision of a dedicated online space for the IME community within six months through CK2 and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, teacher moderators being trained by C2k.
- (ii) In the *medium to long term*, the establishment of pilot programmes of curriculum delivery in the priority areas through a joint planning group of the relevant third level and other bodies. This would require research on needs analysis and on schools technical infrastructure. A collaborative venture with interests in the RoI and in the other Celtic languages areas might well attract EU or other funding. Pilot programming of this kind is crucial to any future planning. Without such trialling, the area of ICT for post-primary IME will remain as it is, untried and therefore regarded as untriable.

4.3.4 In the matter of **the future funding context of IME as a developing sector** surrounded by a host of inhibiting factors, the Group **RECOMMENDS** both **a suite of specific new incentives** and **some changes to the current funding approach**. In making these recommendations, the Group was influenced by the following considerations:

- a need to promote in a proactive way the development of IM arising out of the Treacy Judgement;
- the sector is underdeveloped and underfunded (admitted in the *Salisbury Report*);
- the sector needs to grow and therefore requires incentivisation;
- it was important to incentivise schools and remove obstacles.

4.3.4.1 The **specific incentives** designed to deal with the inhibiting factors are listed under teacher supply and resources and could be phased in gradually perhaps in collaboration with other departments, the sectoral representative body, or other educational institutions.

4.3.4.2 In the matter of establishing and actively encouraging a clearly delineated **pathway within models of PP provision for IME**, The Group **RECOMMENDS** as **incentives**:

(i) to ensure success and growing expertise, the funding of a post of Principal up to a year in advance of the opening of any new funded IM post-primary provision to ensure that all relevant policies and staffing arrangements are in place to deliver high quality education (based on the model used in proposed school amalgamations);

(ii) to encourage movement to begin or to move forward:

(i) a *nascent* incentive to get the proposed provision off the ground (including the provision in advance of a Project Manager);

(ii) a *transformation* incentive to encourage movement, particularly

(a) within schools towards taking on IM at interim Level 0 Unit and

(b) movement upwards to Level 1 Unit to detachment from a host school towards autonomy as a school;

(iii) accompanying financial support for the host school, during and after the detachment process, on a sliding scale for up to five years after a Unit detaches to become autonomous.

4.3.4.3 Arising out of scrutiny of the *Salisbury Report* for a developing sector, and from the necessity to encourage increased immersion in the *Pathway* of models proposed, the Group **RECOMMENDS**:

- uplift to AWPUP;
- a formulaic approach primarily based on the number of pupils and the subjects at each key stage with a need for additionality and in acknowledgement that there is more effort involved in teaching at a higher level;
- that administration funding should apply equally to units and IM PP school provision.

The table illustrates the third option favoured by the Group.

Scenario 3

Pupils	Salisbury Funding per pupil additional 0.155 AWPU	Funding through Irish percentage immersion <i>(for illustrative purposes)</i>	Keystage	Funding
300	£299.00	100%	3	£89,700.00
200	£299.00	100%	4	£59,800.00
100	£299.00	100%	5	£29,900.00
Total				£179,400.00

4.3.4.4 As part of the overall funding context, the Group **RECOMMENDS** that the issue of **Economic Appraisal** (EA) must be revisited, if the arguments are accepted that pertain to (i) legal context and removal of obstacles; (ii) Irish as minority language; (iii) desire of parents and community; (iv) desirability of (eventual) full immersion in a freestanding autonomous school.

If the economic, rather than the linguistic/cultural or legal argument, dominates the debate, there is little or no prospect of any model other than attached unit being acceptable in the medium to long term. It clearly is cheaper to encourage attached units rather than independent schools, particularly in terms of physical accommodation and capital funding. Unless a pragmatic progressive approach is taken, allied to criteria which ensure the best education for the IM pupils, no equivalent Coláiste Feirste will emerge in the near future.

A cost approach measures solely in terms of financial outlay. A cost-benefit approach may not necessarily assess the less measurable or intangible benefits. In a more flexible strategy for IME at PP level, these benefits might include the following:

- Adherence in education to all existing legislation and to elements of the DCAL Strategy for Irish.
- Removal of barriers to progress.
- Acknowledgement of previous neglect and the current undeveloped nature of the IM PP sector.
- Normalisation of IME at PP level through additional visibility leading to greater confidence on the part of parents.
- Recognition of parental and community desire.
- Recognition of the importance of IM education to the IM community, to education in NI and to immersion education in the international context.

(5) Other Celtic Languages and Education

The Group was fortunate to have expert input from the education departments of the Republic of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and from representatives of Bord na Gàidhlig, Glasgow City Council and Gaelscoileanna, in relation to Medium Education in their respective jurisdictions. (See also **Appendix 3**). In many respects, with regard to post-primary development, the situation in urban areas for the Gàidhlig language is that closest to Irish in NI insofar as GM development at second level in Scotland is sparse and National Guidance on this area of educational provision is getting underway.

It is to be noted that the three Celtic languages under discussion are indigenous to their territories and that regions, where the language is still spoken as community language, are found in Scotland, Wales and in the ROI. In the case of NI, easy access exists to the Gaeltacht area of Donegal.

The significance of this reality lies in the close links between the concepts of *education* and *community* for all Celtic languages, and for lesser-used languages in particular. Immersion education is viewed not only as contributing to the individual's overall development but also to community continuity and vitality.

1. Some Celtic Languages: Outline of Provision of Language Education as Continuum

ROI	Wales	Scotland	NI
IM	WM	GM	IM
Aonad (Unit) – attached to EM host school but offering full curriculum through Irish.	Bilingual		Unit – attached to EM host school but offering certain number of subjects through Irish.
Sruth (2) (Stream) – EM school offering some subjects through Irish or all subjects through Irish to specified class groups.	E Welsh	EM + 1 or 2 subjects through Gaelic	
EM + Irish	EM + Welsh	EM + Gaelic	EM + Irish



While the second table gives an indication of the legislative support enjoyed by the three languages, it does not indicate the extent of that support nor the intensity of its actual operation.

2. Some Celtic Languages: Legislative Support

Language/ Jurisdiction/Support	Language(s) Act	European Charter	Language Strategy/ Plan	Legislative Provisions for the Language in Education
Scottish Gaelic in Scotland	*Yes (2005)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Welsh in Wales	*Yes (1993)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Irish in RoI	**Yes (2003)	No	Yes	Yes
Irish in NI	No	Yes	Has been prepared but not yet before Assembly	Yes

***Local authorities must produce schemes for the language in education**

****Also Article 8 of the Constitution**

Information for the third table has been provided by bodies in the different jurisdictions. However, the extent and intensity of the immersion experience for pupils is not always clear from the listing of educational institutions. Where available, numbers for pupils are given in brackets.

3. Some Celtic Languages: Statistics for Medium Education

Language/ Jurisdiction	Total Immersion Primary	Partial Immersion Primary	Total Immersion Post-Primary	Partial Immersion Post-Primary
Scottish Gaelic in Scotland	3 Total 865 pupils (a further 3 due to open between now and 2016)	56 Classes/depts./ streams Total 1787 pupils 2013/14	1 Total 216 pupils 10 subjects taught through Gaelic	33 <i>Total 965 pupils taught at least one subject through Gaelic 2013/14</i> <i>Total for secondary education – Gaelic school + streams/ dept = 1181</i>
Welsh in Wales	408(54,723) Welsh medium	43 (9,049) Dual stream Bilingual	31 (20,982) 2012/13	24 (18,610) 2012/13
Irish in RoI	144 (32,549)		36 (8,890) To Leaving Certificate level	2 designated as 'streams'
Irish in NI	36	Unit Streams	1 (545) To Post-16 level	3 KS3/4

In Scotland, apart from 3 total immersion primary schools (one of which has some secondary provision), the *Plan for Gaelic 2009-2012* of Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS) reports that *primary GME* is delivered in the form of classes, 'departments' or 'streams' within schools and that LTS supports a move away from the term 'Gaelic Unit' to a more inclusive terminology. While Gaelic is offered in all secondary schools in Scotland, only a small number offer some subjects through the medium of Gaelic. A new second level GM school is currently in planning to serve the GM primary schools in Glasgow.

In terms of provision and planning, NI would appear to have more in common with Scotland at this point in time.

There are two terms in use in Wales for *primary WME*, Welsh medium or dual stream. The latter comprise no more than 3.4% of the total. In the WM schools, Welsh is used for teaching, for communication with pupils and in administration although communication with parents is in both languages. Both languages are in use in those schools designated 'dual stream'. The term 'transitional' is further used to describe those schools where efforts are being made to create a totally Welsh ethos in addition to Welsh as teaching medium. Since Welsh is taught as subject in all publicly funded primary schools, two further terms are in use to define English medium schools:

- EW means English medium with significant use of Welsh;
- EM means predominantly English with some use of Welsh in communication with pupils.

Terminology at second level in Wales is even more differentiated. In addition to WM and the two categories of EW and EM, there are four subcategories – *based primarily on the percentage of the curriculum delivered through Welsh* - distinguished for *bilingual schools*:

- AB - at least 80% of subjects are taught only through Welsh with one or two subjects being taught to some pupils in English or through both English and Welsh
- BB – 80% of subjects taught through Welsh but also through English
- CB – 50-79% of subjects are taught through Welsh but also through English
- Ch – all subjects are taught to all pupils using both languages

In all cases of these schools designated 'bilingual', the languages themselves as subjects - Welsh and English – are excluded from the definitions.

In comparison with NI, it is of note that the WM second level system is long established and favoured by the authorities. The Group were informed that the WM sector comprises a third of the entire system. In the RoI, PP IME is offered in approximately 5% of the second level system.

(6) The Irish Language in Northern Ireland

Demography

Phase One of the Census 2011 population statistics for NI were released by NISRA on Monday 16 July 2012. These figures deal with the total population in terms of age and sex as well as household size. They revealed the following facts:

- Total population: 1,810,900. This was the highest figure ever recorded in NI and an increase of 7% on Census 2001.
- More females (923,500) than males (887,300) overall.
- More males than females in the following age cohorts:

Age bracket	Male	Female
0-4	63,500	60,900
5-9	57,100	54,200
10-14	61,000	58,000
15-19	64,600	61,600
20-24	63,900	62,100
Total	310,100	296,800

While decline in school population is envisaged up to 2025, nevertheless it was also noted that despite the Census 2011 fall of 9% in age cohorts 4-15, there was a rise of 10% in age cohorts 0-3. This will have a corresponding effect on planning for provision into the future. Even more significantly, the school population undergoing most growth is that of the Irish-medium sector.

Phase Two results of Census 2011 became available on 11 December 2012. They included census specific classification listings, *language* among them. The results on language are for all usual residents aged 3+ years. The detailed tables cover differing ranges of ability, from the skill of understanding only up to ability in the four skills of speaking, reading, writing and understanding. [For some reason a caveat is included (for both Irish and Ulster-Scots) as a note accompanying the tables on language in the report issued by NISRA, *Census 2011: Key Statistics for Northern Ireland, December 2012*, to the effect that:

An ability to speak, read or write Irish (or Ulster-Scots) does not imply an ability to understand Irish unless stated. Persons in these categories may or may not have the ability to understand Irish.

Applied linguists might have issue with this statement if the abilities to speak, read or write are intended to have a meaning other than imitation without understanding.]

The figures below have been extrapolated from NISRA tables.

NI Census 2011: Knowledge of Irish by % of population aged 3+

Year	Persons having Four Skills	%	Persons having Some Ability	%
2011	64,847	3.74	184,898	*10.65
2001	75,125	4.6	167,490	10.4

*In fact the official press briefing document in hard copy gave 11% while the general press release stated:

Among usual residents aged 3 years and over, 11 per cent had some ability in Irish in 2011 (compared with 10 per cent in 2001), while 8.1 per cent of people had some ability in Ulster-Scots.

The actual increase in the number of persons having some knowledge of Irish is 17,408. Nevertheless, there is a decrease of 10,278 persons professing ability in all four skills. This may arise from the decrease in schools offering Irish among Modern Languages and subsequent decrease in those sitting Irish for public examinations. Further comment on Irish in examinations is found below in the section on Education. No information was given with regard to the number (if any) of the census forms filled out in Irish only or whether they were accepted for computation. The tables of returns for the 2001 Census are titled *Irish Language (Gaeilge)* 2001. Those for 2011 are headed *Knowledge of Irish* followed by *Knowledge of Ulster-Scots* as Ulster-Scots was included for the first time as noted above.

The Group felt that it would be useful to obtain also a detailed analysis of distribution of Irish speakers from population projections at Local Government level, given that possible local tensions and demographic trends need to be considered *in tandem*. These are found at **Appendix 4**.

Legislation

Current legal protection for the Irish language in NI arises out of Education Orders, the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement of 1998 and from what was promised in its successor, the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. Commitments in relation to the Irish language are also monitored under Parts II and III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe, the UK having signed and ratified this international instrument in 2001. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Council of Europe) is also pertinent. In addition, the proposed Bill of Rights for NI is an issue.

There are two items promised by the British Government in the St Andrews Agreement:

To introduce an Irish Language Act reflecting on the experience of Wales and Ireland and to work with the incoming Executive to enhance and protect the development of the Irish Language.

Monitoring reports on implementation of the European Charter had also urged the introduction of an Irish Language Act.

However, the legal amendments to the Northern Ireland Act 1998, following the 2006 Agreement, make no mention of an Irish Language Act. The references are solely to the

adoption of Strategies by the Executive (both for Irish and Ulster-Scots), these Strategies to be kept under review, revised or replaced by new strategies.

The February 2010 Hillsborough Castle Agreement which ensured devolution of policing and justice to the NI Assembly also included commitment to progress on issues outstanding from the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. These issues included movement on the Irish language, a matter that received comment at the time from both the *Taoiseach* and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the *Dáil* on 9 February 2010.

The report, *Languages for the Future: Northern Ireland Languages Strategy*, was published in 2012. In general, it recommends an extension of languages throughout the education system. The successes of the Irish-medium system are cited as examples of encouraging and producing bilingualism. On the Irish language, the following is stated as a recommendation under the subheading, *Languages for Understanding*:

That the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by the government of the United Kingdom, are fully applied and that, as a fully recognised indigenous language on an equal footing with Scottish Gaelic and Welsh, Irish should be afforded the full status and privileges that such standing entails.

It is to be noted that it is the Charter which fully recognises all three Celtic languages equally. Reports of the monitoring aspects of the application of the Charter are conducted by a Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe. They have, in general, been critical of compliance in NI.

In July 2012, a *Strategy For Protecting and Enhancing The Development of the Irish Language* was published by DCAL for public consultation. This Strategy is not yet in operation. Among the purposes and objectives were:

The purpose of this Strategy is to make the Irish language more accessible.
(Ministerial Foreword)

To increase the number of those who can access Irish medium education. (Executive Summary)

Education features strongly in the Areas for Action proposed. The proposed provisions for *second level IME* were of interest to the Advisory Group:

4.4.8 Measures should be taken to address the complexity in establishing new post-primary IME Secondary Schools.

4.4.9 Extra teacher training places for IME trainee teachers should be provided.

4.4.10 Eligibility criteria for the establishment of IME post-primary schools should be reviewed.

Relevant extracts on the general and more specifically legislative context appear in **Appendix 5.**

(7) Irish-Medium Education in Northern Ireland

Introduction

The Group was at all times mindful of the specific task given by the Minister in its Terms of Reference which detailed that:

- the work of the Group should focus on the development of practical and deliverable solutions to increase access to IM Post-primary Education. It should assess the challenges facing future development of the sustainable provision and in doing so the following should be considered:-
- potential models for delivery in the short and medium term based on current legislation and taking account of current financial constraints;
- long term delivery models that may require *new legislation*.

The Group also kept in mind the statutory duty placed on the Department of Education, under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1999, to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education.

In addition, the Group considered the possible impact of general DE policy on the IME sector.

The Group were aware of the extent of IME in NI; it is currently the fastest growing sector within the education system. The Group then considered a range of factors which have implications for IME.

Legislation

For purposes of their deliberations on the strategic development of IME at post-primary level, the Group took as their starting point that section of the Education Order 2006 which sets out what is, in statutory terms, an Irish-medium school:

(2) For the purposes of this Part a school is an Irish speaking school if more than one half of the teaching of—

- (a) religious education; and
- (b) the minimum content of the areas of learning other than that called Language and literacy, is conducted (wholly or partly) in Irish, and “school” includes part of a school.

The Treacy judgment of November 2011 has implications also as the following extract shows:

“Accordingly, [the Department] may facilitate and encourage the Irish-medium post primary sector in ways that it need not for other sectors by taking positive steps or removing obstacles which inhibit the statutory objective. This does not appear to have been fully appreciated by [the Department].”

DE Policy

Entitlement Framework

Changes to curricular arrangements and emphasis on specific skills for second level have been quite extensive. Under the Entitlement Framework at least 24 courses are to be provided up to Key Stage 4 and post 16 but there are thousands of courses from which these are chosen, both General and Academic. Modules may be chosen under courses. A view was expressed that these changes have proved challenging to deliver, not least for IME. The development of Area Learning Communities where schools may assist each other through forms of collaboration or partnership, is intended to ensure that every pupil has access to full entitlement.

The table below outlines the Curricular offering (2013-2014) in the present PP IME sector²

School	Subject Areas	Level
Coláiste Feirste (Belfast)	19	KS3
	23	KS4
	19	Level 3, Post-16
	7	Level 2, Post-16
Coláiste Chaitríona (Unit) (Armagh)	9	KS3
	4	KS4
	-	Post-16
Coláiste N. Iósaef (Unit) (Donaghmore)	(50% reported by school authorities)	KS3
	In first year of development	KS4
Ardscoil N. Maolmhaodhóg (Unit) (Castlewellan)	7	KS3

For purposes of their Task, the Group agreed to focus *on the 11-16 cohort with provision at local level* and the *16-19 cohort with provision on a regional level* in cases where education in the particular subject choices proved unavailable in the local provision.

Current Provision across the IME Sector

Statistics

Each level supports the succeeding level. From a strategic perspective, it is then necessary to keep an overview of the sector in mind.

² Figs reported for Coláiste Feirste were provided by Department of Education and by providers for the Units whether orally at evidence session or subsequently in writing.

The Statistics & Research Team within the Department of Education issued the following statistics in relation to pupils in Irish-medium education for the school year 2013/14

Provision/Type	Preschool	Primary	Post-Primary
Voluntary & Private (funded places)	467		
IM Schools	312	2570	564
IM Units	26	686	267
TOTAL	805	3256	831

Figures for pupils attending naíscóileanna who are not of pre-school age or pupils attending non-funded gaelscóileanna are not included in this table.

