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Cumann na Scoileanna
Pobail is Cuimsitheacha
Association of Community and
Comprehensive Schools

Strategic Plan
2013-2016



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools

Strategic Plan 2013-2016



Prepared By:
NEWMARKET CONSULTING LTD
G9 CALMOUNT PARK
BALLYMOUNT
DUBLIN 12
TELEPHONE NO: 01 429 3600
FACSIMILE NO: 01 460 0919

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Foreword

ACCS has completed a 3-year Strategic Plan which will give guidance and focus to the work of ACCS over the next number of years. Following a tender process we engaged Newmarket Consulting to support the development of the Strategic Plan by the ACCS sub-committee chaired by Ms. Eileen Salmon, Assistant General Secretary. Our thanks are due to the members of the committee Mr. Malachy Molloy, President, Mr. Ciarán Flynn, General Secretary, Mr. Liam Ryder, Mr. Liam Wegimont, Mr. James Duignan, Mr. Séamus O’Ceallacháin, Ms. Susan Cunniffe, and Chairperson Ms. Eileen Salmon for their work in the development of the Plan. Our thanks are also due to the ACCS Executive for their support for the work and for ensuring that the committee received adequate resources to carry out the task.

Research was carried out in the following manner by Newmarket Consulting in the development of the Strategic Plan:

1. Internal Research: 6 interviews and 38 completed eSurveys
2. Focus Groups: involving approximately 30 people
3. External Research: 8 interviews
4. Desk Research

ACCS in conjunction with Newmarket Consulting developed an eSurvey which listed questions appropriate to the future direction of ACCS. This instrument was used to hear the views of Boards of Management and Board members in the development of the Plan. We received 38 completed eSurveys from our schools and are grateful to all those Board members who participated.

Newmarket also conducted individual and focus group interviews with key stakeholders, including educational partners and Board members. The Focus groups consisted of Board and Executive members, Trustee/Patrons, Parents, Principals, Deputy Principals and teachers. Newmarket Consulting was very pleased with the response and engagement with all of the groups concerned and we would like to thank the participants for their helpful contribution.

Individual interviews were held with our key stakeholders and we would like to thank the following for their participation in the process and for their helpful views and suggestions:

Mr. Martin Hanevy	Assistant Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills
Mr. Ferdia Kelly	General Secretary, JMB/AMCSS
Mr. John MacGabhann	General Secretary, Teachers’ Union of Ireland
Mr. Michael Moriarty	General Secretary, Education and Training Boards, Ireland
Mr. Pat King	General Secretary, Association of Secondary Teachers’ of Ireland
Mr. Don Myers	President, National Parents’ Council, Post-Primary
Mr. Clive Byrne	Director, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
Mr. Tommy Walshe	Public Relations Officer of the Parents’ Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools.

Our thanks also to Ms. Anne Marie Dillon and Ms. Debbie Riordan in ACCS Head Office for their work and support of the Strategic Planning process in their respective roles. We look forward as an organisation to responding to the ideas and suggestions outlined in the Strategic Plan and are now developing a corresponding implementation plan. We hope and expect that the work accomplished in accordance with the Strategic Plan will make our organisation more efficient and effective in all its aims. This implementation will be overseen by the Executive of ACCS and will be reported on to all our Boards of Management through the usual channels and specifically through the ACCS Annual Convention.

Mr. Ciarán Flynn,
General Secretary.

Preamble

The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (hereinafter referred to as the ACCS), which was founded in 1982, is the national representative association and management body for the 93 Community and Comprehensive Schools post-primary schools nationwide. (This will rise to 94 in September 2013 with the opening of Ballinamore Community School).

The main objects, as outlined in the Memorandum of Association of the ACCS are:

- To contribute by every means at its disposal to the advancement of Education
- To advance and develop the concept of broad comprehensive curricula as enshrined in the deeds of the schools
- To advance and develop the wider "community" concept of the schools

As with any representative association, the ACCS must deal with a multitude of stakeholders, which adds to the complexity of the environment in which it operates. To ensure that the on-going remit and activities of ACCS are in line with stakeholders' expectations, funders' priorities and the organisation's mission, the ACCS has completed a strategic review and strategic plan development to ensure on-going relevance and value.

