

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 1 May 2019 at 5:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Dungannon Campus, Circular Road, Dungannon

PRESENT:

- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chairman)
- Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
- Mr Peter Archdale
- Mrs Joanne Lucas
- Mrs Margaret Martin
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey
- Mrs Gillian McDowell
- Mrs Monica McGeary
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Miss Jane Molloy
- Mrs Joanne Moore
- Mr Stephen Moss (*from item 2.0*)
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
- Mr Michael Skuce

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Ms Donna Blaney, Deputy Director of Further Education, DfE
- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Ms Beverley Harrison, Director of Further Education, DfE
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Dr Helen Young, University of Stirling Research Fellow

APOLOGIES: Mr Derek Weir

1.0 PRELIMINARIES

Dr O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body, welcomed all present to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to Ms Harrison and Ms Blaney, Director and Deputy Director of Further Education, and to Miss Molloy, student governor.

2.0 DISCUSSION WITH DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FURTHER EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

CIRCULATED to those present:

- Paper 02 Department for the Economy Presentation.

Ms Harrison began by acknowledging the achievements of South West College and by commenting on the good relationships and partnership working between the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the College.

With reference to paper 02, Ms Harrison went on to advise the Governing Body of the Department's strategic direction, of the Further Education (FE) sector's role in

achieving a number of the outcomes set out in the draft Programme for Government, and of the objectives and progress of the FE Means Success Strategy. She also provided an overview of the progress of Transformation Programme and highlighted the challenges for the sector in 2019/20. With regard to the joint DfE and Department of Education (DE) working group on the education and training of 14 to 19 year olds, members commented on the issues arising out of the current 14 – 19 strategy and on the barriers to transformational change in this area for the benefit of young people.

Ms Harrison drew attention to the College's 2019/20 indicative budget allocation and re-enforced the importance of meeting budget targets at the year-end. She added that a bid had been submitted for funding to ease the sectoral pay pressures and that bids for further funding would be submitted where opportunities arise, but stressed that the College must plan its provision based on the indicative allocation provided as further funding is not guaranteed. She explained that colleges would be required to submit two versions of their College Development Plans (CDP) in the forthcoming weeks, with one CDP outlining the provision planned given the allocation set out in paper 02, and the other outlining the provision planned with the additional funding for pay pressures. A lengthy discussion then followed focusing on the impacts of reducing budgets for students and other college stakeholders, the outcomes of and actions arising from the Sectoral Value for Money Review, and the need for enhanced funding for the Training for Success programme.

In concluding her presentation, Ms Harrison updated the meeting on the College's capital allocation for 2019/20, on the endeavours to retain colleges' charitable status and on the approvals sought to extend governors' terms of office in the absence of a Minister.

Mr Moss joined the meeting during the above presentation.

Ms Blaney and Ms Harrison were thanked for their input and withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

3.0 REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 19 APRIL 2019

Dr O'Shiel reminded the meeting of the confidentiality of the discussions held at Governing Body and committee meetings as outlined in the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members.

He then reported that a meeting of Committee Chairs had been held to consider the provision achievable with the budget allocation for 2019/20. He explained that a range of efficiency and service reduction options had been considered by the committee chairs, which would be developed further for the scrutiny of the Governing Body at a future meeting.

Members then discussed the need for the segmentation of the provision that may be reduced to enable their roll-out should funding become available in-year and the importance of clear communications with stakeholders on the rationale for any service reductions, once agreed. Governors were also informed of the data required in the CDP submissions and were given assurances that decisions on any efficiencies and/or service reductions will be taken by the Governing Body.

4.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mr Derek Weir.

5.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

6.0 MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 6 March 2019 (Pages 1 – 8).

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr O’Hanlon and seconded by Mr Skuce, that the above minutes (Pages 1 - 8) be accepted as a true and accurate record. This section of the minutes was subsequently signed by the Chairman.

7.0 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

8.0 CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS

Dr O’Shiel reported on the meetings held with the Chairman and Chief Executive of North West Regional College (NWRC) on potential collaboration opportunities with a view to protecting services in the West. He also informed members of the meeting held with the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance and of the procurement process underway to source training to maximize the efficiency of committee meetings.

Dr O’Shiel then invited Miss Molloy, student governor, to raise any matters of interest with the Governing Body. Miss Molloy suggested that practical courses may benefit from a greater insight into current and future industry practice through enhanced exposure to industry practitioners. Dr Cush undertook to feedback Miss Molloy’s comments to Heads of Department. Miss Molloy also commented on the vibrancy of North West Regional College’s (NWRC) Student Union and undertook to invite the NWRC Student Governor to deliver a ten-minute presentation to the Governing Body on the NWRC Student Union.

9.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS

The Chief Executive reported the following matters:

- **Lecturers’ Negotiating Committee** – Communication has been issued to lecturing staff to inform them of the programme of work being progressed by a working

group established by the Lecturers' Negotiating Committee to explore and develop proposals designed to transform and modernize the existing pay, reward and conditions of service of academic staff in the FE sector;

- **Property Services Division** – College Principals have written to DfE to seek a review of the decision not to progress the business case to develop alternative sectoral procurement arrangements;
- **Youth Assembly** – Plans are in place to seek approval from the NI Assembly, when reconstituted, to establish a Youth Assembly;
- **Open University** – Assessment for Open University Institutional Approval will take place over a three-day period in May 2019.

