

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**  
held on Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 5:30 pm  
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus

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### **PRESENT:**

Ms Siobhan Breen  
Mrs Deborah Brown  
Mrs Maureen Brunt  
Dr Frances Campbell  
Mr Jack Daly (*from item 6.0*)  
Ms Elaine Grier (*via MS Teams*)  
Mr Brian Ingram  
Mrs Sandra Isherwood  
Ms Alana Jones Campbell  
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey  
Mr Seamus McCaffrey  
Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive  
Ms Anne McCleary  
Mrs Gillian McDowell (*via MS Teams*) (*from item 6.0*)  
Mr Michael McGuckin  
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chairman  
Dr Lynsey Quinn

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body  
Mrs Nicola Nugent, Executive Support Officer  
Mr Sean O'Donnell, Head of Finance (*via MS Teams*)(*item 6.0 only*)

## **1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES**

Dr O'Shiel began by offering the Governing Body's condolences to Ms McCartan on her recent bereavements. He also offered its congratulations to Ms McCleary on the award of an Order of the British Empire (OBE).

Dr O'Shiel then acknowledged Ms Grier, Mrs McCaffrey, Mr McCaffrey and Mr McGuckin's last attendance at a governing body meeting and spoke of the contribution made by each of them to the College during their tenure as a governor. Ms Grier, Mrs McCaffrey, Mr McCaffrey and Mr McGuckin reflected in turn on their experience as governors and wished the College well in its future endeavours.

Dr O'Shiel also welcomed Mrs Nugent to the meeting in her role as Executive Support Officer and noted that no apologies had been tendered.

## **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 WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2023**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 26 April 2023.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Brunt, seconded by Ms Breen, 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 Strategic Alliance Communication.

**Students** – Dr O'Shiel reminded governors to focus on impacts on students during the course of the meeting and commented on the student recruitment drive for 2023/24 programmes.

**Election of Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee** – In light of the imminent departure of Mrs McCaffrey from the Governing Body, Dr O'Shiel explained the process for the election of the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee and sought nominations for this role.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mrs Brunt, appointment of Mr Ingram as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee for 2023/24 and 2024/25.**

**Departmental Attendance at September 2023 Governing Body Meeting** – Members agreed to invite Ms Louise Watson, as the new Director of Further Education (FE), Department for the Economy (DfE), to the September 2023 Governing Body meeting. At a later juncture in the meeting it was agreed to extend this invitation to Ms Moira Doherty, incoming Deputy Secretary, DfE.

**New Governing Body Members** – Dr O'Shiel advised that appointments will be made by DfE to the four Business, Industry and Professional category vacancies arising in the Governing Body. He added that it may be necessary to acquire additional skills through co-option and sought delegated authority to the Chair, Chief Executive and Secretary to progress the co-option process if required.

**AGREED: that authority is delegated to the Chair, Chief Executive and Secretary to progress the co-option process if required.**

**Strategic Alliance** – Dr O'Shiel reported on the establishment of a working group for each of the six work-strands being progressed through the Strategic Alliance proposal with Northern Regional College and North West Regional College as well as an overarching Task & Finish Group comprising Governing Body representatives and Principals. He reminded members of the Alliance's objective to increase enrolments, reduce costs and enhance quality as well as of its potential to inform the outcome of the Review of the FE Delivery Model.

## 5.0 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 DfE Update on Risk Assessment and Partnership Agreement.

**Celebration of Success Events** – Ms McCartan commented on the three successful Celebration of Success events held in the Dungannon, Enniskillen and Omagh campuses recognizing the achievements of FE, work based learning and entitlement framework students.

**Engagement with External Stakeholders** – Ms McCartan reported on engagements with external stakeholders through events hosted and attended.

**Staff Briefings** – Ms McCartan reported on the campus briefings delivered in May 2023 during which comprehensive updates were provided to staff.

**Staff Acknowledgement** – Ms McCartan acknowledged the support and dedication of staff and management and noted the challenges of the ongoing lecturing staff pay dispute for all.

**Governance** – With reference to paper 05.01, Ms McCartan drew attention to DfE's classification of South West College as 'medium' risk as well as to the update provided on the development of a Partnership Agreement. She also commented on the continued development of the robust governance arrangements in place within the College.

***Mr Daly and Mrs McDowell joined the meeting at this juncture.***

## 6.0 **2023/24 BUDGET**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Draft Budget Allocation Letter
- Paper 06.02 Proposed 2023/24 Budget.

