

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**
held on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 5:30 pm
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

- Mr Peter Archdale
- Ms Siobhan Breen
- Mrs Margaret Martin
- Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey (*from item 6.0*)
- Mrs Gillian McDowell
- Mrs Monica McGeary (*from item 6.0*)
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Mrs Joanne Moore
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chairman)
- Mr Michael Skuce
- Miss Clara Jane Whitley

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Mrs Tracey McElroy, Boardroom Apprentice

APOLOGIES: Mrs Deborah Brown

1.0 PRELIMINARIES

Dr O'Shiel welcomed all present to the meeting. He acknowledged Mrs McElroy's last attendance at a Governing Body meeting due to the end of her tenure as Boardroom Apprentice and wished her well in future endeavours.

2.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Brown and it was noted that Mrs McGeary would be approximately 15 minutes late in joining the meeting.

3.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Mr McAlister declared an interest in the Fixed Term Contracts Report and the Estates Team Restructure Proposal due to a family connection with a member of the Erne Project Team. Mrs McCaffrey declared an interest in the Review of the Business Development Management Structure due to a family connection with a member of the Business Development Team.

4.0 MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 MAY 2021

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 5 May 2021.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey and seconded by Mrs McGeary, 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.

5.0 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Dr O'Shiel acknowledged the retirement of Mrs Beverley Harrison, Director of Further Education, DfE, on 30th June 2021. He commented on her support to the College and wished her well in her retirement.

6.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

Student Death – The meeting was informed of the death of a college student, Mr Cathair O'Dochartaigh. Condolences were extended to Mr O'Dochartaigh's family.

Framework for the Safe Resumption of On-Site Educational Provision and Related Activity – Mr McAlister reported that a recent communication from the Director of FE had advised of a delay in relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions with an indicative date for progression to Stage 5 of the above framework of 10th August 2021. He added that contingency measures for continued restrictions into the new academic year have been advised and that the Assisted Lateral Flow Device Testing Pilot will inform plans for a wider implementation of this initiative in 2021/22.

Risk Assessment – Mr McAlister reported that South West College has been categorized as 'low risk' following a risk assessment using DfE's new risk model.

Revised Capital Allocation – Mr McAlister confirmed the receipt of £200k from DfE for the Enniskillen Workhouse Project bringing the 2021/22 capital allocation to £1.2m.

Skills Strategy – Mr McAlister noted that a consultation event on the implementation of the new Skills Strategy will take place on 1st July 2021.

Mrs McGeary joined the meeting at this juncture.

Awarding Organisations Update – Mr McAlister provided an update on the status of the qualification assessments undertaken for the main Awarding Organisations engaged with by the College.

HE Maximum Student Number (MaSN) – Mr McAlister confirmed the allocation of 654 full-time HE places for 2021/22 and advised that additional places may become available at a later date.

College Development Plan (CDP) Commissioning Memo – Mr McAlister noted that the consolidated data return is due on 30th June 2021.

Mr McCaffrey joined the meeting at this juncture.

One Planet Living – At the invitation of Mr McAlister, Mr Archdale updated the meeting on the progress of the Sustainability Implementation Group in developing an action plan for implementation of the One Planet Living principles. He commented on

the opportunity to become sector leader in the adoption of the One Planet Living approach and recommended the submission of the action plan to Bioregional with a view to gaining One Planet Living leadership status. Dr O'Shiel acknowledged the 60 projects within the action plan and commented on the importance of an overarching unifying theme applicable to all college campuses. In response to a query on resource implications, it was noted that the budget required will not be excessive but cannot be quantified until the action plan is finalized.

AGREED: that governor comments on the One Planet Living Action Plan are received and reviewed by Mr Archdale, Mr McAlister and Dr O'Shiel and a decision taken by them on submission of the action plan to Bioregional with a view to gaining One Planet Living leadership status.

7.0 ERNE CAMPUS PROJECT UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Erne Campus Opening Running Order
- Paper 06.02 Invitation List.

Mr McAlister referred to the draft running order and invitation list for the official opening of the Erne Campus scheduled for Wednesday 22nd September 2021. He commented on the capacity limitations given the likelihood of continued social distancing restrictions and explained that a working group will progress plans during the Summer period. In response to a query on the number of employers to be invited, Mr McAlister explained that sectoral events are planned throughout the week commencing 20th September 2021 which will facilitate a larger number of employers.

8.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH MAY 2021

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Wednesday 19th May 2021
- Paper 07.02 Annual Corporate Risk Register Review Report
- Paper 07.03 Risk Appetite Statement
- Paper 07.04 Data Protection Policy
- Paper 07.05 Risk Management Policy
- Paper 07.06 Access to Information Policy
- Paper 07.07 Information Governance Policy
- Paper 07.08 Conflict of Interest Policy.

Reporting on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Wednesday 19th May 2021, the Committee Chair, Mrs McCaffrey, explained that a satisfactory assurance rating had been awarded following an Internal Audit Review of Student Engagement and that the review of Appeals & Complaints had been undertaken and would be presented at the September 2021 meeting, completing the audit plan for 2020/21.

In relation to the Management Report, she advised that the Corporate Risk Register had been presented with the risk relating to Covid-19 remaining as the highest scoring risk; that a comprehensive report had been received on the ransomware attack noting that no evidence of data exfiltration had been found, teaching systems had been unaffected, no regulatory action is required from the Information Commissioner's Office and enhanced mitigations have been put in place in light of the continued risk in

this area; and that the Committee had recommended approval of the Risk Appetite Statement, the Data Protection Policy, the Risk Management Policy, the Access to Information Policy, the Information Governance Policy and the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Mrs McCaffrey also reported on the presentations received on the College's risk management framework, the strategy for the audit of the College's 2020/21 Annual Report & Financial Statements, Risk Management in the Automotive, Computing and Engineering Faculty and Risk Management in the Business Development Unit. She highlighted the high risk relating to staff recruitment and retention as well as that relating to the impact on income of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

In response to a question on the Raising a Concern Report, the Committee was made aware of the appointment of a Raising a Concern Champion and that a presentation on her activities will be made to the Staffing Committee in 2021/22.

