

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**  
held on Wednesday 10 January 2018 at 5:35 pm  
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus, Circular Road, Dungannon

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**PRESENT:** Mr Joseph Martin (Chairman)  
Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)  
Mr Peter Archdale (*via video conference*)  
Mr Samuel Hodson (*via video conference*)  
Mrs Margaret Martin  
Mr Wilson Matthews  
Mr Wilbert Mayne  
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey  
Mr Seamus McCaffrey  
Mrs Monica McGearry  
Mr Michael McGuckin (*Items 1.0 –11.0*)  
Mr Stephen Moss (*via video conference*)  
Mr Michael Skuce

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

**APOLOGIES:** Mrs Joanne Lucas

### **1.0 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND PRELIMINARIES**

Mr Martin, Chair of the Governing Body, began by welcoming all present to the meeting. He then extended his congratulations to Mr Tom McBride, former Head of Department, on his receipt of an MBE Honour for services to Further Education in Northern Ireland.

Mr Martin went on to note the attendance of three members via video conference from the Omagh campus and asked members to adopt appropriate video conferencing etiquette.

An apology was then tendered on behalf of Mrs Lucas and a number of governors provided advance apologies for their early withdrawal from the meeting.

### **2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

With reference to the Staff Resource Report, Mr Hodson drew attention to his appointment as Lead Student Representative. It was noted that this interest did not require action.

### **3.0 MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 15 November 2017 (Pages 1 – 9).

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, that the above minutes (Pages 1 - 9) be accepted as a true and accurate record. This section of the minutes was subsequently signed by the Chairman.**

### **4.0 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### **5.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2017**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 29 November 2017
- Paper 05.02 Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy
- Paper 05.03 Excellence in Learning and Teaching Strategy – FE & WBL
- Paper 05.04 SWC Student Charter
- Paper 05.05 Excellence in Teaching Framework.

Mrs Martin, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, began by noting her attendance at the Governors' Conference hosted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and by commenting on the alignment of the College's priorities with Departmental strategy as disseminated at the conference.

She then drew attention to the presentation provided to the Committee by the Head of Department (Technology) on the performance and strategic plan of his department and highlighted Ulster University's review of Higher Education Partnerships and the inter-departmental work underway to mitigate the impact of the change to requirements under the Entitlement Framework as key points arising out of the presentation.

She also referred to the presentation received from the Higher Education Co-ordinator on the 'Higher Education Academic Board' strategic project and advised of the plans to secure Foundation Degree Awarding Body Powers to enable the delivery of programmes abroad and / or recruit international students for virtual delivery.

Regarding the Quality Unit Annual Report provided by the Quality Assurance Manager, the Committee Chair commended the Whole College Self-Evaluation & Quality Improvement Plan 2017 and highlighted the effectiveness of the College's data systems in providing the required information to effectively plan curriculum provision. She also advised on the change to the quality improvement planning process from prior years and reminded the meeting of the achievement of the highest level of

confidence in the College's quality assurance process for the seventh consecutive year following the March 2017 scrutiny inspection of quality assurance processes.

Moving on to the Management Report received by the Committee, Mrs Martin commented on the significance of the selection of the College as the base for the Institute of Innovation and Knowledge Exchange NI and of the College's role as the Engineering & Manufacturing Hub and advised that the latter had been added as a key strategic issue for close monitoring by the Committee. She also highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy, Excellence in Learning & Teaching Strategy – Further Education & Work Based Learning, Student Charter and Excellence in Teaching Framework.

On conclusion of Mrs Martin's report, the Chief Executive advised that the re-submitted application for funding to commission a feasibility study into the development of a Social Impact Bond had been rejected by the Department of Finance (DoF). He went on to provide an overview of the issues raised by DoF in rejecting the application and explained that DfE remain supportive of the concept and that it is hoped that the Departmental NEETS Policy Team will commission the feasibility study with support from the College. A discussion then ensued during which members commented on the value of the College's social inclusion programmes, on the innovative nature of the Social Impact Bond concept in Northern Ireland and on alternative means of managing non-governmental funding.

Members were also provided with an overview of the messages delivered by DfE at the Governors' Conference regarding a sectoral Corporate Plan and the proposed new funding model.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Martin, seconded by Mr McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein.**

## **6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2017**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 6 December 2017
- Paper 06.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 06.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 06.04 Carers' Policy
- Paper 06.05 Access NI Policy Statement.

Mrs McGeary, Chair of the Staffing Committee, reported that assurances had been received by the Committee from the Head of Innovation & Business Development on the security of the College's EU funded projects and associated posts for three years and on the progress being made to leverage alternative funding post-Brexit.

She went on to explain that a number of cases of long-term sickness absence had caused a minor spike in sickness levels. She added that the Committee had been made aware of initiatives to improve staff resiliency and had discussed the challenges faced by some students and the staff supporting them. In response to a query from a

member regarding sickness absence, the Chief Executive detailed the parameters in the definition of long-term sickness and commented on the positive impact of the focus placed on absence management evidenced through the College's consistently low sickness absence levels.

