Further Education Means Business:
A Programme for Implementation
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Foreword

The Further Education (FE) sector is recognised by Government as key to helping deliver Northern Ireland’s vision of a buoyant economy. In recognition of this over the past three years, the resources provided to the sector have increased by around 11%, and there has been a high level of investment in the college estate, with plans for further investment in the future. Alongside the recently issued Skills Strategy, the FE Means Business Strategy provides a unique opportunity for the Department, key stakeholders, partners in the sector and for business and industry to work together to reinvigorate education and skills opportunities for our young people and adults.

Since the consultation on the FE Means Business Strategy, a lot of work has been done on putting together a programme of projects through which the strategy can be implemented. These projects are already well under way, and this document outlines how the overall strategy is being taken forward.

The six new colleges which evolve from the restructuring of the sector will have a very important role to play in supporting the economic and social life of Northern Ireland, and will also be key to the implementation of the other strands of the strategy outlined in the plan.

I and my staff are committed to do all we can to make the implementation of the FE Strategy a success, but we cannot do it alone. Key public agencies, employers of all sizes in the private, public and voluntary sectors, schools, colleges, universities, training providers and trade unions, all have important roles to play both individually and by working in partnership with each other. I would urge you to play your part in the most appropriate partnership for you, and I look forward, as I’m sure you do, to seeing Northern Ireland reap the undoubted economic and social benefits which will result from a strong, vibrant and sustainable Further Education sector.

AIDEEN McGINLEY
Permanent Secretary
Department for Employment and Learning
1. Introduction

1.1 The Northern Ireland Economic Vision and the Department for Employment and Learning’s Skills Strategy, both emphasise that increasing skill levels and improving participation in education and training are vital elements in ensuring a strong local economy.

1.2 The consultation document “Further Education Means Business” (February 2004) set out the findings of an extensive review of further education in Northern Ireland, together with policy proposals for the future of the sector. The report clearly positioned further education at the heart of lifelong learning, its aim being to strengthen economic development, enhance social cohesion and advance the individual’s skills and learning. Responses to the public consultation were highly supportive of the new aim and objectives and there was also wide public recognition that Further Education colleges could play an even greater role in driving local, sub-regional and regional economic and workforce development in Northern Ireland.

1.3 To take the new strategy forward, FE colleges will be working together to plan and implement changes which will:

- raise skills and qualification levels in areas that meet the needs of the local economy;
- ensure that curriculum provision in colleges is focused on economic and workforce needs;
- provide greater support to employers, for example in the areas of business creation, incubation and product development;
- develop more flexible approaches to learning through the use of technologies and through partnership with other local providers;
- improve their response to local needs including Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs); and
- update and ensure the quality of college services in keeping with international standards of best practice.

1.4 To ensure the effective implementation of the strategy, and to improve co-ordination and collaboration across the sector, the number of individual college management units will be reduced. This new structure creates six large, high profile colleges with multi-million pound budgets, enabling the provision of leading edge facilities which can better meet skills training required by our rapidly changing economy. Under these arrangements the aim will be to maintain ease of access in traditional local campuses up to level three, while enabling colleges to take a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach to the provision of courses at level four and above. Larger colleges with larger budgets will also have more scope to devote resources to continuous improvement, staff development and quality enhancement.
1.5 There is much to be done to implement such an extensive programme of change. The remainder of this document describes the Further Education Strategy Implementation Programme in full. Chapter two sets out the vision for Further Education in Northern Ireland and, in particular, its role in helping to strengthen and develop the Northern Ireland economy and its workforce. Chapter three provides details of the different contributing projects which will enable this vision to be implemented, while chapter four summarises the main project delivery milestones.

1.6 Successful implementation will require the co-operation and commitment of a wide range of people and organisations within the Further Education sector including Governing Bodies, the college Principals/Directors and their staff, the trade unions and student representatives. It will also require input from other Government Departments (notably the Department of Education and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment), schools, universities, and other providers of education and training.
2. The Vision for Further Education

The Vision for the Northern Ireland Economy

2.1 As outlined in the Department’s Skills Strategy, the vision for the Northern Ireland economy is that by 2015 it is seen as highly competitive in global terms; it is based on high value added jobs, with progressive leadership from a strong cadre of skilled local managers; it has increased export levels; and it attracts substantial amounts of inward investment. Its people are entrepreneurial and innovative; small businesses are encouraged to grow; and strong, coherent services and support for businesses of all sizes are provided. Employment has increased, leading to an expansion of the workforce and migrant workers are playing a valuable role in the economy. The workforce is literate, numerate and has good Information, Computing and Technology (ICT) skills. Individuals can solve problems, work in teams, are innovative, enterprising and expect to learn new skills throughout their working lives. A broader adoption of technology and e-learning will have reduced transport and location barriers.