Current Provision in the IME Sector at Post-Primary Level

Existing models of post-primary IME *schools* in Northern Ireland are generally described as *standalone* or *freestanding*. This means a school established as a grant-aided school with its own Board of Governors who are accountable to the Department. There is only one such IM PP school in Northern Ireland, Coláiste Feirste, in Belfast. There are also three settings described as IM *units* attached to English-medium host schools, in Armagh, Donaghmore and Castlewellan. Each of these has been established through the Development Proposal (DP) process and has Ministerial approval. However, Castlewellan has yet to meet the enrolment criteria to become grant-aided. Coláiste Feirste offers full immersion which is taken to mean that the full curriculum is delivered through Irish. The situation in the units is further discussed below.

The *Review of Irish-Medium Education Report 2009* defines a *unit* as ‘a setting attached to an English-medium school where the curriculum is delivered through the medium of Irish’. This is the meaning and the reality of the term with regard to models of IME in the Republic. The *Review of Irish-Medium Education Report 2009* further defines a *stream* as ‘a setting attached to an English-medium school where the curriculum is delivered partly through Irish and partly through English’. Two issues arise from these definitions.

- (i) Firstly, ambiguity attaches to the phraseology used in defining a stream in terms of delivering a ‘curriculum partly through Irish and partly through English’. This could be taken to mean use of two languages, Irish and English in this case, in teaching each specific area of the curriculum. The actual approach is in fact delivery of some areas of the curriculum through the medium of Irish and others through the medium of English. Use of the term *dual language* or *bilingual approach* is open to the same possible misinterpretation.
- (ii) Secondly, what are currently described in NI as *units* are in reality *streams*.

Federation

Among the recommendations of the Review of Irish-Medium Education Report 2009 was the innovative concept of *federation*, or a federated school, at either primary or post-primary levels of IME. This is defined as ‘a single school in law, with one principal and one Board of Governors, but operating on two or more sites’. While governance received attention, the distance between sites is not specified nor is there clarity on budget or on staffing or on the location of teaching staff, an issue more pressing perhaps at post-primary level.

Immersion

In the matter of terminology, Irish-medium education (IME), just as WME and GME, appears to be used as an inclusive term to describe varying degrees of curricular immersion which may, or may not, be accompanied by institutional and administrative use of the immersion language.

Current forms of provision offer different levels of immersion. The statutory requirement to be designated an IM school is set out in terms of curriculum and subjects in Education Order 2006. The NI revised curriculum, however, lends itself to *modules* being taken in either Irish or English within the different areas of learning, at KS3 and 4. This approach is reported to have provided difficulties in its operation and moderation, particularly in IME. Immersion may also be measured in terms of the school and class community use of language. In taking the statutory designation as guide for its recommendations, the Group discussed also the concept of ‘contact time’ with Irish (to include teaching time) as a measure of immersion, given these curricular changes and current practices in schools, all of which have occurred since the Education Order of 2006. In doing so, the Group satisfied itself that a satisfactory method of measuring contact time was available.

In addition, it was recognised that any suggestions by the Group with regard to different models offering lower levels of immersion, i.e. less than 50% plus, could also have legal implications.

Governance and funding

Governance and funding are closely related. In terms of governance and funding, the IM PP school is a completely autonomous and independent entity while the unit is the opposite, completely dependent on the school which runs it. It is in relation to the models of units, which are not generally standalone, that governance requires more precise definition and wording in any protocol clearly established.

Comparison with the South (ROI)

Comparison with the situation in the South is useful, particularly since cross-border contacts are a feature and the language of immersion the same. From the general educational viewpoint, such comparison reveals the following:

- (i) A well-developed highly regarded IM sector at PP level (although not 100% transfer/retention rates) comprising some 5% of the second level system.

(ii) Changing official policy with regard to planning (**Appendix 6**).

(iii) A good support system, both statutory and non-statutory.

With regard to more specific aspects on models, the Group was informed that the preferred model is an independent IM school, that no more than two streams exist in the system, that there is an acceptance of units where demand for an independent school is not sufficient. On units, it was the case that parents prefer physical separation from the host school; that occasionally some subjects may be taken at an EM school, particularly at Senior Cycle, to ensure student preferences; that both IM identity and ethos are nurtured simultaneously with a certain level of integration with the host school.

There are 2 IM boarding schools in the South, one primary (Coláiste na Rinne, County Waterford), the other post-primary (Coláiste Íde, County Kerry), both located in Gaeltacht areas. The IME boarding college for final year primary school pupils has existed for 100 years.

Possible Future Provision in the IME Sector at Post-Primary Level

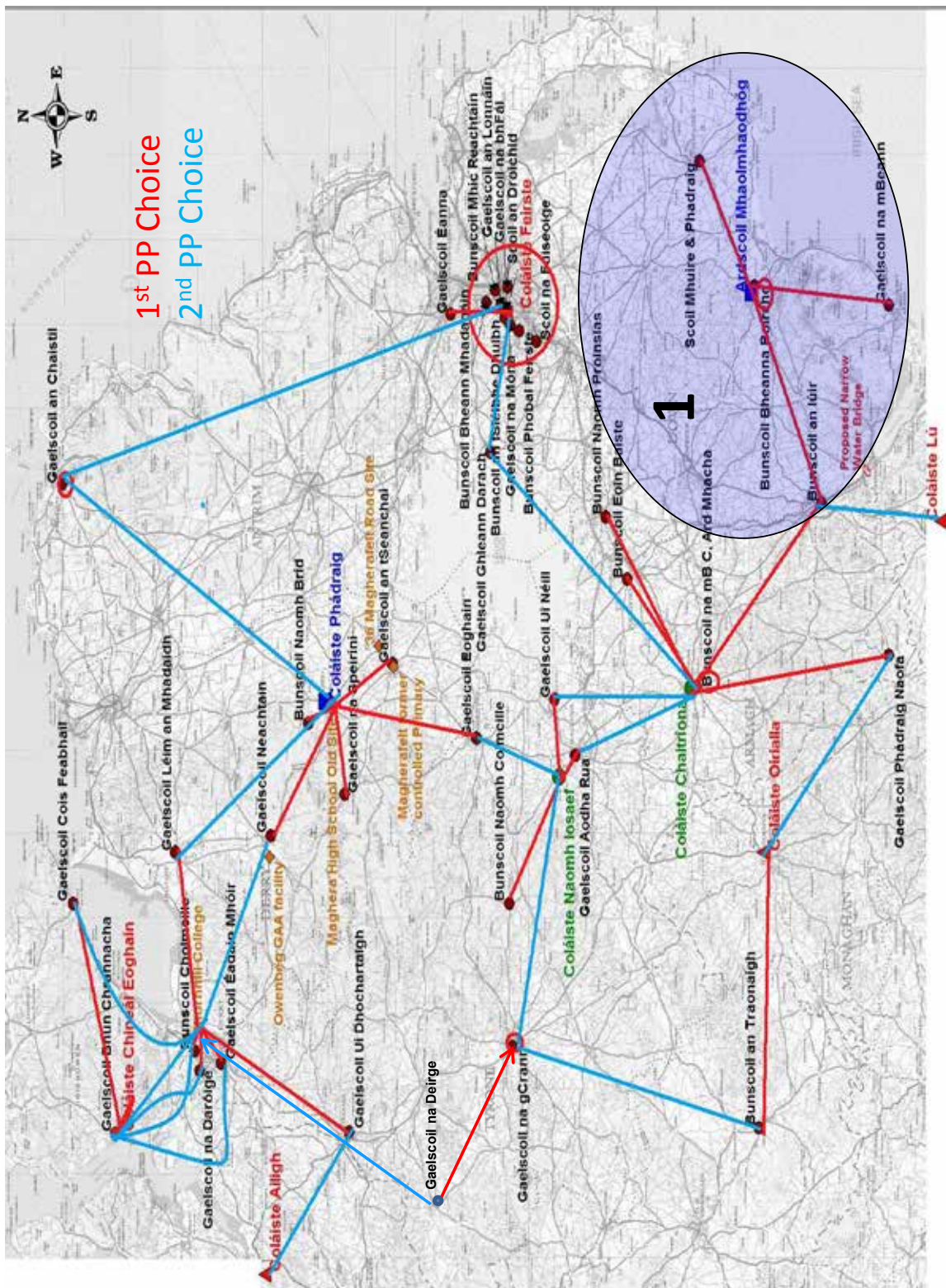
Location and accessibility

The Group agreed that the optimum location for PP provision was to serve the largest number of IM primary schools in the surrounding catchment area. On this basis, the Group then considered areas where a larger number of IM preschool and viable primary schools exist and transfer rates to PP level is adequate or could be higher. The Group began from a series of maps (courtesy of CnaG) showing the location of existing IM provision at primary and pre-primary levels set within 8 IM planning areas (some overlapping) and with an indication of distance to the possible nearest post-primary school. After discussion, the Group concurred with the locations identified by CnaG.

East Down – Area 1

The Group discussed St Malachy's Unit Castlewellan. It has 4 primary schools in its catchment area but one borders on Down/Armagh.

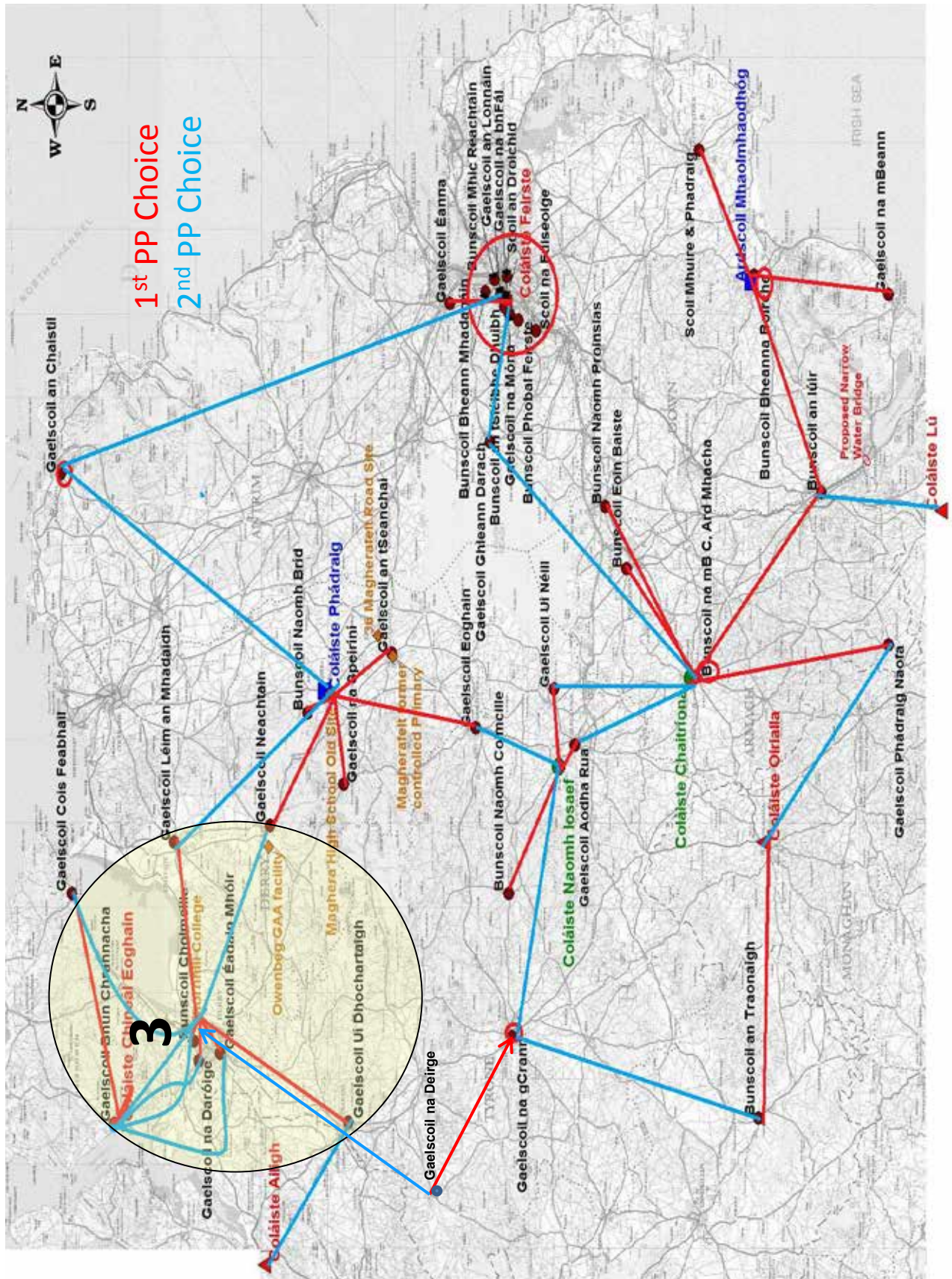
The Group recognised that there were difficulties, since the unit is not funded as it did not initially meet the criteria of having an intake of at least 12. The availability and cost of suitable transport was also an issue. Nevertheless, it currently provides the best location for the IM planning area in question.



Travel to the closest available IM post-primary provision for North Antrim pupils would not be feasible.



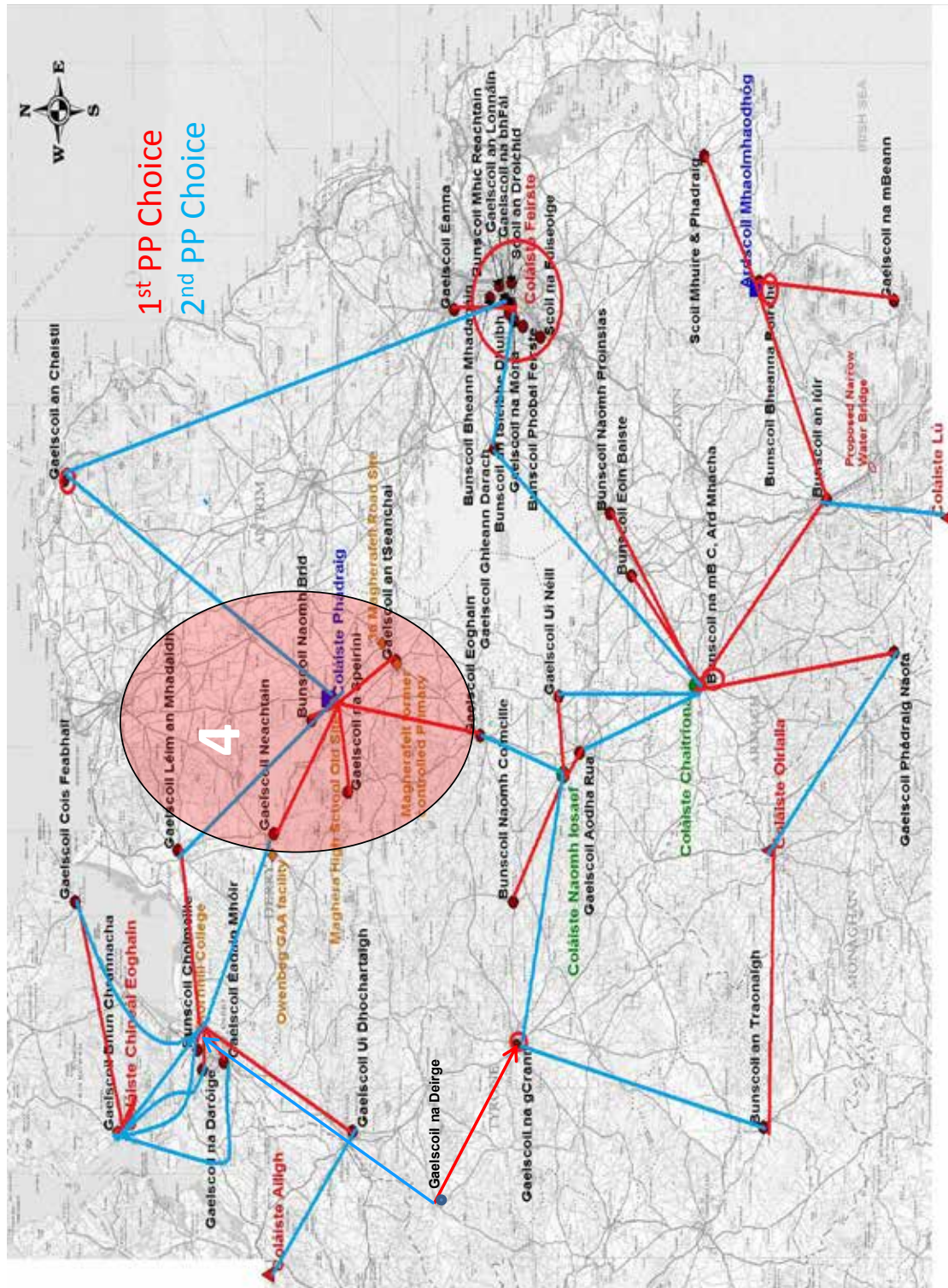
Representatives of the communities in North West Derry and West Tyrone expressed a preference for Derry City as their desired location for IM post-primary provision. This was accepted by the Group as being currently optimal for the area in light of community wishes as of now.