The Strategic Plan 2013-2016 will formalise the strategic direction of the organisation and will aim to build on the work carried out by the ACCS since its inception.

With a view to ensuring the on-going achievement of their objectives, the ACCS sought an experienced party to undertake a strategic review of the organisation. Newmarket Consulting was selected from the tender process to carry out this review.

The project was completed with active participation from all constituent members and external stakeholders. The process involved the following phases:

Phase 1 – Research And Analysis involved a comprehensive consultative process with internal and external stakeholders to identify the key issues to be considered by ACCS in developing their strategies until 2016.

Phase 2 - Develop Vision, Mission and prioritised Strategic Objectives which involved working closely with the ACCS Executive to develop vision, mission, strategies and priorities.

Phase 3 - Strategy Development involved developing a plan of action for each of the strategies to direct the ACCS until 2016.

Newmarket consider the process used has, both in consulting comprehensively with the constituent bodies and with a range of key external stakeholders, allowed a strategic plan for the ACCS to evolve

which takes account and plans for the needs of member schools, the overall needs of the ACCS and the future of the sector as envisaged and outlined in the Strategic Review Findings Report.

The Summary of the Strategic Review Findings Report is included in Appendix A

ACCS Strategic Plan 2013-2016

Vision Statement of the ACCS

ACCS leads and supports its schools in providing equal access to a comprehensive, community-based, multi-denominational education. In doing so it aims to contribute towards a just and caring society.

Mission of the ACCS

The Mission of the ACCS is to:

- Innovate and disseminate good practice in our schools
- Communicate effectively with member Boards and education partners
- Facilitate and assist member Boards of Management in the execution of their responsibilities
- Commit to use and account for resources efficiently and effectively
- Influence and manage change by committing to sector-wide partnership initiatives
- Promote the growth and development of the Community and Comprehensive Schools model
- Act as a representative on behalf of all member Boards at various educational fora
- Negotiate and enter into national agreements on behalf of our Boards, and support them to implement these obligations
- Act as a representative, on request, on behalf of an individual member Board on specific issues

STRATEGY 1: Managing the Evolution of the ACCS

Objective 1: Establish and Define Role of ACCS

Actions

- Define where roles of Patron and Management Bodies begin and end
- Define ACCS's principles of engagement and partnership with others bodies (particularly where there is joint-representation at a forum)
- Define ACCS's role in terms of:
 - Lobbying
 - Industrial Relations
 - Media Relations
 - Welfare
 - Boundaries of the Relationship with Teachers and Parents in terms of support and communication/information
- Communicate role and boundaries of ACCS to members
 - Map areas where ACCS is the main contact and where other organisations are and circulate
- Define areas where regional structures can be enhanced and supported
- Examine possible technologies that may increase efficiencies (as the CRM has successfully done)
- Look into potential areas where additional skills/resources are required, clarify if the requirement is long-term or issue specific and examine options (including full time, part time, contractor, secondments or fee-based service provision) and identify how the current style of service provision can be maintained:
 - Administration
 - Communications/PR
 - Technology
 - Accounts
 - Research
 - Procurement
 - Central Buildings Maintenance
- Investigate potential for shared services with other management bodies e.g. legal, financial issues
 - Examine whether duplication occurs with other management bodies, and, if so, agree with other bodies who should take the lead in which areas
- Identify potential role of ACCS in the event that a single Catholic and/or Protestant religious trustee body for Community school patronage is established

Objective 2: Define Models of Growth

Actions

- Outline potential for growth under the headings of “education and support of members” and “establishment of schools”
- Re-establish ACCS Future Development of Community and Comprehensive Schools Sub-Committee
- Review varying models of Instruments of Governance (Deeds of Trust and Articles of Management) with a view to setting out and clarifying the core values and principles for an ACCS model
- Engage directly with Trusts via ATCS sub-committee
- Identify potential school amalgamations and approach potential patrons
- Prioritise and plan for ACCS resources required to meet increased administrative demands as a result of the models of growth identified
 - Look into potential funding sources in addition to those already secured
- Investigate strategic partnerships between the sector and other bodies to establish whether strategic links might be developed between ACCS and external entities (nationally and internationally)

