

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body** of **South West College**
held on Wednesday 27 April 2022 at 5:30 pm
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:	Ms Siobhan Breen Mrs Deborah Brown Ms Alana Jones Campbell Ms Elaine Grier Mrs Patricia McCaffrey Mr Seamus McCaffrey (<i>items 1.0 – 6.0 only</i>) Ms Anne McCleary Mrs Gillian McDowell Mr Michael McGuckin Miss Caitlyn McLoughlin Mrs Joanne Moore Mr Leo Murphy (Interim Chief Executive) Mr Gerard O’Hanlon Dr Nicholas O’Shiel (Chairman) Dr Lynsey Quinn Mr Michael Skuce
APOLOGIES:	Mrs Sandra Isherwood Ms Celine McCartan Mr Mark Sterritt, Boardroom Apprentice
IN ATTENDANCE:	Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body

1.0 PRELIMINARIES, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Dr O’Shiel opened the meeting by acknowledging the death of Mrs Jacqueline McDowell. He spoke of Mrs McDowell’s energy and commitment to the College and extended the sympathies of the Governing Body to her family.

Dr O’Shiel then formally welcomed Mr Leo Murphy as Interim Chief Executive and offered his appreciation to the Chair and Governing Body of North West Regional College for facilitating the secondment arrangement. Mr Murphy recorded his thanks to Dr Cush and all members of the management and staff teams for their support in his initial weeks in post.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Isherwood, Ms McCartan and Mr Sterritt.

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 2 MARCH 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 2 March 2022.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, 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

Budget – Dr O'Shiel explained that Mr Murphy would present an update on the 2022/23 budget position and provided assurance that colleges will work together to address impacts in an orderly way.

Review of Further Education Delivery Model – Dr O'Shiel explained that Mr Murphy would provide an update on the Review of the FE Delivery Model and reminded the meeting that Ministerial approval has been granted for an initial phase of the review entailing a quantitative and qualitative data capturing exercise. He advised that a meeting with DfE representatives has been scheduled regarding the review.

Chief Executive Recruitment – Dr O'Shiel informed the meeting that the Chief Executive vacancy has been advertised on online platforms and will be placed in the Belfast Telegraph on Friday 29 April 2022.

Change Management Team – Dr O'Shiel reported that Mr John McKeown has joined the Change Management Team and has commenced fieldwork in relation to his review of Human Resources, Corporate Services and Governance. He added that Mr Jim Mullen has completed the fieldwork phase in relation to his review of curriculum and that a report on his findings will be presented to the Governing Body in due course.

5.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

Immediate Priorities – Mr Murphy reported that he had asked the Management team to adopt a focus on maximizing retention and achievement, encouragement of progression amongst learners and 2022/23 applications, and that he had asked the Marketing team to create a visible physical presence in the local community. He commented on the external environment leading to a reduction in enrolments across the sector and, with reference to the five year analysis presented by the previous Interim Chief Executive at the March 2022 Governing Body meeting, noted that the challenges arising have been experienced across the sector. He added that he is committed to avoiding increasing the College's fixed costs whilst in post.

Review of Further Education Delivery Model – Mr Murphy commented on the ongoing review of the FE Delivery Model noting that reducing enrolments and increasing costs are likely to be evidenced. He explained that the report may be made available in June and that the political environment following the forthcoming NI Assembly election will impact on further actions. He also spoke of the benefits of closer working relationships between North West Regional College and South West College, as the two colleges serving the West of Northern Ireland.

Strategic Governmental Reviews – Mr Murphy apprised the meeting of a number of ongoing NI Government reviews impacting on the policy framework for Further and

Higher Education. He added that an Open Letter for the business, civic and political community outlining the importance of investment in Further Education will be delivered post-election.

2022/23 Budget – Mr Murphy referenced the communications received from DfE regarding the 2022/23 budget. He noted that the most recent correspondence indicated a less severe position than originally put forward but cautioned that a reduced budget is expected, that reliance on funding from Monitoring Rounds will be required and that all funding requests are unlikely to be met. Dr O’Shiel commented on the seriousness of the budget situation and re-iterated his earlier assertion that colleges will work together to address impacts in an orderly way.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 16 March 2022
- Paper 06.02 Managing Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy
- Paper 06.03 South West College Centre Assessment Policy.

