

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 5:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Enniskillen Campus, Fairview, Enniskillen

PRESENT:

- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chairman
- Mr Michael McAlister, Chief Executive
- Mrs Joanne Lucas
- Mrs Margaret Martin (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey
- Mrs Gillian McDowell (*via video conference*) (*From item 7.0*)
- Mrs Monica McGeary (*via video conference*)
- Mr Michael McGuckin (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Joanne Moore (*via video conference*)
- Mr Stephen Moss (*Items 1.0 to 7.0 only*)
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon (*From item 7.0*)
- Mr Michael Skuce
- Mr Derek Weir

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Mr Sean O'Donnell, Head of Finance (*Item 7.0 only*)
- Dr Helen Young, University of Stirling Research Fellow

APOLOGIES:

- Mr Peter Archdale
- Miss Jane Molloy

1.0 PRELIMINARIES

Dr O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body, opened the meeting by welcoming all present.

In acknowledgement of the forthcoming end of Mr Weir's term of office as a governor, Dr O'Shiel then paid tribute to Mr Weir for his eight years of service to the Governing Body of South West College and for his contributions during that period. Mr McAlister echoed Dr O'Shiel's sentiments and thanked Mr Weir for his valuable input to the College on behalf of the Senior Management Team. In accepting the presentation offered, Mr Weir reflected fondly on his time at the College and spoke of his pleasure in working with the Governing Body and the Senior Management Team.

Dr O'Shiel explained that second terms of office had been accepted by Mrs McCaffrey, Mr McCaffrey and Mr McGuckin and nine month extensions accepted by Mrs Martin, Mrs McGeary, Mr O'Hanlon and Mr Skuce. He also advised that recruitment for maternity leave cover for Mrs McCauley's Secretary to the Governing Body position would commence during the Summer.

With reference to the Governing Body Effectiveness Workshop held in May 2019, Dr O'Shiel then highlighted the revised agenda format and commented on the objective

of maintaining focus on the agenda to conclude the meeting within two hours with relevant actions identified and recorded.

2.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mr Archdale and Miss Molloy. It was noted that Miss Molloy's presentation would be rescheduled to the September 2019 meeting.

3.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

4.0 MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 MAY 2019

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 1 May 2019.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

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

5.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04 Chairman's Presentation.

Dr O'Shiel noted the proposed change to safeguarding arrangements to be discussed later in the meeting as well as his intention to undertake safeguarding training relevant to his role as Chair of the Governing Body.

With reference to paper 04, Dr O'Shiel highlighted the projected income and expenditure for 2019/20 and reminded members of the proposed reductions in Department for the Economy (DfE) grants, putting these in the context of the overall income. He also drew attention to the Erne Project budget summary and to third level demographic projections for the Republic of Ireland.

Dr O'Shiel went on to refer to the College's governance structure made up of the new organisational structure and the governing body framework, and spoke of how greater effectiveness in governing body operations will positively impact management structures and the college as a whole.

At a later stage in the meeting Dr O'Shiel apprised members of the ongoing work with North West Regional College to develop collaborative projects in the West as well as of a meeting held with Neueda to explore potential future engagements.

6.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

The Chief Executive reported the following matters:

- **Dalradian Gold** – A letter has been received from a local councillor requesting information on any financial connections held by the College with Dalradian Gold. The Chief Executive will write to the councillor concerned to inform him of the scholarship opportunities afforded to college students by Dalradian Gold.
- **SSE Airtricity Scholarship Fund** – SSE Airtricity has made £43k available to South West College students in scholarships. Scholarships are also provided to college students from other sources.
- **Open University Institutional Approval** – South West College has achieved full institutional approval from the Open University as well as validation for honours degrees in Mechanical Engineering, Sport and Exercise, and Construction Engineering and Management. Members extended their congratulations to all involved in this outstanding achievement.
- **Consolidation of Community Provision** – A press enquiry has been received regarding the consolidation of the College's community provision. A press release approved by DfE will be issued in response to further enquiries and circulated to governors.
- **Sectoral Value for Money Review** – The College is in negotiations with DfE regarding the content of its action plan developed in response to the sectoral Value for Money Review undertaken by Tribal in 2018.
- **Anticipated Inspection** – It is likely that a sectoral evaluation of curriculum planning provision in Further Education in Northern Ireland will be undertaken in the 2019/20 academic year.
- **Colleges' Charitable Status** – DfE is in ongoing negotiations with the Department for Communities regarding colleges' charitable status. Members commented on the impact that removal of this status would have on colleges.

