

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 11 March 2020 at 5:30 pm
in the Boardroom, Omagh Campus, Mountjoy Road, Omagh

PRESENT:

- Mr Peter Archdale
- Ms Siobhan Breen
- Mr Zack El Marif
- Mr Joanne Lucas
- Mrs Margaret Martin
- Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey
- Mrs Gillian McDowell
- Mrs Monica McGearry
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Mrs Joanne Moore
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chair)
- Mr Michael Skuce

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Ms Claire O'Donnell, Secretary to the Governing Body

8.0 APOLOGIES

No apologies were recorded.

9.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No declarations were made under this heading.

10.0 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 Minutes of 8 January 2020 Governing Body Meeting

Mr McGuckin suggested that under item 14, the phrase 'main contractor' should be replaced with 'lead mechanical and electrical consultant'.

The Chief Executive requested the Further Education Review referred to should be termed the Higher Education in Further Education Review.

AGREED: subject to the above, adoption of the minutes of the Governing Body meeting and the recommendations therein. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

11.0 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

11.1 Coronavirus

The Chairman asked the Chief Executive to provide an update on the Coronavirus situation. In response, the Chief Executive explained that a lot of activity was taking place in line with Public Health Agency advice. A group had been established to deal with Coronavirus issues and all staff, students and employers had been communicated with. All ERASMUS trips had been cancelled going forward he advised and the Minister was developing legislation to close Colleges. He noted that further information was expected in the coming days and that the College could continue to deliver indefinitely. In response to member queries the Chief Executive then clarified that the Business Continuity and Critical Incident Plans had been reviewed and that the six principals were due to discuss a possible two week closure over Easter the following day. Mrs Martin congratulated the College on having the foresight to introduce virtual programmes which, she commented, was a huge investment that was now paying off.

11.2 2020 Board Apprentice Programme

The Chairman, with the support of Ms O'Donnell, then outlined the 2020 Board Apprentice Programme, which was a 12 month board learning and placement programme, aimed at giving individuals over the age of 16 board experience.

AGREED: that South West College would act as a Host Board for the 2020 Board Apprentice Programme.

11.3 Governor Information for College Website

The Chairman explained that, as the Public Bodies Annual Report for Northern Ireland would no longer be produced, The Executive Office had requested that information on public appointments should be contained in public bodies websites. Ms O'Donnell added that the information to be published on the College's website should include membership details, length of term of appointment, remuneration and workload.

AGREED: that the one page summary on public appointments prepared by Ms O'Donnell should be published on the South West College website.

12.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

None.

13.0 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 14.01 Minutes of 26 February 2020 Finance & GP Meeting

In presenting the report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 26 February 2020, Mr McCaffrey, Committee Chair, focused on the key highlights as follows. He explained that the Committee had held their annual contracts review meeting with Belfast Educational Services in the course of the meeting. A

number of issues had been identified for clarification and/or further work and, as such, they would provide an update to the next Committee Meeting on 8 April 2020. Mr McCaffrey summarised the management report, highlighting that the College had a positive bank balance. Mr McCaffrey also outlined presentation from Mr Pdraig McNamee, Head of Automotive, Computing and Engineering Faculty, which demonstrated the amount of financial management required. Mr Archdale suggested that Belfast Educational Systems should contribute to the Sustainability Strategy.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, seconded by Mr Archdale, adoption of the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

14.0 UPDATE ON BUDGETS

Referring to the Annual College Development Plan Commissioning Memo (Paper 05.01), the Chief Executive explained that the College had yet to receive their allocation for 2020/21. He highlighted £17m pressures in the sector which had risen to £25m, but assured governors that the College should come in on budget for the current year. He added that work was continuing to find a solution to the PFI issue.

15.0 ERNE CAMPUS UPDATE

The Chief Executive explained that the last Project Board Meeting had taken place on 28 February 2020, and assured members that the Erne Project was on programme and within budget. A number of issues had emerged in relation to the project and he outlined them as follows: (i) the contractor was suggesting a delay of four weeks on the project which was subsequently softened to two weeks. The handover date remained 6 August 2020; (ii) The College had requested an additional report from White Young Green on the rock issue; (iii) the College was exploring options for a soft landing and; (iv) in terms of Fairview, there were nine lots to be registered for sale and work was progressing well on this. In response to a query from Mr Skuce, the Chief Executive advised that the Department may ask the College to hold the sale/proceeds of sale of Fairview for a period of time until it was appropriate to release back to DfE.

