Minutes of the seventh meeting of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council
Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th September 2003, in the Council Room, Centre
House, 79 Chichester Street, Belfast at 2.00 pm

Present:
Mrs M Griffith, Chair
Miss P Blaney, Chief Executive
Professor J Boore
Miss J Hill
Dr S Magee
Mr I McGowan
Miss F McMurray
Mrs M O'Hagan
Mrs M O'Hare
Mrs P Patten
Mr M Rea
Mrs Thelma Byrne and Mr B McCarthy arrived at 2.25pm)

In attendance:
Miss L Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer
Dr T McCance, Senior Professional Officer
Mr B McGrath, Senior Professional Officer
Mr E N Thom, Head of Corporate Services
Mrs H Craig, Administrative Team Leader

Five members of the public attended the open session of the meeting

1.0 APOLOGIES

1.1 An apology was received from Mrs D McCormick.

2.0 CHAIR’S BUSINESS

2.1 The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting. Copies of the seating plan, the open session agenda and minutes of the previous meeting had been made available to them for their convenience.

2.2 Members noted the additional items to the agenda at 6.1 and 17.0 and the tabled papers for item 22.1.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Iain McGowan asked that it be recorded that he should have declared an interest at the previous meeting on the 18th June 2003 in regard to item 20.0. This was duly noted by members.
The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2003 – NIPEC/2/03, copies of which had been circulated were agreed by Council and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 NIPEC CORPORATE STRATEGY (MINUTE 11.1)
   Item 11.1 of the Agenda referred.

4.2 EQUALITY ACTIVITY (MINUTE 11.2)
   Item 11.2 of the Agenda referred.

4.3 DHSSPS – CLINICAL PLACEMENTS (MINUTE 9.1)
   Item 9.1 of the Agenda referred.

4.4 USING AND DOING RESEARCH: GUIDING THE FUTURE - Reviewing progress and strategic planning of research and development in the nursing and midwifery professions (MINUTE 8.2)
   Item 8.2 of the Agenda referred.

4.5 DRAFT PROJECT PLAN (MINUTE 7.1)
   Item 7.1 of the Agenda referred.

4.6 DRAFT “NIPEC VISION STATEMENT” FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE ACTIVITIES (MINUTE 8.1)
   Item 8.1 of the Agenda referred.

4.7 PATIENT CENTRED NURSING (PCN) PROJECT (MINUTE 8.3)
   Item 8.3 of the Agenda referred.

4.8 DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE ACTIVITIES DATABASE (MINUTE 8.4)
   Item 8.4 of the Agenda referred.

4.9 LINKS NETWORK (MINUTE 10.1)
   Item 10.1 of the Agenda referred.

4.10 POSTAL NIPEC BOOKLET DESIGN (MINUTE 10.3)
   Item 10.3 of the Agenda referred.

4.11 NIPEC WEBSITE (MINUTE 10.4)
   Item 10.4 of the Agenda referred.
4.12 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2002/03 (MINUTE 11.3)

It was noted that the draft Annual Report would be considered by members in conjunction with NIPEC’s draft Accounts for 2002/03 at item 22.1 in the Closed Session Agenda.

4.13 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2003/04 (MINUTE 11.4)

Item 11.4 of the Agenda referred.

5.0 CONSULTATION ACTIVITY

Copies of the Consultation Activity Report had been circulated to members and copies of the consultation responses had been available on the Members’ Table. Members received the Consultation Activity Report. The Chief Executive gave members an update on developments. It was noted that the consultations had all been responded to within the specified timescale. Members also noted that the date in respect of No.57 “Skills for Health” should have read 26th September 2003 and not the 26th August 2003, this response had been mailed earlier in the day. In regard to No. 65 “NHS Quality Improvement Scotland”, this response had been forwarded on the 5th September 2003. The responses to the NMC in regard to the Election Scheme, Fitness to Practice and the New Register had been sent to NMC by the relevant officer within the specified time limit.

6.0 CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY – RECEPTION, HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE

Members noted that this correspondence had only just been received and as such was an additional item to the agenda. Correspondence dated 9th September had been received by the Chair from Ms Angela Smith, MP inviting the Chief Executive and herself to an evening reception on the 21st October 2003 at Hillsborough Castle which Ms Smith was hosting for all Chairs and Chief Executives associated with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Members noted the correspondence.

