

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 08 January 2020
in the Boardroom, Enniskillen Campus, Fairview, Enniskillen

PRESENT:

- Mr Peter Archdale
- Ms Siobhan Breen
- Mrs Joanne Lucas (*via Video Conference*)
- Mrs Margaret Martin (*via Video Conference, items 9.0 – 13.0*)
- Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mrs Gillian McDowell
- Mrs Monica McGeary (*via Video Conference*)
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Mrs Joanne Moore (*via Video Conference*)
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chair)
- Mr Michael Skuce

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mr Zack El Marif
- Ms Claire O'Donnell, Secretary to the Governing Body

PRELIMINARIES

The Chair extended a very warm welcome to Mr Zack El Marif, who was attending his first meeting as the new Student Governor for South West College.

9.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded from Mr Seamus McCaffrey and Mr Gerard O'Hanlon.

10.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No declarations were made under this heading.

11.0 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 Minutes of 13 November 2019 Governing Body Meeting

AGREED: adoption of the minutes of the Governing Body meeting and the recommendations therein. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

NOTED: that there were no matters arising.

12.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

13.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

13.1 ETI Inspection

The Chief Executive advised that notification had been received from ETI about the substantial Level 3 inspection programmed for Semester 2. He explained that South West College would be the first of the six colleges to be inspected, starting on 3 February 2020. The College were expecting 16 inspectors across five days of the inspection. Feedback sessions would be open to governors and outputs would include:

- (i) An oral report for each area inspected
- (ii) A summary of key findings for each college
- (iii) A composite report for the six colleges

On the proposal of Mrs Martin, it was agreed to issue a letter of support to staff to wish them well with the upcoming inspection.

The Chief Executive agreed to share dates for feedback sessions.

13.2 PFI Update

In relation to PFI, the Chief Executive advised that PWC were meeting with the Audit Office in January to discuss the proposal around pre-payment of lifecycle costs.

13.3 Principals Group

Finally, the Chief Executive apprised members that he would be chairing the Principals Group from January 2020.

Mrs Martin exited the meeting at this juncture.

14.0 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 14.01 Minutes of 11 December 2019 Finance & GP Meeting
- Paper 14.02 Investment Policy
- Paper 14.03 Hospitality and Gifts Policy

In presenting the report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11 December 2019, Mr McGuckin, in the absence of the Committee Chair, informed members of updates on key strategic issues as follows:

- (i) Brexit – no update
- (ii) Erne Campus – covered under agenda items 4 and 5
- (iii) Long term Financial Planning – covered under agenda item 4
- (iv) Contractual arrangements – Mr McGuckin noted that Dr Cush was chairing the working group looking at internationalization and highlighted the great opportunities to attract international students but advised that this was a very competitive market.

- (v) PFI – covered under agenda item 5
- (vi) Student Experience – Mr McGuckin again welcomed Mr El Marif as the newly appointed Student Governor. He advised that Grant Thornton would be carrying out a piece of work on the student voice.

Referring to the Management Report, Mr McGuckin advised that the 2018/19 Financial Statements had been signed off and submitted. He further advised that the College's fixed assets now stood at £114m, and added that the Erne Project was on budget and on time, with assurances around standards such as PassiveHaus, particularly following the death of the main contractor. The College had an over spend of £1.312m with a balance sheet of £3.38m. Debtors totaled £2m while creditors totaled £4.5m. Mr McGuckin highlighted that 91% of all payments were made within 5 days. He recommended the Investment Policy and Hospitality & Gifts Policy for approval. Under the Estates Report, Mr McGuckin outlined the minor works spend, which he noted was mainly on the Gortin Road property. He then outlined a very comprehensive presentation received from Mr John Moss, Head of Built Environment, Creative and Life Sciences Faculty. Mr McGuckin noted that a request had now issued to Mr Michael Gould to meet the Governing Body to discuss the FE review. Finally, Mr McGuckin briefed the meeting on the insurance cover across the different campuses.

In response to queries from Mr Archdale, the Chief Executive explained that the College currently operated its Large Vehicle Repair (LVR) training out of a premise on the Killybrack Road which required some work. The owner of this premise also owned another premise on the Gortin Road which, after some work, would be suitable for LVR training. The Chief Executive explained that the College had received capital funding from the Department to carry out the work at the Gortin Road site.

NOTED: in relation to the minutes of the 11 December 2019 Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting it was noted that:

- (i) Under item 5.6.3 (Gortin Road) the last sentence should read 'The College planned to *train large vehicle repair apprentices at the new site....*'
- (ii) Under item 5.1.3 (Erne Project Finance Report) the second paragraph, second sentence should refer to *optimism* bias

AGREED: subject to the above amendments, adoption of the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations therein, including the Investment Policy and Hospitality & Gifts Policy. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

15.0 UPDATE ON BUDGETS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 15 Budget Update

NOTED: that this issue had been covered under agenda item 4.

16.0 ERNE CAMPUS UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 16 Erne Campus Update

Referring to Paper 16, the Chief Executive gave assurances that the project was on time and in budget. The Chair reminded governors that, by Departmental direction, members sitting on the Project Board had been asked to give assurances to other governors in relation to this project. The Chief Executive further advised that alternative arrangements were to be made following the death of one of the main contractors and that these would be discussed at the Project Board meeting on 24 January 2020.