2.2 In this vision of a buoyant economy, all children at Key Stage 4 (age 14-16) and at post 16 are offered a wide range of vocational, professional and technical subjects within the curriculum and vocational, professional and technical training is recognised as a valuable alternative to the traditional academic pathway. Participation in post compulsory education or training is at a higher level than ever before and learners are given good quality independent information, advice and guidance about opportunities and progression routes, based on accurate labour market intelligence.

2.3 The vision includes a much better understanding of the current and future demand for skills. Employers can anticipate and articulate their future skill needs; they are willing to invest in the skills of their employees and new recruits; and they find that their skill needs are more easily met. Management and leadership skills are highly prized and well developed through both formal education and informal mentoring techniques, and contribute to a growth in productivity. The skills needed for innovation and enterprise are better understood and embedded in the training and education systems. The education and training sector is highly responsive to employer needs, offers high quality provision and represents very good value for money measured in terms of student advancement against international comparators. The education and training sector will work in a more collaborative way, and will have established appropriate partnership working arrangements between colleges, schools, higher education institutions, employers and other education and training organisations. This will have led to enhanced quality, synergy and customer satisfaction.
2.4 Through collaboration there is:

- a better understanding of employers’ future demand for skills in enough detail and with enough certainty in time to influence the planning of provision;
- an increased focus on improving the skills levels of the workforce;
- a more consistent supply of high quality education and training in all government funded provision; and
- an understanding and acceptance of the balance between the respective responsibilities of Government, the employer and the individual, based on the benefits derived by each.

2.5 In summary, there is much to be done if people are to progress up a skills ladder in order to raise the skills of the whole workforce so that productivity and competitiveness are increased, and Northern Ireland’s place is secured in a global marketplace.

**The Vision for the Further Education Sector**

2.6 The vision for the Further Education sector is that colleges are playing a vital role in the delivery of the economic vision for Northern Ireland outlined above. There is more relevant, coherent and better quality provision at every level of the education system and through increased work based learning. The network of FE colleges has been rationalised to create a smaller number of larger management units with local campuses providing good quality learning opportunities and access for all. The new college structure is enhancing the sector’s profile and status, particularly with employers and employer representative bodies, as key providers of education and training to meet the skill needs of the economy. The new structure is also enabling the sector to play an increased role in local and regional planning and in the delivery of qualifications and skills at all levels across Northern Ireland. A strong focus on excellence is ensuring that provision reflects best practice in key subject areas. Online and distance learning are well developed and being used wherever appropriate.

2.7 A recognised skills ladder has been put in place which acknowledges the value and complementary nature of academic and vocational progression routes. Further Education colleges are working in partnership with local universities to ensure that the higher education provision delivered through colleges, whether in the form of Higher National Diplomas and Certificates (HNDs/HNCs) or the newer Foundation Degrees, meet the needs of the local economy, and allow those who wish to progress further along the skills ladder via Higher Education to do so. The progression opportunities are available to all ages.
2.8 While the work of FE colleges has an increasing economic focus, colleges will continue to have an important part to play in enhancing social cohesion and in providing opportunities for lifelong learning. The sector has a particularly valuable role in giving people a second opportunity for education, and in encouraging those who are unemployed or who are socially excluded or disengaged to participate in education and training.

2.9 A new funding model has been introduced for the Further Education sector which meets the design criteria of simplicity, transparency, accountability and equity. It offers stability of funding whilst rewarding good outcomes and it supports more flexible delivery to suit responsiveness to individuals’ and employers’ needs. The funding model operates in conjunction with a new planning process which is sensitive to economic priorities and employer needs.

2.10 The funding and planning mechanisms are underpinned by data, which is shared across the sector, and a set of “SMART” indicators have been introduced to improve performance management.