7.0 2019/20 BUDGET

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Budgetary Projections 2019-2022
- Paper 07.02 Budget Summary 2019/20
- Paper 07.03 Business Cases to DfE
- Paper 07.04 Revised Budget Reduction Plan.

Mr O'Donnell, Head of Finance, joined the meeting at this juncture.

Mr O'Donnell began his report by apprising the meeting of the new financial structure to be implemented in 2019/20 as a result of the organisational review and the consequent use of estimated figures due to the absence of prior year benchmarks. He added that a mid-year budget revision will therefore be undertaken if necessary.

With reference to paper 07.02, Mr O'Donnell then highlighted the projected accounting deficit of £4.274m as well as the projected cash deficit of £736k. He cautioned that £2.4m of unsecured DfE grant income has been included in the figures, as advised by DfE. In terms of pay costs, he explained that allowance has been made for statutory employers' pension contribution increases, anticipated pay increments and a more realistic part-time lecturing budget. With regard to Private Finance Initiative (PFI) costs, he advised that allowance has been made for current commitments and that relevant figures will be revised in-year following the planned review of the financial model.

Mr O'Donnell concluded by drawing attention to papers 07.01, 07.03 and 07.04, and by noting that bids for additional funding will continue to be made where opportunities arise with a view to achieving operational breakeven for the 2019/20 year.

In response to a questions from members regarding potential implications of a recent court ruling on holiday pay in another organisation, Mr O'Donnell, supported by Mr McAlister, explained that an analysis of potential liability has not been undertaken and that no communication on the matter has been received by DfE. In response to queries on the anticipated reprofiling of the PFI financial model, Mr O'Donnell explained that it is hoped that the reprofile will result in a more even spread of service charge payments over the remaining term of the contract.

Dr O'Shiel thanked Mr O'Donnell for his presentation and acknowledged the work involved in the budget setting process for 2019/20.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Weir, seconded by Mr McCaffrey, adoption of the 2019/20 budget and 2019-2022 financial projections as presented.

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

8.0 ERNE CAMPUS PROJECT UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Erne Campus Project Board held on 29 March 2019
- Paper 08.02 Minutes of a meeting of the Erne Campus Project Board held on 17 April 2019
- Paper 08.03 Minutes of a meeting of the Erne Campus Project Board held on 31 May 2019
- Paper 08.04 Erne Project Cost Summary
- Paper 08.05 Programme and Budget Progress.

Mr McAlister informed members that a special meeting of the Erne Campus Project Board had been held on 20 June 2019 in which a detailed review of the project budget had been undertaken. He explained that all known and expected costs had been considered in this review and an assumption of no income from disposal of the Fairview campus made. With reference to the cost summary provided in paper 08.04, he then highlighted the £167k underspend currently projected following this review.

In response to a query from a member, Mr McAlister confirmed the satisfaction of the DfE representative on the Project Board on the revised financial reporting and communication arrangements. He also advised that an operational plan for the building will be developed during the 2019/20 year, and, at the suggestion of a member, undertook to consider seeking private sponsorship for some of the facilities in the Erne Campus.

Members then commented on the assurances provided by Mr McAlister's report as well as on the value of the information provided in papers 08.04 and 08.05.

9.0 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Wednesday 15 May 2019
- Paper 09.02 Annual Corporate Risk Register Review Report
- Paper 09.03 Conflict of Interest Policy
- Paper 09.04 Whistleblowing Policy.

Dr O'Shiel alerted the meeting to the Audit & Risk Committee's identification of a skills gap in the area of IT in light of the risk posed by cyber-crime. He then reported Mrs Moore's experience in this area as well as on her willingness to join the Committee.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mr Skuce, appointment of Mrs Moore to the Audit & Risk Committee.

In presenting her report of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 15 May 2019, Mrs McCaffrey, Committee Chair, informed members that a 'satisfactory' assurance had been awarded following an internal audit review of Procurement and Management of Contracts and explained that updated DfE guidance on business cases is awaited. She went on to report that a review of the Internal Audit Plan had been undertaken resulting in the inclusion of an audit of the PFI model and the replacement of an audit of Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) Cost Savings with an internal analysis. She also reported on the Committee's acceptance of the proposed strategy for the audit of the 2019/20 Annual Report & Financial Statements following scrutiny and noted that the risk factors listed within are consistent with the risks identified by the College.