South Derry/Mid Ulster – Area 4

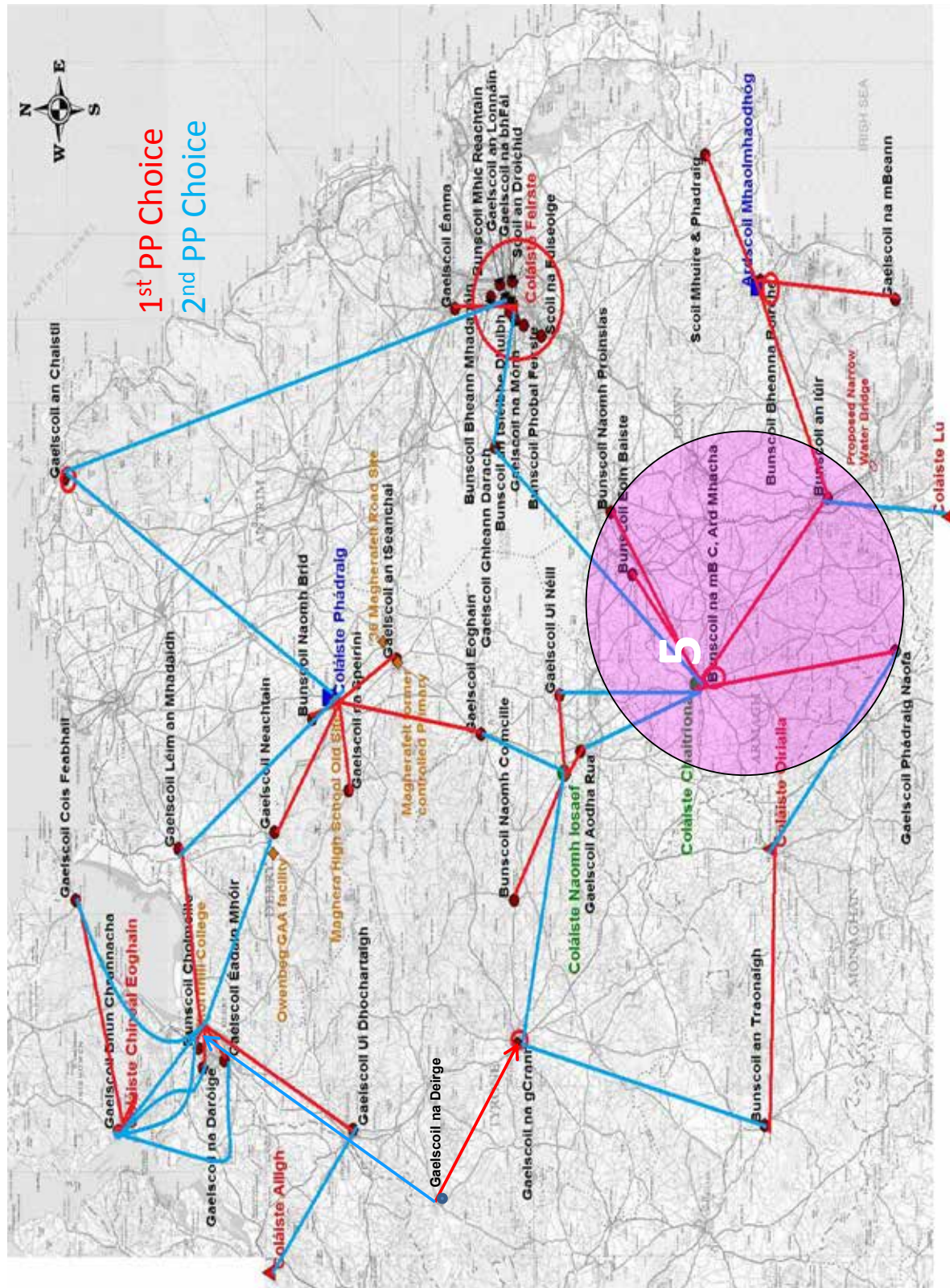
The optimum choice of location for IM post-primary provision in the South Derry/Mid Ulster area would be Maghera and Magherafelt would be the second choice. It was reported that a site in the South Derry/Mid Ulster area, outside Dungiven, had been identified by the local committee.

Independent provision had been requested by the community in South Derry and consideration was given by the Group to a model that could work towards full immersion. It was agreed that South Derry's stated preference may not be currently feasible.



Armagh/South Down – Area 5

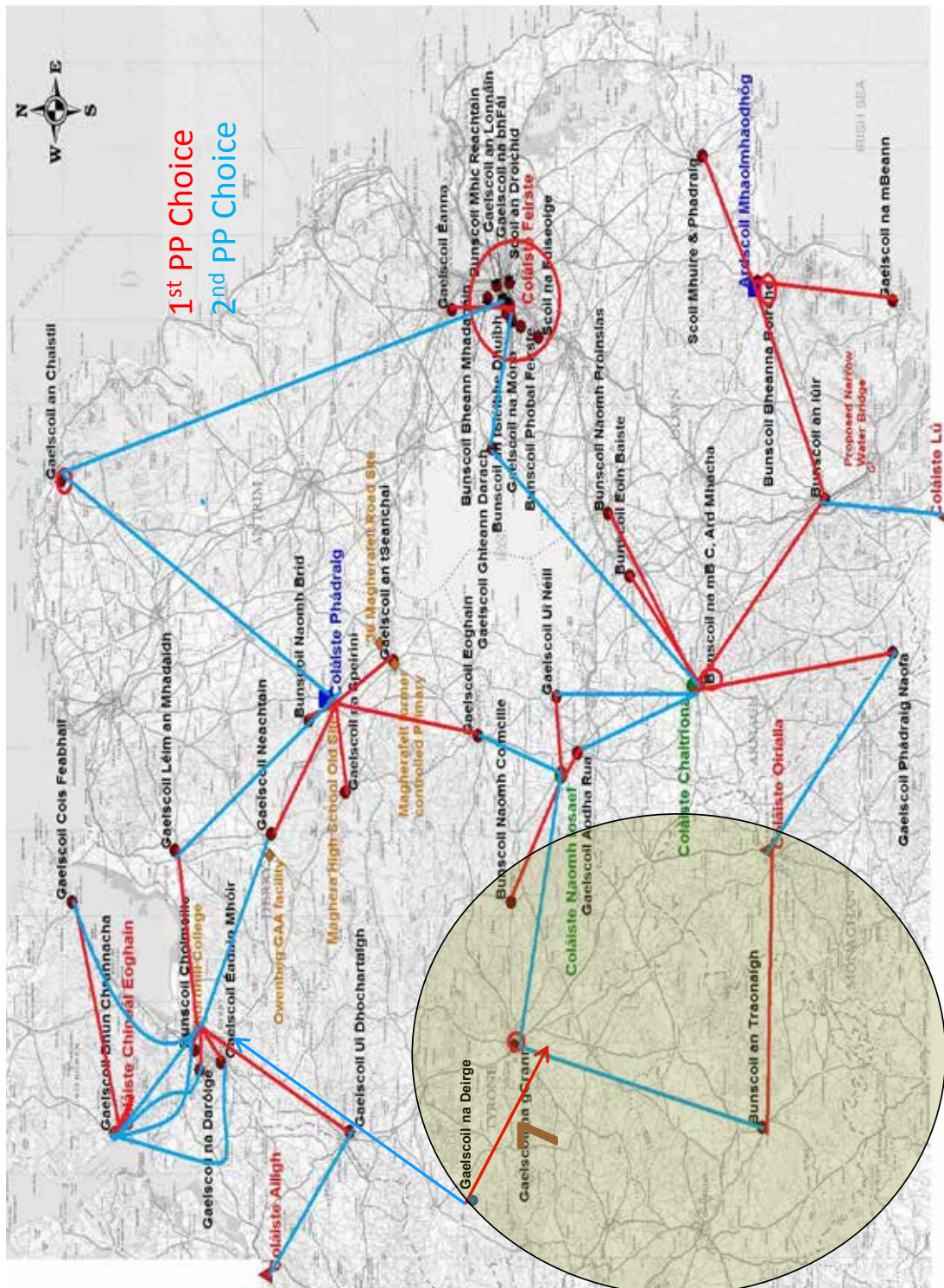
It was agreed that the unit at St Catherine's College, Armagh, was very successful and in light of this might move towards independence, if the host school and the parents were in accord with such a move.³



³ A number of Lurgan parents (who have the option of availing of IM provision in Belfast and Armagh) wished IM to be considered as part of the local current reconfiguration. It was also observed that a number of parents requested the provision of a unit in an Armagh Boys School.

Fermanagh/South Tyrone – Area 7

These areas have few primary schools with small numbers of pupils and the Group agreed to leave consideration of these areas for the moment. There was a suggestion that the Department should examine the possibility of post-primary IM provision being provided for the Fermanagh area by cross-border arrangements and for the south Tyrone area through the consideration of post-primary IM provision in Omagh where appropriate consideration should be given to location on the Lisanelly site. In addition, Fermanagh parents, in their responses to the Parents' Survey, requested that local English-Medium post-primary schools provide more appropriately for pupils transferring from an IM primary school.



The Group considered whether one standalone total immersion PP school would be sufficient in a developing urban area for current and future IM needs through Coláiste Feirste.

Future community demand and development of primary provision leading to increased retention rates could have an impact on North Belfast where other options might then be considered.



Funding

General financial position

The general financial position of current PP provision is easily stated. The provision is totally dependent on state funding which, at its minimum, is dependent on satisfying specific criteria. The size and dispersed nature of the IM community in tandem with IM education being a new provision, beginning from scratch, mitigates in the early years against high numbers of pupils. This, in turn, affects available funding. The Units, in particular, have reported funding problems in their efforts to provide as high a proportion as is possible of immersion education.

Current arrangements (to early March 2014)

Common Framework Scheme and resultant Formula (CFF)

A set of common principles underlie this scheme and formula.

Under this existing Common Framework Scheme and resultant Formula, the funding situation is as detailed below.

All schools receive funding such as:

- Core AWPU (per pupil)
- Premises area and per pupil
- TSN to reflect identified needs
- Small Schools Support where applicable
- Above average teacher salary compensation support where applicable

For IME pupils, the addition to the AWPU is

- 0.055 at primary level (total £110.33 per pupil; £337,050 overall 2013/14)
- 0.014 at PP level (£28.08 per pupil; £21,596 overall 2013/14)

in recognition of their specific linguistic circumstances, for curricular support arising from provision of English at KS2 PLUS curricular materials at both levels for IME.

In addition, IM UNITS (as discrete units within host school) receive additional funding

- for additional administrative & management responsibilities (similar to Small Schools Support Factor) which depends on size and profile of Unit
- Primary IM Unit: £21,090 (up to 50 pupils) à max £42,180 (up to 100 pupils) à zero (300+ pupils)
- PP Unit: £55,600 (up to 100 pupils); £111,201 (200 pupils) – equivalent to 2.9 x relevant salary M6; zero (550 or more)

The total allocation for 2013/14 for second level units was £205,166 while the overall expenditure on all aspects of IM additionality was £797,065 for 3,055 pupils in the system.

This equates to some £260 per pupil, which might be viewed as the cost of providing the opportunities for learners to become bilingual through their educational provision.

(8) Evidence from stakeholders

The Group met with key stakeholders including:

- Parents and school representatives in the Derry/South Derry area;
- Representatives from the Welsh education government;
- Representatives from the Scottish education government;
- Representatives from the Republic of Ireland;
- Practitioners from existing IM schools and units; and
- Educationalists, academics, support services (ESA, ITT, CCEA & C2k; Áisaonad) and Irish- Medium cultural and linguistic specialists.

It was agreed that the key stakeholders are the pupils, parents and teachers. The Group considered as important to determine what their view is and then to decide on how best to ensure that their view is taken into account when developing provision.

Parents

In an effort to determine the point of view of parents, the Group carried out 2 surveys in which questionnaires were issued to parents of Irish-medium primary school children and to parents of Irish-medium nursery school children. Most, but not all, schools co-operated with the Group to facilitate this. Responses were received from 23 of the 36 primary schools and 7 responses from nursery schools. Two replies were received from primary schools which were critical of the survey form on the grounds of its seeming to seek the lowest common denominator in terms of options. A full analysis of the responses is detailed at **Appendix 2**.

From the surveys and sessions held, it became apparent that the motivation of parents in choosing IME for their children may be educational or linguistic or both. At post-primary level, future education and employment prospects were an issue of importance as was the standing of the school, whether an IM post-primary school or an English-medium post-primary school hosting an IM post-primary unit. It could be assumed that such attitudes might change over time as the provision of IME at post-primary level would become more widespread and normalised and its effects more clearly visible.

Teachers

Position held by Primary teachers (Principals) on provision of IME at PP (Derry City and South Derry)

From sessions held with Principals, it was very clear that all Principals sought PP provision for their pupils, that the lack of this continuity of provision was proving a disincentive for parents to engage with IME, and was a cause of unnecessary and detrimental loss to the linguistic fluency achieved by the individual child and therefore to the Irish language community. Many parents expressed their willingness to consider various options and different travel distances to ensure this provision.

It might be added that *the investment* made by parents, teachers, pupils and DE in primary provision was also suffering loss because of this lack of progression. Two further points were made during the evidence gathering process: that the IM primary pupil without access to some form of IME at second level may not receive appropriate linguistic schooling in an EM secondary school; that, despite the many resources being made available for IME, learners of Irish in EM schools, coming from IM primary schools, may not receive sufficient attention even though they currently form a majority within the cohort leaving the IM primary system, given the lack of IME at PP level.

Focus Groups

The point was made at Focus Group sessions that more collaboration and support would benefit the IM sector, that more cohesion should be encouraged. Such cohesion would ensure advice and a support umbrella for teachers, whether teaching Irish or through Irish. Collaboration with third level institutions could also be envisaged. Issues raised are detailed at **Appendix 7**.

With regard to ICT and the *provision of curricular resources*, comments from stakeholders and focus groups were positive.

- There are many resources available as e-books.

The following extracts from discussion during stakeholder and focus group meetings are apposite.

- There are practical possibilities and advantages in connecting schools using ICT and/or using on-line learning for initial teaching.
- Although there would be issues with teaching online, e.g. timetabling problems, there are huge possibilities but the consensus was that a good 'live' teacher cannot be replaced.
- ICT may be part of the short-term answer for IM.
- However, ICT is very expensive, technical support can be a problem, there is a certain fear factor with ICT and teachers would need to be upskilled.

The Group was advised through Focus Groups that the numbers taking Irish at GCSE level appear to be falling although A-level Irish is remaining relatively steady. It was also reported to the Group that more third-level students are undertaking a single honours degree, when there is need to have more students doing joint areas to answer current and future needs. Resources can be a problem for schools, in that funding is sometimes only available to teach one specific language so it may not always be possible for a school to offer Irish. Irish is in competition with other languages especially in non-selective schools. Concerns were also expressed about the revised curriculum for NI on the argument that there cannot be a one size that fits all. Under the Entitlement Framework, at least 24 courses are to be provided up to Key Stage 4 and post 16 but there are thousands of courses from which these are chosen both General and Academic.

It was pointed out that different forms of incentivisation exist: in the ROI, pupils get extra points for mathematics at Leaving Certificate if they do their examination through Irish, a bonus which enhances their chances of third level entry.

Collaboration was a strong theme in the Focus Group sessions and the need to promote coherent collaboration in teacher education between north and south and to share expertise.

North/South issues

Arising from evidence given orally and in writing from Focus Groups participants and other invited stakeholders, the Group was made aware of a range of issues concerning IME and supports for its operation north and south. These issues included, in particular, a demonstrated need:

- *With regard to resources*
 - for a mechanism to provide more effective collaboration between the Departments and providers, north and south, to govern what is produced for the Irish-medium post-primary sector;
 - for a mechanism to provide more effective collaboration between providers to streamline the production process, maximise the benefits of 'products' and increase value for money;
 - to ensure that what is produced is made accessible to IM schools/learners across the island, including through the use of ICT; (Concern was expressed in relation to reports that textbooks were being produced and not being used; also that online resources which had been produced were not being made available via C2k);
- *With regard to ongoing planning for IM including transport*
 - for more precise information, on a yearly basis, to determine the number of children from the north accessing IM in the south (and vice versa), or who might wish to do so;
- *With regard to the ongoing valuable collaborative work and research of the North South Standing Committee on IM Education*
 - for an enhanced role and effective dissemination process for the body, recognising that the new funding model being implemented by Foras na Gaeilge has reduced the number of core-funded voluntary bodies, including those in the education sector, with the result that current membership of the Standing Committee may change in the future.

The major points from the evidence-gathering exercises may be summarized as follows:

- Recognition of the benefits of immersion education.
- An urgent need for extension of Irish-medium post-primary provision pro-actively and properly supported by DE.

- Communities and parents having differing desires with regard to initial options of models in PP provision.
- A range of funding problems, particularly for those options currently designated units.
- A dearth of specialist teachers to implement the curriculum in immersion provision.
- Need for more structured collaboration and clarity across the respective roles at all levels among the various support agencies for IME, whether departmental, statutory, or otherwise.

(9) Irish Medium Education in Northern Ireland – The Way Forward and Recommendations

Introduction

In this final section, the Group, having taken on board the wealth of information provided through the methodology used, makes a series of recommendations. These primarily comprise three overall constituents: the required elements of a strategic approach to planning for IME by the authorities; a pathway for development at PP level; a series of recommendations to help obviate the constraining factors which hinder the continued development of IME at PP level.

Strategic Planning

Forward planning is a prerequisite of a strategic approach. IM provision in the long-term needs to have *pre-planning and continuity of planning*. It was agreed that there is now a sufficient base of primary schools in place to be able to plan for post-primary provision which would feed into the area learning model that the Department prefers. However, each succeeding level is dependent for development on the strength of the preceding level. It was agreed that the Department should take a *proactive* strategic approach to establish what the demand is and how to meet it through supply. Once a demand is articulated, the need would have to be examined and a decision made as to whether or how the need could be met. The base of statistical information that would be available could help determine the model which would best meet the need.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that the Department requires the appropriate planning authority to develop a mechanism to identify the numbers of children wishing to go into IM education at every level so that the demand could be met and planning would be on a long-term basis. This may be done in collaboration with CnaG.

The Group is of the view that, in relation to a *strategic* context for planning, a starting point must be determined. A developing system needs to start somewhere. There was strong debate whether that is at an initial low level of entry to IME in order to ensure access and inclusion or through innovative methods of reaching the pinnacle of standalone status as an independent school within a reasonable timescale or both.

The Group saw their task in terms of a process such that if anyone in Northern Ireland wanted an IM provision, there would be clear steps or criteria to be followed and satisfied. The process could be seen as a progressive journey to be shared with the community during which barriers to starting or continuing that journey are replaced by forms of assistance.

The Advisory Group considered the concept of *area planning* in relation to IME through the appropriate planning authority. It was advised that the planning area for IME, as with all schools, is whatever it needs to be in order to meet the needs of the young people of the area in question.

The Group then **RECOMMENDS** that the planning authorities be directed to take particular cognisance of IME in any and all current and future local planning and reconfigurations.



Nevertheless, in order to better avail of all possible educational benefits and to contribute IME expertise to existing areas, the proposed IME dedicated area could also be embedded in existing Planning Areas.

In terms of area planning and future development, area and demand needs should be kept under constant review and it was accepted that there would be a need for a risk analysis to be carried out in any new provision and this could allow for a fallback position if quality was not being met.

Pro-active development of the IME sector is a tenet of existing legislation. The Treacy judgment (October 2011) dealt clearly with any issue of possible discrimination.

In offering advice and guidance on a strategic approach by the DE in the future to the judicious expansion of IME from the currently very under-developed PP level, the Advisory Group **RECOMMENDS** as follows:

- a strategic approach presupposes a **Statement of Intent** (to be made by the Minister);

DE statement of Intent for IM Education

The Review of Irish medium Education Report 2009 led to the Department of Education adopting an approach to IM education which required all policy areas to embed Irish medium education as an integral part of the policy development and implementation process. While this was a laudable objective, in reality it has resulted in a fractured and incoherent articulation of the Department's IM policy. This, in turn, has resulted in frustration for key stakeholders who have had to navigate the whole Department to establish what the position is for IM education sector.

It would be the view of this Group that the Department should publish a clear statement of intent for the development of IM Education in the context of the Department's full suite of policies, the Treacy Judgement and taking into account the recommendations outlined below.

The statement should clearly articulate the Department's vision for the IM sector and the principles to which it will adhere to deliver this vision. It should outline the models and support systems it will put in place to encourage and facilitate the development of IM education at pre-school, primary and post-primary phases of education. In doing so it should detail the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in the processes of development and consolidation of IM Provision.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that in order to oversee the policy development and implementation in line with the Statement of Intent DE should establish appropriate implementation structures at both official (top down) and sectoral (bottom up) level.. Within DE this may mean a cross-branch committee which meets regularly on IME issues, is chaired by a high-ranking official, and is serviced by a dedicated team who may act as interface between sector and committee on specific issues; within the sector, it may mean more targeted support for CnaG in assisting in the delivery of strategic goals within a dedicated overall plan.

