

Northern Regional College

Governing Body

Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 28 May 2025 in Magherafelt campus commencing at 5.00pm.

The meeting commenced following a presentation on Magherafelt Development Proposals by M Lennox, Estates Manager from 4.30-5.00pm.

Members warmly welcomed the proposals and raised a number of queries which were answered by ML. He reminded members that this was a feasibility study and no engagement had yet taken place with consultants.

MH advised that a number of different options were still to be looked at and commissioning would start when GB were comfortable on a decision. He emphasised that it would not be possible to use another base for a campus decamp which negated the possibility of a completely new build.

Members noted that demand from local industry could be taken forward in a business case.

Present: Mr K Nelson (Chair), Mrs L Crilly, Mr B Devlin, Dr P Graham (online), Ms J Hemphill, Mr M Higgins, Mr A Hoey, Mr G McAllister (online), Mr D MacAuley (online), Mrs McGovern, Ms D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Mrs P Martin (online), Mr I Murphy (online), Mr B Patterson, Mr S Shevlin (online), Mr D Small, Mrs J Taggart

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Ms H Hampsey (item 127.6)

Secretary: Mrs K Wallace

127.1 Apologies None.

127.2 Declaration of Interests None.

127.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

On the proposal of PG and seconded by DS, the minutes of the meeting held on 26.03.25 were approved.

127.4 Matters Arising None.

127.5 Chair's Communications

Documents shared in advance: Board Effectiveness Action Plan; Minutes of Accountability Meeting on 03.04.25.

KN had attended a meeting of each of the Committees in advance of the governor assessment meetings, dates for which had now been agreed. Members were reminded of the Ballymena

closing event on 29.05.25 and the risk workshop on 02.06.25, which all members were invited to attend.

The Draft minutes of the Accountability Meeting and the Board Effectiveness Action Plan were noted. KN noted that the plan showed that the GB was working very effectively and advised that he had asked ICS to come to the June meeting to compare the College report against the sector report, which was still awaited. MH noted that the College report may differ from some of the sector recommendations.

KN advised that the Department had decided to appoint an independent convenor for the CEF.

Action: Members to be notified when the convenor role is confirmed.

127.6 Update on College Development Plan

Documents shared in advance: CDP 24/25 Progress Report Executive Summary, 25/26 Draft CDP, CDP Presentation

CB provided a brief overview of the documents provided. She confirmed that the 25/26 Draft CDP had been submitted on 23.05.25 following discussion at Education Committee on 21.05.25. Final amends would be made to reflect feedback from the Department, with final submission on 30.06.25.

HH spoke to the presentation. She highlighted that reduction to non-baseline funding for 25/26 would be equivalent to a loss of 1,000 enrolments (Multiply) and updated on current and projected enrolment figures to provide a steady year for the College enrolments.

HH took members through details on KPIs for the new academic year and noted in particular the success of Apprenticeships, with new programmes being launched in Ballymena and Causeway.

In relation to KPI 3, members heard that time had been set aside on the staff CPD day to allow completion of mandatory training. They also welcomed the introduction of green skills for students which would be included at induction.

SS joined the meeting at 5.18pm.

PG commended CB, HH and the curriculum team for providing very detailed data aligned to the Minister's priorities. He also pointed to the increasing alignment between College strategy and CDP.

Members queried and received clarity on availability of staff and funding resource to allow delivery of the new curriculum offer; average class size; retention target versus performance.

The variety of new and extended programmes was greeted enthusiastically in particular on carbon related KPIs. MH outlined the reason for flat growth rate as due to programmes

ceasing and the level of budget funding. Members noted that sectoral growth was similar or showed a marginal increase.

CMcG congratulated the team for targeting enrolments in spite of cuts. In response to her question on promotion of FE and HE, CB and HH outlined difficulties gaining direct access to post primary school pupils and an active external marketing campaign involving various youth groups and local councils.

JT referred to a teacher insight day on 20.06.25 being facilitated by the Causeway Business Education Partnership and would book a slot for a College pitch.

KN noted alignment with minsters' priorities bearing in mind the budget reduction.

Action: The final 25/26 CDP would be brought back to GB.

AH and HH left the meeting at 5.35pm.