2.11 In summary, the vision for “Further Education Means Business” has been achieved:

- providing a sharper and greater focus on skills and qualifications provision for the NI economy;
- delivering a curriculum which is more clearly related to economic and workforce needs;
- supporting businesses, in particular SMEs, in enhancing productivity and competitiveness and providing opportunities for business creation, incubation and development;
- providing learners with the skills and knowledge to enhance their employability;
- ensuring that there are clear progression routes for learners;
- providing greater access to vocational, professional and technical education for 16 to 19 year olds;
- ensuring that the Essential Skills of Communication and Application of Number together with the wider key skills are available to all full-time learners;
- embedding enterprise as a central component of further education;
- enabling flexible approaches to learning through the use of technologies;
- encouraging partnerships with other education and training organisations and a greater responsiveness to local needs; and
- providing access to learning for a wider variety of learners.
3. Delivering the Vision: A Programme for Implementation

3.1 The vision in “Further Education Means Business” will be delivered through a programme of 12 individual projects. The projects have been developed carefully to reflect all major aspects of “Further Education Means Business” and they take account of responses made through the consultation exercise.

Core Elements

3.2 The core elements of the programme are:

- the size and structure review, associated governance and transition arrangements necessary to ensure the sector is effective, efficient and offers value for money;
- improved arrangements for partnership and collaboration, both within the sector and between colleges, universities, schools, employers, and other education and training organisations;
• links to economic and labour market assessments that provide forward views of skill needs in the short, medium and long term;
• a curriculum that meets the identified skills needs;
• arrangements to measure and enhance the quality of provision and its economic relevance;
• performance management arrangements; and
• a funding model and associated planning arrangements that ensure funds are directed at the priorities set for the sector.

**Timescale**

3.3 The vision for the FE sector is that by 2010 all elements of “Further Education Means Business” will have been implemented in full and will be operational in all colleges across Northern Ireland. However, all but one of the projects described below have been planned over a two or three year timeframe. Their successful delivery will be the “building blocks” that will enable the vision for FE to be realised.

3.4 The 12 projects are described briefly in the remainder of this section. Key delivery milestones for the projects have also been included.

**Individual Projects**

**Essential Skills Programme**

This is wider than the FE Programme but much of the provision will be delivered through FE colleges. It is an essential component of raising the foundation of literacy and numeracy skills within the Northern Ireland workforce. The project will ensure that strategies and policies are in place to support 18,500 learners to achieve an Essential Skills qualification by August 2007. The potential for introducing ICT as a third Essential Skill is being trialled through a small pilot from September 2005. Finally, the project will consider the development of the wider Key Skills (Working with Others, Managing One’s Own Learning and Problem Solving) taking account of developments in England in relation to the convergence of Key and Essential Skills and the wider functional skills initiative, which contextualises Essential Skills provision.

**Key Milestones:**

- Develop and pilot an assessment regime for the introduction of Essential Skills in ICT at levels One and Two - 2006/2007.
Reform of Vocational Qualifications

The main aim of the project is, within a UK-wide setting, to reform and rationalise the current range of vocational qualifications and relocate them within a simple and accessible Framework for Achievement (FfA) which will be unitised, credit rated and will eventually replace the present National Qualifications Framework. Within this, the main objectives of the project are to: revise national occupational standards to ensure that they develop the workforce and inform qualification systems across the UK; produce flexible, responsive and fit-for-purpose qualifications within an agreed framework structure that are supported by responsive regulation that meet user need and sector requirements; devise appropriate funding systems; and develop an effective communications and marketing strategy to promote the outcomes of the project to all stakeholders.

Key Milestones:
- Begin testing and trialling FfA - January 2006.
- Evaluate the outcome of testing and trialling - July 2008.
- Continue to populate FfA with reformed qualifications - August 2008.
- Transition to FfA completed - December 2010.

Vocational Enhancement Programme

This project is an element in the wider 14 to 19 year old reform agenda, and is a joint project with the Department of Education. The Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP) involves the development and implementation of collaborative models between post primary schools and FE colleges as they move towards the implementation of the Entitlement Framework as outlined in the Post Primary Review. This will ensure that all 14 to 19 year olds in post primary schools have access to high quality vocational education through the development of robust collaborative partnerships between FE colleges and post primary schools.