7.0 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

7.1 DRAFT PROJECT PLAN – THE PROJECT BOARD REPORT

Members noted that the title of this item would in future be referred to as “The Project Board Report”.

The Chair reported that a seminar had been held in the Dunadry Inn on the 27th August 2003 and asked Mr McGrath, Senior Professional Officer to update members on recent developments.

It was noted that the membership of the Project Board was now complete with 25 members. A list of the members was available on the NIPEC website or a list would be made available to members on request. The initial meeting of the Project Board took place on the 27th June 2003 with briefing sessions being held for those members who could not attend on this date. The seminar which was held on the 27th August set the scene for the workshop which was subsequently held on the 28th August 2003. A briefing paper, prepared by the Senior Professional Officers was circulated to members in preparation for the workshop. The workshop was enjoyable and
productive and considered to be an efficient use of members time. The next meeting of the Project Board is scheduled for the 8th October 2003. It was also noted that the Project Board had agreed the Project Group competencies and recruitment of members was in progress.

It was noted that a Project Manager post had been advertised with a closing date of 19th September 2003 and that he/she, in conjunction with the Project Group assisted by subgroups would be taking this initiative forward. Members received the verbal report.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE

8.1 DRAFT “NIPEC VISION STATEMENT” FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

Dr McCance, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that the Vision Statement had been forwarded to the Clearing House, who had looked at and commented on the document. The comments were most useful and had been taken on board. The document was then sent out for consultation to the Nurse Leaders Network, asking them to share the Vision Statement with their lead nurse responsible for research, quality or practice development and NIPEC were looking forward to receiving comments through this avenue. The closing date for receiving comments was the 22nd August 2003, but comments were still being received. To date 21 responses had been received. NIPEC hosted a seminar for the Links Network on the 5th September 2003 when an invitation was issued to those present to respond, if they wished to provide feedback and to facilitate this the response date had now been extended to the 29th September 2003. Dr McCance reported that she had looked at the comments received to date and generally they have been very positive, with some detailed comments from some organisations which would be taken on board in the final version of the Vision Statement. Members received the verbal report.

8.2 USING AND DOING RESEARCH : GUIDING THE FUTURE (Reviewing progress and strategic planning of research and development in the nursing and midwifery professions)

Dr McCance, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that the Project Team had experienced some difficulty in the management of this project due to the resignation of the Project Officer. Due to the lengthy timescale involved in recruiting a replacement Project Officer the Project Team agreed to look for support on a consultancy basis, this action was still under negotiation but hopefully would be resolved in the near future. Some progress had been made during the summer months with the assistance of Dr Nicola Armstrong from the R & D Office. The Steering Group had a meeting on the 1st September 2003 and it was noted that the focus of the project was currently at stage one, phase one, which was a critical analysis of the policy literature leading to the development of a good practice framework for research and development. Members received the verbal report.

8.3 PATIENT CENTRED NURSING (PCN) PROJECT

Dr McCance, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that this project was ongoing and well underway. The first meeting of the Advisory Group was scheduled for the 29th October 2003 and NIPEC’s representation on this Group was Mrs O’Hare, lay member of NIPEC and Miss Blaney, Chief Executive. Members received the verbal report.
8.4 DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE ACTIVITIES DATABASE

Mr McGrath, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that the draft specification for the database was currently out for consultation to colleagues in service, education and research and the closing date was the 5th September 2003. To date just a few responses have been received so a reminder had been sent. Some members of the Database Working Group established within NIPEC had met with a software company to talk about initial cost implications, feedback on this was still awaited. Links have been established with the All Ireland Public Health Steering Group regarding the development of a database to support All Ireland Public Health from a multi professional prospective. Members received the verbal report.

9.0 DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

9.1 DHSSPS CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

Miss Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that the Practice Placement Project Report had now been finalised and forwarded recently to the DHSSPS. A meeting was being arranged between the DHSSPS and NIPEC to discuss the recommendations contained in the report and the implementation of these. The report contains 11 recommendations and the key findings were spread across areas of practice placement experience, student support, clinical allocation mechanisms, programme structure focus and placement requirements. Members received the verbal report.

Mr Rea asked if Council would have access to the recommendations. The Chair indicated that Council would have access to the report and recommendations at the next Council meeting following the aforementioned meeting between DHSSPS and NIPEC.