Members then discussed the opening plan for the new campus, and it was agreed that a draft event plan and invitee list should be presented to the next Governing Body Meeting on 29 April 2020. Dr Cush suggested engaging an external PR agency to manage the event, as this approach had been used in the Omagh campus. Mr Archdale stressed that the brief for this engagement should fit with the College's Marketing Strategy. It was agreed that the brief for this work should also be presented to the next Governing Body meeting.

AGREED: that an Erne Campus Opening Plan Report would be presented to the 29 April 2020 Governing Body Meeting for consideration.

16.0 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 16 Minutes of 12 February Audit Committee Meeting

In presenting the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2020, and in relation to the internal audit contract, Mrs McCaffrey, Committee Chair, explained that Grant Thornton had given an assurance that all outstanding audits would be completed for the next Audit Committee meeting. At this meeting, the Committee would also receive a report on the risk register for the Erne Project and consider the Disaster Recovery Policy and ILT Security Policy both of which had been deferred from the February meeting. Mrs McCaffrey advised that there had been two presentations at the February Committee meeting, one from Mr John Moss and one from Mr Ciaran McManus, both of which highlighted recruitment difficulties in the Built Environment Creative and Life Sciences Faculty and Centres for Excellence respectively. Mrs McCaffrey finished by advising that the Committee had received assurance that transition to the new payroll system was progressing on schedule.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mr Skuce, adoption of the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

In response to a query from Mrs McGeary, the Chair advised that the Digital Learning Review currently being carried out by Grant Thornton would be presented to the next Audit Committee meeting.

17.0 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 17 Minutes of 29 January 2020 Staffing Committee Meeting
- Paper 17.01 Staffing Requests Forms Memo
- Paper 17.02 SRF MIS Officer (Omagh)
- Paper 17.03 SRF Heritage Education & Skills Coordinator (Enniskillen)
- Paper 17.04 SRF Science Technician (Dungannon)

In presenting the report of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 29 January 2020, Committee Chair Mrs McDowell, explained that the College was on target to meet 1 April 2020 deadline for the introduction of the new payroll service. Mrs McDowell also explained that negotiations on terms and conditions were ongoing. Mrs McDowell noted that the Marketing Manager had resigned from the College and that interviews for this post were scheduled for Friday 13 March 2020. She also noted high levels of absence in the Centres for Excellence and how these were being managed, and she advised that a mid point evaluation would be carried out on the Leadership and Learning Programme 5, which was currently being rolled out.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell, seconded by Mrs McGeary, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein, including the three Staffing Request Forms presented to this meeting (Papers 17.02, 17.03 & 17.04). The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

18.0 EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 18.01 Minutes of 22 January 2020 EQP Committee Meeting

In presenting the report of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 22 January 2020, Mrs Moore, Committee Chair, expressed her gratitude to the Chief Executive for the key strategic issues update which gave detail on the ETI Inspection and safeguarding assurances in particular. Mrs Moore outlined two presentations the Committee had received from Mrs Elizabeth Shackels and Mrs Ciara Duffy, along with a management report. She recommended the Anti-Bullying Policy, Controlled Assessment Policy and the Examinations Policy to the Governing Body for approval, noting that the Disciplinary Policy would be presented to the May 2020 Committee meeting.

In response to a query from Mr Archdale, Dr Cush confirmed that sustainability would be included in future curriculum content. In response to a further query from Mr McGuckin, the Chief Executive advised that the ETI feedback had been good and that the formal report would be presented to the Governing Body when published.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore, seconded by Mr McCaffrey, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein including the Anti-Bullying Policy, Controlled Assessment Policy and Examinations Policy. The minutes were subsequently signed by the Chair.

19.0 DECLARATION OF ANY HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

None

20.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

None

21.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

It was noted that the two outstanding actions had now been completed.

In response to comments from Mr Archdale, the Chief Executive suggested that the Education, Quality and Performance Committee should consider asking Mr Alan Strong to present to the Governing Body in the first instance.

22.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Members conveyed their satisfaction with the proceedings of the meeting,

Mr McAlister, Dr Cush, Mrs Lucas, Ms Breen and Mr El Marif then exited the meeting as it moved into Reserved Business Without Management.

The meeting concluded at 7.05pm

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2020

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____