

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 9 January 2019 at 5:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Enniskillen Campus, Fairview, Enniskillen

PRESENT:

- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chairman)
- Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
- Mr Peter Archdale
- Mrs Joanne Lucas (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Margaret Martin (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey
- Mrs Gillian McDowell (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Monica McGeary (*via video conference*)
- Mr Michael McGuckin (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Joanne Moore (*via video conference*)
- Mr Stephen Moss
- Mr Michael Skuce
- Mr Derek Weir (*via video conference*)

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive (*via video conference*)
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Dr Helen Young, University of Stirling Research Fellow

APOLOGIES:

- Miss Jane Molloy
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon

1.0 PRELIMINARIES

Mr Skuce, Vice Chair, formally introduced and welcomed Dr O'Shiel as Chair of the Governing Body. He wished him every success in his new role and offered the full support of the Governing Body.

Dr O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body, thanked Mr Skuce for his assistance to date. He spoke of his delight in being offered the Chair position and added that he looked forward to working with governors in the forthcoming years. He listed the recent meetings attended and those planned and commented on the College's strong position in meeting the challenges facing it.

Dr O'Shiel then introduced Dr Helen Young, Research Fellow with the University of Stirling, who was in attendance to audio record the meeting as part of the 'Processes and Practices of Governing in FE Colleges in the UK' Research Project.

2.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Miss Jane Molly and Mr Gerard O'Hanlon.

3.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

4.0 MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2018

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 14 November 2018 (Pages 1 – 9).

Mrs McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body, undertook to correct a typographical error highlighted by a member.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Archdale and seconded by Mr Skuce, that 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.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Articles and Instrument of Government

Minute Reference 5.2

Mrs McCauley confirmed that the revised Articles and Instrument of Government had been signed, sealed and submitted to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for countersigning.

5.2 College Development Plan 2018-21

Minute Reference 10.0

It was noted that a presentation on the College Development Plan 2018-2021 would be provided later in the meeting.

5.3 2018/19 Budget

Minute Reference 14.0

- Paper 14 Letter from DfE Confirming Revised Budget.

With reference to paper 14, Mr McAlister, Chief Executive, confirmed the revised 2018/19 budget of £25.304m through additional allocations from DfE. He commented on the substantial improvement in the budget position since the beginning of the year and on the efforts being made to meet the remaining shortfall of circa £450k.

In response to a query from a member regarding the expected 2019/20 budget, Mr McAlister spoke of the importance of meeting the targets set for 2018/19 and of his anticipation of an equitable allocation.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2018

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 28 November 2018
- Paper 05.02 Whole College Self-Evaluation Report 2017-18
- Paper 05.03 Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy
- Paper 05.04 Further Education and Work Based Learning Quality Handbook 2018-2020.

In commencing her report of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 28 November 2018 the Committee Chair, Mrs Martin, provided an overview of the presentation received on the performance and strategic plans of the Technology Department. She noted the updates provided on enrolments, curriculum pathways, performance against KPIs, workforce development activities and curriculum developments. She also commented on the value of the international exchange opportunities offered to staff and students and on the alignment of departmental priorities with those of DfE and the College.

Mrs Martin then went on to draw attention to the Quality Unit Annual Report received by the Committee. She noted the assurance provided to governors on the quality of the service delivered in the College through the outcomes of the inspections held on 2018 and highlighted the synopsis of the College's key strengths and areas for development contained within the Executive Summary of the Whole College Self-Evaluation Report 2017-18.

Regarding the Management Report delivered to the Committee, Mrs Martin highlighted the plans to market the College's Higher Education provision to year 14 Entitlement Framework students, the importance of lobbying for funding for the continuation of international exchange opportunities following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the likelihood of further growth in FE, HE, Training for Success and Apprenticeship NI enrolments in-year and the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy and the Further Education and Work Based Learning Quality Handbook 2018-2020.

