

SHADOW GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Shadow Governing Body held on 20 June 2007 at the Antrim Campus, North East Institute.

Present Dr B Caul (Chair), Mr T Neilands (Director Designate), Mrs A M Campbell, Professor W Clarke, Mrs K Collins, Miss J Fullerton, Alderman P J McAvoy, Mr P McCudden, Ms A Rankin, Mrs L Wallis

In Attendance Mr J A Hunter

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1.1 Introductory Remarks

The Chair welcomed new members of the Governing Body to their first meeting. He explained that the Governing Body was not fully constituted and at present consisted of the Chair, Director Designate and nine members from the Professional, Business and Industry category, appointed by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). Members from other categories would be included in due course. In the meantime the quorum for meetings would be six members.

The Chair advised members that a recent DEL Circular had been distributed to the sixteen further education colleges directing that the merger to six new Colleges of Further Education should take effect from 1 August 2007. On that date the Causeway Institute, the East Antrim Institute and the North East Institute and their Governing Bodies would cease to exist and all property, rights and liabilities of these institutes would be transferred to the Governing Body of the new institution, the Northern Regional College.

1.2 Membership

The Chair invited members to introduce themselves.

1.3 Apologies

An apology was received from Mr S Davidson. It was noted that he would meet with the Chair and the Director Designate on 25 June 2007.

1.4 Strategic Challenges

The Director Designate provided a brief summary of the major strategic challenges facing the new college in its early years. During discussion Members raised queries regarding staffing and management information systems. In regard to governance the Chair explained that there was a need to establish an Audit Committee and a Finance and General Purposes Committee by the beginning of September 2007 to monitor the accounting and financial situation. It was noted that DEL would soon be issuing amended Articles and Instruments of Government, which would help to clarify matters.

1.5 Miscellaneous Material

The Governing Body received a paper providing the following information:

- a) Details of new Colleges and Directors. It was noted that Mr B Henry had resigned as the Director of the South East Regional College;
- b) Homepage for Northern Regional College;
- c) Details of Directors and Campus locations of the constituent colleges of the Northern Regional College;
- d) Contact addresses and telephone numbers of the Chair and Director.

1.6 Calendar of Meetings

Members received a Calendar of Meetings for 2007/2008 and noted that it would be necessary to include additional dates for meetings, when sub-committees of the Governing Body were established. It was noted that meetings were scheduled, where possible, on the first Wednesday of appropriate months.

Members discussed and agreed that the first meeting of the Governing Body should be held at the Farm Lodge Campus, Ballymena and thereafter meetings should rotate from one campus to another to familiarise everyone with the various campuses of the Northern Regional College.

1.7 Due Diligence Report

Members received a copy of:

- a) The Due Diligence Report, which had been prepared by Grant Thornton. The Report identifies and makes recommendations regarding the risks confronting the Northern Regional College; and a copy of
- b) The Due Diligence Action Plan, which had been prepared by the Chair and Director Designate on the basis of discussion with Grant Thornton and the views expressed by the Temporary Executive Committee at its meeting on 25 April 2007.

In response to a query the Director Designate stated that the Training for Success Programme had given rise to unhappiness regarding the process for awarding contracts and in respect of the resulting outcome. He advised that the NRC had had a mixed outcome in the exercise and that dissatisfied colleges may wish to challenge some of the decisions regarding the award of contracts.

Members noted that the continuing industrial action by lecturing staff for pay parity with teachers was having an adverse effect on the merger process, as lecturers had refused to co-operate in merger planning. The Director Designate informed Members that the Minister, Sir Reg Empey, was making strenuous efforts to resolve the situation.

1.8 College Development Plan

Members noted that the Department had agreed Phase 1 of the NRC's College Development Plan (CDP) at a meeting on 29 May 2007. The Department indicated that the CDP was realistic and robust and that the NRC is likely to receive a recurrent grant for 2007/2008 in the region of £22 million. This allocation should be confirmed in early July 2007.

1.9 Appointment Panels

The Chair requested Members to complete and submit a pro forma to the Secretary regarding their availability to carry out appointment interviews during the period up to 1 September 2007.

1.10 Any Other Business

1.10.1 Personal Details

The Chair requested Members:

a) To complete a pro forma and return it to the Secretary to enable him to draw up a list of contact addresses and telephone numbers; and

b) To check and confirm the accuracy of their pen pictures, which the NRC intends to use in publications and the college web site.

1.10.2 E-Governance Pilot Project

The Chair indicated that the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) had asked if the Governing Body of the NRC would be interested in participating in an e-governance pilot project.

The Governing Body **agreed** that LSDA should be invited to the next meeting in September to provide details of the project.

1.10.3 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 6.00 pm on Monday 3 September 2007 at the Trostan Avenue Campus, Ballymena.

Dr B Caul, Chairperson

3 September 2007

J A Hunter, Secretary