10.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2019

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 20 March 2019
- Paper 09.02 Annual Development Plan 2019/20
- Paper 09.03 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

Mr Archdale, who had presided over the meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 20 March 2019, began his report by highlighting the prevalence of personal and social problems amongst students, as reported by the Acting Head of Department (Health & Life Services), during his presentation to the Committee and by commenting on the effectiveness of the supports put in place. He also noted the demand for increased places on the Foundation Degree in Health & Social Care and the submission of a report to DfE highlighting the negative impacts of the current government policy on FE in Higher Education (HE).

Mr Archdale also referred the meeting to the Annual Development Plan 2019/20, which had been reviewed by the meeting, as well as to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, which had been recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

In response to a question from a member, the meeting was provided with an overview of the proposed small scale Social Impact Bond pilot designed to test the viability of the Social Impact Bond concept in a local context.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Archdale, seconded by Mrs Moore, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and the recommendation therein.

11.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH 2019

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 27 March 2019
- Paper 10.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 10.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 10.04 Flexible Working Procedure.

Reporting on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 27 March 2019, Mrs McGeary, Chair of the Staffing Committee, referred to the presentation received on Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Industry & Training Department, and welcomed the reported opportunities for the development of apprenticeships in new curricular areas.

With reference to the Management Report received by the Committee, Mrs McGeary drew attention to the higher than target sickness absence rate, the delivery of the Managing Wellbeing & Resilience workshops in advance of the transition to the new management and academic structure, the delay in the implementation of the Systems, Technology & Services project and the statistics requested on appraisals. She also advised that an action plan would be developed upon analysis of the responses to the Investors in People (IIP) Survey for the period leading to the IIP re-accreditation assessment.

In concluding her report, she highlighted the ratification by the Chair of the Governing Body 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 Flexible Working Procedure.

Dr Cush then sought approval for maternity leave cover for the Legal & Compliance Officer and, with reference to section 7.3.5 of the minutes of the 27 March 2019 Staffing Committee meeting, advised that the transfer request referenced had been withdrawn by the staff member concerned.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McGeary, seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendation for adoption of the Flexible Working Procedure therein, as well as approval for the maternity leave cover detailed above.

12.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2019

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 April 2019
- Paper 11.02 Bad Debt Write Off Proposal
- Paper 11.03 Banking Review
- Paper 11.04 Financial Regulations
- Paper 11.04 Fees & Charges Policy 2019/20.

Mr McGuckin, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, explained that a presentation had been received by the Committee on the Financial Performance of the Business Development section and highlighted the comfort received by the Committee on the funding outlook and on the College's strong position to continue to promote innovation and deliver support to industry.

He then reported on the under-budget deficit for the seven months to 28 February 2019, confirmed that cash reserves remain within the range allowed by DfE and noted the 21% reduction in part-time lecturers costs over three years. He also reported on the final out-turn of £27.133m for the year to 31 March 2019 and explained that an authorized overspend of £410k is included in this figure.

With reference to papers 11.02, 11.03, 11.04 and 11.05, Mr McGuckin then drew attention to the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Bad Debt Write Off Review, the Banking Mandates, the Financial Regulations and the Fees & Charges Policy 2019/20.

In response to questions from members on the Student Hardship Fund, Mr McAlister acknowledged the disappointing uptake and detailed the comprehensive marketing measures undertaken to alert students to the availability of the fund. The stringent criteria for the Student Hardship Fund, as well as the potential effect on other benefits were then discussed. Members also discussed the indicative budget allocation for 2019/20, noting the £2m difference from the 2018/19 out-turn position and the overall college turnover of circa £42m.

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

13.0 UPDATE ON ERNE CAMPUS PROJECT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 12.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Erne Campus Project Board held on Friday 1 February 2019.

In relation to the Erne Project, Mr McAlister detailed the assessed values by the Integrated Supply Team (IST) and the Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) of the compensation events that have arisen to date, noting the significant difference between the two assessments and commenting on the affordability of each. He explained that the two parties are working to bring the matter to a resolution but cautioned that mediation or adjudication may be required. He added that construction is continuing and commented favourably on the quality of the work undertaken to date.

Members expressed concern regarding the timeliness and accessibility of the information provided to the Governing Body in light of the pace of the project and the potential impact of the risks involved. It was then agreed that a brief document illustrating the budget and programme position would be made available to governors at the next Governing Body meeting as well as an outline of the operational plan for the first three years of operation.

In response to queries from members, the meeting was informed of the gender neutrality of the facilities within the new campus and it was agreed that a site visit for governors would be arranged.

AGREED: that a brief document illustrating the budget and programme position would be made available to governors at the next Governing Body meeting as well as an outline of the operational plan for the first three years of operation, and that a site visit to the Erne Campus would be arranged for governors.

14.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

15.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

16.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

17.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 5:30 pm in the Enniskillen campus.

18.0 EVALUATION OF MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 16 Governing Body Meeting Evaluation Form.

Members commented on their satisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting.

The Student Governor, Miss Molloy, the Staff Governors, Mrs Lucas and Mr Moss, and the Researcher, Dr Young, withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into confidential session and concluded at 8:40 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2019

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____