9.2 APPROVAL AND MONITORING CIRCULAR

Miss Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that the Approval and Monitoring Circular was currently being printed and it was hoped that it would be available by the end of September. Members received the verbal report.

9.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES

(i) Validations

Miss Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that since the previous Council meeting the following validations had taken place at Queen’s University of Belfast.

Miss F McMurray declared an interest in this item.

BSc (Hons) and Post Grad Certificate in Specialist Practice Programmes with seven pathways. The validation meeting was held on the 25th/26th June and the programme was approved with conditions.
The validation meeting was held on the 31st July 2003 and the programme was approved with conditions. Members noted that this was the initial implementation of a three year direct entry programme in Northern Ireland.

**BSc (Hons) in Midwifery Studies - 18 month programme.** The validation meeting was held on the 1st August 2003 and this programme was approved with conditions.

Members noted forthcoming validations in respect of the following, The Open University pre-registration nursing programme for adults and mental health branches and in the new year programmes would be taken forward with the University of Ulster. Members received the verbal report.

2.25 pm – Dr B McCarthy entered the meeting at this juncture.

(ii) **Monitoring**

Miss Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that the monitoring of programmes in regard to NMC approval was ongoing. The current cycle of activities would be completed by the end of October 2003 with the educational institutions submitting their annual reports in mid January 2004. NIPEC would then submit a report to the NMC at the end of January 2004 for the year’s cycle. At the conclusion of the process a report would be compiled by NIPEC for each educational institution. The annual seminar would be hosted in March 2004 by NIPEC for all key stakeholders to discuss the previous years activity and any issues arising. Members received the verbal report.

(iii) **Joint Validation Agreement**

Miss Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer updated Council on this item. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the two universities to look at the joint validation agreements. The agreements being used at present were those agreed by the universities and the NBNI and these would be refined taking account of NIPEC. A meeting had taken place between the University of Ulster and NIPEC on the 1st September 2003 and draft amendments to the Agreements had been agreed. A meeting had been arranged with the Queen’s University of Belfast on the 20th October 2003. Members were reminded about the tri-partite validation which had taken place between the two universities and NIPEC for the Nurse Prescribing Course earlier in the year. This had been an innovative venture and NIPEC would like to negotiate tri-partite joint validation agreements with the two universities so that they would be available if needed in the future. Members received the verbal report.

(iv) **NIPEC Seminar**

Copies of a report on the seminar hosted by NIPEC on the 27th June 2003 to discuss issues pertaining to approval and monitoring activities had been circulated. Miss Barrowman, Senior Professional Officer presented the Report. It was noted that this seminar would be an annual event hosted by NIPEC for key stakeholders. One of the issues of significance to emerge from the seminar was NIPEC developing a strategy for quality assurance for DHSSPS commissioned education, which is not NMC registerable or recordable.
The Chief Executive reported that the seminar was a commitment given by NIPEC to at least annually bring education providers, service providers and other interested parties together to look at how NIPEC quality assured education in the previous year. She intimated that there was a considerable amount of education that nurses, midwives and health visitors undertook that was commissioned by the DHSSPS that was not registered or recorded with the NMC, so NIPEC were exploring how in conjunction with other colleagues this could be developed, by identifying how a level of quality assurance could be given to this type of education. It was noted that the seminar had been very successful and any feedback received had been very positive. Members received the report.

9.4 STRATEGIC EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS

Miss Blaney, Chief Executive gave a verbal report on this item. Miss Blaney indicated that she had already in the previous item mentioned the area of quality assurance of commissioned education. The other area of significance was the work that the Chief Nursing Officer was undertaking led by the Department in regard to modernising learning and this was trying to look at all the activities that nurses, midwives and health visitors might undertake that provided learning, that ultimately could improve patient, client and community care. This was very much an area that merged the two main areas of NIPEC together, ie development of practice and development of education, so NIPEC were involved at a strategic level and work was ongoing. The third piece was the Vision Statement that had been referred to at item 8.1. NIPEC were also planning in the Autumn to prepare a Vision Statement for the development of education. Members received the verbal report.