Mr Archdale's resignation from the Audit & Risk Committee was also reported.

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. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

9.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26TH MAY 2021

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee held on Wednesday 26th May 2021
- Paper 08.02 Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Policy
- Paper 08.03 Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy
- Paper 08.04 Policy for Students with Caring Responsibilities.

With reference to the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 26th May 2021, the Committee Chair, Mrs Moore, provided an overview of the updates given on strategic issues including Covid-19 recovery, student assessments and safeguarding.

She went on to refer to the Management Report presented to the Committee and highlighted the validation of additional higher education courses, the alignment of the College's further education offering with the regional skills barometer and the Committee's recommendation for approval of the Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Policy, the Personal Tutoring & Academic Support Policy and the Policy for Students with Caring Responsibilities.

Mrs Moore also explained that a presentation had been received on the Performance and Strategic Plans of the Professional & Social Sciences Faculty. She noted the increase in staff and courses delivered, the challenges presented by campus closures for practical courses in particular and the benefits of Industry Advisory Boards in ensuring the relevance of the College's offering with industry needs.

She concluded her report by thanking management and staff for their relentless effort during a very challenging year.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore, seconded by Mr Archdale, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting and the

recommendations therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

10.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9TH JUNE 2021

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 9th June 2021
- Paper 09.02 Staff Resource Report
- Paper 09.03 Fixed Term Contracts Report.

Reporting on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 9th June 2021, Mrs McDowell, Chair of the Staffing Committee, began by referring to the updates received on the Committee's key strategic issues noting the scheduled review of sectoral Curriculum Hubs in 2021/22, the ongoing negotiations on lecturers' terms and conditions, the continuation of action short of strike by lecturers and the request to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to ratify routine appointments over the Summer months.

She then provided an overview of the Management Report received by the Committee highlighting the updates provided on the Assisted Lateral Flow Device Covid-19 Testing Pilot, the forthcoming Health & Wellbeing Week, the issue of a voucher to all staff in appreciation of their efforts during the pandemic, the request for further information on the reasons for staff resignations with a view to improving retention and the Chair of the Governing Body's approval of the appointments, staff requests and fixed term-contract proposals as outlined in the minutes.

Mrs McDowell also explained that a presentation had been received on Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Built Environment, Creative and Life Sciences Faculty during which the specialist expertise provided by part-time lecturers, the wide range of Continuing Professional Development undertaken by staff and the introduction of two new apprenticeships were highlighted.

In response to a query on exit interviews, the meeting was advised that a high level report on reasons for leaving are received by the Staffing Committee and that further information on leavers on fixed-term contracts has been requested.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell, seconded by Mrs McGeary, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the request within to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to ratify routine appointments over the Summer months. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

11.0 REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2021

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16th June 2021
- Paper 10.02 Credit Control & Debt Management Policy
- Paper 10.03 Fees & Charges Policy
- Paper 10.04 Financial Regulations
- Paper 10.05 Budget 2021/22 and Financial Projections 2021-2026.

Reporting on the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16th June 2021, Mr McCaffrey, Committee Chair, began by listing the Committee's key strategic issues and noting that comprehensive updates on these items had been provided by the Chief Executive during the committee meeting.

Moving on to the Management Report, he commented on the robust analysis provided on the proposed 2021/22 budget, drew attention to the increase in bad debt provision from £100k to £300k, noted the need for sensitivity regarding the issue of student debt in the current environment and highlighted the Committee's recommendation for approval of the proposed 2021/22 Budget, the Credit Control & Debt Management Policy, the Fees & Charges Policy 2021/22 and the Financial Regulations.

Mr McCaffrey also referred to the presentation received by the Committee on the Financial Performance of the Centres for Excellence as well as the resolution of issues regarding the guarantor for the PFI contracts.

Regarding the 2021/22 budget, Mr McAlister made the meeting aware of uncertainties regarding DfE Covid-19 mitigation allocations, MaSN and 2021/22 enrolments.

With reference to the Financial Regulations, it was suggested that references to 'Whistleblowing' are amended to reflect the more up-to-date 'Raising a Concern' terminology. It was also suggested that updates on the implementation of the Benefits Realisation Plan for the Erne Campus should be provided to both the Education, Quality & Performance Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

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 therein. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.

12.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2021/22

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11 Schedule of Meetings 2021/22.

It was noted that the September 2021 Audit & Risk Committee meeting has been brought forward to Tuesday 21st September 2021 to avoid a clash with the official opening of the Erne Campus on Wednesday 22nd September 2021.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed Schedule of Governing Body and Committee Meetings 2021/22.

13.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

14.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

15.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

Mrs McCauley acknowledged a problem with hyperlinks from the agenda and undertook to resolve the issue.

Mrs Breen, Mrs McElroy and Miss Whitley withdrew from the meeting at this juncture. The meeting then went into confidential session and concluded at 8:15 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2021

CHAIRMAN

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicholas", written over a horizontal line.

DATE 08/09/2021

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	30/06/2021	6.0	OPL Action Plan to be sent to governors for comment. Comments to be reviewed by PA, MMA and NO'S and a decision taken on the submission of the action plan to Bioregional with a view to gaining One Planet Living leadership status.