

Northern Regional College

Governing Body

Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 24 September 2025 in Newtownabbey campus commencing at 5.00pm.

Present: Mr C McKenna (Chair), Mr B Devlin, Mr M Higgins, Mr G McAllister, Mr D MacAuley, Mrs McGovern, Ms D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Mr B Patterson, Mr S Shevlin (online), Mr D Small

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr S Lavery

Secretary: Mrs K Wallace

130.1 Apologies

Apologies were received for Dr Graham, Ms Hemphill, Mr Murphy and Mrs Taggart

130.2 Declaration of Interests

The Chair notified members of his position as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee with the Department of Justice.

130.3 Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and all took part in a round of introductions.

130.4 Minutes of Last Meeting

Document shared in advance: Draft minutes 31.07.25

On the proposal of BP and seconded by DS, the minutes of the meeting held on 31.07.25 were approved.

130.5 Matters Arising

All actions from the last meeting had been completed with no matters outstanding.

130.6 Chair's Communications and Correspondence

The Chair updated the meeting on his previous experience and appointment process and on meetings undertaken with internal and external stakeholders. He noted upcoming meetings on 25.09.25 with FE Chairs and at the DfE Partnership event.

The Chair highlighted key focus on clearing July '24 accounts as quickly as possible, March '25 component accounts by end of October and July '25 accounts by end Jan 2026. He noted the importance of being in a position to make and follow through on commitments to the Department.

DS noted negativity around accounts and reputation as key issues for the College.

The Chair noted that accounts would be sorted by the next meeting of GB on 26 November and that, meanwhile, there continued to be a business to run, especially given the upcoming move into a 3-yr budget cycle. He also noted things being done well by the College including new campus builds and delivery in other areas of curriculum.

CMG noted primary focus of the last number of GB meetings as accounts and highlighted the need to make sure regular issues eg running of the College, curriculum etc, were being kept on top of.

The Chair agreed and was open to additional meetings of GB to look at regular issues, if necessary.

The Chair reminded members of the upcoming official opening of the Ballymena campus on 08.10.25 and hoped to see everyone there.

130.7 Principal's Report

Documents shared in advance: Principal's Report; Draft CEF Constitution; College Business Continuity Plan

MH spoke to his report and highlighted a number of key issues including: CEF constitution; budget; Exercise Pegasus, an update on which was expected in the next few days; CDP; and enrolments.

DMI asked how Department skills funding would be shared. MH clarified that the College has placed bids to secure funding for skills competitions. He advised on measures to cover existing commitments and that no further commitments could be made to competitions unless funding is reinstated.

DMI queried possible sponsorship for competitions and noted the challenges this would present.

The Chair asked for information on the strength of College relationships with local industry and employers. He also noted the potential for networking with other DfE ALBs and CITB, and with universities. He highlighted the onus on Principals to impress the importance of this funding on the Department.

CB noted strong local relationships and would be happy to raise awareness of funding withdrawal and impact through vocational curriculum areas.

DMI queried figures for learners on other campuses. She also asked for the number and breakdown of new academic/support staff to the College.

Action: CB to provide update on enrolment per campus and report to Education

Committee on 30.09.25.

Action: MH would come back on breakdown of new staff.

DMI asked for and received information on induction documentation, process and training for new staff.

Action: CM would be asked to bring information on breakdown of new staff numbers and details of mandatory staff training to Resources Committee on 15.10.25.

RMK asked how lessons learnt from Exercise Pegasus would be captured.

MH referred to the evaluation of lessons learnt carried out following Covid and noted the differences to colleges' direction in Exercise Pegasus.

SL noted cooperation across the sector to share learning as the exercise progresses.

130.8 Education Committee

Document shared in advance: Draft minutes 18.08.25; Draft CDP 2025/26 – Letter and final draft CDP

CB presented the draft minutes and summarised the context and contents of the meeting.