10.0 COMMUNICATIONS

10.1 LINKS NETWORK

Dr McCance, Senior Professional Officer gave a verbal report on this item. It was noted that to date NIPEC had received 63 nominations to the Links Network, covering representatives from Trusts, education providers, the prison service, the private sector and from professional organisations. It was recognised that there could be some gaps in representation from the profession but that would be addressed in due course. The NIPEC Links Network was formally launched on the 5th September 2003, with 39 members attending an inaugural seminar. The aim of the event was twofold, firstly to provide link members with a more detailed insight into the business of NIPEC and, secondly to give them the opportunity to explore how to move forward in a partnership approach. The feedback from the event was very positive. Those members who were unable to attend the event would be briefed by the Senior Team. It was agreed at the event that there was merit in using e-mail correspondence between members but there would also be some small group working from time to time. It was noted also that it was hoped all members of the Links Network would be identified on NIPEC’s website and this would allow organisations to identify who within their organisation was the NIPEC links person. Agreement would be sought from members prior to this being actioned. Members received the verbal report.

10.2 POSTAL NIPEC BOOKLET DESIGN

Copies of the booklet and excerpt from the “Irish News” dated 26th August 2003 had been circulated to members for information. It was noted that the majority of registered nurses, midwives and health visitors within the Province received a copy of the Booklet during week commencing 18th August 2003.
Miss Blaney, Chief Executive gave members a verbal update on this item. It was noted that there had been some media interest generated via a media consultant in regard to the booklet. There had been a short radio interview which profiled NIPEC as well as talking about the booklet, NIPEC also had some mention during news snippets on two other radio stations and the article and photograph in the “Irish News” which had been circulated to members. The media consultant hoped also to have some coverage within the “Belfast Telegraph” in the near future. An article had also been approved recently and it was hoped this would appear in some of the nursing journals. Miss Byrne, Council Member congratulated the Chief Executive, she had heard the broadcast on the radio and indicated that the interview had been excellent. Members received the verbal response.

10.3 NIPEC WEBSITE

Mr Thom, Head of Corporate Services gave members a verbal update on this item. It was noted that when the IT Officer commenced taking statistics in June 2003, NIPEC averaged 3,300 hits to the website per month, the total hits to date had risen to 41,000. Statistics in the first 10 days of this month showed an increase of 9% against the total hits for August with the highest ever hits for one day being recorded at 7231 on the 4th September 2003. This could most likely be attributed as a result of the booklet and the publicity that NIPEC has been generating during the current month. People have been accessing the website from Canada, Australia, Germany and the Netherlands. It was noted that overall there had been a significant increase in usage and this was very encouraging. Members received the verbal report.

10.4 CLEARING HOUSE DEVELOPMENTS

Mr Thom, Head of Corporate Service gave members a verbal update on this item. It was noted that meetings of the Clearing House had taken place on the 30th July 2003 and 3rd September 2003. It was noted that the Clearing House had agreed a pro forma which would accompany all documents being presented to them. A restricted site had been set up on the website for members and this would be accessible by password only. The Clearing House had considered the Vision Statement as had been referred to earlier in the meeting by Dr McCance, and the majority of comments made by them were taken on board prior to the document being issued for consultation. The Clearing House were also advised at their last meeting of the development of the NIPEC ‘E’ News, and had been very happy with the template format of this. The next meeting of the Clearing House was scheduled for the 10th December 2003. Members received the verbal report.

10.5 “IRISH NURSE” VOL 5, ISSUE 12, AUGUST 2003

Copies of an article which appeared in the above publication in regard to NIPEC had been circulated. Members received the article.

10.6 BRITISH JOURNAL OF MIDWIFERY

Members noted that an article had been submitted to the above journal.

11.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

11.1 NIPEC CORPORATE STRATEGY

Members noted that copies of the corporate strategy had been distributed widely to all interested parties. A second printing of the document was being undertaken to
take account of the demand for extra copies. An interest in the Strategy had been expressed by the General Practitioners so NIPEC were currently planning to have it circulated to every general practice in Northern Ireland.

11.1 EQUALITY ACTIVITY

11.1.1 Equality Scheme

Members noted that on the 7th August 2003 a copy of the desk audit carried out by the Equality Commission on NIPEC’s draft scheme was received. There were no major issues and only a few minor changes to some wording were made to the scheme. The scheme had now gone back to the Equality Commission and was expected to go to the next meeting of the Equality Commission’s Approvals Committee in September for approval.

