

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 1 February 2023 in Newtownabbey campus commencing at 5.00pm.

Present: Mr K Nelson (Chair), Mr K Chambers, Mrs L Crilly, Dr P Graham, Ms J Hemphill, Mr M Higgins, Mr D Macauley, Ms D McIlwaine, Ms Y Mallon, Mrs P Martin, Mr G McAllister, Mr W McCluggage, Mr R McKernan, Ms A Morrow, Mr I Murphy, Mr S Shevlin, Mr D Small

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr S Laverty, Ms J Small
Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

112.1 Apologies

Mr Hutchinson.

112.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

112.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Small Seconded: Mr Murphy

111.4 Matters Arising

None.

111.5 Chair's Communication/ Correspondence

Members noted meetings and events attended by the Chair over the period 23 November 2022 to 31 January 2023. The Chair also outlined a range of engagements with campus staff and College trade unions during November/December 2022. A number of key themes identified by staff during engagement sessions, along with progression paths, would be picked up in due course. The key topic identified was communication.

The Chair drew members' attention to the agenda for the Strategy Day on 21 February 2023, in the Ross Park Hotel. A number of presentations would be made on the day including Board Effectiveness as delivered at a DfE Partnership event in December 2022.

The College's report to the Accountability Meeting with the Permanent Secretary on 1 February 2023 was presented for members' information. The Chair and Principal reported good engagement at the event with the Deputy Secretary and Director of FE in attendance. The report was warmly received by the Department, whose focus was on curriculum delivery, with the emphasis on activities aligning to 10X.

111.6 Principal's Report

Consideration was given to this report with the Principal highlighting in particular: improvement

in monthly performance compared to previous year; reduced risk level for TAMS implementation; new builds award; and the College graduation and staff awards events, with thanks to governors who attended.

Mr McCluggage commended the College for the excellent work carried out on cyber security. He also referred to the extra work undertaken by the College on TAMS and noted the importance of providing access to legal/commercial remedy where contract providers underperformed.

Mr Laverty updated members on security updates taking place on software and reported that the College was on target to achieve cyber essentials certification.

111.7 Education Committee

Mr Chambers reported on key topics addressed at the meeting on 17 November 2022 including a proposal to develop an intellectual property policy for the College; Dr Graham's paper on the Shared Island conference including information for note at the Strategy Day; student success at the World Skills event and resulting publicity opportunities; concern expressed at the TAMS situation and appreciation of the College's proactive work on same.

Mrs Brown updated GB on developments with Apprenticeships awards 2023, L3 evaluations and HE Annual Assurance return which would be brought to the March meeting of Committee. She reported a restructuring of the ES team and that a robust action plan had resulted in improved success rates in the January exam session. Members noted that the College would be presenting best practice at a DFE event on 9 March on relationship with NIE Networks and how strategic employer relationships were evolving.

The draft minutes of meeting on 17 November 2022 were noted.

111.8 Resources Committee

Mr Murphy gave a verbal update of the meeting on 23 January 2023 noting consideration given to reviewed Departmental budget; CDP progress report, where he noted credit to Ms Kerr for an excellent report; and an encouraging HR update.

Mr Laverty took members through the summary finance update on 23 January 2023. Members heard that the College was operating to budget for the current year, with additional money provided for help for students on cost of living. He highlighted the lack of budget clarity for the coming year and uncertainty around in-year funding from April 2023.

Mr Murphy commended Mr Laverty and the finance team for their work on the budget. He confirmed that work on financial scenario planning was on-going across all colleges with more clarity expected in coming weeks.

Ms Mallon reported a very successful staff awards event and congratulated those involved in organising and contributing to same, with particular emphasis on excellent student participation. She encouraged governor attendance at future ceremonies and Mr Chambers endorsed this sentiment.

111.9 Audit & Risk Committee

Mr McCluggage reported very good relationships between the College, internal audit and external audit, with a smoothly executed annual audit and good final Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG). He commended Mr Lavery and the finance team on this achievement.

Mr Murphy referred to upcoming increase in audit work within a short time frame for the 31 March year-end and Mr Lavery reported that the College was working with NIAO to plan for this.

The draft minutes of the meeting on 16 November 2022 were noted.

111.10 CDP Progress Report

Ms Small spoke to this report and expanded on areas under development for red risks in FT HE in FE and InnovateUs, where output is currently constrained by delivery capacity. She noted a focus on engagement with the OU to develop enrolments, review of new provision in curriculum planning, working closely with colleagues on innovation and recruitment of one further technical specialist to address these issues. Members noted that College Open Days take place in the coming week.

Members noted a need for clarity on the extensive remit of InnovateUs and the Principal advised that DfE had now requested that College engage with them on funding going forward.

Action: Issues around methods of funding allocation would be picked up at the Strategy Day on 21 February.

111.11 Risk Assessment and Draft Partnership Agreement

Consideration was given to these documents. The Principal explained the annual Risk Assessment process and highlighted changes put forward by governors included in the document.

Action: The Governing Body endorsed the Risk Assessment and were content to confirm the Draft Partnership Agreement.

The Principal advised the Department's intention to have the Partnership Agreements in place for March 2023.

111.12 Any Other Business

None.

111.13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 22 March 2023 in Magherafelt campus.

The meeting ended at 6.00pm.

Mr K Nelson



Date 22 March 2023

Chair

Mrs K Wallace



Secretary