

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, ON MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2008 AT 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Mr A Rainey (Chair)
Mrs J Doherty
Mr L Gallagher
Mr S Murphy (Director)
Mr A O'Connor (from 4.25pm)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P McKeown (Assistant Director, Finance)
Mr T Mahon (Estates Manager) for item 7.9
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

7.1 APOLOGIES

Mrs M Lestas

7.2 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

It was proposed by Mrs Doherty seconded by Mr Gallagher and agreed that Mr A Rainey should be re-elected as Committee Chair.

7.3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2008

It was proposed by Mr Murphy seconded by Mr Gallagher and agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

7.4 MATTERS ARISING

6.3 (5.9.1) Credit Card transactions. The Assistant Director indicated that this matter was still under investigation.

6.3 (5.9.2) Investments. To be dealt with under management accounts.

6.5 Estate valuation. The Assistant Director indicated that the Land & Property services were in discussion with DEL on the valuation of property across the sector.

6.6 Tracking income generation. The Assistant Director reported that a meeting was being held with staff involved to discuss the way forward.

6.6 Strabane Campus. The Director reported encouraging growth in both full-time and part-time students enrolled on the campus.

6.6 Budget approval. The Chair referred to the requirement for budget approval to be agreed by the whole Governing Body. This had been obtained at its meeting on 24 September 2008.

6.8 Project criteria. The Director advised that the present requirement for all projects to be approved by the Governing Body prior to implementation was

proving unwieldy due, mainly, to imposed time constraints. It was agreed to recommend to the Governing Body that, in future, projects are fully approved by the SMT before implementation and that the Committee would receive regular updates. The Director distributed a copy of the scoring and selection criteria which would be used for assessing projects. It was agreed to recommend to the Governing Body approval for the TEEUP project (investigating a common set of competencies for Vocational Education teachers and trainers) and Invest NI project.

It was agreed to take item 7.9 at this point in the meeting.

7.5 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

No business was conducted under this heading.

7.6 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (Ref: paper FC7.6)

The Assistant Director presented the accounts for the period up to 31 October 2008. The report showed actual total income of £8,875,739 and total expenditure of £7,007,931. He considered there were no matters of concern at this stage of the year.

The Assistant Director then tabled a paper providing details of the spread of College investments.

The Assistant Director tabled an Aged Debtors Report. He mentioned that approval had been obtained from DEL for £138K old debt to be written off. He considered a major level of more recent debt was recoverable.

In reply to a question on income revenue, the Director referred to the discretion given to him by the Governing Body to reduce fees for January enrolments if necessary.

7.7 TENDERS ISSUED (Ref: papers FC7.7.1 & FC7.7.2)

The Assistant Director referred to the papers provided to members. He reported that 31 replies had been received for the Learner Access and Engagement Pilot.

In reply to a question he stated that companies are advised that envelopes containing bids should not have any identification marks.

He indicated that procurement procedures had been subject to detailed examination by the external auditors.

7.8 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2007/2008 (Ref: paper FC7.8)

The Assistant Director drew members' attention to various aspects of the report including the final accounts position which showed a historic surplus.

He reported that, due to legal difficulties advised by DEL, it would not be possible for the NIAO to sign off the Audit Annual Report at this stage. Members noted its contents.

7.9 ESTATES ISSUES UPDATE

7.9.1 Harmonisation of Estates Service Delivery. The Estates Manager reported that quotes had been obtained from 3 consultants. The selection panel had still to meet to make a final decision. He reminded members that the purpose of the consultancy is to look at all options and then make a recommendation to the Governing Body on the way forward.

7.9.2 Review of the Use of the Limavady Lifelong Learning Building. The Estates Manager reported that the recommended options had been explored and that the only viable one was to seek a sub-letting of the section of the property presently vacant. This process was being pursued.

7.9.3 New build: contract position (Ref: Paper FC7.9). The Estates Manager reported on the tendering process for Stage 1 of the new build at Strand Road. He indicated that the contract had been awarded to Tracey Bros. There was now a 14 week negotiation period with the contractor on firming up design and price. The contract allowed for an opt out if the outcome of these issues was not considered to be satisfactory.

In reply to a question, he said that the connecting bridge across Strand Road was designed to have a visually low impact.

7.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Budget adjustments. The Assistant Director tabled a paper detailing adjustments to the approved budget for 2008/09. Changes included increases in lecturer costs and travel as well as depreciation, VEP link income and investment income. The result was an estimate of surplus in year of £402,338 against the previous estimate of £608,955. It was agreed to recommend to the Governing Body the adoption of these adjustments.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting is planned for Monday 2 February 2009 at 5.30pm in Strand Road.

This being all the business the Chair closed the meeting at 5.35pm

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____