Objective 3: Influence Patronage Debate

Actions

- Actively engage with recognised Patron bodies in the promotion of the joint-patronage model
- Define ACCS agenda for National Trustee Forum (through sub-committee and Executive) and increase influence at National Trustee Forum
- Where there are already competing interests, identify whether there is an opportunity for ACCS to approach patrons and suggest compromise by joining together to promote the Community and Comprehensive School model
- Develop relationships between ACCS and other stakeholders to give ACCS more influence in patronage debate

Objective 4: Achieve Growth in Number of Community and Comprehensive Schools through Collaboration/Strategic Partnerships

Actions

- Increase engagement with Educate Together to encourage new Community Schools
- Explore single patron stance of An Foras Pátrúnachta
- Communicate to parents the distinctive features of the Community and Comprehensive Schools so that they can influence the direction of patronage in an informed way and give preference to Community and Comprehensive model if patronage surveys occur for post-primary schools
- Develop relationships between ACCS and other stakeholders in the development of new schools

STRATEGY 2:

Promoting the Community and Comprehensive School as Models of the Schools of the Future

Objective 1: Define uniqueness and achievements of Community and Comprehensive Schools Model

Actions

- Establish Identity Promotion Sub-Committee to explore uniqueness of Community and Comprehensive Schools (including outcomes particular to the C&C model)
- Define the unique identity of Community and Comprehensive Schools
- Emphasise commonalities between Community and Comprehensive Models and integrate these commonalities into promotions of Community and Comprehensive Schools model
- Define ACCS's "vision for education" and map how ACCS will achieve this vision
 - Match the "vision for education" to the role of the ACCS to ensure that the future vision can be appropriately achieved and resourced

Objective 2: Clarify target audience and key messages for each audience

Actions

- Establish Identity Promotion Sub-Committee to clarify key target audiences
- Define what Community and Comprehensive Schools mean to target audiences including:
 - Minister and DES officials
 - Boards of Management of ACCS member schools
 - Principals of ACCS member schools
 - New principals of ACCS member schools
 - New members of Boards of Management
 - Patron bodies
 - Students of ACCS member schools
 - Teachers of ACCS member schools
 - Parents (including Parent Associations)
 - Adult education cohort
 - Other management bodies and bodies within the education sector
 - Potential strategic partners

- Local communities
- General public
- Define key marketing messages for each key target audience
- Plan an awareness and communications campaign to define the level and content of planned interaction with specific target audiences outlined above
- Define target outcomes from each audience

Objective 3: Communicate uniqueness and achievements of Community and Comprehensive Schools Model via Awareness Campaign

Actions

- Define appropriate level and channels of communication to different audiences identified above
- Devise an internal communications plan to highlight achievements of interest to members specifically and a communications plan for external bodies within the sector
 - Place specific emphasis on exemplifying the work of the ACCS in relation to good practice and innovation
 - Ensure that the provision of adult education is highlighted more often
- Communicate achievements of ACCS as an organisation
- Communicate achievements of ACCS member schools
- Develop “Information Pack on ACCS” for all members of Boards of Management
 - Develop and circulate guidelines for the distribution of information within the Board of Management
- Engage a professional for delivery of media training to key ACCS staff (online and offline)
- Examine, in more detail, the Communications/PR activity of other management bodies and patron bodies within the sector
- Identify potential for an additional Communications/PR resource to deliver Awareness Campaign

