

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **South West College Governing Body**
held on Wednesday 11 January 2017 at 5:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus, Circular Road, Dungannon

PRESENT: Mr Joseph Martin (Chairman)
Mr Malachy McAleer (Chief Executive Officer)
Mr Peter Archdale
Councillor Robert Irvine
Mrs Joanne Lucas
Mrs Margaret Martin
Mr Wilson Matthews
Mr Wilbert Mayne
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mr Seamus McCaffrey
Mrs Monica McGeary
Mr Michael McGuckin
Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
Mr Michael Skuce (*Items 1.0 – 13.0 via video conference*)
Mr Derek Weir

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr George Frazer, Technical Supervisor
Mr Michael McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (*Items 10.0 - 16.0*)
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES: Mr Stephen Moss

1.0 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND PRELIMENARIES

The Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Martin, began by welcoming all present to the meeting. He then advised that the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Mr McAlister, is currently engaged at another event and will join the meeting in due course. He also asked members to adopt appropriate etiquette in light of Mr Skuce's attendance via video conference from the Enniskillen Campus and noted Mr Frazer's presence to optimize the video conference experience.

An apology was tendered on behalf of Mr Moss.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Councillor Irvine noted his interest in items 8 and 9 of the agenda. These were addressed later in the meeting.

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 16 November 2016 (Pages 1 – 9).

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Martin and seconded by Mr Archdale, that the public section of 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 30 NOVEMBER 2016

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on 30 November 2016
- Paper 05.02 Whole College Self-Evaluation and Improvement Report 2015-16
- Paper 05.03 Annual Quality Assessment Return
- Paper 05.04 Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy
- Paper 05.05 Excellence in Teaching and Learning Strategy – FE and Work Based Learning
- Paper 05.06 Learning Resource Centre Policy.

Mrs Martin, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, began her report of the committee meeting held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 by commenting on the value of the presentations received by the Committee from the Head of Department (Technology), the Quality Assurance Manager and the Head of Curriculum in obtaining the information and providing the assurances required by governors. She then went on to provide an overview of each of the presentations during which she apprised members of the changing trend in growth areas and the development of additional Higher Level Apprenticeships within the Technology Department, drew attention to the feedback received from the Education & Training Inspectorate on the outstanding quality of college leadership and management, and made the meeting aware of the periodic reviews taking place as well as the achievements of the Confucius Hub.

She also expressed her delight on the 2015/16 student governor's receipt of an All-Ireland Scholarship, made reference to the Prime Minister's statement confirming the availability of EU funding opportunities until Brexit arrangements have been put in place and highlighted the Committee's recommendation for the approval of the Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy, the Excellence in Teaching & Learning Strategy for Further Education & Work Based Learning and the Learning Resource Centre Policy as well as the Annual Quality Assessment Return.

On conclusion of the committee report, the Chair of the Governing Body referred members to the Whole College Self-Evaluation and Improvement Report and commented on the value of this document in summarizing the College's activities, achievements and plans for further improvement. These sentiments were echoed by Mrs Martin who also commended the Quality Assurance Manager for her reports and presentation.

In response to questions and comments from members in relation to the College's reclassification as an F2 College, the Chief Executive Officer explained that the college grouping is dependent upon prior year enrolment, detailed the profile of enrolments in 2015/16 and highlighted in particular the decrease in low value enrolments and the increase in high value enrolments. It was noted that the reduction in recreational provision impacts least on the on the most deprived quintiles and that the focus on full-time equivalent enrolments in the presentation of the results may affect the public's perception of the College. The Chief Executive Officer then undertook to provide an analysis of the impact of the evolving enrolment trends and the Chair of the Governing Body explained that the salaries of senior staff are directly linked to the College Grouping and noted his reservations on this model.

AGREED: that an analysis of the impact of the evolving enrolment trends be provided to the Governing Body.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Martin, seconded by Mr Matthews, 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 7 DECEMBER 2016

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 7 December 2016
- Paper 06.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 06.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 06.04 Stress Prevention and Management Policy.

In commencing her report of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 7 December 2016, Mrs McGeary, Committee Chair, reflected on the work undertaken by the Committee in the preceding years in designing and implementing the new management structure and noted the plans to evaluate this model in due course.

With reference to the presentation received from the Head of Business Development, she then alerted members to the resourcing requirements of the Renewable Engine Project and the need for engagement with industry and universities to raise awareness of the high level jobs available and attract high calibre applicants.