Mrs McCaffrey referred to the update provided to the Committee on risk management in the Erne Project and welcomed the provision of information on the status of the project in terms of overall budget, fit-out budget, resourcing and programme as requested by the Committee. She went on to comment on the significant risk posed in relation to IT Security and welcomed Mrs Moore's membership of the Committee in light of her expertise in this area. Mrs McCaffrey also highlighted the Committee's

recommendation for approval of the Conflict of Interest Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

In response to a query by the Committee Chair regarding the status of the business case to establish alternative sectoral procurement arrangements, Mr McAlister confirmed that the business case will be progressed by DfE and reported that a scheduled meeting with Property Service Division (PSD) had been postponed by PSD to facilitate internal engagement.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mr Skuce, adoption of the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting and the recommendations therein.

10.0 EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 22 May 2019
- Paper 10.02 Submission of Coursework Policy
- Paper 10.03 FE Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy
- Paper 10.04 Assessment Policy
- Paper 10.05 Safeguarding Children, Adults, Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection Policy
- Paper 10.06 Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure for Students.

Mrs Martin, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, began her report of the committee meeting held on Wednesday 22 May 2019, by highlighting the focus to be placed by the Committee in 2019/20 on the student voice and the quality of teaching and learning. She then referred to the presentation received on the performance and strategic plans of the Business Services department noting the planned extension to the student induction period to stabilize enrolments through enhanced support to students, the value of the Learning Mentor and Student Engagement Officer roles in supporting students and the achievement of a Business Services student in attaining first place nationally in the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) tax and performance management modules.

Regarding the Management Report received by the Committee, Mrs Martin apprised the meeting of the continual development of the capacity of staff in the area of digital learning and the importance placed on maintaining quality provision in both digital and traditional classroom delivery. She also welcomed the institutional approval secured from the Open University, spoke of the higher education recruitment issues encountered sectorally, commended the Renewable Engine project's PhD students on the publication and presentation of their academic research, endorsed the College's commitment to provide mental health support to students and commented on the challenge in providing support outside of the College's dual mandate, particularly in light of ongoing budgetary constraints. She also highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Submission of Coursework Policy, the FE Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy, the Assessment Policy, the Safeguarding Children, Adults, Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure for Students.

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

11.0 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 5 June 2019
- Paper 11.02 Equality Progress Report
- Paper 11.03 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 11.04 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 11.05 Flexi Scheme
- Paper 11.06 Employee Standards Policy
- Paper 11.07 Amendments to Employee Standards Policy.

Reporting on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 5 June 2019, Mrs McGeary, Chair of the Staffing Committee, referred to the presentation received on Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Health & Life Services Department, and drew particular attention to the reported increase in the number of students presenting with social and mental health challenges as well as to the Mental Health First Aid initiative to equip staff with the skills to support affected students. She also commented on the enhanced attention to be placed on the resiliency of curriculum teams and on the impact on staff of meeting increasing student needs.

With reference to the Management Report received by the Committee, Mrs McGeary confirmed that an extension to the College's Investors in People (IIP) accreditation to June 2020 had been awarded following a strategic review, noted the withdrawal of the College's Princes Trust provision and the assurances received on the alternative programmes available to those eligible for Princes Trust support, and drew attention to the development of a business case for DfE funding to implement the proposed restructure of the Technical Services team. 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 approval of the Equality Progress Report 2018/19, the Flexi Scheme and the Employee Standards Policy. She also highlighted the Committee's request for authority to be delegated to the Chief Executive to ratify routine appointments over the Summer months.

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

12.0 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 12.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2019
- Paper 12.02 Financial Management Report

- Paper 12.03 Credit Control and Debt Management Policy.

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 Industry & Training Department and highlighted the sustained growth in Training for Success and Apprentice NI enrolments supported by the College's strong industry engagement and social inclusion provision. He also commented on the submission of a business case for funding to deliver seven additional Welding Academies due to exceptional demand in this area, the 9% of curriculum delivered virtually and the £250k reduction in part-time lecturing costs since 2015.

Mr McGuckin then drew attention to the recorded trading deficit for the nine months to 30 April 2019 of £1.967m, to the bank balance of £4.05m at 30 April 2019 as well as to the operating cash surplus of £490k and noted that a breakeven position at the 31 July 2019 year end is projected as planned. He then referred to the budget report received from the Head of Finance earlier in the meeting and highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Credit Control & Debt Management Policy.

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

13.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2019/2020

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 13 Schedule of Meetings 2019/20.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed Schedule of Governing Body and Committee Meetings 2019/20.

14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

15.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 15 Outstanding Actions.

Following a review of paper 15 it was noted that one action remains outstanding.

16.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members commented favourably on the revised agenda format highlighting the value of the indicative timings therein. It was suggested that this revised format be used as a template for the agenda of committee meetings also.

Mrs Lucas and Dr Young withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into confidential session and concluded at 7:25 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____