While in agreement with the value of mainstreaming IME policy following recommendations of the Review of Irish-Medium Education Report 2009, the Group has concerns on the possible lack of the requisite focus/diminution of focus within too broad-based an approach. Alongside the Statement of Intent, the group sees merit in:

- initial language proofing of the implications of *all* education policy proposals; and
- continuous monitoring of the impact of specific policy as implemented in the IM sector to ensure it is fit for purpose; and to allow for any required tweaking.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that a separate voluntary coalition of IM Post-primary providers should be established along the lines of the current area learning communities, to provide a space within which IME schools and personnel work together on the challenges posed by curricular change and by those specific elements offered at IME PP level. This space would be shared by all IME schools and simultaneously be embedded in existing local learning communities to ensure cross-sectoral contact and mutual support.

Development Proposal (DP) and Protocols

A need was identified to outline the specific list of elements required in a DP with regard to any models that the Group would be proposing. Currently, in terms of a Development Proposal, there is a process to be followed by applicants but there are no specific criteria in place so long as the DP is in keeping with government policies. Both the Development Proposal (DP) and the Development Proposal process and related documentation were discussed by the Group. There is guidance provided by the Department and also supporting information available. In making the case in support of the DP, the proposer should draw extensively on the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) as it is the main driver. There must be robust evidence of demand and a clear 'critical path' outlined for implementation that will be planned well enough in advance to instil confidence in the parents that the school will actually be available.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that all forms of current provision should ensure contact with all local feeder schools and be enabled to devise communication strategies in collaboration with CnaG to ensure increased retention. Parental confidence is vital which needs to be secured if IM provision is to succeed. It is important that the educational experience of their children is paramount and that parents are kept informed on an ongoing basis and are assured that everything is in order, especially funding.

Additionally, some 'nurture/seeding' package was seen as a crucial element that would allow the preparations to be made to ensure that all arrangements for high quality education were in place for the day the first pupils arrived. A recommendation with regard to the DP *process* to offer support at the initial stages which would include funding appeared feasible. It was accepted that there is a lot of pressure on the Principal at the start in order to get the school up and running. It was agreed that support was essential for IM education in the initial stages.

The Department needs to have a degree of confidence that teachers will be in place, the curriculum will be delivered and there will be the numbers of pupils to attend. This is best demonstrated through the Development Proposal, a process which would also benefit

from having a Project Manager in place in order to ensure that the critical path towards implementation is clearly and effectively outlined for the benefit of the first pupil entrants. The Group accepted that there should be a consistent approach followed, across all areas, in relation to the criteria to be satisfied to justify funding for a school or another model of IM post-primary provision.

Ideally, a member of staff should be in post at least a year before the proposed provision opens so that the support structure and resources can be in place before pupils arrive. However, any models for the 16-19 cohort would be a different case.

It is the view of the Group that a period of 3 years should be allowed from the development of a proposal through to implementation and the opening of the provision. At development stage support should be provided by a Project manager and on approval of the development proposal, support should be provided by the Principal to recruit staff and get the school up and running. Such a period would help to build up community confidence, to improve ability for distance/elearning and to foster leadership and managerial quality at both governor and senior management level. There would also be value in showing the benefits of the proposed provision in order to ensure stability and sustainability through incentivisation of the proposed type of provision, security of tenure for staff, ring-fenced funding, and clarity of any service level agreement devised.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that in order to ensure success and growing expertise, the funding of a post of principal up to a year in advance of the opening of any new funded IM post-primary provision to ensure that all relevant policies and staffing arrangements are in place to deliver high quality education (based on the model used in proposed school amalgamations)

In respect of models and the DP process, the Group was cognisant of the need for clarification of terminology and the implications of possible changes to legislation. This included clarity on terms such as 'IME, stream, unit, standalone, and independent', together with the financial implications of incentives or supports and the impact on Development Proposal guidance in respect of wording.

As an overall starting guide, the Group decided to set out for itself the required criteria for a Development Proposal, as outlined above, which might ensure a viable and vibrant IM standalone independent school as the ideal.

The Group looked then at the key elements for a Development Proposal for forms of IM PP provision. It **RECOMMENDS** that the following criteria be included:

- Identified demand from the community;
- Within area planning requirements (geographical location and with regard to other forms of provision in area);
- Initial intake for an IM PP school of 35 in year 8 rising to an annual intake of 65/80 by the fifth year to ensure sustainability;
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to increase intake;
- Governance and management structures in place;
- Teaching staff available (including the principal);
- Arrangements in place in relation to physical location;
- Transport arrangements in place;
- Evidence of manifestation of ethos;
- Immersion (50% plus);
- Agreed monitoring process by DE;
- In the case of a Unit, Co-ordinator post (with representation) on subcommittee/ SMT;
- Commitment to progress on pathway; and
- Protocols for units should be examined and accepted by DE.

There will be a need for a change in the legislation to ensure that incentives for development can be provided on a statutory basis.

In addition to listing the criteria to be included for official consideration of a DP, the Group agreed that the criteria for protocol/service level agreement should be clearly laid out and agreed in advance. Such agreements should include reference to admissions and local circumstances and draw on existing protocols previously agreed between CnaG and Catholic Trustees.

In the case of units, in order to ensure that the child has access to the full range of facilities, any possible problems between host school and unit must be set out and resolved through the service level agreement or protocol established. The protocol is then a significant instrument in ensuring harmony.

It was suggested that the protocols for units and schools should be examined and accepted by the department. A unit would have an administrative aspect and consideration was given to the funding of units/schools.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that the protocol covers the following items:

- Governance and funding arrangements.
- Level and continuity of immersion.

- Progression issues, whether in terms of Key Stages or model type.
- Clarity on issues of IM identity and integration with host school.
- Admissions policy.
- Local circumstances

Projected enrolment trends and issues of sustainability

The Group accepted that there needs to be larger numbers at the lower levels to allow for sustainability at post-primary level and therefore development at every level is required.

Sustainable provision is more dependent on the annual intake of pupils, on retention rates from IM primary schools, than on any other single factor. Intake depends on a variety of issues, including transport and incentivisation. The Group considered the retention or transfer aspect in the context of each of the locations agreed and in terms of possible percentages of retention rates. (See also **Appendix 8**)

In general, from a starting position and in the initial stages, the rates as shown appeared unlikely to sustain a standalone form of provision, particularly as some primary schools are quite young and have not yet reached Year 7. Given the success of existing forms of provision, however, and their steady upward growth, the prospect of increasing rates of retention towards greater evidence of sustainability seem almost certain, particularly if parents' knowledge of, and confidence in, the provision increased.

It was the general consensus of the Group that something must be done also to improve transfer rates. It was accepted that in areas where larger number of viable primary schools exist, transfer rates to PP levels could and should be higher.

Future forms of collaboration with Celtic colleagues

The Group were enabled to make very fruitful contacts and develop possibilities for informative and helpful discussion on areas of mutual interest in medium education with colleagues in the DEs of Scotland, Wales and the RoI. All expressed a wish for future collaboration as well as reciprocal study visits which the Group, due to time constraints, was unfortunately unable to accept.

Given, however, that such collaboration could prove useful into the future, and that a structure is available for the dissemination of ideas and good practice, the Group makes two **RECOMMENDATIONS**.

That DE takes the initiative:

- (1) in establishing an informal group with Celtic colleagues which might meet twice yearly to exchange views and information on a particular aspect of immersion education across the Celtic languages;
- (2) in formally hosting a seminar under the auspices of the British-Irish Council on immersion education.

The Council was established under Strand Three of the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement and has added indigenous languages to its areas of work. The Council's areas of work also include Early Years, a topic which provides another possible opportunity with regard to immersion education in NI.

Models and Immersion

There are currently 3 examples of IME units which represent selective/non-selective/single sex/co-educational host schools. All 3 examples are co-educational, all-ability and promoting a special needs ethos over an extended catchment area. All 3 units are at different stages of development. IM PP has not enjoyed official strategic planning (see Review of Irish-Medium Education Report 2009). The Group is of the view that current provision has developed organically in certain areas and therefore may need assistance to realise its full potential within a developing strategic framework which should emerge from this Report. The Group is also of the view that some interim arrangements may be required to enable some existing IM PP provisions to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Schools Policy. This may mean a 3-year funded plan within which all relevant factors would need to be considered and examined.

Using a series of maps prepared by Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta which included the possibility of cross-border provision, the Group began its consideration of models through a set of objective criteria which examined current provision and a possible future strategic scenario. These general criteria included: location, accessibility, enrolment trends, and general financial position.

In their examination of models of provision, the Group then examined the rather less objective criteria of the educational experience of the children, school leadership and management – all linked to curricular provision and teacher supply – together with consideration of the relative strength of community links.

Finally, the Group looked at those factors which might have constraining effects on strategic development, e.g. funding and teacher supply in particular.

Terminology and issues of definition

The nature of the IM PP sector currently encompasses what may be described as two forms of provision: three units and one school. The Group, while not precluding beginning with a school provision, also envisages development as the encouragement of movement upward along a pathway from interim Level 0 Unit→Level 1 Unit→school.

Debate was had on whether or not there should be 'streams' and if not, what to do in relation to existing streams. The view was that each existing stream should be incentivised to move to becoming a 'unit'.

The key issues, with regard to any model proposed, lie in support from parents/pupils, the number of pupils going into a school and the level of parental confidence. It is important that the needs of parents and pupils are identified. It is also vital that the legislative curriculum requirements are fully met.

The aim would be to have full immersion and, where this is not possible on the required criteria, the fallback position would be a unit where a large percentage of the curriculum would be delivered through Irish. The Group agreed that the model will also depend on the level of immersion to be offered.

A diagrammatic representation of the **RECOMMENDATION** of the Group, arising out of sustained discussion, is given below.

UNIT to School

Level	Immersion	Key Stage	Incentive (includes AWPU element and an administrative element)
Level 0 (interim)	25-50% over 3 years	3	✓
Level 1	>50-70%	3 4*	✓
School	50+% to full curriculum	All	✓

*At KS4 the host school should offer a sufficient number of subjects through the medium of Irish to allow pupils to study at least 50% of their subjects through the medium of Irish. This allows for individual pupil choice and compliance with the entitlement framework by the School.

If it becomes quite clear towards the end of the 3 year cycle that the school cannot satisfy the criteria/conditions of the initial proposal, then special funding lapses.

In exceptional circumstances where sufficient progress has been demonstrated, the Department may renew special funding for 1 additional year.

The advantages/benefits of (appropriate) immersion education are attested in international research. Some of the aspects of this research have been replicated in research conducted on Irish-medium education in NI and in the immersion systems of the other Celtic languages. It is the Group's view that standalone immersion education of the kind experienced (offered) in other jurisdictions has the most beneficial effects for both pupils and community. Where this approach is not initially possible, it should remain the goal of whichever provision prevailing circumstances allow, subject to parental wishes.

The Group then **RECOMMENDS** in relation to models, that a continuum/pathway leading to full immersion should be considered if full immersion is the desired aim of the proposing community. This has implications for current and future provision; for funding and legislation.

Issues of governance and funding

The variables considered by the Group in this respect included the following.

- (i) An independent school has its own governance and has total autonomy of 100% of its curriculum and is recognised by the Department and therefore receives funding.
- (ii) An interim Level 0 Unit is totally dependent on the proposing school with regard to governance, finance and curriculum but within the criteria of the Proposal accepted by the planning authorities.
- (iii) A Level 1 Unit is dependent on the host school with regard to governance, finance and curriculum but within the criteria of both the DP and the mutually agreed protocol or service level agreement.
- (iv) A unit may be *attached* to an EM or IM host school.
- (v) If a unit *detaches* from an EM or IM host school, it then becomes, to all intents and purposes, an independent school once it complies with all criteria as laid down in the DP criteria listed above, including level of immersion.
- (vi) If the unit is detached (but not yet independent on DP criteria) from an EM or IM host school then the unit should receive its own unit funding.
- (vii) Detachment may be defined in (a) purely physical accommodation terms or (b) in terms of satisfying most (but not all) of the DP criteria for an independent school or (iii) in terms of both (i) and (ii). Physical detachment *of its own* is not sufficient for independence of governance or funding.
- (viii) The funding in the new funding scheme proposed below is applied to unit and school equally but the unit should receive additional funding as detailed.
- (ix) A detached unit could be linked to either an IM or EM host. If in *federated union*, the unit would be governed by the host, IM or EM. If the detached unit is self-governed but not yet a school, then it would have unit funding and would have governance of its own.

The Group also discussed the possibility of having a subcommittee of the Board of Governors in an EM host school that would deal with the attached IM unit; the possible co-option of IM representation on to the Board of Governors of the host school; of the unit Co-ordinator being a designated member of the school's Senior Management Team; of a report on the unit being an integral part of an annual report and school prospectus of the host school.

Pathway of IM Provision: Implications

The Group discerned a possible pathway, or continuum of provision, from interim Level 0 Unit→Level 1 Unit→IM PP school. These three models would have differing implications in relation to immersion, governance and related funding. In all cases, the possibility is built into the initial DP of moving onward through the options towards the ultimate option of independent full immersion provision so that progression is envisaged from the outset, if that is desired by the community or if the community wishes to leave all options open from the outset.

Models: Units by Funding/Immersion levels/Governance

Clearly, existing legislation ties the definition of an IM school or IM Level 1 unit to a specific level of immersion, 50% plus of the curriculum (with certain conditions). Similarly, the level of official recognition through funding is tied to that level of immersion. However, differences exist with regard to *the intake* required in either case and to the actual ***level of funding***. The Group discussed in detail the implications arising from this situation.

- a) Legislative requirement for recognition of a school (or 'part of a school', or Unit) is 50% or over of IM curriculum to receive the appropriate level of funding from the department. The Group discussed a possible scenario to raise the 50% plus to 75/80% of immersion for full funding with *pro rata* decreases for 50%+ or lower. This would mean (i) possible recognition through funding of a level of immersion lower than the current required 50%+; (ii) but also some of the current provision might be disadvantaged. Therefore other increases/incentivisation measures were proposed.
- b) A developing system needs to start somewhere where there is less than 50% plus immersion. The Group had a concern that unless lower than 50%+ was accepted, current provision in Units could be affected. In that case, two possibilities presented themselves: acceptance of the concept of unit at lower than 50%+ immersion together with incentives that would encourage the current provision to move to *de facto* unit status.
- c) Additionally, if a greater % of the curriculum in a unit is IM, if 50% plus of the learning is through IM, it would appear that elements of the governance of the unit should be by the IM fraternity.
- d) In the view of the Group, from the legislative perspective, post-primary IM should focus on the age group 11-16. The curriculum should be at least 25% immersion at the interim Level 0 unit and funding should be increased as the % of immersion increases and the protocols should reflect that full immersion is the ultimate aim.

The Group therefore envisage either an independent full immersion model once requisite criteria are met or a ladder/pathway towards that ideal position. Pathways would have to be reviewed on a regular basis and clear criteria for movement along the 'pathway/ladder' was needed. There was a need to assess what parents want and the options available to satisfy that. The Group also accepted that a school which starts out as moving towards total immersion needs time in which to prove itself.

Summary

In accordance with current legislation and as diagrammatically represented above, the Group views recognised IM provision at PP level to comprise either a Level 1 unit or a school which offers over 50% of the curriculum through the medium of Irish; which receives incentive funding for increasing levels of immersion, but which is also subject to conditions attaching to KS4 and to a specific time span with regard to the continuance of such special funding. Both Level 1 units and schools will, as of now, require development proposals to be submitted, these to be in accordance with the requisite criteria listed by the Group.

A Level 0 unit is regarded as a starting point, or interim position, on a pathway towards becoming recognised IM PP provision under the current legislative terms. To assist that progression, an incentive is offered for increasing the level of immersion. This, however, is timebound. In order to be considered for such incentive funding, the proposing school is required to submit a proposal clearly setting out its developmental plan and the means by which it intends to achieve it within the specified time span.

In all cases, regular monitoring of proposed outcomes will take place.

IM Transitional Budget

Transition

The Department has a process and support package for any grant-aided school wishing to transform to become an integrated school.

This framework could provide a useful model should a process be developed to allow any grant-aided school to enhance the IM provision in their school.

It was acknowledged that schools would have to have a strong Irish language ethos/department and it should also be recognised that these schools may not wish to develop further to full immersion.

When a unit is transforming to a stand-alone provision, there could be a need to incentivise the unit and the host school. However, it was agreed that the incentive should be time bound and be paid from a central budget. The precedent that could apply here is how the Department deals with schools that amalgamate.

Encouragement may take the form of incentive to begin or to move forward. In this respect, the Group **RECOMMENDS** both

- a *nascent* incentive to get proposed provision off the ground – this may include provision in advance of a Principal/Project Manager - and
- a *transition* incentive to encourage movement particularly (a) within schools towards taking on IM at Level 0 Unit and (b) movement upwards to Level 1 Unit to detachment from a host school towards autonomy as a school
- accompanying support for the host school during and after the detachment process.

If the ideal is to ultimately achieve a standalone unit, then consideration needs to be given to whether a host school will suffer if they are losing pupils. The Group **RECOMMENDS** continuing some form of financial incentive on a sliding scale to host schools for up to five years after a Unit detaches to become autonomous.

Possibilities of pre-immersion to boost intake

The Group examined the possibility of late immersion in English medium schools. It was suggested that pupils at the end of Year 6 could be offered a full summer of immersion. In the South there are funded Easter and summer camps which are geared towards children starting IM education.

Consideration was given as to how immersion such as this might be funded/incentivised; however, it was agreed that this was not an area that would have the best results for public money. It was felt that there is not currently a need for this or, at least, a need has not been identified. Experience has shown that Principals prefer that children have commenced immersion one or two years before starting primary school. However, it was accepted that the Department could not have a criterion that would stop children from accessing a funded primary school place. There was a view that if public money is to be spent, it might be better spent on funding teachers in English-medium schools to be available for services to IM schools.

Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation for immersion situations is a major factor of provision across the Celtic languages. In the case of Irish in NI, however, it would seem reasonable to look towards the solutions being proposed for Irish from a cross-border perspective. In the RoI, the statutory body COGG has ensured several new departures in teacher preparation for immersion teaching.

In recent times, at primary level, an examination has been offered in both the RoI and in NI to provide Irish language qualifications to those trained as teachers outside the Republic in order to enable them teach in primary schools in the Republic. This Scrúdú Cailíochta Gaeilge may provide a type of precedent for somewhat similar inter-institutional collaborative teacher education ventures at PP level.