STRATEGY 3: Shaping the Future by Influencing and Managing Change

Objective 1: Support Boards of Management to manage change

Actions

- Continue to provide excellent service to schools in the core service identified by members and outlined in Strategic Review Findings document i.e.:
 - Interpreting legislation and regulations for member schools
 - Keeping Boards of Management well informed about the changes that are happening in the education system
 - Provision of high quality and focussed training
 - Fostering networking and sharing of ideas and issues amongst member schools
 - Working on behalf of schools in negotiations with DES
- Executive to identify and prioritise expected changes, and establish sub-committees where necessary, in the following:
 - Resources and management of same
 - Curriculum
 - Teaching
 - Evaluation
 - Policy
 - Technology
 - Further Educationand their impact on Community and Comprehensive Schools Boards of Management
- Set out ACCS support plan for Boards of Management based on prioritised changes identified
- Set out training plan for Boards of Management based on prioritised changes identified
- Develop guidelines and templates in areas that will assist member schools
- Leverage existing regional networks to facilitate sharing of knowledge in relation to change management amongst Boards of Management

Objective 2: Continue to influence change within the education sector

Actions

- Identify potential for an additional Research resource to research best practice in education policy and change management
- Communicate work of ACCS in influencing change to member schools and their Boards of Management

- Draw on the work of ACCS sub-committees and task groups to inform internal processes and influence education policy and provision, based on the specific needs of Community and Comprehensive Schools
- Communicate Community and Comprehensive Schools message of change, including:
 - What are the unique outcomes for students from attending Community and Comprehensive Schools?
 - Curriculum (what is unique in Community and Comprehensive Schools' curriculum?)
 - Dealing with parents and patrons (how do Community and Comprehensive Schools deal with parents and patrons differently?)
 - Management/administration (what is unique about Community and Comprehensive Schools' training?)
 - Involvement in external committees (what are the Community and Comprehensive Schools' key messages to these committees?)
- Define areas where ACCS can take a lead in influencing change
- Continue positive collaboration across the education sector
- Identify areas where ACCS can strengthen its position by joining forces with other Management Bodies to develop submissions, position papers and research to provide background to a particular stance etc.

Objective 3: Evaluate available resources and plan for new services

Actions

- Decide at Executive level what resources are required to implement the Strategic Plan
- Seek additional resources if required to implement the Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Evaluation

Definition of Measurements of Success

Specific measurements need to be defined for each of the Strategic Objectives in the Plan which would represent success to the ACCS. These measurements need to be SMART, in that they are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

On-going review

A structure should be put in place to ensure on-going review of the actions being progressed to achieve the objectives. The Strategic Plan objectives should be an agenda item for the Executive meeting. The frequency of reporting should be agreed with the Executive.

This should include identifying key achievements (and which achievements can and should be communicated externally) and also areas where challenges may arise/have arisen so that risk management can be put in place and/or a different course of action can be agreed.

Overall Evaluation Frequency

An overall evaluation of the progress of the Strategic Plan 2013-2016 implementation should occur every 6 months, against the Measurements of Success defined above, in:

- November 2013
- May 2014
- November 2014
- May 2015
- November 2015
- May 2016
- November 2016 (Final Evaluation)

Format of Evaluation

The evaluation would ideally be carried out internally and externally on an alternating basis. The progress of the plan in relation to the Objectives and the Tasks, should be reviewed by the ACCS Head Office each November. An external party should carry out a more comprehensive, objective review in May 2014, May 2015 and May 2016.

Result of Evaluation

Given the dynamic nature of the education sector in Ireland, the importance and feasibility of the Strategic Objectives may change. Carrying out 6-monthly reviews will allow the ACCS to benchmark the progress they have made in implementing the Plan, recognise and correct any deviations that are occurring in the Plans' implementation, and re-prioritise the Strategic Objectives based on their importance. Furthermore, the ACCS might also identify and plan for emerging Strategic Objectives that were not identified in the initial Plan.

Appendix A

Summary of the Strategic Review Findings Report

Introduction

Newmarket Consulting (Newmarket) was retained in October 2012 to assist the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) in developing a strategic plan for 2013-2016. The project is being completed in three phases as follows:

- Phase 1 - Research and Analysis
- Phase 2 - Vision and Mission Development and the Prioritization of Strategic Objectives
- Phase 3 - Strategy Development

The purpose of the Strategic Review Findings document is to set out the findings of the research and analysis phase. This will inform the decision on future strategies and priorities, structures and operations. In doing so it will also help to clarify a clear vision and plan for ACCS to effectively and efficiently guide the future progression of the organisation.