127.7 Principal's Report

Documents shared in advance: Principal's Report; FE Lecturers Workload TOR.

MH gave an overview of his report and highlighted key points including: current position on pay negotiations; increased level of student applications; work taking place with councils on labour market partnerships and local economic partnerships; and good new stories.

Members noted the report.

127.8 Education Committee

PG gave a verbal update on the meeting held on 21.05.25 and noted the key topics presented at the meeting including: CDP; ES, which would be the focus for the Committee's 'deep dive' in 25/26; ETI evaluation. He noted that it had been AH's last Committee meeting as student governor and wished him well for the future.

Members noted that ETI had now completed their review of Traineeship with individual and sector reports being examined for accuracy before being published online. For full context, levels of outcomes were explained and that an action plan would be put together to address issues raised.

CB advised of work already in progress on planning for improvement through the internal steering group.

127.9 Resources Committee

Document shared in advance: Draft minutes of meeting on 07.04.25

The draft minutes of meeting on 07.04.25 were endorsed.

127.10 Financial Accounts Improvement Committee

Documents shared in advance: Draft minutes of meetings on 07.04.25, 28.04.25 and 12.05.25

KN presented the draft minutes which were endorsed by members.

127.11 Audit & Risk Committee

Documents shared in advance: Draft minutes of meetings on 14.04.25 and 21.05.25;
Corporate Risk Register April 2025

DS presented the draft minutes and gave an overview of key issues addressed. He noted the main point raised in meetings referred to the need for regular updates to Committee on emerging issues around accounts and College performance.

The minutes of 14.04.25 were endorsed. The minutes of 21.05.25 were endorsed subject to KN's name being removed from the list of attendees. The minutes would be amended.

MH presented the Risk Register and noted changes to risks on: financial health, industrial action and accounts production. He referred to the risk workshop which would take place on 02.06.25 which all members were invited to attend. The focus of the workshop would be to review the College's risk appetite in line with that of the Department and to update risk narrative. Members noted that the Corporate Risk Register would be taken to all GB meetings going forward.

Action: KW to share papers for the risk workshop with all members.

DMI referred to risk arising from lack of policies and procedures particularly in relation to dismissal and suspension. MH advised that this would be picked up at CEF as part of a transformational review. Whilst not a particular issue for the College, he would survey HR managers across the sector on how this was being dealt with.

SS agreed with DMI and noted the potential for reputational damage and financial penalties due to a lack of robust policies.

Action: This issue would be reflected on and picked up at the risk workshop.

RMK requested clarity on College's disaster recovery plan in relation to possible cyber security issues. He also queried risk from sector wide systems. MH outlined all plans in place to address such an event including cloud based storage, commercial insurance and team contingency plans. In relation to sector wide systems, MH detailed cover in place.

Action: KW will circulate information on NSCC cyber training, received from the Department.

DS queried if all College IT systems were in place. MH noted that a decision had been made to replace old pcs or upgrade due to risk potential from MS no longer providing support.

127.12 Finance Update

Document shared in advance: Financial update

MH presented this paper and advised some minor pressures going forward that were bid for in the June monitoring round. He provided clarification on the level of spend to March 2025 and the implications on budgets for 2025/26. Additional capital funding secured from the Department to complete the new Ballymena campus.

The update was noted.

127.13 New Build Update

Documents shared in advance: CPSG minutes of 26.11.24; CPSG paper for meeting 20.05.25; CPSG presentation for meeting 20.05.25

MH noted that meetings with the Department take place biannually as part of the Capital Project Steering Group. He advised the current position with the Ballymena new build on track for handover in third week in June, having now achieved a green rating from the Gateway review. Recommendations in the review report, which was very complimentary about how the project had been carried out, are being looked into.

Members noted the attached documents.

127.14 Any Other Business

MH outlined 2 career break applications for one and two years, which had been assessed for cover from current resources and were now recommended for approval.

Action: GB approved both career break applications.

127.15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 25.06.25 in Farm Lodge, with a tour of the new building from 4.15-5.00pm.

The meeting ended at 6.17 pm.

Mr K Nelson, Chair



Date 25.06.25

Mrs K Wallace , Secretary