Federated Model

The Group considered the federated model and considered carefully the comments on federation made in the review of Irish-medium education. To date, federation is untried as a model within IME at either primary or post-primary level. Consequently, it was considered that, currently, the risks at post-primary level outweighed the benefits. Collaboration, co-operation or partnership between schools, whether between IM forms of provision or between IM and EM forms, when founded on clearly detailed service level agreements or protocols, were considered preferable for the present. It was agreed that the federated model might best be considered when IME has further developed at post-primary level.

Other Possible Forms of Provision

Move from IM to English Provision

The Group noted that, in some instances, children in year 8 move from IM education to English provision in year 9 but it was unclear on where the Group could get the statistics or the reasons why this occurs which could lead to remediation of the situation to the benefit of all concerned. Obviously, such moves from IM provision influence the continuity of retention within the PP provision and hence funding and possibly community/parental attitude.

English Unit

To address issues of access for all pupils in isolated areas, the Group also explored the feasibility of an English-Medium Unit in an IM School. This, however, was open to the linguistic argument that such an option would weaken the immersion ethos and context of the IM school.

Isolated Provision

As another possible solution for isolated IM primary schools at an unfeasible distance for travelling to the nearest IM PP such as North Antrim, the Group considered extension of provision in the 4 -14 age group until such time as closer PP became available. In the event of the community seeking such provision, the Group were of the view that this model could be considered but that the community should be asked to consider it in conjunction with the full range of models.

Boarding

Boarding schools could be looked at as a versatile possibility to allow children of particular areas access to IM education. Looking at academic progression, IM might be more accessible for post-16 or A-level education if there was boarding available. Centralised IM PP provision would also be more likely to achieve the critical mass of pupils required for sustainable A-Level or FE provision.

The example of the agricultural college in Antrim was given as a possible model for residential IM post-primary provision. There is also currently boarding in Victoria College and Campbell College. There are no maintained boarding schools. In addition, the Group looked at other possible options including the model of the summer colleges in the Gaeltacht; and the provision of a boarding allowance.

With regard to possible *location*, the Group considered the concept of *regional boarding schools*, i.e. at Armagh, Belfast and Derry. However, in the event of such a model being feasible or acceptable in the immediate or long term, the Group identified Belfast as an initial possibility in the current situation of IM.

Cross Border

The survey of parents (**Appendix 6**) showed little interest in this option. Nevertheless, three children from NI enrolled in the first year (2013-2014) of Coláiste Lú, the IM unit in Dundalk.

There are possibilities for children in the North to access IM PP education across the border in Buncrana, Monaghan, Letterkenny and Dundalk (which is further away). Issues of curriculum, however, may impede this for the present. In addition, this means a commitment to the full cycle of education and a different examination system with differing possibilities for certification towards entry to further or higher education. Nevertheless, the Group is of the view that such cross-border choices for IME should not be hindered as a result of transport issues.

RECOMMENDATION: In the meantime, DE should look urgently at the need for cross border PP provision for IM primary children particularly in Co Fermanagh.

Transport

The Group discussed transport issues. It would seem that if a pupil applies to get into a unit or IM PP school then transport would be provided. It was thought that there should be recognition that a parent may wish to avail of provision with a greater level of immersion and the transport policy should support this choice. It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** by the Group that transport should be provided (i) to respond to parents' choice and (ii) to facilitate travel to the stronger form of IME.

Specific Areas

In relation to specific areas, the Group looked closely at Derry City and South Derry and made the following points/recommendations

Derry City

The area has agreed to seek IM unit provision. There had been a wish for independent provision but it is now acknowledged that a unit is a step towards that goal. Having heard from relevant stakeholders in the North West and examined enrolments in feeder primary schools, the Group acknowledges the clear potential for post primary provision and the preparatory work undertaken by the local community. The Group also noted the wishes of the community from the meeting with the educational stakeholders.

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that if it is found that the present host option preferred by the community cannot currently take on the responsibility, the Group would urge the Department to seek responsiveness from all schools in the catchment area to host the IM provision to determine how suitable it deems the provision offered and how it meets the needs of the parents.

Further, the Group **RECOMMENDS**, following this precedent, in the case of a community wishing to establish a unit in a host school, that the department will arrange for consultation with all post primary schools in the area to seek their views on their willingness or otherwise to host IM provision and requesting that they set out their case to do so against agreed criteria.

South Derry

The Group examined the issues the Department had with the first South Derry Development Proposal for an independent school (the first since CF) in light of (i) the new planning arrangements in RoI (See **Appendix 6**) where trusts now will apply to the department once it decides that a new PP school is required to meet demographic demand in any given area, and the department will decide on where the trust will feature on the list for capital build; (ii) the criteria the Group had listed for a DP in future; (iii) the intake policy of the Department.

The Group examined the South Derry proposal in terms of the current policy for a sustainable school. For post primary schools the minimum intake to qualify initially for recurrent funding in NI will be 50 but to retain recurrent funding this would be expected to increase to 80 in the second year and then 100 in the third year in anticipation that a minimum enrolment of 500 for years 8-12 would be achieved. In the RoI, the Group was advised that no figure is apparently required for intake to Year One but enrolment of 400 within 5/6 years (less than EM schools where 800-1,000 is the expectation). (see **Appendix 8**).

Keeping in mind the underdeveloped nature of IM PP provision in Northern Ireland and the necessity for assistance to a fledgling sector and to assist in responding to community desire for PP provision in this interim period:

The Group **RECOMMENDS** that DE set a lower intake rate for the first and subsequent five years of any form of new provision. Initial intake for an IM PP school of 35 in year 8 rising to 65/80 by the fifth year to ensure sustainability. The Minister might take rural factors into account.

The Group agreed that, from study of the current intake figures, South Derry did not appear to be in a position to have a sustainable independent school at the moment but, given the level of preparatory work, might be in a position to have some form of provision with a degree of autonomy.

The Group then discussed what the next step could be if the provision does not qualify to be an independent school and concluded that a unit might be a feasible solution now.

South Derry did not appear to be in a position to have a sustainable (ie 65+ pupils per year) independent school at the moment; from the figures available, sustainability (ie 65+ pupils per year) for an IM PP school would not be reached until approaching 2020. Although from the figures available, sustainability for an IM PP school would not be reached until approaching 2020, 35 pupils in year 8 would appear to be achievable by 2016/17. Therefore, the recommendation to allow an initial intake for an IM PP school of 35 in year 8 rising to 65/80 by the fifth year to ensure sustainability where the Minister might take rural factors into account could allow ministerial consideration of an independent school by 2016/17.

Earlier proposals by South Derry had identified Maghera as a potential site. With regard to location, the potential for Dungiven as a site would have implications for the adjoining Derry City area which would need to be investigated. It would also have implications for addressing the needs of the children from Cookstown in relation to IM education.

Fermanagh

In the context of provision for isolated IM primary schools at an unfeasible distance for travelling to the nearest IM PP:

RECOMMENDATION: DE should look urgently at the need for cross border PP provision for IM primary children in Co Fermanagh.

South Tyrone

It was felt that provision for IM post-primary in Omagh should be considered in order to facilitate easy access to IM post-primary provision for current and future children attending IM primary provision in south Tyrone where travel distance to current or proposed provision in Derry or Donaghmore is restrictive.

RECOMMENDATION: The option of IM post-provision located in Omagh should be considered. In this context, appropriate consideration should be given to the Lisanelly campus as a suitable location.

Factors constraining development

Teacher Supply

IME provision at both PP and at third levels in the short, medium and long term is dependent on several key factors, one of which is teacher/staff supply. Appropriate teacher supply is integral to the quality of education offered, to the delivery of the curriculum and to the degree of immersion provided.

Whether setting up a Level 0 unit, Level 1 unit or IM PP school, the constraints in all cases are the number of pupils and the issue of providing teachers.

Teacher supply comes initially from the post-primary A-level cohort. While a significant proportion of post-primary Irish-medium students have returned as teachers to Irish-medium education in NI, the post-primary sector is still too under-developed to cater for all its own needs. The English-medium sector must then form part of the solution, as it is and has been doing.

Level of immersion and teacher supply

Currently, the IM sector in NI is unable to provide for its own needs in the case of teachers. This is also recognised as a problem in other Celtic language situations. A significant number of teachers come through English-medium education.

It was agreed that teacher supply is pertinent to the model whether it be a unit or independent provision.

- The range of subjects or courses, whether chosen by the pupils or offered by the school, in the case of total or partial immersion, are largely dependent on *teacher supply*. Teacher supply is an issue of very high concern in NI as in other jurisdictions offering immersion education through the medium of other Celtic languages. Some areas of the curriculum are more heavily language-dependent than others. A list of the curricular areas most commonly in use, as well as those desirable, such as STEM subjects, requires to be compiled and a cohort of specialist, perhaps peripatetic, teachers built up. Otherwise, it will be difficult in the future to have standalone full immersion provision as currently offered by CF or even to properly service existing and/or future provision.
- In conjunction with the issue of curricular areas chosen for immersion introduction, the *age* at which pupils begin and the *level* to which they may continue with these curricular areas also have implications for teacher education.
- Additionally, to ensure viability of the provision in other jurisdictions, pupils have been recruited from E-medium schools and prepared to enter late immersion. Preparation may be through 'forest schools' (Wales), holiday camps (ROI), or one year's boarding immersion (ROI) in the final year of primary or the first year of post-primary education.

For the immediate short term, the Group discussed the difficulty in identifying individual teachers across the educational system who are both subject specialist and sufficiently proficient in Irish to enable them to deliver courses through the medium of Irish at the different key stages and who might be willing to undergo *transition/conversion courses*.

The Group refers to *the substitute register* which requires teachers to include this sort of detail. It was recognised that there is a gap in the current information which needs to be addressed.

As an indication of potential the Group **RECOMMENDS**

- (1) that information be gathered from the *substitute records* where a teacher has stated that they teach Irish – to ascertain if they can teach up to A-level and what other subject(s) can they teach;
- (2) that the information currently used to register a substitute teacher should be collected for all teachers;
- (3) that, following an open call to retired or other teachers, bursaries be offered to enable those willing to undergo *transition/conversion* courses for inclusion on panel for urgent substitution in schools.

In addition, the Group **RECOMMENDS**

- (4) that bursaries be publicised and provided for practising teachers across the English-medium sector
 - (i) with Irish and STEM subjects who are willing to undergo *transition/conversion* courses;
 - (ii) who are willing to undergo *transition/conversion* courses for specific learning areas;
- (5) that incentives be provided to all schools which encourage and provide the uptake of GCSE and A-Level Irish (this might take the form of either best achieving pupil bursary or school fund to be expended on Gaeltacht scholarships);
- (6) that FE Colleges be incentivised to offer some courses through Irish.

It was accepted that teachers would be reluctant to move from their current positions without some kind of remuneration bonus. Teachers could also be fearful of going into an area that may be perceived as capable of not proving to be sustainable.

In the medium and for the longer term, the Group **RECOMMENDS** the incentivisation of entrants to courses in education, students following courses in education and providers of courses in education through:

- (7) bursaries for existing teachers in PP IME - targeted at specific learning areas/ pedagogic skills and with 'cascade effect' built in (recipients sharing added expertise with others);
- (8) 3rd level institutions for specific research and provision of IM targeted courses following needs analysis; (such institutions cannot offer bursaries unless there exists an identified demand of sizeable proportions);
- (9) bursaries for students with Irish and a STEM subject area on entry to third level/ teacher education to encourage their taking a joint honours course.

In the matter of innovative or extension of criteria for funding of such ventures, it was pointed out at Focus Group meetings that use should be made of existing available DE programmes, e.g. the School Partnership Fund between universities and schools.

- (10) In the matter of *Continuing Professional Development* (CPD), the Group **RECOMMENDS** on a regular basis, throughout the school year, weekend and week-long courses: on the approach currently devised by COGG in the RoI, which concentrate on upskilling Irish-medium and English-medium teachers, whether

through training in the classroom language required for specific areas of the curriculum or through transition/conversion courses.

The Group **RECOMMENDS**

- (11) a joint interdepartmental approach, north and south, to the provision and funding of appropriate teacher education for IME at PP level, whether initial, conversion or CPD, to include training as examination assessors;
- (12) the establishment of a representative body within six months to research, plan and implement this cost-effective approach, possibly through the existing structure of the NSMC.

Encouragement of Irish in EM sector as an aid to IME

The Group agreed that DE and DCAL should encourage through incentive(s) Irish as subject especially for (i) GCSE and A-Level plus (ii) A-Level in conjunction with priority subject needs for IME in order to ensure teaching/administrative/management personnel for IME, i.e. to encourage through incentive the teaching of Irish to the highest level and the teaching through Irish of any of the priority subjects, STEM in particular.

Resources

After teacher supply, the next most significant resource needed for IM education are resources for teaching and learning through the medium of Irish. The Group was impressed with the range and quality of the resources now available to IM schools through an tÁisaonad, through CCEA and through collaboration with COGG in the RoI and with Stórlann in Scotland.

It was clear to the Group, however, that more appropriate measures are called for since:

- (i) the IM sector overall has quite specific needs while simultaneously being quite small in market terms;
- (ii) the PP sector comprises a small component of the overall sector;
- (iii) the Entitlement Framework encompasses quite a wide curriculum;
- (iv) more technology-based responses to lack of resources are being sought by schools as being cheaper, more flexible and responsive to immediate need, more youth-oriented;
- (v) the definition of resources is much wider than a textbook;
- (vi) resources in the areas of literacy, numeracy and special needs are required for IM;
- (vii) the whole area of examinations through Irish requires a new approach; in particular there is a need to do away with the current practice of translating pupils' scripts from Irish to English, to enable them to be marked in English by markers with little knowledge of Irish.

On the evidence available to the Group, it appeared that circumstances demand a much more strategic and co-ordinated focus in future to the provision of resources for IME:

- that needs analysis and policy-oriented resource provision be more beneficially articulated for the end users;
- that clearer demarcation be made between provision and providers for levels within the IM sector and for specific areas and groups within the sector, e.g. literacy and special needs; IM pupils in EM secondary schools studying Irish or Gaeilge;
- that the challenges and possibilities of technology be more strategically harnessed towards the delivery of resources to underpin the Entitlement Framework;
- that funding be allocated less on a specific project basis and more on a longer term strategic planning basis; and
- that cost-effective methods of provision be explored.

Such an approach calls for:

- some form of joint planning between current funders of provision, DE and Foras na Gaeilge, to ensure that needs are met and that the expertise which has been built up is not lost; and
- more defined forms of collaboration between current providers in NI, between providers in NI and in RoI, and between providers in NI and in other Celtic languages, Scotland in particular; between providers in NI and other possible sources of material in NI, e.g. television and radio; C2k.

The point was also made in Focus Groups that many recommendations from various working groups have detailed the need for research, but that *very few platforms are available for the research, once carried out, to be disseminated*. Such a dedicated online space could also serve the function of updating schools and students on employment possibilities. It might even become a centre of excellence on special education needs, on the Harberton service model, to service the IM sector as well as a centre for the preparation and dissemination of resources prepared with the expert assistance of the relevant agencies with associated training in their use.

Based on all the available evidence, the Group **RECOMMENDS**:

- (1) A realistic budget to IM schools and units, based on a clear school plan.
- (2) A piece of work to be commissioned by DE to map the outline of a strategically oriented approach to the provision of resources for the IM sector in a widely collaborative context.

The Group **RECOMMENDS:**

- a joint high level interdepartmental approach, north and south, through the establishment of a representative body within six months to research, plan and implement this more cost-effective approach to areas of joint operation or need, possibly through the existing structure of the NSMC.

This would be in keeping with not only the transfrontier provision of the Charter of the Council of Europe but with the statement in the Context section of the Strategy proposed by DCAL in July 2012:

Part 2: CONTEXT

2.12 Recognising that Irish speakers across the whole of the island of Ireland are linked through family, social, resource and economic connections, this Strategy complements the approach envisaged in the 20 Year Strategy of the Dublin Government for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

ICT

The Group recognised that ICT will undoubtedly play a key role in the *future* development of IM *curricular provision and delivery* particularly at post-primary level. It was agreed that this should be developed in the stable environment of existing provision for IME and through the expertise and use of ICT already in existence, in order to ascertain the benefits and risks. To attempt to develop ICT in a new school/model could be a high risk proposal. Initial trialling in conjunction with existing providers could be a useful and cost-effective approach.

In examining the possibilities of using some of the undoubted advantages of ICT to try to redress some of the lacunae in relation to specialist teacher supply which are currently hindering development in IME at second level, the Group found insufficient evidence and no more than one example of its actual use at IME post-primary level in NI (preparation of a teaching resource; a science module being developed between Coláiste Feirste and one of the Units). In other jurisdictions, the case was not materially much more advanced although plans are being made in Scotland and in Wales use of ICT is advancing. In the RoI, it has been used to deliver classes to island schools from the mainland to enhance the number of curricular areas available to students.

The Group acknowledged the need to include a recommendation on ICT in their Report. However, in the *current* situation of under-development of both the IME PP sector and of the use of ICT in educational settings, this could only be done in general terms.

The Group agreed that **a specific forum for IME practitioners** is required and that **an on-line chat room** or forum could be considered, possibly hosted and moderated by Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta or by one of the bodies already providing for the IM sector, whether through resources or teacher preparation. This could constitute a relatively inexpensive mechanism within which the dedicated space could be provided to enable schools, practitioners, the school community of IME and resources providers to work together collaboratively on the challenges posed by curricular change and by those specific elements offered at IME PP level. This space would be shared by all IME schools and simultaneously be embedded in existing local learning communities to ensure cross-sectoral contact and mutual support.

Keeping all these factors in mind, in the current climate the Group **RECOMMENDS** in the matter of ICT:

- (1) In the short term, planning towards the provision of a dedicated online space for the IME community within six months through CK2 and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, teacher moderators being trained by C2k.
- (2) In the medium to long term, the establishment of pilot programmes of curriculum delivery in the priority areas through a joint planning group of the relevant third level and other bodies. This would require research on needs analysis and on schools technical infrastructure. A collaborative venture with interests in the RoI and in the other Celtic languages areas might well attract EU or other funding. Pilot programming of this kind is crucial to any future planning. Without such trialling, the area of ICT for post-primary IME will remain as it is, untried and therefore regarded as untriable.

Future Funding Context of IME

Current funding of the IM sector has been described above. Options for a possible future approach to funding are made in this section.

Implications of the Salisbury Report

Introductory points

The Group discussed the Salisbury Report proposals in relation to IME and measured them against the needs of the PP sector, particularly in light of the desired strategic development from a very low base, evidence presented by stakeholders, and recognition of the underfunding of the PP sector by Salisbury. It then examined several different options for a possible new approach.

Salisbury proposed a model of school funding which related directly to the number of pupils and removed a lot of other school related elements which had previously existed. It was recognised that this would have a negative effect on the funding of IM education.