***Mr O'Donnell, Head of Finance, joined the meeting for this item.***

Ms McCartan reported on the draft 2023/24 budget allocation of £29.409m as well as on the additional allocations confirmed for Traineeships and Advanced Technicals highlighting the resultant overall budget reduction of circa 6%. She noted that the College is required by DfE to deliver £1.049m savings through discretionary cost reductions, curriculum efficiencies and other savings and quantified an additional remaining budget shortfall of £871k. She advised that a further examination of income generation / maximisation will be undertaken in an attempt to reduce the shortfall and that any additional cost savings required may give rise to staffing implications. She added that a more detailed budget will be presented to the Governing Body at its September 2023 meeting, which would be informed by student recruitment.

Mr O'Donnell explained that further income could be realised from Traineeships, Higher Level Apprenticeships and the recently awarded Rural Economic Accelerator Programme, and commented on the work underway within the Strategic Alliance's Finance Working Group to identify and deliver savings.

Mr McCaffrey noted the Finance & General Purposes Committee's satisfaction with the due diligence undertaken in relation to the minimisation of the impact of the budget

reduction on students and staff as well as the assurance provided by the collaborations with other colleges.

In response to a query from a member, Ms McCartan confirmed that the lecturers' pay offer, if agreed, had already been funded by DfE.

On conclusion of the item, the Governing Body noted the high level 2023/24 budget presented with a view to receiving a more detailed budget for approval at its September 2023 meeting.

***Mr O'Donnell withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.***

## **7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2023**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Wednesday 10 May 2023
- Paper 07.02 Data Protection Policy
- Paper 07.03 Access to Information Policy
- Paper 07.04 Special Category Appropriate Policy Document
- Paper 07.05 Records Management Policy
- Paper 07.06 Conflict of Interest Policy
- Paper 07.07 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Paper 07.08 Declaration and Handling of Criminal History Disclosures Policy and Procedures (Students)
- Paper 07.09 Business Continuity Management Policy
- Paper 07.10 Risk Management Policy
- Paper 07.11 User Account Management Policy
- Paper 07.12 Corporate Risk Register Review Report.

In reporting on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 May 2023, Mrs McCaffrey, Committee Chair, began by highlighting the satisfactory assurance ratings awarded following internal audit reviews of Key Financial Controls and the Framework for Compliance with Legal & Regulatory Requirements as well as the implementation of the recommendations made in response to the internal audit of Email Access Controls.

In reporting on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 May 2023, Mrs McCaffrey, Committee Chair, provided an overview of the reports received by the Committee in the areas of internal audit, external audit, fraud, raising a concern, governance, risk management and IT security. She highlighted the Committee's acceptance of the strategy for the audit of the 2022/23 Annual Report & Financial Statements, its recommendation for approval of the policies referenced in papers 07.02 to 07.11 above, the risks presented by the budgetary pressures and the lecturing staff pay dispute and the deep dive undertaken of the risk associated with Health & Safety.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mr Ingram, adoption of the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting and the recommendation therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.**

## **8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee held on Wednesday 17 May 2023
- Paper 08.02 Post 16 PTE Quality Assurance Handbook 2023-2025.

Referencing the minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2023, Dr Quinn, Committee Chair, highlighted the discussion held on the review undertaken of the curriculum delivery model for 2023/34 in light of budget constraints and acknowledged the work of staff in developing the planned curriculum adjustments. She also drew attention to the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Post 16 PTE Quality Assurance Handbook 2023-2025, noting the need for a further review of this handbook upon implementation of the management realignment.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Dr Quinn, seconded by Mr McGuckin, adoption of the minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Assurance Committee meeting and the recommendation therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.**

## **9.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 31 MAY 2023**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 31 May 2023
- Paper 09.02 Student Internship Policy.

Ms Jones Campbell, Chair of the Staffing Committee, drew members' attention to the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 May 2023 and the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Student Internship Policy.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Ms Jones Campbell, seconded by Mrs Isherwood, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendation 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 7 JUNE 2023**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7 June 2023
- Paper 10.02 Credit Control & Debt Management Policy
- Paper 10.03 Fees & Charges Policy 2023/24.

In reporting on the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 7 June 2023, Mr McCaffrey, Committee Chair, commented on the reports received on financial and estates matters, noted the diligent approach taken in relation to quantifying and planning for budgetary pressures and highlighted the Committee's

recommendation for approval of the Credit Control & Debt Management Policy and the Fees & Charges Policy 2023/24.

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

**11.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2023/24**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 Schedule of Governing Body and Committee Meetings 2023/24.

**AGREED: acceptance of the proposed Schedule of Governing Body and Committee Meetings 2023/24.**

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

No declarations were made under this heading.

**13.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

Ms McCartan commented on the efforts invested into reaching a resolution to the lecturers' pay dispute and acknowledged the disappointing current position. She also commented on the strong desire of the employer to facilitate enhanced salaries for staff and on the impending impact of the current economic environment.

**14.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**

Members commented favourably on the effectiveness of the meeting.

***Ms Breen, 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 13 SEPTEMBER 2023**

CHAIR



DATE

13/09/2023