

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body** of **South West College**
held on Wednesday 22 June 2022 at 5:30 pm
in the Central Hall, Omagh Campus

PRESENT:

- Ms Siobhan Breen (*via Microsoft Teams*)
- Ms Alana Jones Campbell
- Ms Elaine Grier (*via Microsoft Teams*)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey
- Ms Anne McCleary
- Mrs Gillian McDowell
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Miss Caitlyn McLoughlin (*via Microsoft Teams*)
- 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 Deborah Brown
- Mrs Sandra Isherwood

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Mr Sean O’Donnell, Head of Finance (*items 7.0 & 8.0 only*)
- Mr Mark Sterritt, Boardroom Apprentice

1.0 PRELIMINARIES, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Dr O’Shiel welcomed all present to the meeting. He then acknowledged the end of Mr O’Hanlon and Mr Skuce’s term of office as governors of South West College and thanked them for their contribution to the College in their 11 years as governors.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Brown and Mrs Isherwood.

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 27 APRIL 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 27 April 2022.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce and seconded by Mr 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

Dr O'Shiel advised that he had no business to raise under this item.

5.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05.01 Learner Work Placement and Work Experience Policy.

Mr Murphy reported that colleges continue to operate at risk with contingency budgets in place and advised that Mr O'Donnell will join the meeting at a later stage to provide an update on the budget position. He explained that the report on the initial phase of the Review of the Further Education Delivery Model is expected in late Summer and suggested that it may be prudent to invite the Director of FE to update the Governing Body on policy changes.

With reference to paper 05.01, Dr Cush then reported that a new policy has been developed to define the framework for Further Education work placement requirements as recommended following an internal audit and sought approval for this policy to enable its implementation from the commencement of the 2022/23 academic year. In response to a question, Dr Cush explained that the policy is supported by a procedure in which relevant operational information is provided.

AGREED: approval of the Learner Work Placement and Work Experience Policy.

6.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MAY 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Wednesday 11 May 2022
- Paper 06.02 Annual Risk Register Review Report
- Paper 06.03 Conflict of Interest Policy
- Paper 06.04 Information Governance Policy
- Paper 06.05 Web Management Policy.

Mrs McCaffrey, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, began her report on the committee meeting held on Wednesday 11 May 2022 by reporting that limited assurances had been awarded following internal audits of Procurement & Contract Management and Marketing & Employability Arrangements. She also commented on the significant number of outstanding low priority internal audit recommendations to which Mr Murphy advised that many have since been actioned.

Mrs McCaffrey went on to note the Committee's acceptance of the Strategy for the External Audit of the 2021/22 Financial Statements, advise that the NIAO's confidence in its ability to adhere to the timetable within had been confirmed and report that the Audit Code for the Governing Bodies (and Audit & Risk Committees) of Further Education Colleges has been withdrawn.

Mrs McCaffrey then advised that the Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed by the Committee, that a discussion had taken place on the Technical Services IT Security Report, that presentations had been received on risk management in the Automotive, Computing & Engineering Faculty and the Business Development Unit, and that the Conflict of Interest Policy, the Information Governance Policy and the Web Management Policy had been recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mr McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

Mr O'Donnell joined the meeting at this juncture.

7.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MAY 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 18 May 2022
- Paper 07.02 Submission of Coursework Policy
- Paper 07.03 Higher Education Assessment Policy.

Mrs Moore, Chair of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee, drew attention to the Committee's decision to change its key strategic issues to reflect the key performance challenges identified by the previous Interim Chief Executive in his report to the Governing Body.

She then referenced the Management Report received by the Committee highlighting the incorporation of the priorities of the Skills for a 10X Economy Strategy into the College Development Plan, the opportunity that would be afforded by the introduction of All Age Apprenticeships, students' lack of experience in exam situations, the reporting of the activities of the Quality Assurance and Assessment Working Group to the Change Management Committee and the assurances received that the additional scrutiny placed on staff as a result of the Quality Assurance Action Plan has not negatively impacted staff as well as the assurances received on the mitigations in place to address the decline in applications to Further Education and Higher Education programmes. She also highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Submission of Coursework Policy and the Higher Education Assessment Policy.