Underfunding of the IME PP sector is generally recognized and received attention in the Salisbury report. The Group examined two approaches towards remedying this situation for the benefit of the educational experience of pupils and the expansion of the sector: (i) incentive measures targeted at specific needs and groups; (ii) a new funding model towards supporting provision of IME PP. The overall aim in putting forward proposals is to ensure a high-quality high-performing sector.

The Group agreed that funding should only apply to those schools that are approved by the Department within an approved area plan.

The view was expressed that the establishment of any 'formal' IM provision should require a DE decision.

Any form of IM provision that is going to get funding should be subject to a Proposal so that the Department can satisfy itself that there will be systems in place to ensure that it will

develop along the continuum and be imbedded as an important part of the school that will ensure quality and provide confidence.

The Group agreed:

- A new formulaic approach;
- A need to promote in a proactive way the development of IM arising out of the Treacy Judgement.

The Group considered four possible models of funding to present to the Minister; as a result agreement was reached in the following elements:

- Uplift to AWPUP;
- Immersion factor;
- Administration funding should apply equally to units and IM PP school provision; and
- Implications of other possible IM settings.

Rationale

The present situation is that the Department recognises two modes of Irish-medium provision which qualify for funding: independent schools and units attached to English-medium schools. Units and schools need to pass a threshold for recognition of delivering 50%+ of the curriculum through the medium of Irish.

The Group envisage the development of Irish-medium as being a journey leading to the possibility of a total immersion experience of 11-18 education entirely through Irish. As such it was important to incentivise schools and remove obstacles. Any new formula should therefore recognise progress in these models for increasing the number of young people studying through Irish and the amount of time spent using the immersion language. Therefore it was felt that there was a need to increase the curriculum support element and link it with the percentage time spent immersed in Irish. In addition funding should continue to incorporate an administration element for inescapable institutional costs in supporting Irish language provision.

The threshold for funding provision should be adjusted in line with the range of models suggested. Therefore to assist provision where initial demand or teacher supply might not justify 50%+ provision, it was further suggested that schools might consider provision at a minimum of 25%+ to receive some funding support.

In summary, the rationale underlying the figures given in the preferred proposal below is:

- the sector is underdeveloped and underfunded;
- the sector needs to grow and therefore requires incentivisation;
- the form of incentivisation proposed by the Group arose from scrutiny of Salisbury;
- it is primarily based on the number of pupils and the subjects at each key stage with a need for additionality; and

- there is more effort involved in teaching at a higher level; (while this is not reflected in the preferred scenario as it is in scenario 1, the Group were of the view that it is a factor which should be taken into account).

The issue considered as part of the formula was:

- an increase in the terms of the AWPU as it was felt that £28 was inappropriate and that there was agreement that the level of immersion should be reflected, through measurement of either subject or class contact time, as a percentage.
- The Group wish to see as much improvement as possible for the sector and the number of subjects being taught through IM until the aim of full immersion is reached.
- The Group acknowledged that there is a need to address the areas of curriculum and delivering the Entitlement Framework in IME. One possible measurement of immersion might be designed in the school management information system provided by C2k which would flag *contact time* as being in Irish and calculate the percentage for each group/student. It was questioned if it would be easier from an accountability perspective to look at the number of subjects versus the % of class contact time. Both options have their advantages.

Options

To do nothing would be one option. However, there is dissatisfaction with the current funding to schools and it is recognised that the funding is not adequate for schools taking on a unit or to manage a school. Funding is required for units and discussion ensued as to whether or not schools should get the Salisbury option. The Group accept that a unit starting up requires upfront funding, transformation funding, extra administrative allowances and also needs funding if going independent. To do nothing as an option was then rejected.

The Group therefore examined the current situation, looked at figures and then asked two members of the Group to produce two scenarios. Arising out of discussion of these two quite different proposals, a third scenario is put forward by the Group for departmental critique (for illustration purposes, this is based on 100% immersion at KS3, 4 and 5).

The three options considered by the Group

Scenario 1

Pupil	Funding per pupil	Funding per subject through Irish	Keystage	Funding
300	£202.51 (0.1 AWPU)	13	3	£789,789.00
200	£303.75 (0.15 AWPU)	9	4	£546,750.00
100	£405.02 (0.2 AWPU)	3	5	£121,506.00

Scenario 2

Pupil	Funding per pupil additional 0.1 AWPU	Funding through Irish percentage class contact time	Keystage	Funding
300	£202.51	100%	3	£60,553.00
200	£202.51	100%	4	£40,502.00
100	£202.51	100%	5	£20,251.00
Total				£121,506.00

Scenario 3

Pupil	Salisbury Funding per pupil additional 0.155 AWPU	Funding through Irish percentage immersion	Keystage	Funding
300	£299.00	100%	3	£89,700.00
200	£299.00	100%	4	£59,800.00
100	£299.00	100%	5	£29,900.00
Total				£179,400.00

It was suggested that the options should be tested in the sector and key stakeholders asked which model would work best for them. Banding was also discussed but rejected as problematic to apply. It is acknowledged that once the desired growth has been gained, the Department will require more funding to sustain that growth.

Funding Context for Irish-medium Education

As part of the overall funding context, the Group also examined the Economic Appraisal to which any new provision is subject. For IME, this process may possess some possible tension-laden areas which include the wish of the community, transparency and the linguistic element. If the arguments on (i) legal context; (ii) Irish as minority language; (iii) desire of parents and community; (iv) desirability of full immersion in a freestanding autonomous school are accepted, it appeared then that the issue of EA must be revisited.

If the economic, rather than the linguistic/cultural or legal argument, dominates the debate, there is little or no prospect of any model other than attached unit being acceptable in the medium to long term. It clearly is cheaper to encourage attached units rather than independent schools, particularly in terms of physical accommodation and capital funding. Unless a pragmatic progressive approach is taken, allied to criteria which ensure the best education for the IM pupils, no equivalent Coláiste Feirste will emerge in the near future.

A cost approach measures solely in terms of financial outlay. A cost-benefit approach may not necessarily assess the less measurable or intangible benefits. In a flexible strategy for IME at PP level, these benefits might include the following:

- Adherence in education to all existing legislation and to elements of the DCAL Strategy for Irish.
- Removal of barriers to progress.
- Acknowledgement of previous neglect and the current undeveloped nature of the IM PP sector.
- Normalisation of IME at PP level through additional visibility leading to greater confidence on the part of parents.
- Recognition of parental and community desire.
- Recognition of the importance of IM education to the IM community, to education in NI and to immersion education in the international context.

(10) Vision for Irish-Medium Education into the Future

The vision of the Advisory Group for Irish Medium education is:

To have, under strategic direction, a future system of full immersion education and training that proactively encourages and facilitates, in a planned way and in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, the growing demand for Irish-medium education at all levels and, in particular, at post-primary level.

This system to be flexible, sustainable, of high quality, all-ability and co-educational, as an integral part of education in Northern Ireland.

The Advisory Group also endorses fully the following statement:

To ensure that every learner achieves his or her full potential at each stage of development. (Sustainable Schools Policy: Vision for Education)

In addition, the Group found the following statements to have application to the situation of Irish in NI.

- (1) The vision of **Bord na Gàidhlig** for Scottish Gaelic as:

A healthy vibrant language increasingly used, valued and respected in a modern, multicultural and multilingual Scotland

- (2) And that of **LTS** (Learning & Teaching Scotland) in its *Plan for Gaelic* (2009-2012):

Foreword: *We recognise the unique and essential contribution of Gaelic to the rich and diverse cultural life of Scotland and with support from the Scottish Government and our national partners [these include HM Inspectorate of Education and the Scottish Qualifications Authority] we will seek to play a leading role in securing the future of Gaelic.*

Executive Summary: *Aim - to normalise the position of Gaelic within the context of LTS's operation.*

(11) List of Abbreviations

AWPU	Age Weighted Pupil Unit
CF	Coláiste Feirste
CnaG	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
CFF	Common Funding Formula
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DP	Development Proposal
ELBs	Education & Library Boards
EM	English-medium
ESA	Education Skills Authority
GM	Gaelic-medium
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IM	Irish-medium
IME	Irish-medium education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS	Key Stage
NI	Northern Ireland
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
PP	Post-primary
RoI	Republic of Ireland
TSN	Targeting Social Need
WM	Welsh-medium
WME	Welsh-medium education

APPENDICES 1-8

Key Stakeholders

Principals of primary schools

- Mary Nic Ailín, Gaelscoil Éadaín Mhóir
- Seán Mac Cionnaith, Bunscoil Cholmcille
- Máirín Uí Cheallaigh, Gaelscoil Neachtain
- Séana Uí Cheallaigh, Gaelscoil na Spéiríní
- Míceala Ní Chonluain, (in attendance on behalf of principal), Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh
- Catherine Uí Dhoibhlin, Gaelscoil Eoghain
- Charmaine Uí Dhaighre, Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh
- Patricia Mc Master, Bunscoil Naomh Bríd
- Orlaith Nic Fhirléinn, Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí,
- No attendance from Gaelscoil na Daróige

Chairpersons of primary schools

- Seán Mac Cionnaith, Bunscoil Cholmcille (principal present on behalf of Chair)
- Colmán Mac an Chrosáin, Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh (Chair)
- Deaglán Ó Mócháin, Gaelscoil Éadaín Mhóir (Vice-Chair)
- No attendance from Gaelscoil na Daróige or Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh

South Derry Delegation

- Pádraig Ó Mianáin, (on two occasions)
- Siún Uí Mhianáin,
- Niall Ó Cathain, (on two occasions)
- Emma Mhic Bhloscaidh,
- Nóra Murray Williams,
- Catherine Blaney, Head of Irish Medium Unit at St Catherine's College, Armagh
- Enda Cullen, St Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore
- Ciara Pickering, Head of Irish Medium Education at St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan
- Liam Ó Cuinneagáin, St Brigid's College, Derry
- Seán Fearon, Education Training Inspectorate

Scotland

- Màiri MacMillan, Head of Education and Learning (Scotland)
- Jim Whannel, Quality Improvement Officer (Scotland)
- Joan C Esson HMI Alba

Wales

- Caroline Turner, Deputy Director of the Welsh Language Division
- Awne Penri, Head of Welsh in Education Policy
- Nerys Howells, Senior Development Manager-Welsh in Education

Rol

- Gavan O’Leary, Principal Officer in the Department’s Central Policy Unit (ROI)
- Breda Naughton, Principal Officer in the Department’s Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Unit (ROI)
- Padraig Mac Fhlannchadha, Assistant Chief Inspector with responsibility for policy advice in Irish (ROI)

Focus Groups and Individual Meetings

- Fionntán de Brún, University of Ulster
- Eugene McKendry, Queens University
- Jacaí de Brún, St Mary’s University College
- Muireann Ní Mhóráin, An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
- Séan MacNia, CCEA
- Malachy Ó Néill, University of Ulster
- Deirdre Uí Liatháin, Colaiste Lú
- Gabrielle NigUidhir, St Mary’s University College, Belfast
- Gavin Boyd, ESA
- Bláthnaid Ní Ghréacháin, Gaelscoileanna

Cross-Community

- Linda Ervine, East Belfast Mission
- Maighread Ní Bhuadáin, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

Parent Questionnaire (Primary) – Analysis

On 4 November 2013, Principals of Irish Medium primary schools were asked to issue a questionnaire to the parents of their pupils to determine their views on post-primary education (see Appendix M2).

There are 36 Irish Medium primary schools. Responses were received from 23 primary schools ie 64% response rate (see Appendix 2) which equated to 575 completed questionnaires.

Model

75% respondents indicated a preference for a standalone Irish Medium school; however 61% would be happy to send their child to an Irish Medium school with formal links to another school and 60% indicated that they would be happy to send their child to a unit/stream attached to an English Medium school.

Distance to travel

The majority of respondents (43%) indicated that they would be prepared to have their child travel up to 10 miles.

% of courses available in Irish

The majority of respondents would require 50% of courses to be available in Irish for levels 11-14, 14-16 and 16-18. Few respondents (17%) would want 100% of courses to be available in Irish.

Courses available in Irish

At least 60% of respondents indicated that the following would have to be available in Irish:

- Maths;
- History;
- Geography;
- Learning for Life and Work; and
- Religious Education.

Comments

Many comments were made (see Appendix 6.3) especially in relation to the parent's own area. Overall, parents would be happy to send their child to post primary Irish Medium schools within reasonable travelling distance but not to have 100% Irish Medium education. They would also expect the teachers to be high quality Irish speaking teachers.

Parents (Primary) Questionnaire
TOTAL RESPONSES FROM PRIMARY SCHOOLS = 575

1. Would you send your child to Irish-medium Post-Primary Education incorporated in:
 - a. A standalone Irish medium school – **431 (75% of total responses)**
 - b. An Irish medium school with formal links to another school – **348 (61% of total responses)**
 - c. A unit/stream attached to an English medium school – **343 (60% of total responses)**
 - d. An Irish medium school across the border – **51 (9% of total responses)**
 - e. An Irish medium boarding school – **8 (1% of total responses)**
 - f. n/a or blank – **4 (1% of total responses)**

2. To receive Irish medium Post-Primary education would you be prepared to have your child travel:
 - a. 5 miles – **175 (30% of total responses)**
 - b. 10 miles – **249 (43% of total responses)**
 - c. 20 miles – **113 (20% of total responses)**
 - d. More than 20 miles – **30 (5% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank – **8 (1% of total responses)**

3. Please indicate the minimum percentage of subjects at second-level would have to be available in Irish from 11-14:
 - a. 25% - **106 (18% of total responses)**
 - b. 50% - **249 (43% of total responses)**
 - c. 75% - **136 (24% of total responses)**
 - d. 100% - **76 (13% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank - **8 (1% of total responses)**

4. Please indicate the minimum percentage of courses at second-level would have to be available in Irish from 14-16 (GCSE):
 - a. 25% - **116 (20% of total responses)**
 - b. 50% - **236 (41% of total responses)**
 - c. 75% - **142 (25% of total responses)**
 - d. 100% - **73 (13% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank - **8 (1% of total responses)**

5. Please indicate the minimum percentage of courses at second-level would have to be available in Irish from 16-18 (A level):
 - a. 25% - **143 (25% of total responses)**
 - b. 50% - **232 (40% of total responses)**
 - c. 75% - **115 (20% of total responses)**
 - d. 100% - **74 (13% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank - **11 (2% of total responses)**

6. Please indicate which courses at second-level would have to be available in Irish:
 - a. Mathematics – **373 (65% of total responses)**
 - b. Science – **306 (53% of total responses)**
 - c. Technology – **210 (37% of total responses)**
 - d. IT – **258 (45% of total responses)**
 - e. History – **431 (75% of total responses)**
 - f. Geography – **376 (65% of total responses)**

- g. Home Economics – **260 (45% of total responses)**
- h. Learning for Life and Work – **355 (62% of total responses)**
- i. Religious Education – **375 (65% of total responses)**
- j. Physical Education – **259 (45% of total responses)**
- k. Other – **87 (15% of total responses)**
- l. n/a or blank – **35 (6% of total responses)**

Please specify:

- Irish
- Drama
- Art
- Biology
- Accounts
- Music
- Maths (at the start - years 8-10)
- Irish Literature
- English Literature
- Languages
- Spanish
- French
- Business Studies
- Singing
- Dance
- Politics
- Media Studies
- Engineering
- Economics
- English Practical
- As many as possible
- Not specific (at least 25% in Irish)
- 100% (all subjects)
- Any combination of subjects
- General determined in context of overall

7. Any other comments: (see list of comments)

% of responding primary schools in each IM Planning Area

Planning Area	Total number of schools in Planning Area	Number of responding schools in Planning Area	% of responding schools in Planning Area
East Down	3	3	100%
North Antrim	1	0	0%
Belfast/South Antrim	11	4	36%
East Tyrone	4	2	50%
Armagh/South Down	5	4	80%
North West Derry/West Tyrone	5	5	100%
South Derry/Mid-Ulster	4	2	50%
Fermanagh/South Tyrone	3 *	3	100%
Total	36	23	64%

* Includes 1 Independent IM school – not funded by DE.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

SPECIFIC AREAS

- Omagh - A need for IM provision;
- Armagh - Disappointed with the current provision. Would be beneficial to have IM attached to the Boys Grammar School;
- Newry - A need for IM provision;
- Derry - Issues with IM are well known – want dept to push ahead with stream within Thornhill;
- Lurgan – current restructuring of Post Primary provision – would be a good time to introduce IM provision;
- Co Fermanagh – would love secondary schools in Co Fermanagh to be a lot more accommodating for those children coming out of the local Bunscoil;

SUBJECTS

- Wants all subjects through IM;
- Concerned whether or not all terms for eg in science are taught in Irish and if they are would that disadvantage children going to University/work;
- Worried that if everything was taught through Irish, the students would struggle with the terminology used in industry after school:
- History and geography can be very difficult as translations are long and impossible for some children and can make GCSE unattainable;
- Maths, science, geography & English taught through EM
- Concern that child will fall behind in reading/writing in English, therefore it should be 50/50;
- IM should be introduced gradually as the child progresses from 11-14, 14-16, 16-18;
- Rather than 100% EM or 100% IM would prefer a 'happy' medium ie 50/50;

TRAVEL

- Would send the child if there was one in the area or within reasonable travelling distance;
- Travelling expenses should be covered;

TEACHING

- Would require highest quality Irish speaking teachers;
- A need for classroom assistants for children with special needs;
- Extra help for children doing transfer tests;

CHOICE

- Will be the child who will choose whether or not they attend IM;
- Will not send the child to an IM school;
- Allay parents fears over helping child with homework if Irish not spoke at home;
- Need to educate people on the benefits of having Irish as a 2nd language;
- The more subjects available through IM, the more attractive it will be to Parents/Pupils;
- Beneficial for the child to maintain current level of IM;
- IM pupils have difficulty in EM schools as they do not provide for their needs;

TYPE OF SCHOOL

- School would have to be co-educational;
- Preference for an Irish Unit;
- Most viable/sustainable way of running IM post primary provision is alongside a well established EM school;
- Streams don't work and immersion education requires proper investment in our children;

MISCELLANEOUS

- Difficulty in understanding the Questionnaire; Questionnaire should be made more simple;
- Thanks expressed for looking at this issue;
- Hope that there will be action following the consultation;
- Prepared to help in any way to achieve sustainable IM post primary.

Parent Questionnaire (Nursery Schools) – Analysis

On 4 November 2013, Principals of Irish Medium nursery schools were asked to issue a questionnaire to the parents of their pupils to determine their views on post-primary education (see Appendix 1).

Responses were received from 7 nursery schools which equated to 48 completed questionnaires.

Model

88% of total respondents indicated a preference for a standalone Irish Medium school; however 52% indicated that they would be happy to send their child to an Irish Medium school with formal links to another school and 48% would be happy to send their child to a unit/stream attached to an English Medium school.

Distance to travel

The majority of respondents (58%) indicated that they would be prepared to have their child travel up to 10 miles.