11.1.2 Annual Review of Progress 2002-2003

Copies of the annual review of progress to the Equality Committee had been circulated to members for information. Members noted this review was contained within the NIPEC Annual Report.

11.2 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2003/04

Miss Blaney, Chief Executive updated members on this item. It was noted that the 2003/04 Business Plan had been drafted by the Chair, Deputy Chair, and Chair of Audit Committee and Council members at the last meeting had access to the draft plan. At the accountability meeting with the Department it had been requested that some of the objectives contained in the Plan should be written indicating intended pact and outcome, the Chief Executive subsequently had redrafted the Plan taking account of the amendments requested by the Department. The plan had been resubmitted to the Department and agreed by them.

12.0 REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

12.1 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Miss McMurray, Chair of Audit Committee gave a verbal report of the meeting held on the 2nd September 2003.

Copies of a grid showing the up to date position in regard to NIPEC’s polices and procedures had been circulated. There were 35 policies in hand at present, 12 had been finalised and issued, 14 were still in draft format, and 9 policies were currently policies NIPEC used which belonged to the Human Resources at CSA. NIPEC would be producing their own version of the latter mentioned policies in due course. Members received the grid.

The other issue was in regard to corporate credit cards it had now been agreed that there would be only one card and this would come under the control of the Chief Executive.

The other issue related to the audit of NIPEC accounts and this would be considered at item 22.1 of the Agenda in the Closed Session of the meeting.

Members received the verbal report of the meeting.
13.0 POLICY UPDATES

Miss Hill, Chief Nursing Officer gave a verbal update.

- Members noted a report had been published the previous week (Lewis Report) this related to twins that had been adopted from Romania, the recommendations from this report were to strengthen child protection procedures, an implementation group to take forward the recommendations would be established and this would involve nurse representation.
- An inspection of child protection services across the HPSS and with related agencies was being undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team and there would shortly be recruitment for a nurse inspector to be part of that team.
- A workshop had been arranged in regard to the Primary Care Strategy and there would be implications for NIPEC arising from the community nursing review.
- In regard to workforce planning and workforce review, it was noted that it would probably commence with a review of the mental health legislation and focus around the different activities around this and the different roles for nursing and the issues for nurse education arising out of the workforce review.
- The introduction of clinical and social care governance, a workshop had been organised for Monday, 15th September 2003 when progress from the HPSS organisations would be shared.
- A project to benchmark key standard of nursing was being taken forward – a Project Officer was being appointed who would be based at NIPEC.
- Midwifery Community Units, a consultation was being undertaken with a closing date of the end of October 2003.
- In regard to Structural Change, it was anticipated that there would be an announcement in relation to this in the near future.

Members received the verbal report.

14.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2004

Copies of the Calendar of Meetings for 2004 had been circulated. The Chief Executive asked members to record in their diaries that the meeting scheduled for the 15th September 2004 would be an all day meeting, with Council considering the next year’s Business Plan during the morning session. Members received the Calendar of Meetings.

15.0 NOTICES OF MOTION

The press and public were asked to leave the meeting at this juncture, due to the confidential nature of the further business to be discussed.

3.05 pm – the meeting adjourned for a short break.
3.15 pm – the meeting resumed

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed Mr Peter McGowan, Assistant Director of Finance, CSA at this juncture and advised members that he would be presenting the NIPEC Accounts for the year 2002/2003.

16.0 MATTERS ARISING (CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS)

16.1 LEASE AND LETTING ISSUES (MINUTE 16.1)

It was noted CSA Legal Services were still awaiting the final document from the Landlord’s Solicitor for signature and this was expected in the very near future.

16.2 NHSQIS/FONS/NIPEC PARTNERSHIP (National Health Service Quality improvement Scotland) (Foundation of Nursing Studies) and NIPEC ( MINUTE 16.2)

Item 19.1 of the Agenda referred.

16.3 MEDIA TRAINING (MINUTE 16.3)

Item 21.1 of the Agenda referred.

16.4 RECRUITMENT OF A NIPEC PROFESSIONAL OFFICER (MINUTE 16.4)

Item 23.1 of the Agenda referred.