Methodology

Research was carried out in 4 areas:

1. Internal Research: 6 interviews and 38 completed eSurveys
2. Focus Groups: involving approximately 30 people
3. External Research: 8 interviews
4. Desk Research

Overview of the Education Sector

The education sector in Ireland today is both complex and evolving. The change in the education sector has noticeably accelerated in recent years, the detail of which is outlined in the main Strategic Review Findings report.

Role of the ACCS

The Association was established to:

- facilitate and assist member Boards in the execution of their responsibilities,
- act as a representative and negotiating body on behalf of all member Boards or, on request, on behalf of an individual member Board,
- co-operate with, or enter into agreement with any other bodies having similar objectives on a general basis or in relation to particular issues,
- apply the funds of the Association in carrying out these functions and in defraying the expenses of management and administration.

Structures within Post-Primary Education Sector

There are three management bodies representing all schools in the post-primary sector (ACCS, ETBI and JMB) together with other representative and patron bodies (including the Catholic and Protestant Bishops, Educate Together, An Forás Pátrúnachta, Religious Orders and Religious Trusts such as Le Chéile, CEIST, ERST, Loreto Schools Trust etc.).

Promotion of Models of Education

It has become more important that the ethos of the various models of schools is understood, due to the process of consulting within a local area as to the model of choice for new schools. Some bodies are increasingly promoting their ethos and values via awareness campaigns.

Patronage

The patronage of schools at primary and post-primary is a topical subject. Following the recommendations of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector, the patronage of a small number of schools previously run by the Catholic Church is in the process of a phased hand over to new patron bodies as a part of planned reconfiguration in the sector.

One of the characteristics of the current patronage models is that there is a mix of denominational and multi-denominational schools. It was often observed that there is a clash between the catholic patronage of Community and Comprehensive Schools and the multi-denominational ethos.

Finally, of particular interest in recent years is the increasing involvement of parents in the choice of patronage and also the higher prevalence of co-patronage involving new combinations of bodies.

Instruments of Governance

The issue of patronage and the Deed of Trust for Community School, Articles of Management for Comprehensive Schools, which are the instruments of governance of the schools are inextricably linked.

Work has commenced under the auspices of the DES with a review group representing Patron interests and the ACCS in relation to the Deed of Trust. Until this review is complete the original Deed of Trust remains in place.

Amalgamations

According to Minister Ruairi Quinn “The initiative for an amalgamation may come from a variety of sources, such as parents, staff, Board of Management and Patron.”

It is generally agreed that “there will be more amalgamations” and this provides an opportunity for new combinations of education bodies working together, which in turn will provide an opportunity for more Community and Comprehensive School involvement.

Funding and Cutbacks

“The downturn and the reduction in resources from 2009”, highlighted in the ACCS Newsletter 1 2012/2013, is significant within the sector and needs to be considered by the ACCS from two perspectives; firstly, the impact on schools from a management perspective, and, secondly, the impact on the ACCS as an organisation.

As well as funding reductions, the downturn is leading to various types of restructuring in the form of amalgamations of schools and the former VECs. Public sector reform and the Croke Park Agreement combine to bring about other effects including fewer teachers, less subject choice, reduced Special Needs Assistants, recruitment freezes due to the moratorium, changes in terms and conditions of employment e.g. longer hours etc.

In the context of funding levels of the ACCS itself, the organisation has experienced reduced funding in the last few years as a result of the standard drop that affected all public bodies and also reductions in affiliation fee from schools in line with reduction in capitation from the Department of Education and Skills, hereinafter referred to as the DES, to schools.

It should be borne in mind that the issue of potential duplication of activities did arise during the research in the context of needing to consider whether the funding levels might be rationalised to remove the possibility of funding several bodies to carry out the same task.

Identification of Priority Issues

The following priority issues were identified, an overview of which is shown in the Identification of Priorities MindMap below.