In response to a query regarding the funding of international exchange programmes following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, Mr McAlister advised that the situation remains unclear regarding the UK's eligibility to participate in Erasmus programmes and added that current projects are ongoing and further bids in development. He listed the continuation of EU funded programmes, cross-border and international student mobility and response to skills deficits as the three main workstreams to be progressed by the EU Exit Co-ordinator.

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

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2018

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 5 December 2018
- Paper 06.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 06.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 06.04 Good Relations & Cultural Diversity Policy
- Paper 06.05 Guidance Note to be considered alongside College's Discretionary Policy
- Paper 06.06 Additional Requests.

Reporting on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 5 December 2018, Mrs McGeary, Chair of the Staffing Committee, drew attention to the presentation received on Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Business Development Section, noting the large proportion of salaries funded by external sources and commenting on the relatively low impact of the ongoing restructuring on the Business Development section.

Regarding the strategic issues discussed by the Committee, Mrs McGeary highlighted the secondment of four staff to sectoral projects and the need for full resource capacity on commencement of the new structure.

With reference to the Management Report received by the Committee, Mrs McGeary apprised the meeting of the discussions held regarding Part-Time lecturing budgets and associated risk and noted the concerns raised regarding sickness absence levels amongst business support staff and the commitment made to expedite outstanding appraisals as part of the action plan to address these concerns. She also drew attention to the ratification 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 Good Relations & Cultural Diversity Policy and the Guidance Note to be considered alongside College's Discretionary Policy.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce, seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendation therein as well as approval of the additional requests listed in paper 06.06.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2018

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 December 2018
- Paper 07.02 Financial Management Report 2017/18
- Paper 07.03 Investment Strategy & Plan 2017/18
- Paper 07.04 Investment Policy.
- Paper 07.05 Energy Management Policy.

Mr McGuckin, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, began his report on the committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 December 2018 by apprising the meeting of the two presentations received by the Committee on the Financial Performance of the Health & Life Services Department and the Higher Education Academic Board strategic project. With reference to the former, he noted the analysis received on income and expenditure in the Health & Life Services department, the challenge reported in adhering to the Part-Time Lecturer budget and the enthusiasm to maintain services for students with Special Educational Needs despite their high cost of delivery. Regarding the Higher Education Academic Board strategic project, Mr McGuckin commented on the reported challenges encountered in the pursuance of the College's international aspirations including the limitations of the probationary status of the College's tier 4 sponsor licence and the restrictions imposed regarding collaborations at undergraduate level. He also spoke of the opportunity to build on the College's excellent reputation and to develop a brand internationally.

Moving on to the Management Report received by the Committee, Mr McGuckin reported on the Net Book Value of fixed assets at 31 July 2018 of £101.2m; alerted the meeting to the deficit recorded for the first quarter of 2018/19 against a projected surplus as well as to the assurances received on the elimination of this deficit on receipt of outstanding income; spoke of the Committee's concern regarding the College's significant proportion of the projected sectoral overspend; and referred to the approval of business cases for funding to meet increased PFI service costs and the Training for Success travel expenses deficit. He also acknowledged the challenge in expending the additional £510k awarded to the College by DfE for minor works by 31 March 2019 and noted the satisfactory assurance rating awarded following an internal audit review of Estates Management as well as the development of an action plan to realise the objectives set out in the Energy Management Policy. In concluding his report Mr McGuckin highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Investment Strategy & Plan 2017/18, the Investment Policy and the Energy 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 recommendations therein.

9.0 UPDATE ON ERNE CAMPUS PROJECT

Mr McAlister detailed the background to the outstanding fire engineering design issue, explained that a meeting had been held with Fermanagh & Omagh District Council's Building Control department to discuss the matter and advised that it is anticipated that a satisfactory resolution will be agreed by the month end. He also confirmed the projected underspend of circa £800k to 31 March 2019 and commented on DfE's acceptance of this position.

In response to a query regarding the design issue, Mr McAlister apprised the meeting of the Integrated Supply Team's right to propose amendments to the Integrated Consultancy Team's design under the NEC Contract and undertook to circulate the letter issued to the Integrated Supply Team following the meeting referred to above.

