

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 16 November 2017 at Ballymoney campus, commencing at 5.30 pm.

Present: Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey (Chair), Mrs J Eve, Mr W Hutchinson, Mr R Jay, Dr D Lennox, Ms K Linden, Ms Y Mallon, Mrs G McConnell, Mr K Nelson, Mrs K Reilly, Prof T Scott (Principal)

In Attendance: Dr S Brankin, Mr D Hewitt and Mr V Taggart
Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

Ms Beverley Harrison, Director of Further Education, DfE – 79.3

The Chair welcomed Ms Harrison to the meeting. He introduced and welcomed the new student governor, Kathryn Linden, expressing the hope that she would enjoy being on the Governing Body.

Congratulations were extended to Mr Taggart on his appointment as Vice-President Teaching and Learning.

79.1 Apologies

Mr Higgins, Dr McCambridge and Mr McCluggage.

79.3 Presentation by the Director of Further Education

Ms Harrison took members through her presentation providing an update on developments in respect of the Further Education Means Success Strategy for Northern Ireland. She outlined the strategic context and the sponsor role of the Department and highlighted work undertaken in the areas of governance and funding, collaboration and communication.

Mr Chambers made reference to the usefulness of the recent DfE 'Effective Governance Training', which had used case studies to highlight how risk could be identified.

Ms Harrison also advised a new departmental sponsor manual had been developed which would guide and influence the relationship between the Department and all its NDPBs. An event is planned on new funding model, performance measures etc in January 2018.

Action: The Secretary would circulate information on the next available governance training course. Members were asked to indicate interest in receiving presentation papers from the previous meeting to the Secretary.

Mrs Allison joined the meeting at 6.05pm.

Ms Harrison noted members' concerns regarding the existing Governor vacancies. She reported that the issue has arisen due to the absence of the Minister, noting there is a possibility of the Permanent Secretary launching more urgent appointment competitions being considered. There was cautious optimism voiced at this information and Ms Harrison advised that, in the event of competitions not being launched in a timely manner, there was an alternative plan which could be implemented. The Chair asked that DfE put in place an alternative process if public appointment does not proceed in the near future.

The Chair thanked the Director of FE for her presentation and looked forward to seeing the new funding model.

Ms Harrison left the meeting at 6.10pm.

79.2 Declarations of Interest

None.

79.4 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2017 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Nelson

Seconded: Mr Jay

79.5 Matters Arising

Members noted information on actions arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, as detailed in the attached report. Information on the following items was provided:

Item 78.5: Prof Scott had now received information in relation to the appointment of staff governors on committees.

Item 78.6: Sub-committees still to appoint Vice-Chairs.

Item 78.18: Prof Scott advised that terms of reference had now been established for a review of Colleges NI (CNI) with Chairs and CEs from across the sector to take part in a strategy session on 23 November. The remit of CNI was discussed and the importance of providing additionality along with a strong lobbying and advocacy role was emphasised.

The updated list of Committee Membership 2017/18 was noted.

79.6 Election of Vice-Chair

One expression of interest had been received for this position and it was agreed unanimously that Mr McCluggage be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.

79.7 Chair's Communication

Members noted that at the Mid-year Accountability Review meeting on 9 November, the latest KPI report had been shared with the Department and that they had been content with it.

79.8 Correspondence

- i) **DfE Appointment of Student Governor** – the letter dated 3 October 2017 from DfE was noted.
- ii) **ETI publication of revised scrutiny evaluation process - FE Colleges and WBL providers** - Prof Scott outlined the changes from the previous SER process. She also advised that a follow up visit by ETI to review progress with ES and WBL would take place on 4/5 December. There would be no follow up visit in February unless concerns were raised.

79.9 Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

Changes to be made to MSFM procurement guidance were noted.

The Governing Body noted the annual MSFM document.

79.10 Self-Assessment and Board effectiveness

Consideration was given to the following three documents:

- Cover letter for assessment analysis
- NRC GB self-assessment 2016/17 analysis report
- NRC Board effectiveness report and survey 2017

Action: The Chair advised that an action plan would be developed for the next meeting.

