

REVIEW OF SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

WORKING GROUP: ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

FURTHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Purpose

1. To provide members with information on the Further Education Development Directorate.

Background

2. The Audit Committee report of the 2004/05 audit of Inverness College, published in July 2006¹ recommended that:

"The Committee recommends that the Accountability and Governance Working Group review whether any further statutory or non-statutory interventions may be required to assist colleges in severe difficulty."

3. The Executive's response² advised that:

"We accept this recommendation. In doing so, however, we should point out that it is not strictly correct to say, as the Report does at paragraph 111, that the sole remaining power of intervention is the power of Ministers to remove members of the Board. There are several other, albeit less direct, means of intervention. These, along with the power to remove the Board, are exercisable by Order of the Parliament. They include the ability to close or merge colleges; to make regulations prescribing requirements with which Boards must comply; or to require the publication of certain information. Ministers also have certain powers in relation to the funding of colleges where there has been mismanagement."

4. **Paper 20** provided members with information on statutory powers of intervention.

Further Education Development Directorate

5. The Scottish Funding Council's Further Education Development Directorate (FEDD) was formed in the Autumn of 2002. It exists to provide confidential expertise from within the FE sector in Scotland to support College development.

¹<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/audit/reports-06/aur06-04-00.htm>

²http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/audit/reports-06/Audit_4th_Report_ETLLD_Response060906.pdf

6. The FEDD philosophy, in line with Scottish Ministers' objectives and the Council's current strategy, is to work with Colleges in a spirit of mutual co-operation, offering a wide range of support, advice and mentoring services. FEDD uses, in the main, practicing or recently retired senior managers from within the sector, or those who have had a strong association with the sector, for example through membership of College Boards of Management.

7. The Council's current interaction with and responsibility for Colleges remains. For example, for colleges with financial concerns or to provide feedback on improving strategic planning. FEDD activity does not substitute for such existing interactions, but operates in parallel with others in the Council offering supplementary help and advice.

8. Independent evaluations of the early years of FEDD, conducted in 2003 and 2004, concluded that it has been a very effective innovation, providing support and capacity building in the sector in an extremely cost effective way.

9. Since FEDD was established, there have been well over twenty engagements with Colleges in a very wide range of areas. The early engagements with the sector were mostly categorised by Funding Council initiated intervention, to support individual Colleges with particular developmental needs. Examples of this type engagement were to assist Colleges where there were financial concerns, potential weakness in strategic or operational planning, or management and governance practices which could benefit from support.

10. However, more recently, the work of the FEDD has been in response to requests from Colleges for assistance to meet a particular short- or medium-term need, and this now represents the great majority of FEDD engagements. Recent examples are estates, finance, curriculum, human resources, systems, health and safety, governance, management development and support; these are just a selection of the areas of advice and assistance provided.

11. Colleges request support from FEDD both formally and informally. All requests for consideration are passed to the Director of FE Development, who initiates discussions with the Principal and/or Chair of the College to develop and take forward the request. The Chief Executive of the Council is kept informed of any such voluntary requests.

12. For both Council-initiated offers of support and College voluntary requests for support, the purpose of this initial meeting is to agree the nature of support, timescales and planned outcomes.

13. The Director then identifies an appropriate individual, and, where the individual is a practising manager, negotiates with the Principal of the seconding College for their release. The support given by Principals through the release of key staff members as secondees to FEDD is a key element and is gratefully acknowledged.

14. The Director, and others from the Council as necessary, brief the secondee and agree a budget in terms of support over a specified time period. In cases of a

team of secondees being involved, a Team Leader is appointed. Secondees are agreed with the College receiving the support.

15. Secondees report to the Director or designated Team Leader and design/implement appropriate mentoring and support for the College aiming to agree a support plan with them. Secondees and Team Leaders are expected to adopt an interaction style with the College reflective of the agreed 'Consulting Cycle' model (see Annex).

16. Secondees do not only need to have particular skills or a track record (eg. in strategic management, curriculum organisation or functional specialism) but also must have good interpersonal and facilitation skills. The Director monitors progress as the engagement proceeds, and is also responsible for any training/development which the secondees may require, in liaison with others in the Council.

