

DERBYSHIRE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEMBERS SPECIAL MEETING

HELD ON 9 MAY 2002

AT DLSC OFFICE

Present:

Tom Blyth
Olivia Dean
Hardyal Dhindsa
Michael Hall
Simon Hemmings
David Hughes
John Kirland
Stephen Lismore
Pat Morgan-Webb
Brian Powell
Kenneth Spencer
David Williams

In Attendance:

Christine Wright
Debra Blackshaw (Minutes)

Observers:

Brian Gray
Hugh Hastie
Bob Kendall
Jan Sensier

ITEM

ACTION

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Glenys Goucher. JK explained that due to the potential conflict of interests for Roger Taylor and Alan Charles, that they had discussed attendance today with him and taken legal advice. Because of this they were tendering their apologies.

2. North Derbyshire Tertiary College

DH presented a paper on the dissolution of North Derbyshire College, highlighting the following issues.

Background

In November 2001 North Derbyshire Tertiary College received a very unfavourable OfSTED inspection report. Since that time the Corporation of the College has had several meetings. DW and GG have been appointed as governors, standards fund has been used to recruit a Financial Director on a consultancy basis and to carry out an audit of teaching staff skills. Consultants were engaged in March to report on the options available to the College and they reported back in March.

ITEM

ACTION

The report proposed that the college should be dissolved and the assets transferred to the Secretary of State. The report stated that the college could not continue to stand-alone. This has been confirmed by a subsequent financial feasibility study carried out by the College's own finance team.

Process

At its meeting on 25 April the NDTC Corporation agreed to propose to DLSC the dissolution of the college and the managed transfer of assets to other providers in the area. In the long-term a North Derbyshire Partnership group would be established, chaired by the LSC and involving all other partners. This group would be responsible for planning provision across the area. Following DLSC approval, the proposal would go out to public consultation and a report presented to Council Members at the meeting in July. At that meeting the Council Members would need to judge the proposal against set criteria (draft criteria attached) and propose the dissolution to the Secretary of State.

During the discussion a number of issues were raised including:

- Is there sufficient time to allow the dissolution by 31 December 2002? DH informed members of the timescale, June – public consultation, 16 July – recommendation to Council, after which a report will be sent to the Secretary of State and will go before parliament for 21 days.
- Is there sufficient time to provide adequate provision for the learners? DH informed members that DLSC staff are already working with other providers in the area to ensure that there will be adequate provision from this September.
- Would DLSC have financial information on the other providers to ensure that they are financially viable and that they had sufficient resources? DH confirmed this.
- Staff TUPE rights were raised and whether it would be more appropriate for some members of staff to be offered early retirement or voluntary severance. This is a matter for NDTC and any provider who will be taking over the provision. Although DLSC will ask the colleges and LEA to look at this, DLSC does not have the authority to make any such decisions.
- A question regarding the amount of funding which currently goes to NDTC, whether the same level would still be allocated to that area. DH confirmed this would be the case.

Mick Brown, Principal of South East Derbyshire College, is being appointed as Acting Principal for 6 months. John Lewis has been appointed Clerk to the Corporation. In addition consultants will be appointed to give support to the Corporation and Mick Brown, particularly regarding staff issues and the transfer of assets and liabilities

ITEM**ACTION**

Members were asked to consider the proposed dissolution of North Derbyshire Tertiary College and the managed transfer of assets to Chesterfield College, North Nottinghamshire College and Derbyshire County LEA. All members present agreed to carry the process forward.

This will now go to public consultation.