Mrs McGeary also advised that a pilot exercise with HR Connect may take place which will allow benchmarking against the College's recruitment performance and that the Committee will be made aware of any instances of potential re-employment of persons who have exited the sector under the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). She further highlighted the Chair of the Governing Body's ratification of the appointments, staff requests, fixed term contract recommendations and other resource issues detailed in the minutes as well as the Committee's recommendation for adoption of the Carers' Policy and Access NI Policy Statement.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McGeary, seconded by Mr Skuce, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting (pages 1 – 4) and the recommendations therein.**

## **7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2017**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 13 December 2017
- Paper 07.02 Financial Management Report
- Paper 07.03 Investment Strategy & Plan
- Paper 07.04 Investment Policy
- Paper 07.05 Bad Debt Policy
- Paper 07.06 Customer Complaints & Compliments Policy.

In commencing his report on the 13 December 2017 Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, Mr McGuckin, Committee Chair, referred to the presentation that had been received by the Committee from the Head of Curriculum on the financial performance of the Health & Life Services Department. He reported on the relatively low staff costs savings achieved in the department since the loss of staff through the VES and on the reasons for this result; on the relatively static income and expenditure profile; on the high lecturer deployment level; and on the department's disappointing performance in meeting virtualization targets due to difficulties in virtualizing the curriculum of some practical and high support courses. Regarding the VES, the Chief Executive, at a later stage in the meeting, explained the complex nature of the identification of the savings achieved under the scheme and reported that an application is under development to capture the impact of the VES and to analyse the outworking of the savings expected.

With regards to the 2016/17 college financial year, Mr McGuckin then confirmed that the College's Annual Report & Financial Statements 2016/17 and associated audit certificate have been lodged with the Northern Ireland Assembly Office, that the Net Book Value of the College's fixed assets at 31 July 2017 was £96.924m and that £3.5m had been spent on capital items in 2016/17. Regarding performance in the three months to 31 October 2017, he reported a surplus of £117k, an income of £11.5m, pay costs of £5.65m and other expenditure of £5.78m. He added that funds had been

secured by DfE to close the 2017/18 resource pressure and that financial performance and progress against Key Performance Indicators may now be reported to DfE three times per annum rather than four times per annum to allow the alignment of one of the returns with the governmental March year end. He also drew attention to the Committee's review of the Investment Strategy & Plan 2017/18, the Investment Policy, the Bad Debt Policy and the Customer Complaints & Compliments Policy and its recommendation of these policies to the Governing Body for approval.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McGuckin, seconded by Mr Archdale, adoption of the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations therein.**

In response to questions and comments from members, the Chief Executive then commented on the balance to be struck in the employment of full-time and part-time lecturers and noted the College's 99% lecturer deployment level as well as the increased need for backfill to release staff to participate in Erasmus mobilities and staff development activities. He also acknowledged the increased costs arising out of the requirement to source food through suppliers procured through the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) and the potential adverse affect on the College's sustainability agenda through its inability to guarantee local produce.

## **8.0 ERNE CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Chief Executive identified Tracey Brothers Ltd as the Most Economically Advantageous Tenderer for the Integrated Supply Team (IST) contract for the Erne Campus Development and advised that the formal announcement of this would take place on Friday 12 January 2018. The Chairman then commented on the Project Board's satisfaction with the appointment of this IST following the scrutiny of its tender by DfE and CPD.

In response to questions from members, the Chief Executive then provided details of the Defects and Soft Landings period and the purpose of these stages in construction projects.

## **9.0 REVIEW OF 2017 GOVERNING BODY SELF-ASSESSMENT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Letter from DfE regarding Governing Body Self-Assessment Exercise 2016/17
- Paper 09.02 SWC Governing Body Self-Assessment Analysis 2016/17.

The Chairman highlighted the constructive nature of the self-assessment analysis as well as the positive perception evidenced amongst South West College governors. Members then commented on the analysis and noted that the minor concerns raised had been addressed at the November 2017 Strategy meeting.

## **10.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chairman reminded members of the Governors' Conference being held in Omagh the following day where further details of the new funding model and the sectoral corporate plan would be provided. It was suggested that a DfE representative be invited to attend the next Governing Body meeting to discuss these matters further should this be deemed necessary following the Governors' Conference.

## **11.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

The Chief Executive outlined the details of a forthcoming sectoral value for money review and made the meeting aware of DfE plans to consolidate divisional initiatives.

*Mr McGuckin withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.*

## **12.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED**

No declarations were made under this heading.

## **13.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 13.01 Confirmation of 2016/17 College Grouping and Full-Time Equivalent Enrolment Figures
- Paper 13.02 Note to NICS Staff re Budgetary Outlook 2018-20
- Paper 13.03 Briefing on Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook 2018-20
- Paper 13.04 Senior Civil Service Move.

Members discussed the impact on students of the potential budget cuts set out in paper 13.03 and agreed that the Chief Executive propose to the Principals' Group that Education Maintenance Allowance, Home to School / College Transport and the protection of Entry Level and Level 1 programs be highlighted as areas for protection in the sectoral feedback to be submitted to DoF.

The College's F3 Grouping and the change of senior personnel in DfE were also noted by the meeting.

## **14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

In response to a query from a member regarding the College's preparations for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, the meeting was provided with assurances that progress is on track and that regular updates are provided to the Audit & Risk Committee.

## **15.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 7 March 2018 at 5:30 pm in the Omagh campus.

**16.0 EVALUATION OF MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 15 Governing Body Meeting Evaluation Form.

Members attending remotely commented on the quality of engagement in joining the meeting via video conference. Members were then updated on the progress of a business case to upgrade the video conferencing equipment.

***Mr Hodson and Mr Moss withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into private session and concluded at 7:50 pm.***

**CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH 2018**

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_