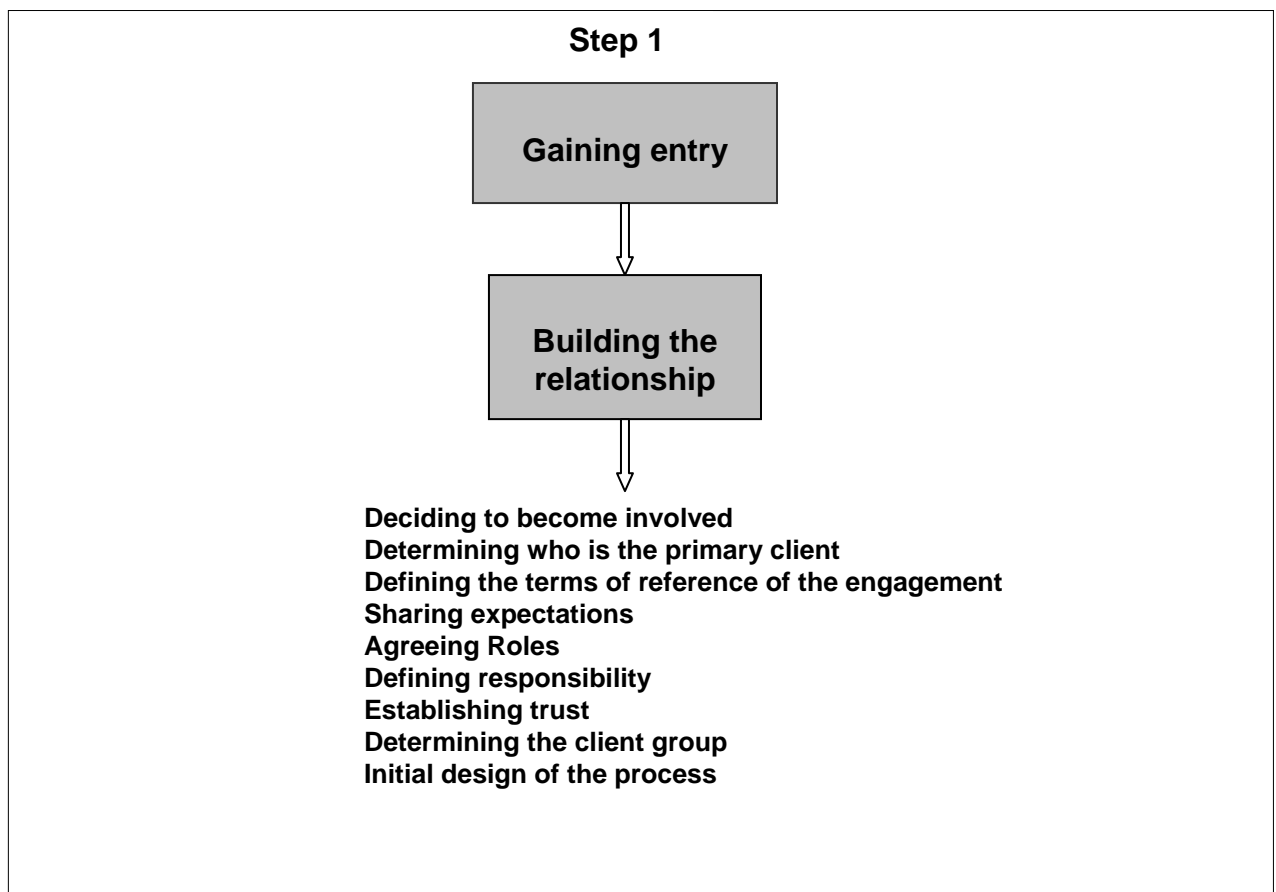
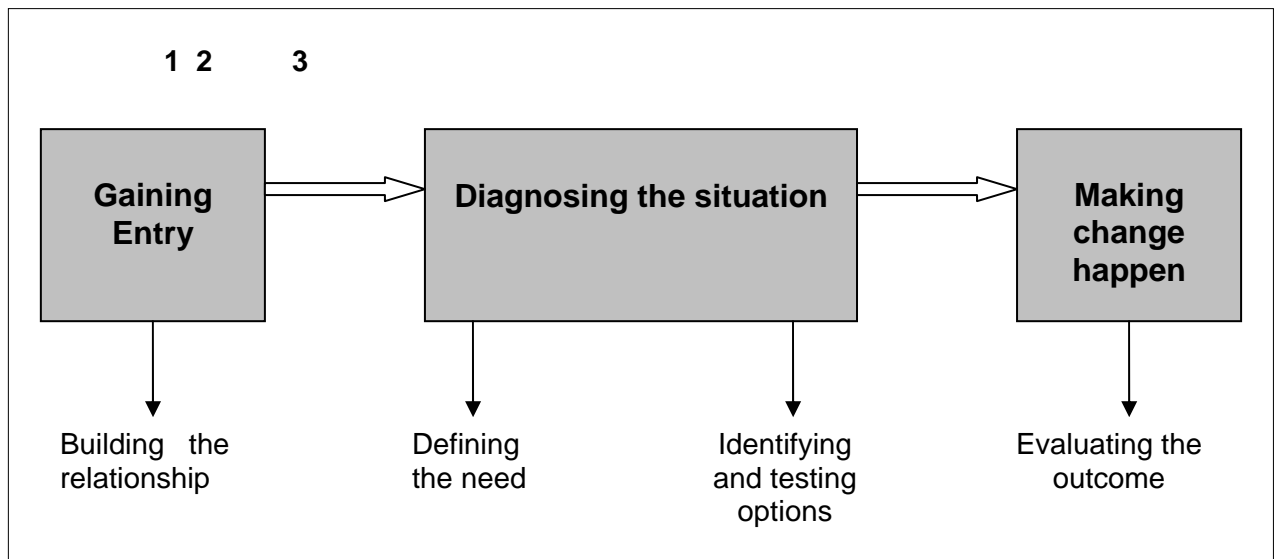
17. At the conclusion of each engagement, an evaluation of the work with the College is undertaken, and any proposed follow-up or ongoing monitoring is highlighted for further consideration.