Mrs Moore went on to reference the presentation received on the Performance and Strategic Plans of the Professional & Social Sciences Faculty noting the reported reinstatement of the Retention and Achievement Working Group. She concluded by advising that a review of the Committee's performance had been undertaken during which themes for a potential committee workshop had been identified.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore, seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. The 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 8 JUNE 2022

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 8 June 2022
- Paper 09.02 Credit Control & Debt Management Policy
- Paper 09.03 Estates Strategy 2022-26.

Mr McCaffrey, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, reminded the meeting of the contingency budget in place and commented on the Committee's satisfaction with the actions being taken to mitigate any impacts. He drew attention to the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Credit Control & Debt Management Policy and the Estates Strategy 2022-26 and acknowledged the contribution made by Mr O'Hanlon during his membership of the Committee.

Mr Murphy advised that DfE continues to negotiate with DoF for an enhanced financial allocation leading to the delay in confirmed budgets for colleges. He explained that a reduced budget is likely and that scenario planning is underway to identify areas where efficiencies may be made.

Mr O'Donnell confirmed that work has taken place with budget holders to identify savings and detailed the expected budget shortfall following this exercise, noting that conservative estimations have been made and that in-year allocations may be available to reduce the funding gap. He provided an overview of the proposed cost cutting actions identified including the postponement of staff recruitment, the discontinuation of the Student Internship Programme, the consolidation of classes and closer focus on staff deployment. He also outlined the pay and energy pressures to be absorbed as well as the anticipated reduced income. Mr O'Donnell then undertook to circulate a paper detailing the above and sought approval for the provisional budget as outlined.

In response to questions and comments from members, Mr O'Donnell, supported by Mr Murphy, listed the recruitment activity that has been postponed, stressed the objective of protecting frontline delivery, commented on the impact of the discontinuation of the Student Internship Programme on students and advised that colleges cannot incur deficits without the prior approval of DfE. The annual running costs of the Fairview campus was also highlighted and it was noted that DfE will retain the proceeds from the sale of the campus and that the timeframe for its disposal is influenced by Land & Property Services.

Mr O'Hanlon reported that it had been suggested at the committee meeting that a Building Fabric Survey of the Dungannon campus is initiated by the College and that future presentations on the Financial Performance of the Centres for Excellence should focus on the value added by the Centres for Excellence.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, seconded by Mr O'Hanlon, adoption of the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations within as well as approval of the provisional budget outlined. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

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

9.0 **REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 JUNE 2022**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 1 June 2022
- Paper 08.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 08.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report
- Paper 08.04 Equal Opportunities, Good Relations and Cultural Diversity Policy.

In commencing her report on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 June 2022, Mrs McDowell, Chair of the Staffing Committee, commented on the overview provided by the Interim Chief Executive on the Committee's key strategic issues highlighting the development of a Graduate Teaching Academy to mitigate the challenges faced in attracting academic staff.

She went on to reference the Management Report received by the Committee, noting the financial scrutiny undertaken in relation to requests for staff, the resignation of the Quality & Assurance Manager, the framework for work placement health and safety requirements, the request to grant delegated authority to the Interim Chief Executive to ratify routine appointments over the Summer months, the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Equal Opportunities, Good Relations and Cultural Diversity Policy and the Chair of the Governing Body's approval of the appointments, staff requests, fixed term-contract proposals and other matters as outlined in the minutes.

Mrs McDowell added that a presentation had been provided on resource planning and workforce development in the Built Environment, Creative & Life Sciences Faculty during which protection of the Continuing Professional Development budget had been sought and the need for a return to enhanced sectoral collaboration had been noted.

In concluding her report, she acknowledged the end of Mr Skuce's term of office and his contribution to the Staffing Committee during his tenure as a member of the Governing Body.

In response to a question on the ownership of risk in relation to work placements, it was noted that due diligence is undertaken by the College and that responsibility lies with the placement provider.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell, seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

11.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2022/23

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10 Schedule of Governing Body and Committee Meetings 2022/23.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed Schedule of Governing Body and Committee Meetings 2022/23.

11.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 Outstanding Actions.

Mr Murphy informed the meeting that an Open Letter from the Sector will be issued to the media in the following week to raise the profile of skills development. It was agreed that both listed items had been actioned.

12.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

13.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

14.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

No comments were made on the proceedings of the meeting.

Ms Breen, Miss McLoughlin and Mr Sterritt withdrew from the meeting at this juncture (6:24 pm). The meeting then went into confidential session.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

CHAIRMAN



DATE 06/09/2022