Key Milestones:
- Preliminary findings/report - June 2006.
- Development of policy and guidance - October 2006.
- Implementation planning finalised - June 2007.
- Evaluation, refinement, implementation and funding to support VEP in the 2006/07 and 2007/08 academic years.
Economically Focused Curriculum

Also a part of the wider 14 to 19 reform agenda, the Department will develop a specific curriculum offer for all full-time 16 to 19 year old students within FE colleges, which will integrate the skills of problem solving, team working and ICT for all students. It will also integrate enterprise into the curriculum to develop an enterprise culture within the 16 to 19 year old cohort. The curriculum offered will be focused on the needs of the economy, with greater priority given to those vocational areas that meet local and regional priority skills areas.

**Key Milestones:**
- Preliminary findings/report and policy proposals developed - June 2006.
- Development of guidance - October 2006.
- Implementation planning finalised - June 2007.
- Phased implementation in colleges - September 2007 onwards.

e-Learning Strategy

This project will develop proposals to maximise the potential of Information and Learning Technology (ILT) to enhance teaching and learning in colleges, in line with the recommendations in the FE Strategy. In order to realise the full benefits of learning and teaching of using ILT, the project will consider issues such as staff development in colleges, how to ensure a consistent approach across the FE sector, and how to develop and disseminate good practice across the sector. The project will also identify the most efficient and effective way to fund ILT to ensure value for money.

**Key Milestones:**
FE Support for Economic Development

This project will determine the role that FE colleges can play in supporting employers in practical ways, beyond the provision of skilled individuals, for example, in areas such as enhancing productivity and competitiveness, business creation, incubation and product development. There will also be a review of the role and effectiveness of centres of excellence in colleges, which will be part of the wider recommendations on how colleges can best provide key workforce and economic development support through the new six college structure.

Key Milestones:

- Evidence gathering and preliminary findings produced - March 2006.
- Policy proposals developed - June 2006
- Initial guidelines disseminated to the sector - October 2006.
- Policy operational in all colleges - September 2007.
Learner Access and Engagement

The main aim of the project is, by September 2007, to develop and introduce a policy framework to permit formal collaboration between colleges and non-statutory providers, in order to encourage the development of occupational skills by those who are unemployed, socially excluded/disengaged, or otherwise reluctant to make use of conventional FE provision. The objectives of the project can be summarised as follows:

- to identify those areas of FE provision (in terms of content, level, discipline, and format), both existing and potential, that might be appropriate for delivery by non-statutory providers, under contract to individual FE colleges;
- to determine and recommend suitable contractual arrangements between FE colleges and non-statutory providers to deliver aspects of FE provision and to provide support and mentoring arrangements;
- and to consider the implications, for the Department and the FE sector, of any such contracting in terms of cost effectiveness, value for money, legal liabilities, pastoral responsibilities, and quality assurance.

**Key Milestones:**
- Policy proposals developed - June 2006.
- Guidelines developed to support policy implementation - August 2007.
- Policy operational in all colleges - September 2007.

Funding Project

The main aim of this project is to develop a fully integrated funding model for the FE sector. The main objectives of the project are to develop a funding model that is transparent, simple, equitable and accountable; to ensure that the funding model encourages and supports colleges to deliver against the Department’s strategic priorities for the sector; and to develop a funding model which contributes to financial stability through a robust planning model for the sector. Consultation on the new model must be complete by August 2006 so that it can be tested through parallel running in the 2006/07 academic year and so that new Directors and Governing Bodies can, from April 2007, plan provision for the 2007/08 academic year. The project will also have to inform, and be informed by, a wider review of the funding of other Departmental programmes that is being conducted as part of the Skills Strategy.
Key Milestones:
- Funding model research completed - March 2006.
- Funding model developed, tested and reviewed - June 2006.
- Parallel operation of funding model commences - November 2006.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

Taken forward through the Skills Strategy, this project will result in the development of an all-age Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (EIAG) Strategy. It will enhance the service offered to young people and adults whilst also ensuring that mechanisms are in place to enable EIAG to be based on up to date labour market information. It is aimed at encouraging increased participation in education, training and employment and to assist clients to make informed decisions on opportunities in education, training and employment. The Strategy will be taken forward in conjunction with the Department of Education and other key stakeholders. Specifically in relation to FE, the project will ensure that learners are made aware of the opportunities that are available to them in Further Education, and to assist learners to make informed decisions on courses and providers.