1. Role and Remit of ACCS

The results of both the Focus Group and eSurvey research showed that there was strong support for the on-going relevance of the existing Values and Vision of the ACCS. For example, when asked in the eSurvey (Q1.) “Do you agree that these are the values and vision that should guide the ACCS”; 100% of respondents answered “Yes”.

When asked specifically what the “most important on-going, long term objectives of the ACCS” should be (Q4.) the top three weighted answers were; 1. Providing support and advice to schools; 2. Commitment to innovate and disseminate good practice and 3. A vision of a just and equal society.

One of the key findings from the research is that ACCS currently operates to very high standards, and it was noted that it is important for ACCS to maintain these standards.

In addition to ACCS continuing to do what it does well, the organisation needs to clarify what functions ACCS does not carry out or only carries out in a limited way, for example: Lobbying, Industrial Relations, Media Relations, Welfare and Boundaries of the Relationship with Teachers and Parents.

As well as considering whether the above are, or should be, part of the ACCS's remit, it is important that the strategy ensures that the remit is communicated to stakeholders so expectations are realistic. Clarity of remit will also ensure that the dividing line between the areas where the ACCS is the primary contact and those where other organisations are the main contact will be clear.

2. Growth and Development of ACCS

The change of focus from “establishment of schools” to “education of members” has resulted in a feeling (both from internal and external stakeholders) that the pace of ACCS's growth has slowed in recent years, in terms of the additional schools, and a feeling that if new Community and Comprehensive Schools are not developed, the ACCS may stagnate.

It must be noted however, that this feeling was not held universally – some research respondents stated that ACCS should be happy to keep the status quo in terms of school numbers, given the comparatively large size and scale of the schools and administrative burden it already faces.

In order to grow the number of Community and Comprehensive Schools, ACCS will have to continue to be proactive on issues such as the Deed of Trust and school patronage, adoption of new curriculum and legislation (e.g. new Junior Cycle) and alignment with the future evolution of the education sector.

ACCS, as a management body, would not in all likelihood become a patron body. However, it has been suggested by the DES that a single Catholic Patron body to represent Catholic Patron interests in all Community Schools is required, as the current patronage model with a large number of patrons is “inefficient and difficult to deal with”.

Significantly, opinion was expressed that the ACCS would be moving itself into a stronger strategic position within the education sector with the establishment of a central, cohesive patronage body for Community and Comprehensive Schools as it would be easier/more efficient dealing with fewer patrons.

From the research, options for the ACCS in terms of strengthening patronage for Community Schools include:

- Establishing a central patronage body for Community Schools through centralising existing Catholic patronage
- Developing a central multi-denomination patronage body, as reflects the multi-denominational ethos of Community Schools
- Proactively seek joint-patronage under patron bodies with a similar ethos
- Where there are already competing interests, there is an opportunity for ACCS to approach patrons and suggest compromise by joining together to promote the Community School model.

3. Effective Planning and Use of ACCS Resources

The ever-growing administrative burden on the existing staff will need to be addressed by adding resources in key areas through one or more of the following - hiring staff, short-term contracts,

outsourcing, collaboration with other bodies, collaboration with regional structures and enhanced use of technology; for example in the following areas:

- Administration
- Communications/PR
- Technology
- Accounts
- Research
- Procurement
- Central building maintenance

4. Collaboration

ACCS is characterised by its basis in a model of Community and Comprehensive education that is different from that of other sectors.

Views were expressed in this review regarding the strong existing work of the ACCS in the practice of collaboration – both with other management bodies and with patronage bodies and other educational partners – and the potential for further collaboration.

At the same time, such collaboration must recognise the particular identity and necessary difference of ACCS vis-a-vis other bodies.

Further rationalisation of schools will provide ACCS with more opportunities to continue such collaboration.

Particular collaboration might be explored in specific areas – for example, shared services including legal and financial services.

