

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 5:35 pm
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus

PRESENT: Ms Siobhan Breen (*items 1.0 – 8.0*)
Mrs Deborah Brown
Dr Frances Campbell
Mr Jack Daly
Ms Elaine Grier
Mr Brian Ingram
Ms Alana Jones Campbell
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mr Seamus McCaffrey (*items 1.0 – 11.0*)
Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive
Ms Anne McCleary
Mrs Gillian McDowell
Mr Michael McGuckin
Dr Nicholas O’Shiel, Chairman
Dr Lynsey Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Sean Brolly, Department for the Economy (*items 1.0 – 7.0*)
Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES: Mrs Maureen Brunt
Mrs Sandra Isherwood

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Dr O’Shiel welcomed all present to the meeting. He extended a particular welcome to Mr Jack Daly, 2022/23 Student Governor, and Mr Sean Brolly, Deputy Director, Department for the Economy (DfE). He also the acknowledged the appointment of Mrs Maureen Brunt to the Governing Body, noting her unavailability to attend the meeting in hand.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Brunt and Mrs Isherwood.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

3.0 MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Tuesday 6 September 2022.

AGREED: on the proposal of Ms Jones Campbell and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, that the above minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

4.0 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 Letter from DfE Minister re RICS Award
- Paper 04.02 Confirmation of Approval for Replacement Posts.

RICS Award – Dr O’Shiel referred to the letter received from the former Minister for the Economy acknowledging the Erne Campus’ achievement of the awards for Project of the Year and Public Sector Project in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) UK 2022 Awards and advised that a visit from the RICS President is expected in 2023. At the suggestion of a member, it was agreed that letters are sent to Mr Martin, former Chair, and Mr McAleer, former Chief Executive, acknowledging their vision and foresight in the development of the Erne campus in the context of its achievement in the RICS Awards.

ACTION: Letters to be sent to Mr Martin and Mr McAleer acknowledging their contribution to the development of the Erne campus in the context of its achievement in the RICS Awards.

Approval of Replacement Posts – Dr O’Shiel reported his approval of the posts listed in paper 04.02.

Marketing Workshop – It was noted that governor representation would be welcomed at a forthcoming Marketing Workshop to input into the development of marketing plans.

Committee Membership – Dr O’Shiel sought approval for the appointment of Mrs Brunt to the Education, Quality & Performance Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mr McCaffrey, appointment of Mrs Brunt to the Education, Quality & Performance Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Safeguarding Governor – Dr O’Shiel drew attention to the need to appoint a governor with oversight of safeguarding. He commented on Mrs Isherwood’s experience in safeguarding and on her interest in this role.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell, seconded by Mr Ingram, appointment of Mrs Isherwood as Safeguarding Governor.

Safeguarding, Care & Welfare Policy - It was noted that the Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Policy had been reviewed by the Education, Quality & Performance Committee and approved by the Chair of the Governing Body on behalf of the Governing Body outside of the standard framework to allow for DfE instructed amendments to be made to the policy in advance of the Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection of the SUSE+ programme.

Governor Training – Dr O’Shiel advised that training will be provided to governors to support the effective discharge of their challenge function as recommended in the reports produced by the Change Management Team.

ACTION: Training to be provided to governors to support the effective discharge of their challenge function.

Change Management Team – Dr O’Shiel explained that the work of the external Change Management Team is substantially complete and that leadership of the change management process will transition to an internal Change Management Team.

5.0 UPDATE ON STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Strategic Improvement Planning.

Ms McCartan reported that an internal Change Management Team has been established to lead the implementation of the Strategic Improvement Plan and outlined the purpose and composition of this team as well as its planned development phases over the next 18 month period.

She advised that a Strategic Improvement Planning event had been held with managers during which the slides in paper 05 were presented. It was noted that the event had been labelled as ‘reset day’ and that staff had welcomed the opportunity to engage positively in the strategic improvement planning process and cultivate stability for the benefit of learners.

With reference to paper 05, Ms McCartan went on to highlight the decline in the College’s success rate and regulated enrolments over the preceding ten year period, the correlation between College Performance, Change Management and the Review of the Further Education (FE) Delivery Model with students, staff and stakeholders respectively, and the practical application of strategic improvement planning to deliver the best possible service and outcomes for students.