Key Milestones:

Higher Education

This project is wider than the dimension that impacts directly on the FE Strategy. Many Higher Education (HE) courses ensure that students gain the relevant employment skills required for higher level professions. As the demand for higher level skills and qualifications increases, there is an emerging need to enable students to enhance their employability. This project will comprise an assessment of the contribution of the HE sector to meeting Northern Ireland’s skills needs through the provision of Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees and postgraduate courses. Specifically in relation to FE, the project will review and agree the
approach to the future delivery of HE through FE colleges. In particular, FE colleges will develop partnerships with the local universities to ensure that the higher education provision delivered through colleges addresses the needs of the local economy.

**Key Milestones:**
- Strengthen the involvement of employers in the delivery of Foundation Degrees - March 2006.
- Assess the contribution of the HE sector to meeting Northern Ireland’s skills needs - March 2007.
- In consultation with the HE sector and employers, develop policy for higher level skills and the enhancement of student employability - March 2008.

**Restructuring the Sector**

The new size and structure for the FE sector has been announced by the Department’s Minister. This will see the existing 16 colleges merging to form six larger area-based colleges. The purpose of this project is to manage the business change that will have to be taken forward by colleges to introduce the new six college structure by the 2007/08 academic year. While the business change will be taken forward within the sector, close working between the Department, the colleges and ANIC (the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges) will be required. An important element of the change management process will be identifying and managing the staffing issues that could result from the implementation of this, and other, elements of the FE Strategy.

**Key Milestones:**
- Change management process agreed - April 2006.
- Six new colleges opened - August 2007.
Restructuring the Sector: Governance

This project, which will be managed in a similar timeframe to the Restructuring the Sector project, will focus on the recruitment of chairs and members of governing bodies, and principals for the six new area-based colleges. The project will also address a range of related issues such as interim governance arrangements during the transition period, training for governors, review and approval of the college’s financial memorandum and articles and instruments of governance and establishing new procedures and format for the development of College Development Plans for the six new colleges.

Key Milestones:
- New Chairs of Governing Bodies appointed - August 2006.
- New Governing Bodies take responsibility for governing the six new colleges - August 2007.

Key Success Criteria

3.5 In section 3.4, a number of key milestones have been identified for each of the individual projects that, together, comprise the Northern Ireland Further Education Strategy Implementation Programme. However, in addition to the delivery of these milestones, the success of the Further Education Strategy will also be assessed against a wide range of success criteria which relate to the delivery of the outcomes identified in the Vision for Further Education (Chapter two). These success criteria are outlined below.

- Economic Development – Further Education is recognised as a key delivery agent for economic and workforce development; colleges are respected as being central to economic development; there is better integration with economic stakeholders.
- Entrepreneurs – there is more support for businesses from the Further Education sector; more small businesses receive IT, technology, manufacturing support; an increased number of SMEs are engaged with the sector and entrepreneurial skills are embedded in the curriculum.
- Funding – a new funding mechanism is in place, including a fully integrated and improved funding formula; funding supports activity which delivers the strategic aims of the Department.
• **Improved Perception** – the increased profile and status of the six larger colleges has improved the perception of Further Education on the part of learners, employers and partner organisations; there is a better match between employee skills and employer demands; there is improved access to, and increased take up of, FE provision; there is a positive impact on students, as a result of their learning; there is an improved and level playing field of provision and resourcing in all areas.

• **Partnerships** – new partnerships have been established; there is better co-operation with partners; more strategic partnerships have been created; there is positive and effective partnership support.

• **Planning** – there are fewer colleges, and college plans contribute to the delivery of the skills needs of businesses; there is evidence of an improved planning process.

• **Qualifications** – there is an increase in the numbers achieving, professional and technical qualifications and Essential Skills qualifications; there are increased enrolments in priority skills areas; there are increased achievements and progression.

• **Size/Structure** – a new structure is in place for the sector; efficiency gains in administration of larger management units have been achieved; there is an increased range of courses on offer; colleges are financially stable.

• **Working Conditions** – there is improved staff morale, estate and working conditions; there is a valued learning experience for tutors and students; Principals, Directors and all staff feel valued and that their jobs are worthwhile.

• **Curriculum** – there is curriculum coherence across schools, FE and HE, and there are simple progression routes for students.

• **Professional Development of Staff** – the importance of college staff to the successful implementation of the strategy and to the delivery of the vision for FE is recognised, and an effective process of continuing professional development ensures that staff enhance their own skills and are equipped to deliver a first class service to students and employers.
Quality and Performance Management

3.6 A robust quality management system will be developed in respect of all aspects of college activity and provision. The quality system will include college self-assessment, rigorous inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate, and customer feedback.