% of courses available in Irish

30% of respondents would require the minimum of 25% of courses to be available in Irish for levels 11-14, 14-16 and 16-18 and 30% would require 50% of courses to be available in Irish. Few respondents (17%) would want 100% of courses to be available in Irish.

Courses available in Irish

At least 60% of respondents indicated that the following would have to be available in Irish:

- Maths;
- Science;
- History;
- Geography;
- Learning for Life and Work; and
- Religious Education.

Comments

Only a few comments were received (Appendix 6.2.2) which indicated that to have any subject taught in Irish would be beneficial but core subjects should be taught through Irish.

Parents (Nursery Schools) Questionnaire

1. Would you send your child to Irish-medium Post-Primary Education incorporated in:
 - a. A standalone Irish medium school – **42 (88% of total responses)**
 - b. An Irish medium school with formal links to another school – **25 (52% of total responses)**
 - c. A unit/stream attached to an English medium school – **23 (48% of total responses)**
 - d. An Irish medium school across the border – **1 (2% of total responses)**
 - e. An Irish medium boarding school – **0 (0% of total responses)**
 - f. n/a or blank – **0 (0% of total responses)**

2. To receive Irish medium Post-Primary education would you be prepared to have your child travel:
 - a. 5 miles – **7 (15% of total responses)**
 - b. 10 miles – **28 (58% of total responses)**
 - c. 20 miles – **11 (23% of total responses)**
 - d. More than 20 miles – **2 (4% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank – **0 (0% of total responses)**

3. Please indicate the minimum percentage of subjects at second-level would have to be available in Irish from 11-14:
 - a. 25% - **13 (27% of total responses)**
 - b. 50% - **15 (31% of total responses)**
 - c. 75% - **12 (25% of total responses)**
 - d. 100% - **8 (17% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank - **0 (0% of total responses)**

4. Please indicate the minimum percentage of courses at second-level would have to be available in Irish from 14-16 (GCSE):
 - a. 25% - **14 (29% of total responses)**
 - b. 50% - **14 (29% of total responses)**
 - c. 75% - **12 (25% of total responses)**
 - d. 100% - **8 (17% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank - **0 (0% of total responses)**

5. Please indicate the minimum percentage of courses at second-level would have to be available in Irish from 16-18 (A level):
 - a. 25% - **16 (33% of total responses)**
 - b. 50% - **15 (31% of total responses)**
 - c. 75% - **8 (17% of total responses)**
 - d. 100% - **9 (19% of total responses)**
 - e. n/a or blank - **0 (0% of total responses)**

6. Please indicate which courses at second-level would have to be available in Irish:
 - a. Mathematics – **29 (60% of total responses)**
 - b. Science – **29 (60% of total responses)**
 - c. Technology – **19 (40% of total responses)**
 - d. IT – **21 (44% of total responses)**
 - e. History – **36 (75% of total responses)**
 - f. Geography – **30 (63% of total responses)**
 - g. Home Economics – **21 (44% of total responses)**
 - h. Learning for Life and Work – **29 (60% of total responses)**
 - i. Religious Education – **35 (73% of total responses)**

- j. Physical Education – **24 (50% of total responses)**
- k. Other – **6 (13% of total responses)**
- l. n/a or blank – **3 (6% of total responses)**

Please specify:

- Irish
- All subjects
- Music
- Art
- Languages
- Ceol
- Gramadach na Gaeilge

7 Any other comments: (see list of comments)

Comments Received:

- Any subject would be great but core subjects would be essential;
- Core subjects should be taught through Irish;
- A child may not choose any of the courses taught in Irish, therefore it is important that conversation/signage within the school would be in Irish so it is part of everyday activity;
- Concerns raised over words/subjects for post-primary. Most of what is taught in primary education can be translated/understood at home but not as easily at post primary and concerned that students may not recognise some of the English; and
- Preference from one respondent that the school be non-religious.

Celtic Languages

Scottish Gaelic

Legislation

Inspectorate Report, June 2011: *Gaelic Education – Building On The Successes, Addressing The Barriers*

5.1.1 The Scottish Government has put in place legislation and measures which have extended and strengthened the development of Gaelic Education over the last 20 years. These have included The Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Specific Grants Regulations, The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000. Gaelic is also listed as a national priority in the Education (National Priorities)(Scotland) Order 2000. Under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* has a statutory function of offering advice and issuing guidance in relation to Gaelic Education. *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* has set out a National Gaelic Education Strategy within its National Plan for Gaelic.

5.1.2 Education authorities have responsibility for putting provision for Gaelic Education in place. They are supported to do this by funding from Scottish Government. This funding, known as Specific Grant for Gaelic Education, is allocated by ministers on the basis of bids received by authorities to assist with any additional costs of Gaelic Education. 21 authorities offer Gaelic Education and are represented by the Management Review Group (MRG). MRG acts as a forum for discussion about issues relating to funding. They have a specific role, for example, in approving *Stòrlann's* programme for resource delivery.

Statistics

Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS) – Plan for Gaelic 2009-2012 (extracts)

Gaelic features in the curriculum in Scottish schools in the form of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education, in both primary and secondary schools. In 2008-09, according to figures supplied by Strathclyde University:

- 58 pre-school centres provided GME for 864 children
- 60 primary schools provided GME for 2,206 pupils
- 39 secondary schools provided Gàidhlig language classes for 981 pupils
- 19 secondary schools provided Gaelic medium subject teaching for 397 pupils.

There are three all-Gaelic primary schools – Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu in Glasgow (which also has a secondary department), Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis in Inverness and Stoneybridge Primary in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Otherwise, primary GME is delivered in the form of classes, 'departments' or 'streams' within schools. (LTS supports a move away from the term 'Gaelic Unit' to a more inclusive terminology.)

Most pupils in GME come from non-Gaelic speaking homes and learn Gaelic in school through being 'immersed' in it and using it in all aspects of learning and teaching. The all-Gaelic approach creates a powerful motivation to learn Gaelic, which is a key factor in the success of GME.

Gaelic Medium Education, as part of Curriculum for Excellence, will require the same range of resources and is covered by the same curricular advice and initiatives as English medium education.

However, there are differences between the two in emphasis, timing and sometimes in pedagogy which mean that many curricular developments have to be adapted for use in GME, especially at the Early and First stages. Advice being developed to support Curriculum for Excellence takes account of these differences.

Within the Gaelic for Learners in the Primary School (GLPS) programme, pupils are usually introduced to Gaelic at the upper end of primary school. There are around 100 schools in this programme. There are plans at national level for expansion of GLPS both in content and in the number of the schools and EAs participating.

Currently (2007-08), 2,813 pupils are studying Gaelic as a second language in 39 secondary schools, spread throughout Scotland but with a majority in the Highlands and Western Isles. These second language classes form a separate stream to the 'Gàidhlig' (fluent speaker) classes and lead to their own set of 'Gaelic Learner' examinations.

Inspectorate Report, June 2011: *Gaelic Education – Building On The Successes, Addressing The Barriers*

3.1.1 Gaelic Medium Education in secondary schools is still at a very early stage of development. Of the 46 schools currently offering Gaelic in some form, only 14 are providing subjects other than Gaelic, through the medium of Gaelic. These subjects are available in S1 and S2, but only a few schools provide continuity through to S4. Subjects available in S1 and S2 include geography, home economics, history, mathematics, modern studies, personal social education, religious and moral education, and science. In 2010-11, 84 young people were presented for Standard Grade examinations in three subjects through the medium of Gaelic. Presentations were higher than in the previous year (62). The subjects available to S4 are geography, history, mathematics and modern studies. Higher mathematics was available for the first time in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) diet of examinations in 2011. Almost all of the 46 secondary schools provide courses to develop young people's Gaelic language skills – *Gàidhlig*. These courses are available up to Advanced Higher. In 2010-11, 302 young people undertook National Qualifications for *Gàidhlig*. (*Inspectorate Report 2011*)

Communication from Joan C. Essen HMI ALBA

Almost all secondary schools provide continuity in developing skills, knowledge and understanding of Gaelic as a language. Only a few provide learning through Gaelic in subject areas. Subjects that are available to qualifications include History, Geography, Modern Studies and Maths. In the younger years at secondary, there is some learning of Religious Moral Education, Personal and Social Education and Science.

HM Inspectors are encouraging schools to use Curriculum for Excellence as an opportunity to be creative in devising opportunities for young people to hear and use Gaelic. Through inspection and other activities, we are raising expectations that all secondary schools should be aiming for a proportion of their curriculum to be through the medium of Gaelic. If schools have teachers who are fluent in Gaelic we encourage them to deliver their subject through the medium of Gaelic. We also encourage schools to link to partners, colleges, Gaelic groups and Community Learning and Development to support Gaelic Medium provision on even a part-time basis to impact on young people's learning and achievement. In Scotland, we are also aware that the time is right to revisit a previous attempt at providing learning through ICT. This is a future plan which I would be happy to keep you advised of as it is progressed.

I am currently about to embark on writing National Advice on Gaelic Education in association with the Scottish Government. This National Advice will have recommendations on improving Gaelic Medium Education in Scotland.

Welsh

Legislation

Welsh-medium Education Strategy 2009

The 1944 Education Act first gave pupils the right to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. This allowed local authorities to consider establishing Welsh-medium schools. This is now Section 9 of the 1996 Education Act.

Under the 1996 Education Act local authorities have a statutory duty to secure provision of sufficient school places and, in so doing, to have regard to the general principle that pupils should be educated in accordance with the wishes of parents, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

Welsh was included in the National Curriculum following the Education Reform Act 1988, and became a compulsory subject for all pupils in Wales in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 in 1990. Education Regulations issued in 1994 provided that the National Curriculum in Welsh (and Welsh Second Language) did not apply to pupils in Key Stage 4 attending a school which was not a Welsh-speaking school until August 1999. From September 1999 onwards Welsh also became compulsory at Key Stage 4. As is the case with all other national curriculum subjects, Welsh may be temporarily disapplied for a pupil, under sections 364-367 of the 1996 Education Act.

Irish in Rol

Legislation

Education Act 1998 - Extracts

Teaching through Irish. 31.—(1) The Minister shall establish a ***body of persons—**(*which later became An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta)

- (a)(i) to plan and co-ordinate the provision of textbooks and aids to learning and teaching through Irish,
 - (ii) to advise the Minister on policies relating to the provision and promotion of education through the medium of Irish in recognised schools generally and in schools located in a Gaeltacht area,
 - (iii) to provide support services to those schools through the medium of Irish, and
 - (iv) to conduct research into any or all matters to which this paragraph applies, and
 - (b) to plan and co-ordinate the provision of textbooks and aids to the learning and teaching of Irish and to conduct research into and to advise the Minister on strategies which have as their objective the enhancement of the effectiveness in the teaching of Irish in recognised schools and centres for education.
- (2) The Minister may by order, made with the consent of the Minister for Finance, delegate any of his or her functions in respect of the matters referred to in *subsection (1)* to the body established in accordance with that

subsection which shall carry out those functions under the direction and control of the Minister.

(3) The body established in accordance with *subsection (1)*—

(a) shall, with the consent of the Minister, establish a committee to assist it in the performance of the functions conferred on it under *subsection (1)(b)*, and

(b) may, with the consent of the Minister, at any time dissolve a committee appointed under this subsection or remove a member of a committee from such membership.

(4) The body established in accordance with *subsection (1)* shall, from time to time, as it considers appropriate, advise the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on matters relating to—

(a) the teaching of Irish,

(b) the provision of education through the medium of Irish, including matters relating to the curriculum for primary and post-primary schools which provide education through the medium of Irish and assessment procedures employed in those schools, and

(c) the educational needs of people living in a Gaeltacht area,

and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment shall have regard to any such advice in the exercise by it of its functions.

(5) The Minister may by order amend or revoke any order made under this section, including an order made under this subsection.

(6) In each financial year the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance, out of monies provided by the Oireachtas, may make to the body appointed in accordance with *subsection (1)* a grant or grants for the purposes of expenditure by that body in the performance of its functions.

(7) The Minister may provide such secretarial and administrative support to a body established under this section as the Minister considers necessary.

6.—Every person concerned in the implementation of this Act Objects of Act. shall have regard to the following objects in pursuance of which the Oireachtas has enacted this Act:

- 6
- to promote the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice having regard to the rights of patrons and the effective and efficient use of resources;
 - to contribute to the realisation of national educational policies and objectives;
 - to contribute to the realisation of national policy and objectives in relation to the extension of bi-lingualism in Irish society and in particular the achievement of a greater use of the Irish language at school and in the community;
 - to contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language in Gaeltacht areas;
 - to promote the language and cultural needs of students having regard to the choices of their parents;

Functions of **7.—**(1) Each of the following shall be a function of the Minister Minister. under this Act: to provide support services through Irish to recognised schools which provide

teaching through Irish and to any other recognised school which requests such provision;

9.—A recognised school shall provide education to students which ^{Functions of a} is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to ^{school.} the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to—

promote the development of the Irish language and traditions, Irish literature, the arts and other cultural matters,

in the case of schools located in a Gaeltacht area, contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language,

13.— (Among) The functions of an Inspector shall be:
to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching, development, promotion and use of Irish in schools and centres for education and to report to the Minister on those matters;

30.—(1) The Minister...

shall ensure that the amount of instruction time to be allotted to subjects on the curriculum as determined by the Minister in each school day shall be such as to allow for

such reasonable instruction time, as the board with the *consent of the patron determines, for subjects relating to or arising from the characteristic spirit of the school* and

shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student.

[While this refers primarily to religious/faith instruction, it has also been used in reference to Irish-medium instruction]

APPENDIX 4

LGDs

Knowledge of Irish: KS209NI (administrative geographies)

LGD	Knowledge of Irish: Understand but cannot read, write or speak Irish: Aged 3+ years (%)	Knowledge of Irish: Speak but do not read or write Irish: Aged 3+ years (%)	Knowledge of Irish: Speak and read but do not write Irish: Aged 3+ years (%)	Knowledge of Irish: Speak, read, write and understand Irish: Aged 3+ years (%)	Knowledge of Irish: Other combination of skills: Aged 3+ years (%)	Knowledge of Irish: Have some ability in Irish: Aged 3+ years (%)	Knowledge of Irish: Have no ability in Irish: Aged 3+ years (%)
Newry and Mourne	7.47	2.53	0.86	7.06	1.92	19.84	80.16
Dungannon	6.59	2.41	0.86	6.71	1.68	18.25	81.75
Magherafelt	7.20	2.63	0.72	6.39	1.55	18.48	81.52
Moyle	6.17	2.27	0.51	5.83	1.49	16.28	83.72
Derry	4.99	1.85	0.56	5.37	1.37	14.13	85.87
Belfast	4.74	1.93	0.50	5.24	1.25	13.65	86.35
Omagh	6.81	2.14	0.59	5.19	1.54	16.27	83.73
Armagh	5.23	1.61	0.56	4.82	1.37	13.59	86.41
Cookstown	5.76	2.17	0.55	4.75	1.30	14.53	85.47
Strabane	5.08	1.76	0.49	4.65	1.36	13.35	86.65
Fermanagh	5.14	1.71	0.54	4.21	1.49	13.10	86.90
Craigavon	3.81	1.31	0.46	3.69	0.91	10.18	89.82
Down	4.37	1.47	0.48	3.45	1.01	10.78	89.22
Limavady	4.21	1.37	0.47	3.10	1.03	10.17	89.83
Lisburn	3.08	1.21	0.27	2.94	0.69	8.20	91.80
Antrim	3.40	1.17	0.35	2.75	0.71	8.39	91.61
Ballymoney	3.18	1.17	0.29	2.37	0.76	7.77	92.23
Banbridge	2.69	0.75	0.31	2.18	0.64	6.56	93.44
Coleraine	2.54	0.88	0.27	2.10	0.62	6.42	93.58
Newtownabbey	2.06	0.69	0.25	1.84	0.50	5.35	94.65
Castlereagh	2.13	0.63	0.20	1.83	0.60	5.39	94.61
Ballymena	2.44	0.70	0.23	1.46	0.46	5.29	94.71
Larne	2.10	0.54	0.14	1.20	0.42	4.39	95.61
Ards	1.46	0.32	0.12	0.90	0.30	3.09	96.91
North Down	1.52	0.33	0.14	0.88	0.35	3.21	96.79
Carrickfergus	1.00	0.25	0.08	0.67	0.22	2.23	97.77
Northern Ireland Overall	4.06	1.42	0.43	3.74	1.01	10.65	89.35

Legal context for Irish in NI

Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1999

RIGHTS, SAFEGUARDS AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

3. All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

4. In the context of active consideration currently being given to the UK signing the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it:

- take resolute action to promote the language;
- facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand;
- seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education;
- explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more widespread availability of Teilifis na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland;
- seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and
- encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by a new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

ANNEX (Strand Two – North South Ministerial Council (NSMC))

Areas for North-South co-operation and implementation may include the following:

1. Agriculture - animal and plant health.
2. **Education - teacher qualifications and exchanges.**
3. Transport - strategic transport planning.
4. Environment - environmental protection, pollution, water quality, and waste management.
5. Waterways - inland waterways.

6. Social Security/Social Welfare - entitlements of cross-border workers and fraud control.
7. Tourism - promotion, marketing, research, and product development.
8. Relevant EU Programmes such as SPPR, INTERREG, Leader II and their successors.
9. Inland Fisheries.
10. Aquaculture and marine matters
11. Health: accident and emergency services and other related cross-border issues.
12. Urban and rural development.

Others to be considered by the shadow North/South Council.

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (the Charter)

GUIDANCE from the Interdepartmental Charter Implemental Group (IGIC) ON MEETING UK GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS IN RESPECT OF IRISH and Ulster-Scots (August 2005) - Extracts

2. The Charter is an international convention designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages. The Charter does not establish any individual or collective rights for the speakers of regional or minority languages. The Charter's overriding purpose is cultural. It is designed to protect and promote regional or minority languages as a threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage.
 - The UK Government signed the Charter on 2 March 2000 and ratified on 27 March 2001. The Charter came into force on 1 July 2001.
 - It is binding upon each of the ratifying states. Thus it has implications for all Northern Ireland departments and associated bodies (see paragraph 36 for definition of 'associated body'), for Whitehall departments operating in Northern Ireland and for district councils.
 - In Northern Ireland it applies to Irish and Ulster-Scots.
 - It does not cover sign languages or the languages of the minority ethnic communities.
 - The UK Government must provide periodic reports to the Council of Europe Committee of Experts who report on each state's compliance with its Charter obligations.
3. The Guidance applies to all Northern Ireland Civil Service Departments and their associated bodies. It also applies to North /South Implementation Bodies (including Tourism Ireland Ltd) to the extent that their activities take place in Northern Ireland. The Guidance is a 'living document' that will be revised as necessary.

Part II of the Charter, *Objectives and Principles*, applies to Irish and Ulster-Scots.

