

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 20 March 2019 in Coleraine campus, commencing at 5.15 pm.

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

In Attendance: Mr M Higgins and Mr V Taggart.

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She then announced that she had resigned her position as Chair and would be stepping down on 8 April 2019. The Chair apologised to members for her short tenure but emphasised that it was unavoidable given the unexpected extensive time commitment which the role had required.

87.1 Apologies

Dr Brankin, Mr Chambers and Mrs Eve.

87.2 Declarations of Interest

None.

87.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Murphy

Seconded: Ms Dynes

87.4 Matters Arising

Mr Higgins outlined the key issues in the Shared Services update, including the agreement to extend the project timeframe by one year. In response to members' questions Mr Higgins confirmed that additional funding for dedicated resources as a result of the deferral, would be requested from the Department. Reference to the possibility of recovering additional costs from suppliers was noted.

All other actions arising from the previous minutes had been completed.

5.20pm Mrs McConnell entered the meeting.

Developments on the shared services issue would be reported through the Resources and Audit & Risk Committees and progress updates would be brought to the Governing Body.

87.5 Chair's Communication

The Chair advised that following the Strategy Day, the 3-year College Development Plan would be taken forward by SLT with temporary support from a managed service contract awarded to Deloitte.

Members noted that the annual Accountability meeting with the Department was scheduled for 1 April 2019 and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

87.6 Correspondence

- i) Letter from the Director of FE advising the latest position on charitable status for FE colleges. Members expressed strong concerns at this situation and it was agreed that this issue be given priority for future consideration.

ACTION: Charitable status to be kept on the agenda to raise with the Department.

- ii) College Development Plan (CDP) commissioning requiring a first draft of individual CDPs and educational enrolment templates by 22 March. Members noted caution around submissions given that the budget allocation for 2019/20 had not yet been advised.

Disappointment was voiced that the budget due to have been issued on 13 March had still not been provided, especially given that the Governing Body meetings schedule had been organised around the Department timetable for submission of CDP. Strong concern was also expressed that money taken out of the baseline budget last year was expected to be returned to the budget for 2019/20.

- lii) Notification that Heather Cousins would take responsibility for the Skills and Education Group from 1 April 2019. The Principal will extend a warm welcome to Ms Cousins and encourage an early visit to the College.

87.7 Principal's Report

The Principal's Report was taken as read. Prof Scott drew members' attention to the Day 1 Brexit planning meetings. She also highlighted the new partnership with Caterpillar and the success of the engagement with Wright Group, commending Mr Taggart for his work on achieving this alliance.

5.30pm Ms Mallon entered the meeting.

Members noted that a report on the annual staff training days on 11/12 February would be brought to the Resources Committee.

The Chair referred to the success of the partnership working with Wright Group and the high level of international engagement. Congratulations were extended to students for their achievements to date in the SkillBuild NI competition and best wishes extended for the finals.

87.8 New Build Update

The minutes of the Project Board meeting held on 21 February 2019 were noted and the decision to move forward with the single phase procurement strategy highlighted. A period of discussion ensued during which members' questions in relation to risks / benefits associated with each of the strategy choices and the rationale for choosing the traditional approach, were responded to by Mr Murphy, Mr McCluggage and Mr Higgins.

Prof Scott drew attention to the possibility of a phased funding approach to take forward both projects in tandem. Confirmation should be known following deliberations with the Department in regard to the CDP. The issue of funding for the two projects would be raised at the Accountability meeting on 1 April.

Planning approval for both projects was expected to be in place by summer.

87.9 Audit & Risk Committee

The draft minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 21 February 2019 and the Corporate Risk Register at 31 January, were noted and Mr McCluggage provided a summary of matters discussed. The Chair and members confirmed they were content for the Audit & Risk Committee to agree the final RTTCWG report and provide an update to the Governing Body.

Mr Higgins highlighted the red risks within the register and provided an update on proposed action to

mitigate these. He drew attention to the inclusion of risk 10 relating to delivery of infrastructure and learning environment following the New Build Project Board meeting and the Audit and Risk Committee meeting. Mr Higgins advised that actions proposed for risk 4 and risk 6 would move these two risks to green in the coming months. The GB confirmed content with the corporate risk register and advised on alternative colour scheme to reflect changes.

ACTION: Mr Higgins would review the colour scheme of the register.

87.10 Resources Committee

The update on budget to deliver CDP anticipated target for 2019/20 and the presentation on FE Sector Budget 2019/20, were noted. Mr Higgins advised that the College 2019/20 draft budget was based on the previous year's allocation but had not been confirmed. As the indicative budget was not received from the Department on the 13th March 2019 a discussion on 2019/20 budgets will be brought to the Resources Committee in April for consideration and circulated to members in advance of the next Governing Body meeting, if appropriate.

87.11 Education Committee

Mr Lennox provided a verbal update of the meeting held on 13 March 2019 including correspondence considered in relation to the review of MaSN numbers and changes requested to the QIP. Mr Lennox highlighted the Letter of Offer received for the Entrepreneurial Hub and acknowledged the work of Mr Crossey and Mr Murphy in achieving this result.

Mr Taggart outlined the contents of the Interim Safeguarding Report which had been discussed at Committee. Prof Scott emphasised the safeguarding responsibility on all staff and governors, Dr Firth was currently looking at providing training on same. Dr McCambridge welcomed the proposed training and requested that tutorial training for staff also be provided. Members were advised of the need to identify a designated safeguarding governor for succession planning, a position currently occupied by Mr Jay.

The Governing Body noted the extensive additional actions being progressed in addition to the safeguarding report.

ACTION: Consideration to be given to identifying a safeguarding governor for succession planning and refresher training to be provided for governors.

87.12 Management Accounts 2018/19

Mr Higgins took members through the accounts for 2018/19 to the end of January; accounts to the end of March would be considered at the Resource Committee meeting in April. He advised that the College is within budget tolerances to the end of the March financial year as a result of additional funding negotiated with the Department. Mr Higgins stressed the importance of that funding being brought in to baseline from next year.

Members noted that £1.4m capital spending had taken place on modernising vehicles and equipment for curriculum activities and preparations for moving to new buildings. The importance of regular investment to meet the increasing demand for updated technology to deliver the curriculum was noted.

87.13 Any Other Business

None.

87.14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Governing Body will take place on 15th May in Magherafelt campus.

The meeting ended at 6.25pm.



Mr H Crossey _____

(Vice Chair)

Date 15 May 2019

15 May 2019



Mrs K Wallace _____

(Secretary)