5. Identify and Promotion of Community and Comprehensive Schools Model

ACCS needs to consistently reiterate what the uniqueness of Community and Comprehensive Schools is, and will be in future, and communicate it clearly both internally (within member schools) and externally (across education sector stakeholders, and to their local communities). In reiterating the uniqueness of Community and Comprehensive Schools, the ACCS will need to consider the specific value that the ACCS and Community and Comprehensive Schools add to the education sector and local communities, and how the Community and Comprehensive Schools model differs from other models of education. Furthermore, ACCS will need to be future-focussed, and determine how the Community and Comprehensive Schools model will align with a future “vision for education”.

By increasing awareness of the unique advantages that the Community and Comprehensive Schools model has over comparative models, ACCS will be able to provide justification for the ACCS as an “essential link in the education system”, and will also be able to increase the influence they have on decisions made on new schools, amalgamations etc.

6. Communication

It was mentioned during the research that the profile of the ACCS is not a key attribute by which the organisation is measured, primarily the success or otherwise of the ACCS will be measured in terms of how well their schools are operating. In this regard, the ACCS is performing well in their direct communications to Boards of Management on key issues, and in particular with Principals.

It was also noted that the ACCS will need to continue to provide a service to the Board as a whole, and not just to Principals who act as Secretaries to the Board.

The research also demonstrated that the ACCS still has some work to do in terms of improving the effectiveness of its communications with its wider stakeholders, including:

- Need to promote all of the work that is done by the Secretariat, particularly the work done “behind the scenes”
- Need to ensure that all relevant communications are filtering down to all members of the Boards of Management
- Develop an “information pack” for Boards of Management
- Better explanations required on how ACCS disseminate good practice and innovation
- ACCS need to clarify who their target audiences are, and what are the key messages and communication channels for each audience
- ACCS will also need to investigate the potential for technology to assist in delivering communications
- Better promote their role in terms of provision of adult education

Given all of the above, ACCS need to rationalise their communications with member schools to ensure they are not using too many resources on less effective communications channels.

7. Influencing and Managing Change

The continuing successful operation of the Community and Comprehensive Schools will be a significant challenge in the face of a quickly-changing educational sector. The change management role that the ACCS will play in terms of the operation of its member schools will need to be clarified.

The change currently taking place within the education sector provides a great opportunity for the ACCS to continue to be seen as pioneering in its management, particularly in relation to:

- Funding, staffing and middle management
- Curriculum Changes
 - Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
 - Junior Cert Reform
 - School Self-Evaluation
- Changes to Teaching Methods
- Technology in Education
- Emerging Policy

The nature of change is that the exact impacts of the changes mentioned above cannot be fully predicted, nor can the response of the ACCS to their introduction be fully planned for, however some suggestions as to how the ACCS might be able to manage these changes include:

- Establishment of working groups to oversee the introduction of new curriculum
- Researching best practice (both nationally and internationally) in the management of similar changes to education
- Developing a suite of guidelines and templates to assist member schools
- Harnessing technology to ensure the sharing of experiences and best-practice
- Facilitating networking opportunities amongst member schools
- Provision of training and In-Service in priority areas as changes emerge