Part II of the Charter highlights the need to base policies, legislation and practice on the principles of recognising, promoting and encouraging the use of Irish and Ulster-Scots to preserve and safeguard both languages. Departments and associated bodies should take account of the wishes of the language speakers as they plan their activity. Part II of the Charter places the onus on departments and their associated bodies to pro-actively encourage Irish and Ulster-Scots.

11. For example, Part II of the Charter undertakes to:

- Eliminate restrictions on the use of languages,
- Ensure that users of minority languages are not excluded from society
- Include language users in the decision-making processes that affect their language
- Take 'resolute action' to promote regional or minority languages
- Ensure that languages are dealt with appropriately within the education system.

12. Part II applies to all policies, legislation and practices of government, not just those that specifically refer to Irish or Ulster-Scots.

Part III of the Charter contains a list of specific actions that could be taken in support of a language. When a certain number and range of these are being fulfilled for a language, that language is said to have 'reached Part III status'. This status reflects the development of a language, not its worth. Through the 'resolute action' taken under Part II languages can generally be expected to develop until they attain Part III status. Language development does not stop once Part III is reached, and further Charter obligations may be accepted once additional activity is underway.

Currently Part III applies to Irish in Northern Ireland and has implications for all Northern Ireland departments and associated bodies, for Whitehall departments operating locally and for district councils. Thirty provisions covering six Articles relating to the Northern Ireland administration apply to Irish. A further six apply to reserved matters.

15. Responsibility for implementing Part III (Articles 8– 14) in Northern Ireland is as follows:

PROVISION	SUBJECT	RESPONSIBILITY
<u>Part III</u>		
Article 8	Education	DE, DEL,
Article 14	Transfrontier exchanges	NIO

For further information on implementing particular areas of Part III contact your departmental ICIG representative.

PART III OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES - 36 PROVISIONS THAT THE UK GOVERNMENT HAS APPLIED SOLELY TO IRISH IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

Of the thirty-six paragraphs listed thirty paragraphs relate to matters that are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland administration. The remaining six paragraphs relate to reserved and excepted matters.

Article 8: Education

Paragraphs:

- 1a With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:
- (iii) to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above [i.e to make available *pre-school* education or a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages] at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or
- 1b (iv) to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above [to make available *primary* education or a substantial part of primary education *in* the relevant regional or minority language or to provide, within primary education, *for* the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum] at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;
- 1c (iv) to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above [to make available *secondary* education or a substantial part of secondary education *in* the relevant regional or minority languages; or to provide, within secondary education, *for* the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum] at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
- 1d (iv) to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above [to make available *technical and vocational* education or a substantial part of technical and vocational education *in* the relevant regional or minority languages or to provide, within technical and vocational education, *for* the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum] at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
- 1 e (iii) if, by reason of the role of the State in relation to higher education institutions, sub-paragraphs i and ii [to make available *university and other higher* education *in* regional or minority languages; or provide facilities *for* the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects] cannot be applied, to encourage and/or allow the provision of university or other forms of higher education in regional or minority languages or of facilities for the study of these languages as university or higher education subjects;
- 1f (ii) to offer such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education;
- 1g to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;
- 1h to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;
- 2 With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of the regional or minority language at all the appropriate stages of education.

Total: 9

Article 14: Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraphs:

- a to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education;
- b for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.

Total: 2

In addition to these extracts from official guidance, the monitoring method in use by the Council of Europe is described below:

The only enforcement mechanism under the Charter is a system of State reporting. Under Article 15, paragraph 1, each State which has ratified the Charter must make an initial report within a year of the Charter's entry into force, and subsequent reports every three years thereafter. The reports are presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and are examined by a Committee of Experts. The Committee of Experts then prepare a report for the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe which shall include proposals for recommendations to the State: Article 16.

THE TREACY JUDGMENT - COURT ORDERS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO RECONSIDER ITS TRANSPORT POLICY FOR IRISH MEDIUM SECONDARY SCHOOL (25 October 2013)

Summary of Judgment

Mr Justice Treacy, sitting in the High Court today, ordered the Department of Education to review its transport policy for pupils attending Coláiste Feirste, the only secondary school in Northern Ireland to provide education through the medium of the Irish language.

The judicial review of the Department's refusal to provide transport or transport assistance for pupils of Coláiste Feirste was brought by Ms Colma McKee, the Vice Chairperson of the Board of Governors. Ms McKee claimed the Department of Education had:

- Failed to give proper weight and consideration to its obligation under Article 89 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education;
- Breached its obligations not to discriminate between different schools and different categories of pupils and failed to treat all schools fairly and equally;
- Failed to comply with its obligations under Article 52 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 to provide transport assistance to pupils attending grant aided schools;
- Impeded the exercise of the right to be educated in one's language under the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Discriminated against those who regard Irish as their first language as against those who do not.

Mr Justice Treacy noted that the issue of transport in the Irish-medium sector was the subject of ongoing discussions since 2003. He commented that, unlike other secondary schools, the primary schools which form the catchment area for Coláiste Feirste are widely geographically dispersed. This has obvious implications for the provision of transport to those who wish to attend this school. The judge noted said that "sadly, despite what appears to have been earnest attempts on the part of all parties involved, a solution has not been found". The Department wrote to various interested parties in September 2010 stating

that while the Minister had striven to find a solution that would meet the wishes of the parents, she had concluded that the situation could not be resolved without unreasonable public expenditure.

The judge reached his conclusion based on Ms McKee's primary submission that the Department had failed to give proper weight and consideration to its obligation under to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education.

Mr Justice Treacy said that Article 89 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 is the statutory embodiment of the clear commitment enshrined in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement to place a statutory duty on the Department to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with the current provision for integrated education. He said he did not accept the Department's contention that this duty was merely aspirational and added that the imposition of the statutory duty has and is intended to have practical consequences and legislative significance.

The judge noted that a major factor in the Department's decision not to provide transport was that it would create a precedent. He said, however, that the Department does not have a corresponding duty in relation to the traditional established educational sector:

"Accordingly, [the Department] may facilitate and encourage the Irish-medium post primary sector in ways that it need not for other sectors by taking positive steps or removing obstacles which inhibit the statutory objective. This does not appear to have been fully appreciated by [the Department]."

Mr Justice Treacy added that, in his view, the provision of transport facilities to schools in any sector is critical to the development of that sector and the provision of genuine parental choice. He said it was therefore open to the Department to exercise its powers and to amend the transport policy in the discharge of its duty under the 1998 Order. The judge granted the application and ordered the Department to reconsider the matter.

STRATEGY FOR PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE – PUBLIC CONSULTATION (D/CAL JULY 2012): AREAS FOR ACTION- EDUCATION

Irish Medium Education (IME)

4.4.1 The IME sector has been growing steadily in recent years and this growth looks set to continue. Increased demand should be met. In 2011/12 there were 70 schools/Units providing IME to over 4,000 children at pre-school, primary and post primary level.

IME Pre-school

4.4.2 The Department of Education should continue to support the development of IME at pre-school level through the provision of PEAGS.

4.4.3 Criteria for the enrolment of bilingual/Irish medium pre-schools should be reviewed.

4.4.4 Capacity in English medium pre-schooling in a particular area should not deter the opening/development/financing of IME pre-schools.

IME Primary Schools

4.4.5 The Department of Education should continue to support the development of IME primary schools.

4.4.6 Thresholds for entitlement to capital funding should be reviewed.

4.4.7 Shortage of qualified teachers for some subjects should be addressed including the adequacy of teaching materials.

IME Post- Primary System

4.4.8 Measures should be taken to address the complexity in establishing new Post Primary IME Secondary Schools.

4.4.9 Extra teacher training places for IME trainee teachers should be provided.

4.4.10 Eligibility criteria for the establishment of IME post-primary schools should be reviewed.

Rol – New Arrangements for patronage of new post-primary schools

Report for New Schools Establishment Group

Patronage Determination for New Post-Primary Schools Opening in 2015 and 2016

The following key elements will apply to the establishment of a new second-level school:

- The demographics of the area must support the need for the establishment of a new school– a new school would not impact negatively on the enrolment of schools in the catchment, other than perhaps the establishment of an all-Irish school and the impact of this on an existing Aonad.
- If the demographics require the establishment of a school, then the process for the selection of the type of school should allow for different patrons/bodies to be considered as the patron of a new school.

Most new schools must have the capacity to operate schools in the size range of 800 to 1,000 pupils. **A lower threshold of 400 would apply for Gaelchóláistí having regard to the alternative of establishing an Aonad within a school.**

The following requirements will have to be satisfied by prospective school patrons:

- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to accept and open special education facilities
- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to enter into the standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills or that the prospective patron will provide their own school site.
- Confirmation of willingness to operate by the rules and regulations laid down in various Department of Education and Skills circulars and operating procedures
- Confirmation of willingness to operate the school within the resourcing and policy parameters established by the Department of Education and Skills
- Confirmation of willingness to share school buildings with other schools as may be determined by the Department should the school building not be in full use
- Confirmation of willingness to be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department
- Confirmation of willingness to enrol children in the area for whom the Department has identified the need for a school
- Confirmation of willingness to follow the prescribed curriculum
- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to expand/operate in the size range of 800 to 1,000 pupils
- **Confirmation of willingness to establish an Aonad where there is a demand for it (for a school where the primary medium of instruction is to be English)**

An initial decision will be made by the Department before seeking applications on whether the school would operate through the medium of Irish or English and that applications would be sought from patrons when this decision is made.

Most new school provision will be co-educational in nature and patronage decisions will be made on that basis. There may be a small number of instances where singlegender provision will need to be

made if there is an identified imbalance between the capacities of single-gender schools. Any such identification would be made in advance of seeking applications from patrons.

The main criterion for the decision on patronage in an area where there is already at least one second-level school will be the following:

- **Whether the establishment of the proposed school model would result in greater diversity and plurality of second-level school patronage and provision in the area (having regard to neighbouring areas) where there is demand for such diversity and plurality. In this context individual patron bodies from the one faith group will be regarded as representing the same school patronage type for assessing plurality.**

As part of the examination of this criterion regard would be had for:

- Whether there is a school of the same or similar patronage in the same catchment area (having regard to neighbouring areas) and whether there is additional demand for such patronage
- The extent to which the establishment of the school would result in greater diversity and plurality of patronage in the area (having regard to neighbouring areas) where there is demand for such plurality and diversity
- Effectiveness of mechanisms planned to ensure that the proposed school will expand to the size range of 800 to 1,000 pupils, including:
 - Planned possible measures if expansion is not happening as fast as planned
 - Planned collaboration with existing second level schools in the catchment area.

Where an area is to be served by a single new school, the key criteria will be the following:

- Whether the school can cater for the needs and requirements of all of the pupils in the area.
- Having regard to neighbouring areas, whether the establishment of the proposed school model would result in greater diversity and plurality of second-level school patronage and provision where there is demand for such diversity and plurality. In this context individual patron bodies from the one faith group will be regarded as representing the same school patronage type for assessing plurality.

As part of the examination of these criteria regard would be had for:

- The effectiveness of the manner in which the patron proposes to determine the requirements of all pupils / groups of pupils regarding pupils of a particular faith; pupils of no faith
- The extent to which these requirements are to be met
- Effectiveness of the manner in which a comprehensive and broad curriculum is proposed to be offered during the start-up phase
- Effectiveness of the manner in which a comprehensive and broad curriculum is proposed to be offered when the school is past the start-up phase
- Effectiveness of the manner to which a comprehensive and broad curriculum is proposed to be offered to all students e.g. supporting gender integration into all subjects
- The extent of demand in the area for the applicant patrons
- Having regard to neighbouring areas, whether the establishment of the proposed school model would result in greater diversity and plurality of second-level school patronage and provision where there is demand for such diversity and plurality.

The process will involve the following steps at second level:

- Identification of locations of new schools and sizes of new schools by the Department
- **Decision by the Department in relation to whether the school would operate through the medium of Irish or English**
- Written applications from prospective patrons addressing all of the criteria
- Consideration of the applications by Department officials and report drafted for consideration by the New Schools Establishment Group

- Consideration by Group of report and endorsement by Group or identification of need for further analysis by Department and subsequent consideration by Group
- Report from the Group submitted to the Minister for consideration ➤ Decision by the Minister

Parental Preferences

Patron bodies proposing schools will be asked to provide evidence of parental demand. Patrons will be asked to sign up lists of parents who indicate interest in having their children educated in their new school. These lists are to be broken down by the age of the children, including year of proposed entry to school, and by where they are living, having regard for the area to be served by the school. A template for submission of parental demand will be provided for this purpose, and all information must be presented in this format only.

Issues from Focus Group interaction and written submissions

Collaboration

- Collaboration needs to work better and a structure needs to be put in place.
- It would seem more advantageous to work on an all-Ireland basis.
- Proper mechanisms are not in place and collaboration usually only happens on a goodwill basis.
- It would be useful for providers to collaborate to ensure that no duplication exists.
- There is also recognition that political goodwill is essential.
- Need to look at investment vs Value for Money vs collaboration.
- The unit cost of a text book would be smaller in the ROI as they would have a greater need – there are savings to be had for both north and south.
- It was acknowledged that north and south are collaborating more than they used to.
- Collaboration between Ireland and Scotland has not been harnessed as there is no formal mechanism in place.
- Need to look at the curriculum in the North and in the ROI and see what is common between the two and look at ways that it could be delivered jointly.
- A recommendation could be for someone to look at what is common between the north and the south and have an agreement that these are supplied jointly.
- It would be useful to have guidelines in place to advise on the best way forward.

Funding

- Funding is required for both human resources and material resources. There is a need to have more effective collaboration especially in respect of funding for these two areas between north and south.
- There is a need to simplify the process.
- Public bodies can find it difficult to produce resources because of procurement rules. They need to abide by many regulations which can be time-consuming and difficult. A north/south body could help improve this and make things easier.
- Marketing, charging and actual use of resources provided should be built into provision.
- Training was also recognised as a factor. If teachers/schools are not trained to use the resources, then they are of no use.
- Potential application for allocation of Peace funding; and other European funding.

ICT

- More consideration should be given to on-line resources.
- ICT would allow for easy update of text books and teachers' guides.
- It was recognised that ICT requires a bigger upfront investment.
- It would seem that there is nothing in place for Irish medium on C2k. There is a need for an interface on C2k for IM and to work out the mechanisms to achieve this.
- On-line resources can be used on a global basis.
- It is recognised that at post-primary it can be more complex as subjects change.

Exams and examiners (NI)

- There are issues with finding examiners to mark exams that have been completed in Irish.
- Qualifications in the north and south in certain areas could lead to jointly produced materials.
- It was agreed that exams should be marked in the language in which the examination was marked. It was accepted that funding would be required.

Research and resources

- Research tends to be tied into needs analysis but should be tied into policy, i.e. literacy.
- There needs to be a centre for effective learning. This is already organised in the South and may be useful to have a discussion with the 3 institutes.

Irish/Gaeilge in EM schools in NI

- Resources have been neglected for this area taken by the majority of IM students without access to IM PP provision.

APPENDIX 8

Possible transfer rates based on enrolments

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	7	11	9	12	19	16		74
Bunscoil an Iúir	10	15	13	9	12	13		72
Gaelscoil na mBeann	0	0	0	4	4	12		20
Our Lady and St Patrick Primary School	11	7	13	13	13	15		72
100%	28	33	35	38	48	56		238
95%	27	31	33	36	46	53		226
80%	22	26	28	30	38	45		190
68%	19	22	24	26	33	38		162

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	10	11	13	10	13	15		72
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	13	10	12	6	9	13		63
100%	13	10	12	6	9	13		63
95%	12	10	11	6	9	12		60
80%	10	8	10	5	7	10		50
68%	9	7	8	4	6	9		43

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014/ 15	2015 /16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Bunscoil Cholmcille	12	16	9	20	12	12		81
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	24	20	13	18	23	20		118
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	20	19	15	17	16	14		101
Gaelscoil na Daróige	4	4	12	10	10	11		51
Gaelscoil Léim an Mhadaidh	0	0	0	6	11	13		30
100%	60	59	49	71	72	70		381
95%	57	56	47	67	68	67		362
80%	48	47	39	57	58	56		305
68%	41	40	33	48	49	48		259

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014/ 15	2015 /16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Gaelscoil Neachtain	5	8	6	8	6	14		47
Gaelscoil na Spéiríní	3	2	11	3	5	8		32
Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	0	0	8	9	12	18		47
St Brigid's Primary School Tirkane	15	16	15	13	14	14		87
Gaelscoil Eoghain	0	0	0	0	0	13		13
100%	23	26	40	33	37	67		226
95%	22	25	38	31	35	64		215
80%	18	21	32	26	30	54		181
68%	16	18	27	22	25	46		154

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Bunscoil an Iúir	10	15	13	9	12	13		72
Christian Brothers' Primary School	15	15	12	25	19	22		108
St Patrick's Primary School	18	10	18	16	13	13		88
St John the Baptist Primary School	7	3	5	8	6	9		38
St Francis Primary School	18	12	20	25	25	23		123
100%	68	55	68	83	75	80		429
95%	65	52	65	79	71	76		408
80%	54	44	54	66	60	64		343
68%	46	37	46	56	51	54		292

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017/ 18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Gaelscoil na gCrann	8	12	14	13	16	16		79
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	20	25	26	23	20	24		138
Gaelscoil Aodha Rua	0	0	0	0	11	20		31
St Columbkille's Primary School	8	12	6	6	8	5		45
100%	36	49	46	42	55	65		293
95%	34	47	44	40	52	62		278
80%	29	39	37	34	44	52		234
68%	24	33	31	29	37	44		199

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	TOTAL
Gaelscoil na gCrann	8	12	14	13	16	16		79
Bunscoil an Traonaigh	5	3	4	6	4	10		32
100%	5	3	4	6	4	10		32
95%	5	3	4	6	4	10		30
80%	4	2	3	5	3	8		26
68%	3	2	3	4	3	7		22

PRIMARY SCHOOL	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	TOTAL
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	3	10	8	10	9	10		50
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	31	37	22	33	35	39		197
Gaelscoil na BhFál	26	19	25	20	22	27		139
Bunscoil An tSleibhe Dhuibh	24	18	28	16	14	21		121
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	12	6	20	19	18	12		87
Scoil An Droichid	21	14	16	18	19	22		110
Gaelscoil na Móna	14	10	18	9	13	15		79
Gaelscoil an Lonnáin	9	8	5	3	5	9		39
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	10	11	13	10	13	15		72
Gaelscoil Éanna	10	16	6	17	21	34		104
Scoil na Fuiseoige	9	14	17	16	18	22		96
100%	169	163	178	171	187	226		1094
95%	161	155	169	162	178	215		1039
80%	135	130	142	137	150	181		875
68%	115	111	121	116	127	154		744

NB – schools with stats detailed in red are IM primary schools located on the boundaries of two or more IM post-primary areas as detailed in this Report.



Advisory Group on
the Strategic Development of
Irish-medium Post-primary Education