In response to questions and comments Ms McCartan commented on the extensive industry engagement undertaken within the College, on the nuanced approach required geographically in relation to schools links, on the opportunity for governors to promote the College through their business networks and on the goodwill and enthusiasm shown by staff for the strategic improvement planning process.

Members commented on the scale of work involved in the development and delivery of the Strategic Improvement Plan as well as on the balance to be found between strategic and operational matters.

6.0 UPDATE ON DFE REVIEW OF FURTHER EDUCATION DELIVERY MODEL

PRESENTED:

- Paper 07 Review of Further Education Delivery Model.

Dr O’Shiel provided an update on the engagements taking place between DfE and college chairs and principals on the Review of the FE Delivery Model. He reflected on the main findings to date indicating that the significant decline in enrolments coupled with increased costs has led to an increasing cost per student. He then invited Mr Brolly to address the meeting.

Mr Brolly began by outlining the aim of the Review of the FE Delivery Model to ensure that the sector is properly structured and equipped to deliver on Departmental objectives and is sufficiently agile to meet the changing needs of learners and the economy. He commented on the collaborative nature of the review noting the extensive engagement with college chairs and principals to consider their advice and experience in working directly with learners.

With the aid of the slides in paper 07, Mr Brolly then detailed the strategic context for the review; the demographics impacting enrolments; the trends in increased retention of 16-18 year olds by schools and increased enrolments to universities; the financial factors impacting enrolments in the 25 years and over age group; the significant increase in college costs since 2017/18; and the sector's dual mandate to support the economy through the provision of skills and to facilitate social inclusion by supporting those with barriers to learning.

Mr Brolly went on to provide an overview of the current position in relation to the review noting that the delivery agent, Tribal, will finalise its report on the first stage of the review, designed to establish an evidence base to inform the future direction of the sector, in early 2023 and that approval will then be sought to proceed to the second stage of the review to include extensive consultation. He reported on the initial findings of declining enrolments, increased costs, rising cost per student and lower success rates than GB comparators. He also listed the three identified areas for action as a new delivery model, reduced costs and improved outcomes and explained that progress on the latter two should commence immediately.

In response to questions and comments from members, Mr Brolly explained that increased pay costs account for the majority of colleges' overall increased costs; advised that investigations are underway to ascertain the authority of the Permanent Secretary to provide the approval required to proceed to the second stage of the review in the absence of a Minister; undertook to seek comparative data on the success rates of colleges, schools and universities as well as comparative data on the destination of college and university leavers; and noted colleges' role in delivering the skills component of the 10X Economy Strategy.

It was noted that a letter to all staff in the sector will be issued from the Permanent Secretary in due course to update them on the progress of the Review of the FE Delivery Model.

ACTION: Mr Brolly to seek comparative data on the success rates of colleges, schools and universities as well as comparative data on the destination of college and university leavers.

7.0 UPDATE ON REVIEW OF FURTHER EDUCATION DELIVERY MODEL – SWC ANALYSIS

Ms McCartan explained that an analysis had been undertaken of the South West College specific data gathered by Tribal in the first stage of the Review of the FE Delivery Model benchmarked against comparators which would be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its December 2022 meeting.

She commented on the likelihood of a change in the structure of the sector along with increased collaboration and a transformation of delivery modes as well as on the need for the College to engage positively in the review in order to influence outcomes for the benefit of its learners and community.

Mr Brolly was thanked for his contribution and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

Dr O'Shiel explained that the purpose of the presentations provided was to provide information to governors and undertook to circulate a letter from DfE's Director of FE outlining the issues currently facing the sector.

ACTION: Letter from DfE's Director of FE outlining the issues currently facing the sector to be circulated to governors.

8.0 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Additional Staff Requests and Appointment.

Engagement – Ms McCartan reported on meetings, events and training which she has participated in since taking up the Chief Executive post to build knowledge and relationships.

Graduation – Ms McCartan explained that the Higher Level Graduation Ceremony has been postponed from December 2022 to March 2023 in order to deliver the event in a more cost effective manner.

Budget – Ms McCartan informed the meeting that an overspend is forecasted for the April 2022 to March 2023 year and commented on the anticipated reduced sectoral budget in 2023/24 and the consequent likelihood of a direct impact on the curriculum.

Engineering Innovation Centre – Ms McCartan advised that the Engineering Innovation Centre proposed under the Mid South West Growth Deal must be led by industry in order to meet the criteria for funding under City and Growth Deals.