Action

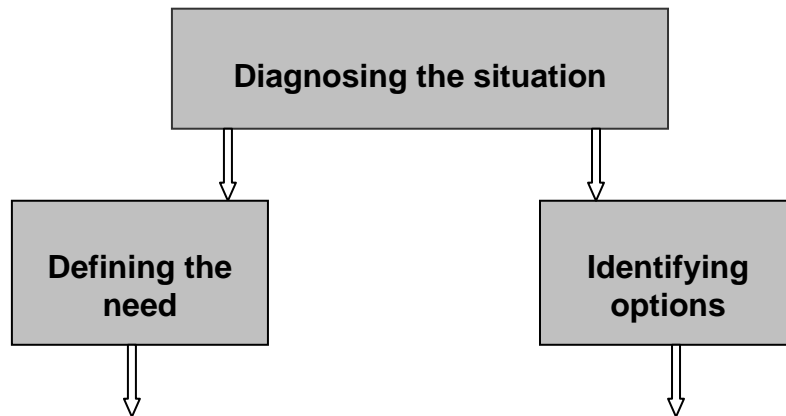
18. Members are invited to discuss whether any further statutory or non-statutory interventions may be required to assist colleges in severe difficulty.

**Reviews Team
November 2006**

FEDD recommended 'Consulting Cycle' Model

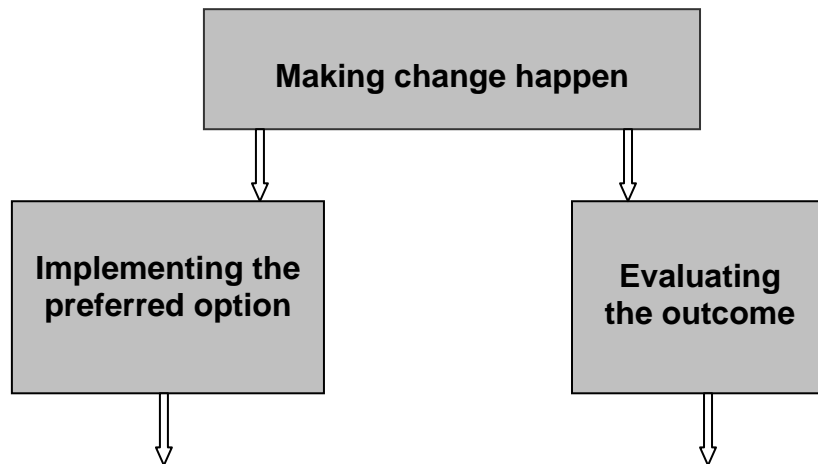


Step 2



Identifying the 'felt need', aim and possible outcomes Identifying a range of options
Collecting the data Determining resources and timescales
Testing the critical issues (accelerators & brakes) Options analysis
Reaching consensus and exploring parameters Identifying the preferred option
Agreeing next stage of process

Step 3



Deciding approach and methods Evaluating the outcome
Testing with stakeholders Evaluating the process and outcomes
Taking action Capturing learning
Monitoring and being open to change Disengaging
Agreeing next stage of process