

**Department for Employment and Learning Board Meeting**

**5 November 2009**

**Board Room, Adelaide House**

**Present:** Catherine Bell (Chair)  
Andrew Hamilton  
Fred Gray  
Dr. Brian Scott

**In Attendance:** Beverley Harrison  
Trevor Connolly  
Roger Arneill (Minutes)

**For Item 2 only:** Stanley Goudie (Education and Training Inspectorate – ETI)  
John Baird (ETI)  
Deirdre Gillespie (ETI)  
Barry O'Rourke (ETI)  
Victor Dukelow  
Dave Rogers  
Angela Whiteside  
Tommy McVeigh

**Apologies:** None

**1. Minutes and Summary Action Sheet of Board Meeting on 3  
September 2009**

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
- 1.2 The summary action sheet was agreed.

## **2. Policy**

### **2.1 DEL Quality and Performance Baseline Analysis**

2.1.1 Mr. Dukelow highlighted the scope and outcomes of the DEL Quality and Performance Baseline Analysis.

2.1.2 Mrs. Bell thanked Mr. Dukelow for his presentation and requested that the presentation of the Education and Training Inspectorate's Annual Report and DEL's Annual Report on Quality Improvement, should be given before opening the meeting to questions.

### **2.2 Education and Training Inspectorate's Annual Report**

2.2.1 Mr. Baird, Ms. Gillespie and Mr. O'Rourke presented the Education and Training Inspectorate's Annual Report which covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. This highlighted the strengths and areas for improvement identified in further education colleges, work-based learning and employment programmes. The report also highlighted the main areas of work planned for 2009/10 to address the areas for improvement identified.

2.2.2 After concluding the ETI Annual Report, Mr. Goudie asked if research had been a focus of the Quality and Performance Baseline Analysis. Mr. Dukelow responded that research will be hugely significant and that the Baseline Analysis will inform the scope for research over the next three years.

### **2.3 Annual Report on Quality Improvement**

2.3.1 Ms. Whiteside highlighted the work Quality and Performance Branch have undertaken to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous report. Mr. McVeigh then highlighted the Department's work and findings

- with regard to contract monitoring and exemplified how this enables poor performance by suppliers to be acted upon. Mr. McVeigh also illustrated how increased work with the ETI had helped the Department to achieve results in this area.
- 2.3.2 Mrs. Bell thanked the ETI representatives for the presentation given to the Board, the report they had submitted and for the ongoing work they do. Mr. Goudie noted his thanks to the Department for the professional response made to the ETI's report as this is essential in achieving improvements.
- 2.3.3 Mr. Gray referred to the ETI presentation where it was reported that out of the six colleges, two were making good progress on self-evaluation and asked if this meant the other four were not making sufficient progress. Mr Baird responded that, in the past, further education colleges had not been robust in self-evaluation but the ETI are working with the Department to ensure there is a coherent approach to quality improvement planning. He continued to note that the ETI are working with the Quality Assurance Agency to ensure there is a consistent approach to quality across all provision in further education.
- 2.3.4 The Board discussed the cause of quality assurance problems which exist within further education and what action is being taken to address these. The Board then discussed the process in place for addressing and monitoring any areas of weakness identified. Ms. Gillespie ensured the Board that a rigorous process of follow-up action and reporting on progress was in place.
- 2.3.5 Board members asked how NI compared to the rest of the UK, however, this is not measured by the ETI. Mr. Baird informed the Board that the indicators of good performance were essentially the same across the UK although GB uses a four point grading system whereas NI currently uses a six point system. Dr. Scott said he felt it was important that the Inspectorate bench mark against the rest of the UK and further afield. Mrs.

Bell said there is an issue for the Department to improve bench marking on all its programmes.

- 2.3.6 Board members discussed DEL's Quality and Performance Baseline Analysis and how it should be used internally. Mrs. Bell concluded this discussion by highlighting that this is the first time such analysis has been completed and therefore sets a bench mark. The Board agreed that this should be adopted as a tool to improve performance. Furthermore, it was agreed that presentations should be made to colleges on the Baseline Analysis.

**Action: DEL Secretariat to liaise with relevant Directors to collate a paper on how the analysis will be used internally.**

**Action: Mr. Dukelow to organise presentations to the colleges on the Baseline Analysis.**

### **3. Finance and Corporate Services**

#### **3.1 Finance Report**

- 3.1.1 **Risk Register** – The Board considered the risks individually. It was agreed that the timings included were not clear and this should be addressed.

**Action: Mr. Connolly to communicate to Directors that all remedial actions included in the Risk Register should be time bound.**

**Action: Mr. Hamilton to update Mr. Gray on legal advice with regard to the European Court of Human Rights judgement on the ASLEF v UK case.**

3.1.2 **Issues Log** – No issues were reported.

3.1.3 **September Monitoring** – This item was discussed and noted by Board members.

3.1.4 **AccountNI** – Mr. Connolly highlighted some ongoing issues with Account NI. This was noted by Board members.

3.1.5 **September Management Accounts** – Mr. Connolly reported the management accounts to the Board. Mr. Gray asked if budget phasing was still an issue. Mr. Connolly said it was but he and Mr. Hamilton were having a series of meetings with Directors on this issue in the near future. Mr. Hamilton added that he was carrying out a major piece of work in this area and would report back to the Board when it is completed. Mr Gray stated that in his experience, accurate budget phasing is an essential part of financial planning.

**Action: Mr. Hamilton to report back to the Board on budget phasing.**

3.1.6 **Second Quarter, Departmental Balanced Scorecard 2009/10** – The Board agreed that target 32 should be changed to green. Dr. Scott said he felt it was difficult to interrogate this report as no detail is given on the reasons for a particular rating. It was agreed that where Directors give a target a rating of 4 or 5, an explanation should be included.

**Action: Mr. Connolly to communicate to other Directors that an explanation should accompany any target rated 4 or 5.**

3.1.7 **Corporate Services Report**

- 3.1.8 Ms. Harrison asked if Board members had any questions on the Corporate Services Report provided. Dr. Scott said he would like to see less detail in the report but more about how DEL compares to other Departments, adding that he felt summaries would be more beneficial at Board level.

### **3.3 Audit Committee Update**

- 3.3.1 Mr. Gray gave an update on the Audit Committee's most recent meeting.
- 3.3.2 Mrs. Bell noted that she had recently met with the Comptroller and Auditor General, Keiran Donnelly and will share a note of this meeting with Board members.

**Action: Mrs. Bell to share the note of the meeting with the Comptroller and Auditor General with Board members.**

### **4. Formal Notings**

- 4.1 The papers were noted without further discussion.

### **5. Any Other Business**

- 5.1 Mrs. Bell reported that the Public Accounts Committee hearing on New Deal 25+ had concluded and the Committee's report will be received in the near future. Mrs. Bell recorded her thanks to all staff involved in the briefing process as the standard of work was excellent.
- 5.2 Dr. Scott also said he would like to receive Board papers earlier to give more time to review prior to the meeting. Ms. Harrison agreed to liaise with the Board Secretariat on this issue.

**Action: Ms. Harrison to liaise with Board Secretariat on issuing of Board papers.**