In continuing her report, she highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Stress Prevention and Management Policy as well as for the approval of the appointments, staff requests, fixed term contract proposals and other resourcing issues as detailed in the minutes noting their endorsement by management. Mrs McGeary commented in particular on the recommendation for the

approval of additional responsibility points and the discussions held by the Committee on this matter.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McGeary, seconded by Mr Weir, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2016

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 14 December 2016
- Paper 07.02 Financial Management Report Quarter Ended 31 October 2016
- Paper 07.03 Investment Strategy & Plan 2016/17
- Paper 07.04 Asset Management Policy
- Paper 07.05 Energy Management Policy.

Mr McGuckin, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, apprised members of the presentations that had been received by the Committee on the Financial Performance of the Health & Life Services Department and the Safeguarding of College Data, during which he commented on the management of the risk of the decreased demand for higher income generating courses as well as the assurances received that all appropriate controls are in place to protect college data.

He went on to provide an overview of the College's financial performance for the quarter ended 31 October 2016 reporting a surplus of £1.4m, income of £11.7m and cash balances of £5.3m. He also confirmed that the 2015-16 Annual Report & Financial Statements had been laid before the Assembly and drew attention to the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Investment Strategy & Plan 2016/17, the Asset Management Policy and the Energy Management Policy.

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

The Chair of the Governing Body then reported that the highest level of assurance, with no recommendations, had been awarded following an internal audit of Core Financial Processes covering eleven sub-process areas and reminded the meeting that no recommendations had arisen from the external audit of the 2015-16 Annual Report & Financial Statements.

8.0 ERNE CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Erne Campus Project Board held on Friday 16 December 2016.

Councillor Irvine noted the potential for a conflict of interest in this item should the College's application for planning be discussed due to his membership of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council. It was then agreed that there was no need for Councillor Irvine to withdraw from the meeting at this point.

In updating the meeting on developments in relation to the Erne Campus Development Project, the Chief Executive Officer apprised the meeting of the feedback received from departmental officials following the submission of the addendum to the business case for the project seeking an additional £4m to achieve PassivHaus Premium and BREEAM Outstanding standards. He also confirmed that five contractors had been pre-qualified to progress to bid for the Integrated Consultancy Team contract and advised that a number of stakeholders were yet to feedback on the planning application as required and that it is anticipated that a decision on the planning application will be made at the February 2017 meeting of the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Planning Committee.

The Chair of the Governing Body, supported by Mr Skuce, in their capacity as members of the Project Board, commented on their satisfaction with the progress to date as well as in their confidence in the ability of the team to deliver to the standards set.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Chief Executive Officer commended the Marketing Manager for her energy and vision in the development of a Communications Strategy for the project; agreed to share suggestions on gender identity issues with the Project Sponsor; and confirmed that the critical path is still on target advising, however, that any further delays would impact on the expected occupancy of September 2019.

9.0 AMENDMENT TO INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Letter from DfE Detailing Proposed Amendment to Instrument of Government
- Paper 09.02 Revised Instrument of Government.

It was agreed that there was no need for Councillor Irvine and Mr Mayne, the two governors nominated by the Education Authority, to withdraw from the meeting during discussion on this item.

The proposed amendment to the Instrument of Government removing the right of the Education Authority to nominate members to college governing bodies was highlighted and clarification was provided on the continued membership of the existing governors nominated by the Education Authority until the expiration of their term of office. A governor then expressed his disappointment at the discontinuation of this relationship.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Weir, seconded by Mr O'Hanlon, adoption of the revised Instrument of Government.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman reported the following matters:

- **New Year's Honours 2017** – Congratulations were extended to Mr McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, on his receipt of an MBE Honour for services to Further Education in Northern Ireland;
- **Annual Accountability Review Meeting** – The Annual Accountability Review Meeting with the College's sponsor department will take place on Thursday 19 January 2017 at which the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Executive Officer will provide an account of their stewardship in the preceding year;
- **College Governing Body Chairs' Meeting** – The Chairs of the Governing Bodies of the six colleges will meet with the Department for the Economy's Director of Further Education on 23 February 2017;
- **Higher Education Graduation** – The Annual Higher Education Graduation Ceremony was held on 13 December 2016 and was attended by Zambian students who graduated with a Diploma in IT delivered through e-learning;
- **Research into the Remuneration of Governors** – The Department for the Economy has made college chairs aware of an independent research study being undertaken into the effects of the remuneration of governors.