Mrs Moore, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, began her report on the committee meeting held on 16 March 2022 by referencing the strategic updates provided to the Committee and the recommendation made for a review of the key strategic issues considered by the Committee. She also highlighted the recognized need for sectoral lobbying and promotion of Further Education as well as the reported success of the Higher Education Graduation Ceremony.

She advised that a Management Report had been received by the Committee and highlighted the reported demand for skills in the cyber industry, the award of the highest level of confidence following an inspection of the College Connect programme, the forthcoming Festival of Teaching and Learning and the Committee’s recommendation for approval of the Managing Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy and the SWC Centre Assessment Policy 2021/22. She added that an update on the progress of the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan and an update on the progress made on the improvements to the application process have been requested by the Committee.

Mrs Moore concluded her report by referencing the presentation received on the Performance and Strategic Plans of the Built Environment, Creative & Life Services Faculty and noting the reported resourcing challenge.

In response to questions from members, the role of the Quality Unit in providing assurance on compliance with Awarding Organisations’ requirements was explained; it was noted that the Principal acts as the Head of Centre referred to in the Centre Assessment Policy; and the high level of scrutiny placed on health and safety of students on work placement was stressed.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore, seconded by Mr McGuckin, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and approval of the Managing Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policy and the SWC Centre Assessment Policy 2021/22. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

Mr McCaffrey withdrew from the meeting during the above report.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 23 March 2022
- Paper 07.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 07.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 07.04 Additional Requests.

In commencing her report on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 23 March 2022, Mrs McDowell, Chair of the Staffing Committee, drew attention to the report provided on the Exceptional Technical Services Action Plan noting the pressures on the Technical Services team and the request for a longer term resourcing proposal to alleviate the pressures.

She went on to reference the Management Report received by the Committee, commenting on the impact of Return to Work Interviews in decreasing sickness absence rates, the extension of the contracts of ten Digital Learning / Technical Services interns to alleviate pressures within the Technical Services team and the progress made in the Performance Appraisal process. She also referenced the requests for contract extensions for seven staff associated with the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme in paper 07.04, and, in response to a question, clarified that the posts are funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund until 31 December 2022.

Mrs McDowell then advised that a presentation had been provided on resource planning and workforce development in the Business Development Unit and that workload pressures due to staff vacancies had been reported as well as staff development requirements and the achievement of all strategic KPIs.

Members reflected on the resourcing challenges within the Technical Services team, raising concerns regarding the swift escalation of the issue. It was noted that four of the six vacancies have now been filled, that the Technical Services resourcing proposal will include benchmarking data on similar teams within the sector, and that a longer term solution to the resourcing challenge must be found. The balance to be found in managing budgets and retaining key staff between funding cycles was also highlighted.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell, seconded by Ms Jones Campbell, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and approval of the extension requests listed in paper 07.04. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6 April 2022
- Paper 08.02 Delegated and Authorised Payment Levels.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McGuckin, seconded by Mr O'Hanlon, adoption of the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting and approval of the Delegated and Authorised Payment Levels in paper 08.02. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

9.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

10.0 REVIEW OF OUSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that the awareness raising of the challenges faced by the FE sector is a work in progress and that the business continuity risk posed by the instability in the IT infrastructure has been added to the Corporate Risk Register. Mr Murphy undertook to share an overview of the FE relevant commitments contained within the manifestos of a number of the political parties. A revised list of outstanding actions is included in Appendix A.

11.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

12.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members noted their satisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting.

Ms Breen, Mrs Brown and Miss McLoughlin withdrew from the meeting at this juncture (6:40 pm). The meeting then went into confidential session.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2022

CHAIRMAN



DATE

22/06/2022

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	02/03/2022	6.0	Government ministers and other politicians to be made aware of the impact of competition from schools and universities on the FE sector through a lobbying campaign.
2	27/04/2022	10.0	Mr Murphy undertook to share an overview of the FE relevant commitments contained within the manifestos of a number of the political parties.