One Planet Living – Ms McCartan confirmed that the proposed application for One Planet Living leadership status has been paused in order to ensure cross college application of required sustainability measures.

Senior Leadership Plan - Ms McCartan noted that the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Senior Leadership Team will be defined in a Senior Leadership Plan.

Colleges Employers Forum – Ms McCartan advised that negotiations are ongoing in relation to pay settlement for academic and support staff.

Trainee and Apprentice Management System – Ms McCartan reported on the business critical nature of the ongoing challenges with the Trainee and Apprentice Management System (TAMS), the IT system to be used by Training for Success (TfS) delivery agents, and the associated additional resource requirement to mitigate the associated risk posed.

Student Hardship – Ms McCartan informed the meeting that a business case for a special cost of living payment to students is under development by the sector.

Social Inclusion – Ms McCartan reported that a sectoral bid for funding to deliver targeted interventions to those with barriers to education is under development.

Ms Breen withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

Additional Staff Requests and Appointments – Ms McCartan sought approval for the staff and appointment requests listed in paper 08.01.

AGREED: approval for the staff requests and appointments listed in paper 08.01.

In response to questions and comments from members, Ms McCartan explained that all colleges face similar challenges with differing priorities; confirmed that the Human Resources professional support has been procured through the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) framework; undertook to circulate the current Management Structure Chart; and commented on the work to be done in aligning the management structure with the recommendations of the Change Management Team.

ACTION: Current Management Structure Chart to be circulated to the Governing Body.

9.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 28 September 2022
- Paper 09.02 2021/22 Equality Progress Report
- Paper 09.03 Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Paper 09.04 Employee Standards Policy
- Paper 09.05 Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

Dr O'Shiel welcomed Ms Jones Campbell to the position of Chair of the Staffing Committee and paid tribute to Mrs McDowell for chairing the Committee in the preceding three years.

Ms Jones Campbell, Chair of the Staffing Committee, referenced papers 09.01 to 09.05 provided and highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the 2021/22 Equality Progress Report, the Sickness Absence Management Policy, the Employee Standards Policy and the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

Dr Cush detailed a number of amendments made to the Sickness Absence Management Policy and the Employee Standards Policy from those presented to the Staffing Committee following queries from a governor, noting in particular that risk assessments are undertaken in relation to criminal convictions acquired by staff whilst in the College's employment.

In response to questions and comments from members, Dr Cush undertook to provide statistics on the level of compliance with the Sickness Absence Notification Procedure and it was suggested that the Employee Standards Policy is reviewed by the internal Change Management Team with a view to developing a handbook for staff.

ACTION: Statistics to be provided on the level of compliance with the Sickness Absence Notification Procedure.

ACTION: Employee Standards Policy to be reviewed by the internal Change Management Team with a view to developing a handbook for staff.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mrs McDowell, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

10.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2022
- Paper 10.02 Financial Management Report 2021/22
- Paper 10.03 Petty Cash & Float Policy
- Paper 10.04 Hospitality & Gifts Policy
- Paper 10.05 Student Hardship Policy & Procedure
- Paper 10.06 Finance & General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference.

Mr McCaffrey, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, referenced papers 10.01 to 10.06 provided and highlighted the Committee's recommendation for

approval of the Petty Cash & Float Policy, the Hospitality & Gifts Policy, the Student Hardship Policy & Procedure and the Finance & General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, seconded by Mr McGuckin, adoption of the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations within. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

11.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 19 October 2022
- Paper 11.02 FE Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy
- Paper 11.03 Controlled Assessment Policy
- Paper 11.04 Policy for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviours
- Paper 11.05 Procedure for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviours
- Paper 11.06 Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy.

Dr O'Shiel welcomed Dr Quinn to her new role as Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee.

Dr Quinn, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, then drew attention to papers 11.01 to 11.06 and the Committee's recommendation for approval of the FE Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy, the Controlled Assessment Policy, the Policy for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviours, the Procedure for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviours and the Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy.

She reported that she had met with the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive and the Secretary to the Governing Body to review the Committee's Terms of Reference during which initial discussions had taken place on the name, purpose, membership and core business of the Committee. She welcomed the interest shown in the Committee by members evidenced through its large membership and suggested that members may consider switching to another committee in order to balance membership of committees.