A discussion then ensued during which members commented on the College's achievement of the targets set by the Department for the Economy and the debt forgiveness bestowed upon those colleges that have underperformed; sought clarification on the method to be used in apportioning forthcoming budget cuts amongst colleges; acknowledged the risk posed to the College by its relatively low reliance on FLU funding in light of the loss of access to EU funds post Brexit and highlighted the need to plan for this eventuality; and suggested that colleges should be rewarded financially for meeting targets aligned to government priorities. In response to a query from a member, the meeting was also apprised of the status of the application lodged to the Department for the Economy for funding to develop a Social Impact Bond.

AGREED: that the Governing Body's expectation for recognition in budget allocations of the College's consistently good performance be highlighted at the Annual Accountability Review Meeting as well as at the Bilateral Meeting with the Department for the Economy.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer joined the meeting during the above item.

11.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S BUSINESS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Draft Letter of Offer for the Renewable Engine Project
- Paper 11.02 Annex D – Standard Conditions of Grant
- Paper 11.03 Annex E – Programme Rules
- Paper 11.04 Annex F – Output Indicator Guidance.

The Chief Executive Officer reported the following matters:

- **Renewable Engine Project** – A Letter of Offer has been issued for the Interreg VA funded Renewable Engine Project. A collective cash contribution of circa £300k is required from the partner organisations with approximately half of this to be committed from South West College;
- **Department for Education Permanent Secretary** – The former Acting Permanent Secretary in the Department for Employment & Learning, Mr Baker, has been appointed as Permanent Secretary in the Department for Education;
- **Tenth Anniversary of the Formation of South West College** – Suggestions are welcomed from members on the format of a celebratory event to mark the tenth anniversary of the formation of South West College;
- **Partnership with Chinese College** – A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with Xiangyang Vocational and Technical College for collaborations in curriculum and course design and it is hoped that this partnership will lead to the enrolment of international students in South West College in future years. Progress has also been made in relation to the College’s application to the Borders Agency for Tier 4 status to facilitate the enrolment of international students;
- **Confucius Institute Conference** – A number of Management Team members attended the Global Confucius Institute Conference at its headquarters in Hanban. The keynote speech delivered by the Vice Premier of the People’s Republic of China will be circulated to governors.

In response to query from a member in relation to the Letter of Offer for the Renewable Engine Project, the need to manage the risk posed by currency fluctuations was acknowledged.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Weir, seconded by Mr Archdale, that approval be granted to sign the Letter of Offer for the Renewable Engine Project.

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 College Grouping and Full Time Equivalent Enrolment Figures
- Paper 13.02 Guide for Governors of FE Colleges
- Paper 13.03 Board Effectiveness – A Good Practice Guide from the Northern Ireland Audit Office
- Paper 13.04 Key Lessons Learned from Investigations into the NI Events Company
- Paper 13.05 Letter to Chairs from FE Means Success Programme Manager
- Paper 13.06 FE Means Success Ezine
- Paper 13.07 Email Seeking College Participation in Research Project

- Paper 13.08 Practices and Processes of Governance Research – Proposal Outline
- Paper 13.09 Practices and Processes of Governance Research – Further Detail.

With reference to papers 13.05 and 13.06, the Chair of the Governing Body suggested that consideration is given by the committees to the implications for the College of the relevant projects under the Department’s FE Means Success Strategy.

AGREED: that the committees of the Governing Body consider the implications for the College of the relevant projects under the Department for the Economy’s FE Means Success Strategy.

Members were made aware of the practical arrangements entailed in participation in the proposed research study outlined in papers 13.07, 13.08 and 13.09. A brief discussion then ensued during which members commented on the benefits and drawbacks of involvement in the study and following which approval was granted for the College’s participation in the research study’s funding application.

AGREED: that approval be granted for the College’s participation in the application for funding of the proposed research study.

Mr Skuce commented on the good quality video conference experience and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture (7:00 pm).

14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

15.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 8 March 2017 at 5:30 pm in the Enniskillen campus.

16.0 EVALUATION OF MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 16 Governing Body Meeting Evaluation Form.

Governors conveyed satisfaction with all elements of the meeting.

Mrs Lucas, Staff Governor, withdrew from the meeting at this juncture as did Mr Frazer, Technical Supervisor. The meeting then went into private session and concluded at 7.40 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 2017

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____