

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 9:00 am
via MS Teams

PRESENT:	Mrs Libby Armstrong Dr David Cutting Mr Brian Ingram Ms Celine McCartan, Principal & Chief Executive Ms Anne McCleary Mrs Gillian McDowell, Presiding Committee Chair
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Camilla James, Head of People & Culture Mrs Sharon McGrath, Director of Corporate Services Mr Padraig McNamee, Director of Curriculum Mrs Breidge Morrison, PA to the Chief Executive
APOLOGIES:	Ms Alana Jones Campbell, Committee Chair Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Mrs McDowell, Presiding Committee Chair, welcomed all present to the meeting and apologies were tendered on behalf of Ms Jones Campbell and Mrs McCauley.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Mrs Armstrong declared a conflict in respect of discussions concerning Industrial Tribunals which arose under the confidential section.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 26 February 2025.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 Strategic Planning Report
- Paper 04.02 People Plan Update Report.

Ms McCartan set the scene for her Strategic Planning Update by briefing members on recent sectoral discussions on the lecturers' pay dispute and the 2025/26 budget allocation, both of which affect staffing decisions as the College moves to a period of consolidation and steady state. Mr McNamee, who attended sectoral meetings on both matters on behalf of SWC, updated members on progress to date and reported that the College may shortly be in a position to issue a sector agreed letter to academic staff advising them of the pay offer.

In response to a member's query, discussion followed on the effectiveness of hybrid working.

4.1 Culture & Engagement

Ms McCartan updated members on the progress of the Culture & Engagement team, action plan and working groups. Due to action short of strike and reticence from some academic staff, there are no significant actions to report at this point. Members discussed the results from the recent pulse and employee engagement surveys. Mrs Armstrong referenced some negative responses in relation to views on awareness of the Governing Body, stating that there is work to be done to redress this issue. Suggestions included Governing Body photos at campus receptions, profiles of governors on the Staff Hub and name badges for Governing Body members when on campus.

4.2 Connect and Plan

Ms McCartan reported that planning for the annual Connect and Plan days for support and academic staff is underway which are scheduled for 20th June and 19th August respectively. This year's theme will focus on developing a coaching culture through connections.

4.3 Social & Wellbeing

Ms McCartan advised members that the annual Knockmany Forst Walk took place on Wednesday 16th April with 105 staff members taking part.

4.4 Strategic Plan

Ms McCartan advised members that the final draft of the College's three-year Strategic Plan is currently with the design team for editing, having gone through a further review with the Senior Leadership Team, resulting in some additional changes. It was noted that the draft strategic plan will be presented to the Governing Body for approval upon completion of the final edit.

4.5 People Plan

Mrs James referenced the update provided in paper 04.02 on the progress of the actions within the People Plan, noting that twenty-two have been achieved, seven are in progress and one is yet to commence. Members agreed with Mrs James that the People Plan will evolve over time to take the College into the next phase of constrained public finances and will be reviewed in its entirety to ensure its alignment with other college strategies.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| • Paper 05 | Management Report |
| • Paper 05.01 | Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report |
| • Paper 05.02 | Term 2 Sickness Absence Report |
| • Paper 05.03 | Fair Employment Monitoring Return Analysis Report |
| • Paper 05.04 | Employee Standards and Ethical Practice Policy |
| • Paper 05.05 | Student Internship Policy |
| • Paper 05.06 | Equal Opportunities, Good Relations and Cultural Diversity Policy |
| • Paper 05.07 | Circular 05/2025 – NILGOSC 2025/26 Annual Update |
| • Paper 05.08 | 2025/26 NILGOSC Pension Finance Update |

- Paper 05.09 Circular CEF 2010/09 – Responsibility Allowances.

5.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

Mrs James advised that wellbeing matters are now reported under the Social & Wellbeing section of the Strategic Planning agenda item and that an update on Health & Safety will continue to be provided within the Management Report.

5.2 Absence Management

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 05.02

Mrs James reported a slight increase in days lost from Term 1, with personal stress reported as the most common cause of absence. The Committee welcomed the implementation of any measures to support staff in this regard.

5.3 Fair Employment Monitoring Return

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.03

Mrs James confirmed the submission of the Fair Employment Monitoring Return to the Equality Commission and reported a continuation of higher representation from females and Roman Catholics in relation to both applicants and appointees to college positions, reflective of the general demography.

5.4 Policy Review

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Papers 05.04, 05.05 & 05.06

Mrs James updated members on the amendments made to the Employee Standards and Ethical Practice Policy, the Student Internship Policy and the Equal Opportunities, Good Relations and Cultural Diversity Policy.

