

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Wednesday 25 February 2026 at 3:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus

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

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Mrs Armstrong opened the meeting with a moment of reflection following the death of Mrs Deborah Brown, former colleague and governor.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Dr Cutting and Ms McCleary.

2.0 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.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 3 December 2026.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02 Management Update on Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.03 Draft 2025-28 People Plan.

4.1 Culture & Engagement

Reporting on the work of the Culture & Engagement Team, Ms McCartan advised of activities in relation to appraisals, the review of the induction process, staff recognition initiatives, employee surveys, leadership and coaching.

In response to a query from the Committee Chair on appraisals, management confirmed the application of the appraisal process to all staff, reported good progress on compliance, acknowledged the opportunity within to embed the coaching approach and noted the alignment of workforce development planning with appraisal outcomes.

4.2 Staff Recruitment & Retention

Management reported continued recruitment challenges to IT Services posts, confirmed the engagement of external support to mitigate the associated risk, and advised of successes in the progression pathway initiative to provide development opportunities for existing staff within the IT Services team.

The meeting was also apprised of ongoing analyses by academic managers to identify future resourcing needs in alignment with the draft Curriculum Strategy. Budget constraints and the opportunity for consolidation of resources were noted as was the need for flexibility in resourcing.

ACTION: Mrs McGrath to circulate the NI Audit Office report on Leading and Resourcing in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

4.3 The People Plan

Ms McCartan drew attention to the draft revised People Plan in paper 04.03, outlining the priority workstreams within and highlighting the transition to the 'Evolve – Embed – Empower – Excel' model in recognition of the progress made through the 'Reset – Restore – Refresh – Retain' model employed in the first iteration of the plan.

Members provided feedback for further development of the plan and endorsed the advanced draft presented acknowledging the amendments to be made as well as the consultation to be undertaken with trade unions.

AGREED: endorsement of the advanced draft of the revised People Plan presented.

Ms McCartan made the meeting aware of the potential development of a temporary HR restructure proposal for the Committee's future consideration to facilitate the dedication of the Head of People & Culture to the implementation of the revised People Plan, when approved.

Mr Ingram apprised the Committee of the College's achievement of the Autism Impact Award in recognition of its commitment to providing a supportive environment for autistic students and staff and congratulated the team involved in this initiative.

4.4 Industrial Relations to include Remuneration

Management updated the Committee on the progress made on each of the four strands of the lecturers' pay agreement and raised concerns on the potential for industrial action in light of the unlikelihood of the completion of all four strands within the timeframe of the pay agreement. Members acknowledged the risk involved as well as the need to raise the matter with the College Employers' Forum at its forthcoming meeting.

Management also apprised the Committee of a technical issue identified as a result of sectoral alignment of the academic calendar in relation to remuneration of part-time staff for contracted work. Following a discussion on the matter, the Committee offered its support to management to make the necessary decisions to address the issue on an individual basis.

The submission of a business case to DfE for the payment of salary increments to business support staff was also reported to members.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Term 1 Sickness Absence Report
- Paper 05.02 Equality Update Report
- Paper 05.03 Equality Scheme
- Paper 05.04 Redeployment Policy
- Paper 05.05 Coaching for Growth Summative Report.

5.1 Workforce Planning Report

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0

Mrs James made the meeting aware of the areas of focus in relation to workforce planning including the analysis of 2026/27 resourcing needs within academic departments, the implementation of the Apprenticeship Support Hub staff structure and the commencement of recruitment to the Part Time Lecturer Register.

5.2 Absence Management

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.01

Mrs James reported an increase in days lost due to sickness absence. She identified personal stress as the most common reason for absences and advised of the ongoing review of the Stress Prevention and Management Policy.

5.3 Equality Report

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Paper 05.02

Mrs James reminded the meeting of the College's achievement of the Autism Impact Award and advised of plans to celebrate this achievement on World Autism Day. She also reported on equality activities undertaken in the reporting period including a review of the Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan, equality screening of policies and development of the Fair Employment Monitoring Return for submission to the Equality Commission.

5.4 Threshold Payment Recommendations

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0

Mrs James informed the meeting of the successful applications by 23 eligible lecturers for threshold payments.

5.5 College Grouping and Full Time Equivalent Enrolment Figures

Ref: Management Report Section 6.0

It was noted that no update had been received from DfE on the College Grouping.

5.6 Policy Review

Ref: Management Report Section 7.0 and Papers 05.03 & 05.04

Mrs James explained that the revised Equality Scheme in paper 05.03 is presented for review pending feedback from the Equality Commission for feedback and that the Redeployment Policy is presented for approval following incorporation of feedback from trade unions.

AGREED: that the Redeployment Policy is recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

5.7 Other Resourcing Matters

5.7.1 Lecturers' Workload Update

Ref: Management Report Section 8.1

Mr McNamee commented on the pace of progress in relation to the lecturers' workload review and explained that a smaller subgroup had been established to address this.

5.7.2 Student Internships

Ref: Management Report Section 8.2

Mrs James informed members of the internship opportunities provided to students.

5.7.3 Coaching for Growth Programme

Ref: Management Report Section 8.3 and Paper 05.05

The update provided earlier in the meeting on coaching activities was noted by the Committee.

In response to questions and comments from a member, Mrs James acknowledged the emergence of training requirements in conflict resolution and performance management.

5.7.4 Social and Wellbeing Activities

Ref: Management Report Section 8.4

Mrs James drew attention to the social and wellbeing activities undertaken since the December 2025 committee meeting.

5.7.5 JANE HR System

Ref: Management Report Section 8.5

Mrs James apprised the meeting of developments in relation to the migration to a new sectoral HR Management system, noting the close monitoring of this process and the risks involved.

6.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

7.0 REFLECTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

Members commented favourably on the proceedings of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 4.50 pm.

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
15 APRIL 2026**

GB CHAIRPERSON



DATE 15/04/2026

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	25/02/2026	4.2	Mrs McGrath to circulate the NI Audit Office report on Leading and Resourcing in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.