3.7 All of the projects outlined at section 3.4 will, where appropriate, identify key performance indicators, and these will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the strategic aims for the sector, as set by Government, are met. In addition, performance indicators will be identified to ensure that progress against the key success criteria outlined in section 3.5 can be monitored.

Key Milestones: - Performance indicators for colleges identified by March 2007.

Monitoring Progress

3.8 The implementation programme is overseen by a Programme Board which includes representation at a senior level from relevant Northern Ireland Departments and from the FE sector. All of the projects have a Project Manager, and a Programme Support Office has been established to ensure that project outputs are delivered on time and to the required quality. Where appropriate, representatives from the FE sector are involved in project work and in quality assuring project outputs.

Impact Assessments

3.9 All projects will also factor in a Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment, with full Equality Impact Assessments and consultation being carried out where appropriate. Policy proofing (for example in respect of human rights, rural proofing and new Targeting Social Need) will also be conducted on projects where appropriate.
4. Summary of Key Milestones

4.1 The table below summarises the main delivery milestones for each of the 12 projects, as detailed in Chapter three.

**SUMMARY OF KEY MILESTONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>MILESTONES</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Skills Programme</td>
<td>ICT trial in Essential Skills introduced.</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop and pilot an assessment regime for the introduction of Essential Skills in ICT at levels one and two.</td>
<td>2006/2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform of Vocational Qualifications</td>
<td>Begin testing and trialling the Framework for Achievement (FfA).</td>
<td>January 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate the outcome of testing and trialling.</td>
<td>July 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to populate FfA with reformed qualifications.</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transition to FfA completed.</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development of policy and guidance.</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation planning finalised.</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation, refinement, implementation and funding to support VEP in the 2006/07 and 2007/08 academic years.</td>
<td>2006/07 and 2007/08 academic years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economically Focused Curriculum</td>
<td>Preliminary findings/report and policy proposals developed.</td>
<td>June 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development of policy and guidance.</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation planning finalised.</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phased implementation in colleges.</td>
<td>September 2007 onwards.</td>
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<td>PROJECT</td>
<td>MILESTONES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>e-Learning Strategy for FE</strong></td>
<td>e-Learning consultation published.</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action plan for implementation of strategy published.</td>
<td>September 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Policy rolls out.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
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<td><strong>FE Support for Economic Development</strong></td>
<td>Evidence gathering and preliminary findings produced.</td>
<td>March 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Policy proposals developed.</td>
<td>June 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Initial guidelines disseminated to the sector.</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
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<td>Policy operational in all colleges.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
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<td><strong>Learner Access and Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Policy proposals developed.</td>
<td>June 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guidelines developed to support policy implementation.</td>
<td>August 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy operational in all colleges.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funding Project</strong></td>
<td>Funding model research completed.</td>
<td>March 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Funding model developed, tested and reviewed.</td>
<td>June 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parallel operation of funding model commences.</td>
<td>November 2006</td>
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<td>New funding model goes live.</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
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<td><strong>Careers EIAG</strong></td>
<td>Future Search Conference.</td>
<td>March 2006</td>
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<td>Launch of Strategy.</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
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<td><strong>Higher Education</strong></td>
<td>Strengthen the involvement of employers in the delivery of Foundation Degrees.</td>
<td>March 2006</td>
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<td>PROJECT</td>
<td>MILESTONES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiate a review of current</td>
<td>Initiate a review of current policy and proposals for the future delivery of</td>
<td>June 2006</td>
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<td>policy and proposals for the</td>
<td>HE in FE.</td>
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<td>future delivery of HE in FE.</td>
<td>Assess the contribution of the HE sector to meeting Northern Ireland’s skills</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
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<td>needs.</td>
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<td>In consultation with the HE sector and employers, develop policy for higher</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>level skills and the enhancement of student employability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restructuring the Sector</td>
<td>Future size and structure announced.</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Change management process agreed.</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six new colleges opened.</td>
<td>August 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructuring the Sector:</td>
<td>New Chairs of Governing Bodies appointed.</td>
<td>August 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Governing Bodies take responsibility for governing the six new colleges.</td>
<td>August 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
<td>Performance Indicators for colleges identified.</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE DEPARTMENT:
Our aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

This document is available in other formats upon request.

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