AGREED: that the Employee Standards and Ethical Practice Policy, the Student Internship Policy and the Equal Opportunities, Good Relations and Cultural Diversity Policy are recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

5.5 Other

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Papers 05.07, 05.08 & 05.09

The updates provided on the NILGOSC Annual Update, responsibility allowances for academic staff and the exceptional leave period were noted by the Committee.

In response to a request from members, an update on the progress of the investigations and maintenance in the training and preparatory kitchens in the Erne Campus was provided.

Mrs McGrath reported that a significant action plan is underway and that a draft report has been received from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), noting satisfaction on consistency with normal practices and nothing hazardous to report.

Mrs James reported on occupational health referrals from a number of staff, supported by the College. Meetings with HSE and Occupational Health professionals have been scheduled to ensure openness and transparency.

Mr McNamee explained that the HSE report identifies the source of the dust and advised that measures have been taken to address the issue. He added that a return to curriculum delivery within the affected kitchens will take place in a phased manner in

order to stress test the systems with a view to returning all students by the end of the 2024/25 academic year.

Ms McCartan advised that a Freedom of Information request has been received from a local newspaper requesting all emails referencing dust and respiratory issues. She explained that this search has returned over 20,000 emails, with considerable narrowing required, given commercial sensitivity and the need to protect personal data.

6.0 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S PERFORMANCE IN 2024/25

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Partially Completed Review of Committee's Performance in 2024/25.

With reference to Paper 06, Mrs McDowell advised that the self-assessment checklist had been completed where a factual response was available and sought members' views on the remaining questions. The resulting review is attached at Appendix A.

7.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2025/26

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Schedule of Meetings 2025/26.

The Committee accepted the proposed schedule of meetings for 2025/26.

Mrs James commented on the operational delays caused by the duration between Staffing Committee and Governing Body meetings and reflected on the amendment made to the Committee's Terms of Reference to facilitate the Chief Executive's approval of routine resourcing matters and the Chair of the Governing Body's approval of new posts recommended by the Committee for the approval of the Governing Body. She then suggested that, for operational efficiency, staffing and fixed term contract proposals, scrutinised by the Committee and recommended for the Governing Body's approval, are also presented to the Chair of the Governing Body for approval under his authority to take decisions between meetings as outlined in the College's Standing Orders.

AGREED:

- acceptance of the proposed schedule of Staffing Committee meetings for 2025/26;
- amendment of the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference to reflect the request to the Chair of the Governing Body to approve staffing and fixed term contract proposals recommended by the Committee for the approval of the Governing Body.

8.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 List of Outstanding Actions

It was noted that all outstanding actions have been addressed. In relation to the corporate modules, Ms McCartan and Mrs James undertook to incorporate wellbeing and support into the Mental Health module to address the area of sickness absence.

ACTION: Wellbeing and support to be incorporated into the Mental Health corporate module.

A revised list of actions is attached at Appendix B.

9.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

10.0 REFLECTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

Members commented on the effectiveness of the meeting.

The meeting went into confidential session.

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
18 JUNE 2025**

PRESIDING CHAIR Brian Ingram **DATE** 18/06/2025

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF STAFFING COMMITTEE IN 2024/25

		Yes	No	Comments
Terms of Reference				
1	Does the Staffing Committee have written terms of reference?	✓		
2	Were the terms of reference reviewed by the Committee and approved by the Governing Body in this academic year?	✓		Reviewed on 2 October 2024 by the Committee and approved by the GB on 20 November 2024.
3	Has the Committee complied with the provisions of its terms of reference in its proceedings throughout the year?	✓		
Programme of Business				
4	Did the Committee agree a programme of business for the academic year?	✓		Agreed by the Committee at its 2 October 2024 meeting.
5	Did the Committee cover all business listed in the programme of business?	✓		
6	Have all actions identified by the committee been satisfactorily delivered?	✓		
7	Was there any business that members feel do not need to be covered next year?		✓	
8	Was there any additional business that members feel should be included next year?		✓	
Skills, Knowledge and Competences of Members				
9	Does the appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and competences exist within the Committee to perform most effectively?	✓		
Governing Body Key Performance Indicators				
10	Did attendance levels at Committee meetings average at least 65%?	✓		75%.

11	Did Committee meetings generally last no more than two hours?	✓		
Additional Comments				
12	None			

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	07/05/2025	7.0	Amendment of the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference to reflect the request to the Chair of the Governing Body to approve staffing and fixed term contract proposals recommended by the Committee for the approval of the Governing Body.
2	07/05/2025	8.0	Wellbeing and support to be incorporated into the Mental Health corporate module.