

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 15 May 2019 in Newtownabbey campus, commencing at 5.10 pm.

Present: Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey (Chair), Ms A Dynes, Mrs J Eve, Mr R Jay, Dr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mr W McCluggage, Mr I Murphy and Prof T Scott.

In Attendance: Dr S Brankin, Mr M Higgins and Mr V Taggart.

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary.

88.1 Apologies

Mr Hutchinson and Mrs McConnell.

88.2 Declarations of Interest

None.

88.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 were approved.

Proposed: Mr McCluggage

Seconded: Ms Dynes

88.4 Matters Arising

The risk register colour scheme would be updated for the June A&R meeting.

88.5 Chair's Communication

DfE had now advised that an offer for the position of NRC Chair had been made and accepted. The new Chair would be taking up the appointment shortly.

The Chair updated members on issues discussed at the accountability meeting on 1 April 2019 including the campus new build project, budget position, performance against targets and members noted that the Permanent Secretary had agreed to attend a launch event at the College..

88.6 Correspondence

Committee noted 5 pieces of correspondence which had been received since the last meeting including the updated guide for governors, the current position re charitable status for FE Colleges and proposals for taking forward Governing Body appointments.

Recommendations on correspondence in relation to 2019/20 resource allocation and Property Services Division had been included on the agenda.

88.7 Principal's Report

The Principal's Report was taken as read. Prof Scott highlighted the College's involvement with the Women in STEM (W-STEM) project and Mr Taggart outlined the operation of the Simulated Work Environment being donated by Caterpillar. The positive trend in student recruitment was noted.

Members' attention was drawn to the list of student achievements and congratulations were extended to Jonathan Scott and to the under-19 football team on their achievements during the year.

A report relating to timescales and workload would be brought to the Resources Committee in June.

ACTION: The Secretary would circulate details of the upcoming Student Recognition Award events to members.

88.8 New Build Update

Mr McCluggage took members through the Project Manager's report for the Project Steering Group meeting being held on 16 May and advised on key decisions to date in relation to value for money.

Mr Higgins presented a fly through presentation on the Stage 3 Design and detailed the various stages of the plans noting that approval to open the Coleraine campus onto Anderson Park had been received from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and a meeting with planners and HED in relation to fascia for the build, was due to take place. It was noted that tender documents for Coleraine were due to go to the marketplace and those for Ballymena would follow shortly after.

5.35pm Mrs Allison entered the meeting.

Members noted that the project was now at the stage to procure planning as anticipated and plans for decant were on course, with necessary facilities to enable the use of Beresford Avenue as the decant for Coleraine campus included in the business case.

Governors were enthused by the project presented and noted that extensive internal consultation had been carried out and 'town hall' information meetings would take place before the end of the academic year. Congratulations were extended to those involved for their work on the project.

88.9 Resources Committee

The draft minutes of the Resources meeting on 29 April 2019 were noted and recommendations made by the Committee outlined and discussed.

AGREED: Mr Higgins will submit the CDP to the Department and follow up with a letter outlining that the GB do not find it acceptable that the baseline budget has not been restored.

Members highlighted issues in relation to time spent on property services issues, continuing health and safety risks and responsibility for any liability outcome.

AGREED: The Governing Body will forward a letter supporting the sector position on Sector Wide Property Division business and highlighting some of the issues raised by governors.

88.10 Education Committee

Members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2019. Mr Lennox gave a verbal update of items considered at the meeting on 7 May 2019 and noted that further work was to be carried out on data analysis for essential skills targets.

The Governing Body were appraised of the importance of identifying a safeguarding governor to take over when Mr Jay stepped down at the end of June.

ACTION: The Chair would give consideration to the appointment of a safeguarding governor to replace Mr Jay.

88.11 Management Accounts 2018/19

Mr Higgins reported that accounts to 31 March 2019 were within Departmental tolerances and members

considered details on funding provided in-year. It was noted, however, that accounts at 31 July would show pressure due to £1.4m of baseline funding not having been reinstated. Mr Higgins advised HE income lower than anticipated due to lower level of recruitment to HE programmes and advised on an authorised overspend permitted by the Department.

A query was raised in relation to discretionary spending and Mr Higgins advised on the level of activity that lead to an over-spend in the area. .

ACTION: Classification of expenditure to be reviewed.

88.12 Progress against Targets 31st March 2019

The CDP progress report to 31 March had been submitted to the Department and discussed at Resources and Education Committees. A report to the end of July would be submitted in line with Departmental requirements.

Mr Jay queried cross-college performance figures to compare with other Colleges similar to the previous health check. Mr Higgins stated that the report card template was not identical across colleges, however he will raise the matter with the Department via the Finance Directors and Planning Group..

ACTION: Mr Higgins will raise with Finance Directors and Planning Group on making available cross-sector data to be used for benchmarking.

88.13 Draft College Development Plan

Mr Higgins outlined the background to a request from the Department for a revised CDP to be put forward detailing 2 scenario. Consideration was then given to details on 3 scenarios which had been developed by the College and members noted that the Resources Committee had been of the opinion that all 3 scenarios should be included in the submission.

ACTION: The CDP with all scenarios be submitted to the Department.

Members expressed strong concerns that the potential reduction in funding would impact adversely on the most vulnerable young people.

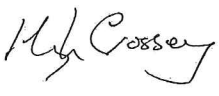
88.14 Any Other Business

None.

88.15 Date of Next Meeting

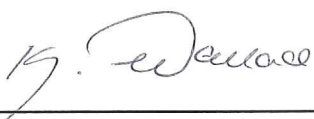
The next meeting of the Governing Body will take place on 26 June 2019 in Farm Lodge, Ballymena.

The meeting ended at 6.35pm.

Mr H Crossey 

(Vice Chair)

Date 26/6/2019.
26 June 2019

Mrs K Wallace 

(Secretary)