Mr Archdale again raised the issue of a fit out strategy and was assured that this would be considered by the Project Board. Mr Archdale further queried who had marketing and public relations responsibility for the project. The Chief Executive assured him that a huge amount of publicity was already happening and that this would be given a much higher profile in the coming weeks and months. Dr Cush pointed out that, from the end of January 2020, marketing activity on the Fairview site would include notices on the side of the building. Referring to the College's Facebook page, Mrs McGeary commented on the sharpness of the information, adding that it would be a good vehicle to promote the new campus.

17.0 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 17.01 Minutes of 4 December 2019 Staffing Committee Meeting
- Paper 17.02 Stress Prevention and Management Policy

In presenting the report of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 4 December 2019, Committee Chair Mrs McDowell, focused on the Management Report. She apprised members that there was a high level of activity in health and wellbeing, that the Equality Officer would be retiring and that following consultation the Stress Prevention and Management Policy was now presented to the Governing Body for approval. Mrs McDowell noted that sickness absence had gone down but that long term absence was an issue. She explained that the Staffing Committee had requested an executive summary of the sickness absence figures, adding that it would be useful for the Governing Body to have sight of this too. Finally, Mrs McDowell apprised members of a very good and concise presentation given by Mr Black on resource planning and workforce development in the Business Development section.

AGREED: adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein, including the Stress Prevention and Management Policy. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

Mrs McDowell then further apprised the meeting of two matters arising since the 4 December 2019 Staffing Committee meeting. Firstly, she outlined the requirement to have a Deputy Safeguarding Lead in. A Staff Request Form had been duly completed and was submitted for approval. An updated version of the Safeguarding Policy would be presented to the Education Committee on 22 January 2020, to include this new post.

Finally, Mrs McDowell apprised members that due to the very significant difficulty of attracting engineering lecturers, the College proposed to review the starting salary level. Members expressed concern about wider implications for other curriculum areas and the Chief Executive provided an assurance to members that until such time as an agreement had been reached with the unions, the College would consider any future

requests carefully and on a case by case basis. He explained that the College had resisted this approach for as long as possible.

AGREED: (i) to appoint a new Deputy Safeguarding Lead as outlined above and; (ii) to offer a starting salary to include two additional points to new Engineering lecturers.

18.0 EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 18.01 Minutes of 27 November 2019 EQP Committee Meeting
- Paper 18.02 Higher Education Admissions Policy
- Paper 18.03 Higher Education Internal Moderation Policy
- Paper 18.04 Higher Education Feedback on Assessment Policy
- Paper 18.05 Management of WBL in HE Policy
- Paper 18.06 Learning Resource Centre Policy
- Paper 18.07 Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan
- Paper 18.08 Excellence in Teaching and Learning Strategy – FE and WBL
- Paper 18.09 FE and WBL Quality Handbook

In presenting the report of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 27 November 2019, Committee Chair Mrs Moore, outlined a robust discussion on the key strategic issues. The Student Voice had now become the Student and would look at issues including student support and the student voice. In updating on the quality of teaching and learning, Mrs Moore extended her best wishes for the upcoming ETI inspection. She added that the Chief Executive would be bringing assurances about future skills and staffing to the next meeting. Under the curriculum, Mrs Moore explained outlined the changes to the Training for Success scheme, and added that higher education, further education and future curriculum would all be considered under the curriculum key strategic issue moving forward.

Referring to the Management Report, Mrs Moore outlined a very detailed report that included a proposal for a pre-nursing apprenticeship, a focus on social exclusion and an increased focus on safeguarding, which would be identified as key strategic issue moving forward. Mrs Moore noted that Dr O’Shiel had attended Safeguarding training in his role as Chair. Mrs Moore then outlined eight policies which were recommended for approval, before outlining the two presentations the committee had received. The presentation from Mr McNamee on the performance and strategic plans of the Automotive, Computing and Engineering Faculty had been short and precise she explained and had given members confidence about the future. She also outlined a very impressive student support presentation from Mr Niall Marlow and Mrs Sharon McGrath through which the mental health had been identified as the main issue. Mrs Moore noted that Mrs McGrath would be providing the Committee with more information on the issue. She also referenced the newly launched student support hub. Ms Breen explained that Student Services could provide contact details for the hub for anyone who required it. The hub, she added, was operated independently and information was confidential. The Chief Executive added that the student support hub was launched at the end of the first term and that Mrs McGrath would be presenting figures from this hub as they became available.

In relation to the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 27 November 2019, and in relation to item 4.3 (Curriculum), the Chief Executive then advised as follows:

- (i) Line 3 to read 'As the biggest *TfS Apprenticeship NI* provider...'
- (ii) Line 8/9 – the reference to private training providers to be removed
- (iii) Paragraph 2 – traineeships to be identified as a separate issue under the curriculum key strategic issue
- (iv) Paragraph 3 – the review is titled 'Review of Higher Education in Further Education'

Mr Archdale further clarified that under item 5.9 (Additional Items), the final sentence should read 'The College's social inclusion programme was the largest *in the sector*...'

AGREED: subject to the above amendments, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein, including the eight itemized policies. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

20.0 DECLARATION OF ANY HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

None

21.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

None

22.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

None

23.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

It was noted that the meeting room in Dungannon was particularly cold and that the sound quality was poor.

The meeting concluded at 7.05pm

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2020

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____