Mr McCaffrey withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

Responding to a query from a governor on the practical application of the FE Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy, Dr Cush provided an overview of the Personal Tutor and Learning Mentor roles as well as the system in place to identify and assist learners with additional support requirements.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Brown, seconded by Ms Grier, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. The minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

12.0 REPORT OF MEETINGS OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 AND WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 12.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Wednesday 21 September 2022
- Paper 12.02 Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report 2021/22
- Paper 12.03 Acceptable Use Policy
- Paper 12.04 Clear Desk / Screen Policy
- Paper 12.05 Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference
- Paper 12.06 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Wednesday 9 November 2022
- Paper 12.07 Draft Annual Report & Financial Statements 2021/22
- Paper 12.08 Draft Report to Those Charged with Governance
- Paper 12.09 Corporate Risk Register
- Paper 12.10 Corporate Risk Register Review Report
- Paper 12.11 Mid Year Assurance Statement 2022/23
- Paper 12.12 IT Acquisition & Disposal Policy
- Paper 12.13 ILT Security & Auditing Policy
- Paper 12.14 Internet, Email Usage & Monitoring Policy
- Paper 12.15 Software Compliance Policy
- Paper 12.16 User Account Management Policy
- Paper 12.17 2021-22 Audit Committee Annual Report.

Mrs McCaffrey, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, explained that the Committee has adopted a deep dive approach to its review of corporate risks and that deep dives of the risks associated with Learner Experience and the introduction of TAMS would be undertaken in-year. She referenced the Limited Assurance awarded in relation to the governance, risk management and control framework within the College and explained that this outcome had been derived in the context of the two satisfactory and two limited assurances awarded to in-year internal audits as well as the high number of outstanding issues to be actioned at the time of publication of the Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report.

Mrs McCaffrey went on to highlight the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Acceptable Use Policy, the Clear Desk / Screen Policy, the Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference, the IT Acquisition & Disposal Policy, the ILT Security & Auditing Policy, the Internet, Email Usage & Monitoring Policy, the Software Compliance Policy and the User Account Management Policy. She also highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Annual Report & Financial Statements 2021/22. It was noted that the Annual Report & Financial Statements 2021/22 provided were substantially complete pending Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) validations in relation to pension assumptions and the treatment of building valuations.

Ms McCartan referenced Mid Year Assurance Statement 2022/23 and noted that the issues outlined within had been reflected in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control within the Annual Report & Financial Statements. She commented on the limited assurance awarded in the Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report 2021/22 and on the work to be done to improve the governance, risk management and control framework within the College.

Members raised concerns regarding the sufficiency of resources available to undertake the extensive work planned in the forthcoming months and offered support to the Chief Executive to source additional resource if required.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Ms Grier, adoption of the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting and the recommendations therein, with approval of the Annual Report & Financial Statements 2021/22 being subject to satisfactory finalization of the the pension and valuation checks being undertaken by the NIAO. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

13.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.


15.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members referenced the tour of the Dungannon campus held prior to the meeting and welcomed the opportunity to meet staff and students and view the facilities and functional areas of the campus.

Mrs Brown and Mr Daly withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into confidential session.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 JANUARY 2023

CHAIRMAN



DATE 11/01/2023

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

| | Meeting Date | Minute Ref | Action |
|---|--------------|------------|---|
| 1 | 16/11/2022 | 4.0 | Letters to be sent to Mr Martin and Mr McAleer acknowledging their contribution to the development of the Erne campus in the context of its achievement in the RICS Awards. |
| 2 | 16/11/2022 | 4.0 | Training to be provided to governors to support the effective discharge of their challenge function. |
| 3 | 16/11/2022 | 6.0 | Mr Brolly to seek comparative data on the success rates of colleges, schools and universities as well as comparative data on the destination of college and university leavers. |
| 4 | 16/11/2022 | 7.0 | Letter from DfE's Director of FE outlining the issues currently facing the sector to be circulated to governors. |
| 5 | 16/11/2022 | 8.0 | Current Management Structure Chart to be circulated to the Governing Body. |
| 6 | 16/11/2022 | 9.0 | Statistics to be provided on the level of compliance with the Sickness Absence Notification Procedure. |
| 7 | 16/11/2022 | 9.0 | Employee Standards Policy to be reviewed by the internal Change Management Team with a view to developing a handbook for staff. |