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To: Board of Management

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Background

1. The Assembly appointed two Education Officers to develop an education and information programme aimed primarily at visitors to Parliament Buildings. Majella Corrigan took up post in September 2002 and Marina McConville started in November.

Purpose

2. The purpose of the programme is to educate people about the reasons for the existence of the Assembly, its role and achievements. The focus of the programme will be to bring people to Parliament Buildings and to engage with them on the work of the Assembly and how it benefits Northern Ireland. Allied to this is the development of a suite of resources that will inform and educate a range of target groups about the Assembly.

Progress

3. A brief, summarising the presentation being given by the Education Officers and detailing progress so far, is attached. A folder containing background information and samples of work is also available for your perusal.

The Way Forward

4. The focus over the next few months will continue to be on visitors to Parliament Buildings and, in particular, visiting schools.

The Education Officers already have a programme to offer pupils aged 11 –15. This is suitable for those doing Citizenship and as a general introduction to the Assembly for all in this age group. Very soon, a more in-depth programme will be on available for A-level students which could also include specific seminars on various aspects of Assembly business, e.g., Committees or the legislative process. A programme suitable for primary level children is also being prepared. A venue for the programme will be problematic when the Assembly is up and running and this is an area for review.

These programmes can then be adapted to suit other user groups, e.g., voluntary and special interest groups.

5. It is proposed to identify set days for tours with an educational focus. This would allow the education programme to be tailored to the specific needs of each group.

6. The Education Officers will continue to host meetings/training sessions for teachers of Citizenship and Government and Politics. It is hoped that interested Secretariat staff will become involved in the seminars.
7. A range of educational resources and activities are continuing to be developed for the education programme and for publication on the website.

Conclusion

8. There is potentially a very wide audience for the education programme and the initial work is already resulting in enquiries from schools on how they can participate.
9. The Education Officers expect that all areas of the Assembly will become involved in the programme as it continues to develop. Many Secretariat staff have already expressed interest in the programme and the involvement of as wide a variety of staff as possible is encouraged. As the programme develops opportunities for the participation of staff across the Secretariat will be identified and the Education Officers will advise as these opportunities arise.

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