

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at Newtownabbey campus, commencing at 5.35 pm.

Present: Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey (Chair), Mrs A Dynes, Mr R Jay, Dr D Lennox, Ms K Linden, Ms Y Mallon, Mr W McCluggage, Mrs G McConnell, Mr K Nelson, and Prof T Scott (Principal)

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

Ms Maria McCann, McCann PR (item 80.1) and Mr C Fairless (item 80.1)

80.1 An Overview of External Communications and Priority Setting for the Future

The Chair welcomed Ms McCann and Mr Fairless who were in attendance to present their report on external communications activity during 2017 and its contribution to the College's Strategic Improvement Plan.

Ms McCann spoke to the report and outlined key areas of public relations engagement activity including media relations; engagement with business, community, schools, political representatives and crisis communications. She acknowledged the initiatives led by Mr Fairless on social media which had contributed to the College achieving the top Edurank ratings for the FE sector. Members noted that a stakeholder partnerships meeting would take place on 31 January 2018.

A sample of media reports were also circulated for GB information.

The Chair and members thanked Ms McCann and Mr Fairless for their comprehensive and informative report on the communications strategy.

Ms McCann and Mr Fairless left the meeting at 6.05pm.

80.2 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Ms Allison, Mrs Eve, Mr Hutchinson and Dr McCambridge.

The Chair welcomed Ms Dynes to her first meeting following appointment as support staff representative on the Governing Body. He congratulated Mr Nelson on his award of MBE in the New Years' Honours and extended best wishes for a speedy recovery to Mr Hutchinson, following his recent fall.

80.3 Declarations of Interest

None.

80.4 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Chambers

Seconded: Mr Nelson

80.5 Matters Arising

Self-assessment and board effectiveness: it was noted that an action plan based on the results of this survey would be issued.

Action: Secretary to circulate Action Plan on Board Effectiveness.

80.6 Chair's Communication

Members noted the feedback from governors following the meeting held on 18 January 2018 and that these would be used to inform the strategic direction and development of the CDP.

The Chair reported receipt of a letter confirming that the College grouping would remain in category F3.

80.7 Principal's Report

Prof Scott spoke to her report and advised on the format for the new corporate planning process, which had been communicated to Governors at the recent conference events. It was noted that Mr Hewitt was the College's representative on a Policy and Planning Group for the sector. In response to queries around the new learning hub status, Prof Scott advised that a response was awaited on the College's submission. Prof Scott also reported that engagement and consultation with the Department in relation to potential efficiency savings across the sector was ongoing.

A number of Governors expressed concern in relation to the proposed move to a single funding model and the short timescale for submission of corporate plans considering the strategic importance the FE sector plays within skills development and enhancement.

The Governing Body noted that the Permanent Secretary, Dr Andrew McCormick, would be moving at the end of January. He would be replaced by Mr Noel Lavery at a date to be confirmed.

Attention was drawn to the schedule of College Open Days and Governors were encouraged to circulate this information widely.

It was noted that, following the success of the graduation ceremonies, the Communications team would be drawing up a strategy for future nomination of honorary fellowships.

80.8 Correspondence

- i) DfE Update: Progress on amending college governance instruments – moving forward pending legal advice.
- ii) Specification for Value for Money Review (VFM) – concern was expressed in respect of the timing including the ambitious timeframe for completing the exercise when the sector was transitioning simultaneously to a new College Development Process.
- iii) Presentations from the Governors' Conference events held in January 2018. Members were reminded that a survey had been issued by the Department requesting feedback on the conference events.
- iv) Department of Finance (DoF) Report 'Briefing on NI Budgetary Outlook 2018' – A response to the Department was being developed in conjunction with CollegesNI and a copy would be issued to the Governing Body when completed.

80.9 Audit & Risk Committee

The minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 8 November 2017 were noted, a verbal updated having been provided at the Governing Body meeting on 16 November 2017.

Copies of the Audit & Risk Annual Report 2017/18 were circulated. The work of Mr Craig Fairless in developing the design of the report was noted.

80.10 Resources Committee

Mr Chambers drew attention to the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 15 January 2018 and summarised the business addressed.

The minutes of the Resources Committee meeting of 15 January 2018 were noted. Mr Crossey thanked Mrs McConnell for agreeing to be Vice-Chair of the Resources Committee.

80.11 Education Committee

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 16 November 2017 were noted, a verbal update having previously been provided to the Governing Body on 16 November 2017.

Mr Jay gave a verbal update on the Education Committee meeting held on 17 January 2018 and summarised the business addressed, highlighting the development of a detailed Curriculum Framework Document.

Members noted that Mr Jay had been designated HE Governor in line with the requirements for the forthcoming Quality Review Visit.

Action: The Chair would liaise with the Secretary on a review of the library documents on MinutePad.

80.12 Monthly Management Accounts

Mr Higgins summarised the draft accounts to March 2018 and to the College year end July 2018. He advised that the College is operating with tolerances to the end of March in line with DfE year-end. He advised of concerns in taking forward a number of procurement exercises and that the matter was escalated by all Colleges to the Department. As a result, alternative projects were being taken forward to ensure full spend to 31st July 2018.

The Governing Body noted the NDPB Monthly Return November 2017 and Summary Management Accounts.

80.13 KPI Reporting Schedule

Mr Chambers confirmed that the Resources Committee had reviewed the report for KPIs 3, 4 and 5 and were content with presentation and progress.

Mr Jay confirmed that the Education Committee had reviewed the report for KPIs 1 and 2 and were content with progress. He highlighted the discussion and actions in respect of the metric relating to ACS.

80.14 Any Other Business

None.

80.15 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Governing Body would be Wednesday 7 March 2018 in Coleraine campus, commencing at 5.30pm. An opportunity would be provided to meet with staff from 5.00 – 5.30pm.

The unreserved business meeting ended at 7.10pm.



Mr H Crossey (Chair)

Date 7/3/2018
7 March 2018



Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

