

## **Northern Regional College**

### **Governing Body – Unreserved Business**

**Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 27 April 2022 in Magherafelt campus, commencing at 5.04pm.**

**Present:** Mr K Nelson (Chair), Mr K Chambers, Mrs L Crilly, Dr P Graham, Mr M Higgins, Ms Y Mallon, Mrs P Martin, Mr D Macauley, Mr W McCluggage, Mrs D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Mr I Murphy, Mr S Shevlin, Mr D Small

**In Attendance:** Mrs C Brown, Mr S Laverty, Ms J Small  
Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

#### **108.1 Apologies**

Apologies were recorded for Mr A Chambers, Mr Hutchinson and Mr McAllister. The Chair and members extended congratulations to Mr McAllister whose wedding took place earlier in the day.

Members noted that Mr McSorley had resigned as staff governor and a competition to replace him would commence shortly.

#### **108.2 Declaration of Interests**

Mrs Crilly declared an interest in section 2 of the Finance Report at item 108.10 below.

#### **108.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Mr McCluggage                      Seconded: Dr Graham

#### **108.4 Matters Arising**

Members were reminded that a short non-executive meeting would be held at the Governing Body meeting on 22 June, to discuss agendas and papers. Comments to be forwarded to the Secretary.

#### **108.5 Chair's Communication/ Correspondence**

Feedback on DfE Effective Governance Training held on 25/28 March: The Chair highlighted that he was keen to capture key learning points from training, to input into governance arrangements.

The Principal's comments on the importance of regular information sharing through informal chats were noted.

**Action: Members' views on key learning points from the DfE training delivered by Ms Eileen Mullan, to be submitted to the Secretary.**

#### **108.6 Principal's Report**

The Principal spoke to his report and provided updates on a number of points including: applications; progress on Ballymena new build site; Covid restrictions; potential change of plan for College graduation ceremony.

In response to members' questions the Principal reported on: areas of growth and decline in applications; annual review of floor space efficiency for the Coleraine new build, in line with

the recent Skills Barometer and local demand; and work being carried out to support refugees to fit into the College programme.

Ms Small advised on organisational collaboration and staff training taking place to enable delivery of the hydrogen project. Mr McCluggage referred to the potential for future capital projects and funding available through the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI). Members noted that Mr Lavery was currently engaging with the Head of Estates and the New Build Project Director on available funding.

The report was noted.

#### **108.7 DfE Review**

The Principal presented an update on the review of the FE Delivery Model and members noted details on an informal meeting of the Chair and the Principal with the Project Lead, Sean Brolly, on 7 April 2022.

The GB considered a proposal for this item to be included on the GB agenda going forward and for workshop meetings to take place, possibly over the summer period, to inform feedback. The importance of the GB's involvement in discussion on the upcoming transformational change to the delivery of FE was emphasised.

**Action: DfE Review to be included as a standing item on the GB agenda and workshops to take place over the summer period as required.**

#### **108.8 Education Committee**

Mr Chambers gave a verbal update of the meeting on 26 April. He reported robust discussion and review of evidence provided in the HE Quality Review and the HLA Evaluation (Stage One) documents, provided for members' information. Members noted the Education Committee's recommendation that the Accounting Officer (AO) sign the Annual Assurance Statement 2020-21 on behalf of all members.

Mrs Brown advised that the HE Quality Review was an internal assurance document from which only the Annual Assurance Statement required Departmental submission, whilst the HLA Evaluation would be forwarded to the Department in its entirety.

Members noted that an HLA Evaluation (Part Two) would be forthcoming.

**Action: The Annual Assurance Statement to be signed by the AO and submitted to the Department by 30 April 2022, along with the HLA Evaluation (Part One).**

Mrs Brown presented a summary of key findings from the ETI Hub Evaluation carried out in October/November 2021, including proposals for a Hub resourcing model.

The Principal referred to an opportunity for the College to expand hub provision across the sector.

**Action: Members approved the Hub resourcing model and agreed that the opportunity for alternative Hubs across the sector be progressed.**

Members congratulated the Hub team on an excellent piece of work.

#### **108.9 Resources Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting on 4 April 2022 and updated Terms of Reference were noted. Mr Murphy advised the Committee on the areas covered at the Resources meeting, reaffirming budget was spent to 31<sup>st</sup> March and significant discussions took place on staffing

related matters including streamlining recruitment competitions. Members congratulated the Finance Team on managing the College budget position to 31 March.

Ms Small apprised the GB of the formal closure of the LMS project at the end of March and a move to phase 2 business as usual. She reported that a Change Management Board had now been established which Mr Leo Murphy would continue to Chair and that these arrangements were also reflected internally within the College.

Members noted that a sector wide LMS audit was underway, with a report to be provided in due course. Also that, after a lengthy implementation process, the LMS system now offered reasonable functionality.

#### **108.10 Finance Update**

Mr Laverty presented the finance report at 28 February 2022 and explained the variance to budget of £858k in the College accounts. Members noted an update to the DfE budget allocation which was now at £29,450k, with the overall capital budget remaining at £9,567k.

Members heard that the Department authorised an overspend to 31 March to cover rising utilities costs and a further cost of living bid was submitted for the 2022/23 financial year. Also, that the College was working with the Department as flexibly as possible on capital funding.

In response to a member's question, Mr Laverty clarified that the College overall 2022/23 deficit was not similar to other colleges.

#### **108.11 College Development Plan (CDP)**

Ms Small gave an overview of the Progress Report to 31 March 2022 and explained variance to target for qualifications and employers' progress. Members noted that income from business engagement currently exceeded the targets identified in the CDP.

Members' comments on the difficulties in reading the Excel report were noted.

**Action: An executive summary of the CDP would be provided for members' information going forward.**

#### **108.12 Corporate Plan**

Ms Small took members through an update of key activities which had taken place following the Strategy Day in March. Members noted that further Strategy Sub Group meetings would take place before the June meeting of the Governing Body, when an updated document would be provided for consideration.

#### **108.13 Any Other Business**

Graduation Day 26 May: The Principal advised that an update to arrangements would be provided to members, as a result of low student uptake.

Sustainability: Mr McCluggage referred to the opportunity for the College to look at a net zero strategy across new campuses in terms of both efficiency and generation. Ms Small advised that sustainability would be included in the strategic plan.

**Action: Net Zero Strategy to be considered by Resources Committee, before being brought back to the GB.**

June GB meeting: The Chair confirmed that the Director of FE would attend the meeting; also that community engagement would be on the agenda.

Annual governor assessments: The Chair outlined his intention to seek members' views on how the GB was working, prior to assessments. Meetings to take place either face-to-face or remotely, with the Chair attending separate campuses on the 3 interview days.

**Action: The Secretary will contact members to arrange meeting dates in July.**

Public Appointment opportunities: Members confirmed they were content to continue receiving information on public appointment competitions.

The Chair thanked everyone for their work on the meeting and members' appreciative comments on the opportunity to meet different campus teams in advance of GB meetings were noted.

**108.12 Date of Next Meeting**

22 June 2022 in Farm Lodge, commencing with a staff engagement session at 4.30pm.

The meeting ended at 6.32pm.

Mr K Nelson



Date 22 June 2022

Chair

Mrs K Wallace



Secretary