10.0 COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2021

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members

- Paper 09.01 College Development Plan 2018-2021
- Paper 09.02 Presentation on College Development Plan.

Dr Cush, Deputy Chief Executive, reminded the meeting of the new requirement for the submission of a three-year Sectoral Plan as well as a one-year College Development Plan and added that the Governing Body had agreed to continue with the three-year College Development Plan cycle for internal planning and monitoring purposes.

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Dr Cush then provided detailed commentary on the previously approved College Development Plan 2018-21. She began by highlighting and defining the six identified strategic priorities for the College. She then illustrated the 'Educational Pipeline' from initial student interest through educational pathways to employability and the systems underpinning the effectiveness of the College's operations. She went on to list and define the four specific strategic objectives and outline the monitoring and evaluation framework in place to measure success. In concluding her presentation, Dr Cush informed the meeting of the innovations planned and of the progress made in their development.

During the discussion that followed Dr Cush's presentation, members commented on the quality and clarity of the College Development Plan 2018-21 and on its value in providing an evidence base for future funding proposals. Members were also made aware of the efforts made by the Student Services team to establish an effective Student Union and of the challenges faced in doing so; of the high priority placed within the College on sustainability at all levels; and of the capture and analysis of data on retention and achievement as well as of data on recruitment. At the request of members, management undertook to report on the position of other colleges in relation to Student Unions; present an analysis of the region's skills needs to a forthcoming meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee; and circulate the PowerPoint slides presented at a Circular Economy conference recently held in the College.

11.0 REVIEW OF 2018 GOVERNING BODY SELF-ASSESSMENT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Cover Letter for 2017/18 Governing Body Self-Assessment Analysis Report
- Paper 10.02 2017/18 Governing Body Self-Assessment Analysis Report.

Mrs McCauley acknowledged the overall positive perception evidenced amongst South West College governors and invited comment from members on the 2017/18 Governing Body Self-Assessment Analysis Report. Following a brief discussion, Mrs McCauley undertook to advise DfE of the Governing Body's request for more frequent training on corporate governance.

12.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Dr O'Shiel acknowledged the governors joining from the Dungannon campus and added that he looked forward to meeting them on future occasions.

13.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

The Chief Executive reported the following matters:

- **Voluntary Exit Scheme** – A further phase of the Voluntary Exit Scheme has been announced by DfE. This will be discussed further by the Staffing Committee;
- **Memorandum of Understanding with Wuxi Vocation College** – Representatives of Wuxi Vocational College, China, will visit South West College on Wednesday 16 January 2019 when a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions will be agreed and signed;
- **Sectoral Procurement** – A business case for an alternative sectoral procurement arrangement is in the final stages of development and will be submitted to DfE for review;
- **Interserve NI** – The College has received assurances from Belfast Educational Services (BES) on the financial stability of Interserve NI. Contingency plans have been put in place by BES;
- **Presentation to Mid Ulster District Council** – The Annual presentation to Mid Ulster District Council will take place on Thursday 24 January 2019;
- **Personal Injury Claim** – A personal injury claim against the College and an employer has been settled out of court with no liability accepted by the College. The College's insurance will cover the settlement;
- **Workforce Composition** – Following queries from local politicians regarding the religious composition of the College's workforce, a written response has been provided and a meeting held in which the politicians concerned were advised that the religious composition of the College's workforce is in proportion to that of the College's catchment area, as validated by the Equality Commission.

14.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

15.0 CORRESPONDENCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 14 Letter from DfE regarding Revised Budget.

With reference to the discussion held earlier in the meeting regarding budgets, Mr McAlister explained that the 2018/19 budget, performance against 2018/19 targets

and 2019/20 resource requirements will be considered in the allocation of the 2019/20 budget.

16.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

17.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 6 March 2019 at 5:30 pm in the Omagh campus.

18.0 EVALUATION OF MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 16 Governing Body Meeting Evaluation Form.

The Secretary to the Governing Body undertook to feedback comments made about a number of minor issues with the video conferencing equipment.

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 7:45 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019

VICE CHAIR _____

DATE _____