

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a **Special Meeting** of the **South West College Governing Body** held on Wednesday 24 February 2010 at 5.30 pm in the Boardroom, Omagh Campus, 2 Mountjoy Road, Omagh

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**PRESENT:**

- Mr Joseph Martin (Chairman)
- Mr Malachy McAleer (Director)
- Mr Brendan Corr
- Mrs Kate Courtenay
- Dr Mark Kelly
- Mr Gerry Kingston
- Mr Adrian McCreesh
- Councillor Thomas O'Reilly
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel
- Mrs Diane Stevenson
- Ms Gwen Stevenson

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mr Leo Murphy, Head of Client Services
- Mrs Celine McCartan, Head of Corporate Services
- Mrs Elizabeth McSorley, Secretary to the Governing Body

**APOLOGIES:**

- Mr Martin Groom
- Mr Gerard McDermott

### **1.0 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Brendan Corr, co-opted governor, to his first Governing Body meeting.

Apologies were recorded by the Secretary to the Governing Body on behalf of those governors listed above.

### **2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

There were no conflict of interest declarations.

### **3.0 COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010 – 2013**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** to all members, Draft College Development Plan 2010 to 2013.

**CIRCULATED:** to those members present, folder containing:

- Copy of the slides to be used by the Head of Client Services in his overview of the draft College Development Plan;
- Document entitled 'Our Vision, Aspirations and Success 2010-11';
- Full-Time Prospectus 2010-11.

The Chairman outlined the proposed format for this section of the meeting, namely the Head of Client Services' presentation followed by any associated questions, a review of each of the twelve strategic projects contained in the draft College Development Plan with a view to identifying any amendments required, and approval of the document for submission to DEL by the 26 February 2010 deadline subject to the incorporation of same. He then invited the Head of Client Services to proceed with his presentation.

The Head of Client Services explained the structure of the draft Plan including the continuing strategic project approach and the reconfiguration of the previous years' twenty three strategic projects to twelve in the 2010 - 13 Plan. He also highlighted the internal and external challenges for the College as regards its delivery and commented on the status of the draft Plan and the Vision, Aspirations and Success document. It was noted that the latter was classified as an external publication whereas the draft Plan was intended for internal publication only.

***Mrs Diane Stevenson entered the meeting during the Head of Client Services' presentation.***

Lengthy discussion ensued during which the Director, Head of Client Services, and Head of Corporate Services responded to comments and questions from members covering a range of issues that arose during the review of the twelve strategic projects including integration and presentation issues; proposed expansion of Higher Education programmes; funding for economic development projects; marketing; and careers guidance matters. Feedback from members in relation to the draft Plan was given at two levels, as follows:

**Proposed Amendments to the current Draft Plan**

- (a) 'Health Warning' to be put at the front of the document to the effect that the proposed deliverables may be at risk in the current economic climate;
- (b) Page 28, first action 6 should read "maintain and develop e-registers";
- (c) Page 122, No 14 6 should be updated to reflect the fact that a person with financial expertise had recently been appointed to the Audit Committee.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Governing Body had submitted a list of proposed amendments to the Head of Client Services prior to the meeting and, furthermore, that the Head of Client Services, on foot of discussion during the strategic projects review process, would give consideration to the insertion of a flow chart to better show the connections between the various projects.

## **Future CDP Planning Process – Suggestions for College and DEL**

- (a) should clearly show how all the different aspects of the plan linked together and how cross college cohesion and integration was achieved and quality assured;
- (b) should look at the use of other formats, including the balanced score card approach, as a means of better achieving the above;
- (c) should seek support from DEL, the College's primary stakeholder as regards the College Development Plan, for simplification of the language to be used in future versions of the document in the interests of improved clarity of understanding;
- (d) should review and develop its marketing objectives with regards to targeting the schools sector, and the involvement of other agencies in building the capacity and image of the region as a student destination;
- (e) should engage in discussions with DEL at a high level about the need for a complete rethink of the traditional careers guidance approach to reflect the realities of the changing economic climate;
- (f) parallel to the discussions at (e) above, the College should build on some of the good practice that already existed, eg, entrepreneurial aspect of some foundation degree courses, by introducing a skills development element (creativity, innovation, leadership, etc) to all courses aimed at better preparing students for the changing economic landscape.

A concluding comment to the College Development Plan discussion was that the College should be seeking to influence the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government in all relevant areas of interest.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Ms Gwen Stevenson, that the Governing Body approve the draft College Development Plan 2010 – 13 for submission to DEL, subject to the amendments put forward during the course of the meeting and separately by the Chairman, and that it also approve the suggestions above for consideration by the College and DEL.**

### **4.0 FINANCIAL PLANNING**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** by email on 23 February 2009 to all members, an electronic copy of an Investment Proposals 2009/10 paper.

**CIRCULATED:** to those members present, a hard copy of the above paper.

The Director, by way of update on the financial planning issue, advised that the above paper, which was aimed at protecting the College's surplus reserves, was work in progress; said that detailed work was also progressing on the formulation of efficiency proposals in line with a previous Governing Body decision and in anticipation of reduced DEL funding; and, in terms of budget

preparation, pointed out that it would be a number of weeks before the College was advised by DEL of its actual budget allocation for 2010/11.

Dr O'Shiel, while acknowledging the level of ongoing 'behind the scenes' activity, made the comment that it was three months since the Governing Body had agreed the 2009/10 budget on the basis that breakeven financial projections would be produced for the following two financial years; felt on the basis of the Revised Financial Projections paper for 2009/10 to 2011/12 issued in January 2010 that there was sufficient information available for decision making; and questioned when the breakeven budgets would be available.

Lengthy discussion ensued in relation to timescale. It was noted that the Chairman and Director were scheduled to have bi-lateral discussions with DEL officials in relation to the College's CDP bid on 22 March 2010 and that it was likely to be April 2010 before the College was advised of its actual budget allocation. The College would then have six weeks from the date of notification to submit a budget for 2010/11 to DEL which meant that it would realistically be May 2010 before properly informed budget projections would be available for presentation to the Governing Body. The Head of Corporate Services provided the meeting with a comprehensive overview of the financial planning process that was ongoing within the College and commented that difficult decisions would have to be made in order to achieve breakeven position.

In relation to the Investment Proposals 2009/10 paper, members were advised that the proposals being developed, and which totalled £2.7m, were mainly linked to the College Development Plan but would have to go through due process and were unlikely to all be realised in the current year.

Commenting on the proposed ILT expenditure, Mr Kingston pointed to the absence of wireless technology within the College which he felt would be an advantage from a marketing perspective and suggested that this be included. The Head of Client Services, in response to further comments from the Chairman on this issue, undertook to provide clarification as regards the College's position on the matter of wireless technology following consultation with the ILT Services Manager. Another comment in terms of member feedback was that there would need to be a reconciliation at the appropriate point in time between some of the figures contained in the Investment Proposals paper and the Revised Financial Projections paper previously presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and forwarded to the Governing Body.

**AGREED: (1) that the Investment Proposals 2009/10 paper be accepted as a working document with an update to be brought to the March Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting, (2) that efficiency proposals also be brought to the March Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting for consideration, and (3) that the timescale of May 2010 for production of breakeven budgets be accepted, albeit reluctantly by Dr O'Shiel in particular.**

The meeting concluded at 8.05 pm

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_