79.11 Principal's Report

Prof Scott spoke to her report and highlighted the success achieved by students in 2017. She had written to congratulate the relevant individuals on behalf of Governors.

Attention was drawn to the three 2017 graduation ceremonies on 13 December 2017. Members would receive full details and asked to confirm attendance..

The Chair advised that the Secretary would conduct a poll to confirm a date for an additional Governor's event in December or Jan.

Action: The Secretary would send out an invitation to the graduation ceremonies

Action: The Secretary would circulate a poll of dates for a Governors' event. Members were asked to respond to the Secretary.

79.12 2016/17 Annual Report and Financial Statements (audited)

Consideration was given to this report which had been submitted to the NIAO ahead of the deadline and received a clean, non-qualified audit opinion. The reports had been considered by the Resources Committee and approved by the Audit & Risk Committee.

Prof Scott acknowledged the work of the finance team in the production of this report which will be resubmitted to the Audit Office before being laid before the Assembly on 8 December.

The Chair recorded his thanks to the Audit & Risk Committee for their work and to the finance team for having the report submitted in timely fashion.

Dr Lennox advised that the Audit & Risk Committee had recommended the 2016/17 Annual Report and Financial Statements to the Board for approval.

The Governing Body accepted the Committee recommendation and approved the 2016/17 Annual Report and Financial Statements.

The draft design version of the report was noted.

Consideration was given to the Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) which had previously been before the Audit & Risk Committee. Reference was made to Annex D of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Opinion. The Governing Body expressed concern about the wording of the opinion and stated that given that progress was monitored closely by the Resources Committee, the Education Committee, the Audit & Risk Committee and particularly the SIP Committee, they were very content with the quality of all reporting carried out during the year. The Governing Body acknowledged that NIAO had recognised the work which had been undertaken and had concluded in their Opinion that 'this report draws this matter to a close'.

The RTTCWG was noted by the Governing Body.

79.13 Audit & Risk Committee

Dr Lennox drew attention to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2017 and provided a verbal update of the meeting held on 8 November 2017.

The minutes of the 27 September 2017 meeting were noted by the Governing Body.

The Committee Annual Report which set out the work of the Committee during 2016/17 was presented to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body approved the Audit & Risk Annual Report.

79.14 Resources Committee

Mr Chambers drew attention to the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 23 October 2017 and summarised the business addressed. He referred to the non-sequential order of business and explained that this was due to a lack of quorum at the commencement of the meeting as a consequence of the reduced Governor numbers.

Prof Scott drew attention to the schedule of meetings for February/March 2018, and advised dates would be reviewed to ensure reporting consistency.

The minute of the Resources Committee held on 23 October 2017 was noted by members.

79.15 Education Committee

Mr Jay drew attention to the minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 25 October 2017 and provided a verbal update of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 prior to the meeting of the Governing Body.

He reported that there had been detailed discussion on the new SER/QIP reporting process, with the finalised document due for submission to the Department by the end of December.

Mr Jay also advised that Committee had considered the returns.

The minutes of the 25 October 2017 meeting were noted by the Governing Body.

The Governing Body approved the Annual Quality Assessment return for HE provision.

79.16 Fees & Charges Policy 2018/19

Prof Scott advised members that an internal working group brought forward a recommendation not to increase fees; this was approved by the Senior Leadership Team .

The Governing Body approved the Fees and Charges Policy 2018/19.

79.17 KPI Report 2017/18

Prof Scott drew attention to the KPI report which had been reviewed by the Resources Committee and agreed by the Education Committee. She highlighted pertinent points and advised the only significant change as being the improved student enrolment numbers.

79.18 Date of Next Meeting

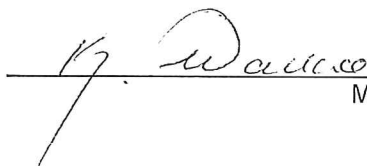
The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Governing Body would be held at Newtownabbey campus on Wednesday 24 January 2018 commencing at 5.30pm.

The unreserved business meeting ended at 7.10pm.



Mr H Crossey (Chair)

Date 24/1/2018
24 January 2018



Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)