17.0 CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair indicated to members that there was an additional item to the agenda at this juncture. Notification had been received of a tribunal application in respect of a former employee in regard to unfair constructive dismissal. The Chair informed Council that advice had been sought from CSA’s Human Resources and Legal Section and NIPEC were robustly refuting the case in each and every allegation with the support of CSA’s legal team. There had been a hearing scheduled but it had been deferred, a new date for the hearing was still awaited.

18.0 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

No business.

19.0 DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE

19.1 NHSQIS/FONS/NIPEC PARTNERSHIP (National Health Service Quality Improvement Scotland), Foundation of Nursing Studies) and NIPEC

Dr McCance, Senior Professional Officer presented this item. Copies of a Project Bid in respect of this item had been circulated. Dr McCance indicated that the circulated document was still a working draft as it still had to be “signed off” formally by the Project Team. The completed reference list and costing still had to be included. A rough costing had been previously undertaken.
Dr McCarthy remarked that the document made very interesting reading the only comment he would have was that it did not clearly say it would link with other disciplines. Dr McCance accepted the point that it wasn’t explicit in the document but the underlying principle was that the approach could be used in a multi-disciplinary setting.

Miss Patten suggested a slight structural change and expressed the view that it would read better if the aim of the project was identified first in a brief resume. The Chief Executive suggested that a resume identifying the aim of the project could be included in the executive summary.

20.0 DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

No business.

21.0 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

21.1 MEDIA TRAINING

Miss Blaney, Chief Executive updated members in regard to this item. It was noted that the meeting that had been arranged with Mr Mike Philpott as detailed at the previous Council meeting had to be cancelled due to a bereavement. The meeting had been rescheduled, and the Chair and the Chief Executive would be meeting with Mr Philpott in due course to arrange for some individual media training for a small group from the NIPEC Senior Team and some Council members.

22.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

22.1 NIPEC ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2002/03

Copies of the draft Accounts and Annual Report had been circulated, a copy of a statement in regard to contingent liabilities and a Review of the Financial Accounts had been tabled for members for information.

It was noted that members would have to consider the accounts with a view to them being “signed off” formally by the Chair and Chief Executive prior to them being presented to the Department.

Miss McMurray, Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Committee’s views. It was noted that there were two issues of concern and these were inter-related. At section 17, page 22 of the accounts under the heading Contingent Liabilities there was an issue that required clarification. The letter as requested by the Committee had been written and this addressed the issue in question and also tabled for members was a paper showing the wording in regard to the Contingent Liabilities. Members noted and agreed the wording.

Miss McMurray as Chair of the Audit Committee advised her Council colleagues that at the Audit Committee Meeting held on the 2nd September 2003 it was agreed that the accounts were a true and fair reflection of the financial affairs of NIPEC. The Internal Auditor’s Annual Report had also been presented to members at that meeting and it was noted that it had been confirmed by them that NIPEC management had established adequate and effective systems of internal financial control within NIPEC. Therefore, on behalf of the Audit Committee, Miss McMurray, subject to any discussion arising, recommended that the Chair and Chief Executive “sign off” NIPEC Accounts and Annual Report for 2002/03.
Following a invitation from the Chair, Mr McGowan, Finance Representative, CSA presented a Review of the Financial Accounts to members.

Following consideration, the Council agreed the Audit Committee’s recommendation that the Accounts were a true and fair reflection of NIPEC’s financial affairs and authorised the Chair and Chief Executive to “sign off” the Accounts and Annual Report for 200/03 subject to the amendments specified by members.

Mr McGowan left the meeting at this juncture.

22.2 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

Copies of the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on the 18th June 2003 had been circulated to non-executive members of NIPEC only. Mrs Griffiths, Chair of Remuneration Committee presented the unconfirmed minutes. The non-executive members of Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the Remuneration Committee.

23.0 ANY OTHER CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

23.1 RECRUITMENT OF A NIPEC PROFESSIONAL OFFICER

It was noted that Mrs Barbara Bradley had been appointed as a Professional Officer at NIPEC. Mrs Bradley’s commencement date had still to be confirmed but she would be joining the Senior Team at their Away Day on the 27th October 2003 and meeting with the rest of the Administrative Team when they joined the Senior Team on the 28th October 2003.

24.0 NOTICES OF MOTION OF A CONFIDENTIAL NATURE

No business.

25.0 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 10th December 2003, in the Council Room, Centre House, 79 Chichester Street, Belfast at 2.00 pm.