

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**  
held on Wednesday 1 October 2025 at 9:00 am  
via Microsoft Teams

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Mrs Libby Armstrong, Committee Chair Dr David Cutting Mr Brian Ingram Ms Celine McCartan, Principal & Chief Executive Ms Anne McCleary Mrs Gillian McDowell
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Mrs Camilla James, Head of People & Culture Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Mrs Sharon McGrath, Director of Corporate Services

### **1.0     ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR**

The Secretary to the Governing Body referenced the resignation of the former Committee Chair from the Governing Body and invited nominations for the position of Committee Chair for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Ingram, seconded by Ms McCleary, that Mrs Armstrong is elected to the position of Chair of the Staffing Committee.**

### **2.0     APOLOGIES**

An apology was tendered on behalf of Mrs McGrath.

### **3.0     CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

Mrs Armstrong declared her position as a board member of the Labour Relations Agency and a panel member of the Fair Employment and Industrial Tribunals NI.

### **4.0     MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04     Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 7 May 2025.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### **5.0     KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES**

Ms McCartan reflected on the value of dedicating time for strategic discussions, on the focus of the Committee in recent years and on the factors to be considered in identifying key strategic issues for 2025/26. A discussion was then held on potential areas for strategic focus.

**AGREED:** that the following items are identified as key strategic issues for the Committee's close monitoring:

- **Culture & Engagement;**
- **Staff Recruitment & Retention;**
- **People Plan; and**
- **Industrial Relations to include Remuneration.**

## **6.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Management Report
- Paper 06.01 Annual Sickness Absence Summary for 2024-2025
- Paper 06.02 Equality Progress Report
- Paper 06.03 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Paper 06.04 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Paper 06.05 Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy
- Paper 06.06 Draft Redeployment Policy
- Paper 06.07 CEF Circular - For Lecturing Staff 2024-25 and 2025-26
- Paper 06.08 Progression Pathway Proposal for IT Services.

### **6.1 Workforce Development Update**

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.0*

Mrs James commented on the enhanced structure and support for workforce development activities, noting the dedicated Continuous Professional Development (CPD) days scheduled, the focus on timely completion of corporate training modules, the development of a Department for the Economy (DfE) funded 'Mentorship for Growth' coaching programme and the College's support for staff undertaking teaching qualifications.

In response to queries and comments from members, management provided further details of the Mentorship for Growth coaching programme, advising in particular of the proposal to expand the beneficiaries to the wider management team with a view to developing a coaching culture.

### **6.2 Absence Management**

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 06.01*

Mrs James reported the College's 2024/25 sickness absence rate of 4.08% as well as the reduction from the 2023/24 figure of 4.45%. She listed the most common reasons given for absences, noting the increase in the prevalence of reported personal stress, anxiety and depression, and advised of the focus to be placed on absence management in the 2025/26 year.

In response to questions and comments from members, Mrs James outlined the support available to staff experiencing mental health challenges and confirmed that no trends have been identified following analysis. She also advised of relevant sectoral benchmarks, of the College's target absence rate of 2.75% and undertook to review this target in year.

**ACTION: Target sickness absence rate to be reviewed.**

### 6.3 Equality

*Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Paper 06.02*

Members commented on the quality and range of equality initiatives evidenced in the Equality Progress Report and commended relevant staff for the compilation of the 2024/25 Equality Progress Report, endorsing its submission to the Equality Commission.

### 6.4 Policy Reviews

*Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 06.07*

In response to questions and comments from members, Mrs James undertook to consider revising the terminology used for vulnerable adults in future iterations of the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy, explained that training has been provided to staff to determine which level of disclosure check is required, highlighted the greater focus on wellbeing within the Health & Safety Policy and outlined the initiatives undertaken by the College to support staff and students to stop smoking and vaping. She also provided an update on consultations on the draft Redeployment Policy.

**AGREED: that the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy are recommended to the Governing Body for approval.**

### 6.5 Pay and Conditions

*Ref: Management Report Section 6.0 and Papers 06.03, 06.04, 06.05 & 06.06*

Ms McCartan reminded the meeting of the two year pay deal in place for lecturing staff and provided an update on the progress of commitments made as part of this agreement including a review of workload, a review of the industrial relations framework and consideration of issues related to pay parity with teachers in the school sector. She also confirmed the submission of a business case to DfE requesting approval to implement the contractual support staff pay award.

### 6.6 Other

#### 6.6.1 Workforce Planning

*Ref: Management Report Section 7.1 and Paper 06.08*

Mrs James referenced the updates provided in the Management Report on recruitment activity, the procedure for the allocation of additional hours, the restructuring of academic staff within the Commercial & Business Services Department and the progression proposal for IT services, noting the circumstances necessitating change in each case.

#### 6.6.2 Staff Turnover

*Ref: Management Report Section 7.2*

Mrs James reported on the relatively high staff turnover rate, noting the prevalence of staff moving to employment in industry and other areas of the education sector.

#### 6.6.3 Employment References for Former Employees

*Ref: Management Report Section 7.3*

Members endorsed the proposal to develop guidelines on providing employment references to former employees and commented on the need to highlight that any personal references provided are independent of the College.

#### 6.6.4 Draft Job Evaluation Guidelines

*Ref: Management Report Section 7.4*

Mrs James advised of plans to finalise and implement the Job Evaluation Guidelines in the 2025/26 year.

In response to questions and comments from members, management advised of the methodology to be used in the job evaluations, confirmed that training will be provided to relevant staff and acknowledged the need to manage expectations in relation to the implementation of the guidelines.

### 7.0 REVIEW OF STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01                      Staffing Committee Terms of Reference
- Paper 07.02                      Amendments to Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

With reference to Paper 07.02, Mrs McCauley highlighted the amendments proposed to the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

**AGREED: that the revised Staffing Committee Terms of Reference are recommended to the Governing Body for approval.**

### 8.0 PROPOSED 2025/26 PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08                      Proposed 2025/26 Programme of Business.

**AGREED: acceptance of the proposed 2025/26 Programme of Business.**

### 9.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09                      List of Outstanding Actions

It was noted that the both actions listed have been addressed.

A revised list of actions is contained within Appendix A.

### 10.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

### 11.0 REFLECTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

Members commented favourably on the proceedings of the meeting.

***The meeting concluded at 10.10 am.***

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2025**

GB CHAIRPERSON



DATE 19/11/2025

## SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	01/10/2025	6.2	Target sickness absence rate to be reviewed.