Members reviewed the Draft CDP 2025/26. CB noted that plans for traineeship had been submitted to the Department, targets for improvement were being finalised and a sectoral plan for improvement of traineeship and ES was also in development.

In relation to enrolment figures, CB updated on current figures and noted that these would continue to change until the final data lift on 17 October.

Members requested and received clarification on achieving carbon baseline and reporting date for enrolment figures. CB would revert with a response to a query on FE PT figures for 2024/25.

MH was delighted with increased growth, as required by the Department, and explained the basis for the change.

Action: CB would report back on the PT FE figures for 2024/25.

GB endorsed the draft minutes 18.08.25 and the Draft CDP 2025/26 and noted the updated enrolment figures.

130.9 Resources Committee

Document shared in advance: Management Accounts to 31.07.25

SL presented the accounts and pointed out that the operating deficit shown was subject to any adjustments. He noted the expectation that the Mar '25 and Jul '24 figures would be finalised

in the next few weeks and explained the purpose of the October interim accounts, which would be the next focus. It was then hoped to get the Jul '25 accounts finalised in January 2026.

CMG noted the previous lack of management accounts and queried proposed frequency for future reporting. SL noted these would normally have been presented quarterly. However, as focus of resources over the past period had been on component and statutory accounts, this had interrupted the normal reporting process. He referred to the current and upcoming increase to resources and process improvements and noted that normal reporting would recommence once the Jul '25 accounts had been completed.

CMG noted the importance of management accounts for monitoring purposes and stated that as a GB member, she needed to see a minimum of quarterly reports of at least P&L and Balance Sheets, in the interim period. She asked that this issue be kept on the agenda.

GMA queried resource equivalency with other colleges and SL noted 2 additional staff members in the College along with the position for possible increase in resources of other colleges given the recent requirement for interim accounts.

DMI asked for and received information on the reason for the increase in staff and especially returning staff.

The Chair stated his commitment to the Department that statutory and component accounts requirements would be supplied by the end of October and noted the importance of at least quarterly management accounts provision.

MH noted that high level reporting on management accounts and spending information took place and monthly reporting of same to the Department had been provided regularly over the last period. He would, however, take on board the requirement for quarterly management accounts going forward.

Action: Quarterly management accounts to be provided going forward.

130.10 Financial Accounts Improvement Committee

Documents shared in advance: Draft minutes of meetings 21.07.25; 13.08.25; 02.09.25

DS presented the draft minutes, with July and August minutes having been previously circulated to members and noted themes and discussions which had run through the information.

He noted position by NIAO on significant audit issues reported at recent meetings and the rationale for why audit couldn't be progressed.

The Chair noted previous positive discussions with NIAO. He would be meeting with NIAO Director on 25 September and would ask for clarity on the situation.

BD would welcome written confirmation on issues causing delay.

MH referred to a positive meeting with NIAO on 16.09.25, and the resultant position at the Audit & Risk Committee on 17.09.25. He noted upcoming meetings with the Department.

Action: MH would forward record of meeting with NIAO on 16.09.25 to the Chair.

A verbal update on the improvement plan was noted by members.

130.11 Audit & Risk Committee

Documents shared in advance: Minutes 17.09.25; Revised Corporate Risk Register; Mid-year Assurance Statement; PO Commissioning Letter for MYA; DfE Submission Timeline; Draft MYA Statement 25/26; Draft Y/E Follow-up Statement

DS gave a verbal update of the meeting on 17.09.25. The minutes of the meeting were endorsed.

SL presented the MYA, explained the current position and clarified the reason for comments on various areas.

In response to a question from CMG, SL explained that the procurement register was not brought to GB as it was an operational issue.

Action: MH confirmed that a minor issue identified in the report would be changed.

130.12 Any Other Business None

130.13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 26.11.25 in Causeway campus.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm.

Mr C McKenna, Chair



Date 03.11.2025

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