Process to Develop Strategic Plan

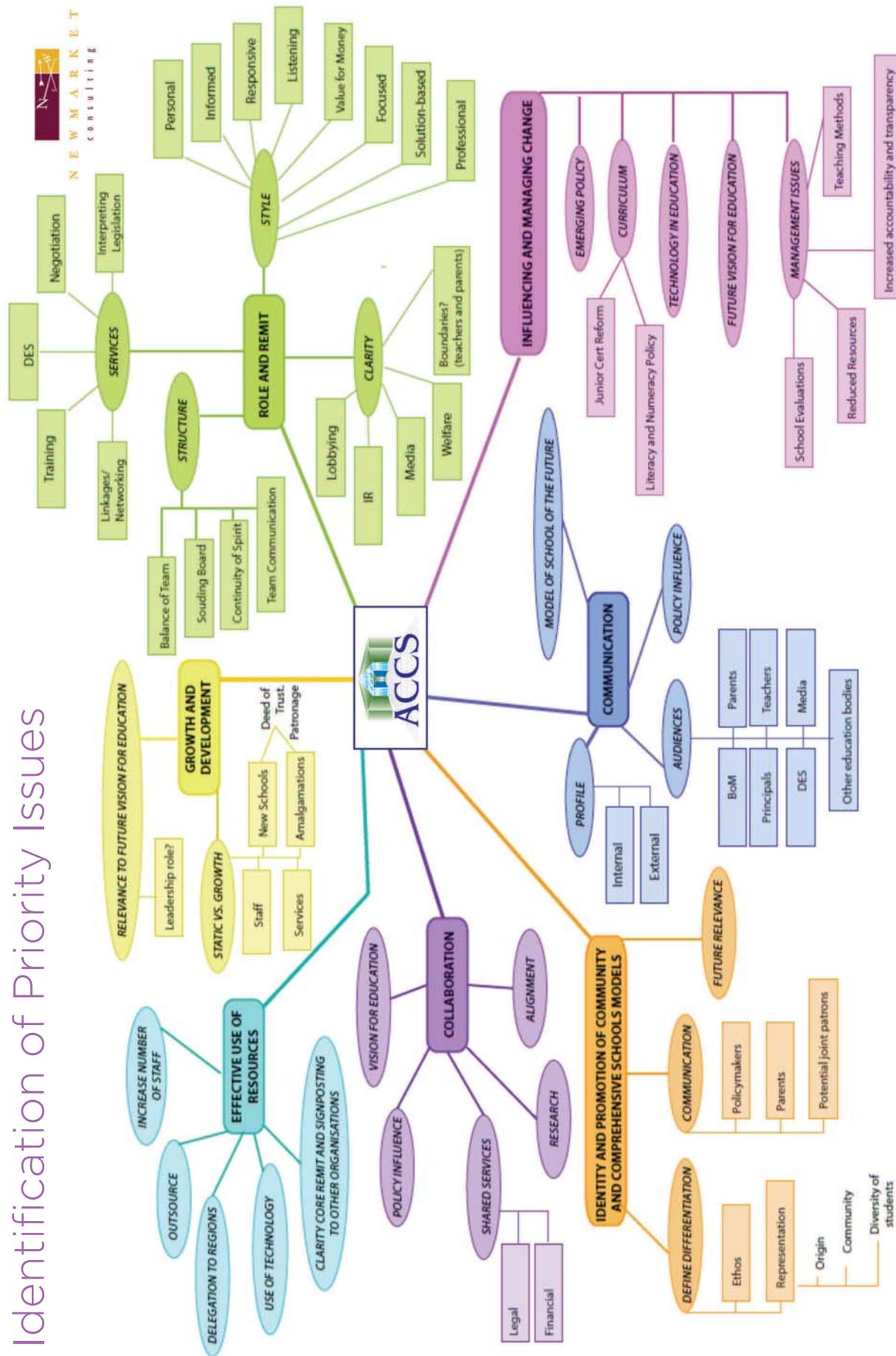
The Strategic Review Findings document was reviewed and discussed with the Executive and was followed by a Strategic Planning Workshop at which the key strategies for 2013-2016 were agreed as being:

1. Managing the Evolution of ACCS
2. Promoting Community and Comprehensive Schools as Models of the Schools of the Future
3. Shaping the Future by Influencing and Managing Change

The development of the Strategic Plan is informed by the thinking internally and externally as outlined in the Strategic Review Findings. The strategies are broken down into a number of individual objectives that will combine to progress the overall strategy and are further broken into the actions required to achieve each objective. Once the plan is adopted, the actions will need to be broken down into further detail in terms of tasks to which deadlines and responsibilities will be allocated. This will be carried out by ACCS internally as the resources and timings will be best understood at head office, but disseminated to schools in an appropriate manner.

The process in relation to Implementation and Review is outlined on page 14.

Identification of Priority Issues





Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
10H Centrepoint Business Park,
Oak Drive, Dublin 12.
Tel: 01 460 1150 Fax: 01 460 1203
E-mail: office@accs.ie
Website: www.accs.ie