

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 5.30 pm on 6 March 2013 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus, Northern Regional College

Present Mr G Gilpin (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands (Principal), Mrs I Allison, Alderman J Brown, Mr J Clyde, Mr S Davidson, Mrs J Eve, Mr R Jay, Dr D Lennox, Alderman PJ McAvoy, Mr S McCartney, Mrs G McConnell, Mr M Murray, Mr K Nelson and Mrs A Rankin.

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Mrs C Moore, Dr C O'Mullan and Mr J A Hunter.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

Liam Neeson Video

At the commencement of the meeting Governors viewed the video made by Media Studies students in Ballymena for the ceremony to confer the Freedom of the Borough of Ballymena on Liam Neeson.

44.1 Apologies

Apologies have been received from Mrs K Collins and Mr I Goldsworthy.

44.2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

44.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body held on 23 January 2013 were approved subject to the addition 'Mr K Nelson' to the list of apologies

44.4 Matters Arising

44.4.1 ApprenticeshipsNI/Training for Success (minute 43.4.2)

It was noted that the Governing Body had forwarded a letter to DEL expressing its frustration regarding the continual delays in the implementation of new contracts. The Department responded by indicating that the timetable for the process remains unclear due to a further legal challenge.

Dr O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum, informed the Governing Body that the following statement has been released regarding the procurement process 'Regarding the award of contracts for the 2010 ApprenticeshipsNI procurement process, a Statement of Claim from the Plaintiff was recently received and is currently being considered by the Department and their legal advisors and as such it is not possible to give a definitive date for when these contracts will be awarded. In respect of the 2010 Training for Success contracts the Department hopes to be in a position to award these contracts within the next few months'. The Principal stated that the contract may have to be re-examined as the Minister is undertaking a review of the apprenticeship system.

44.4.2 Student Successes (minute 43.4.4)

The Chair reported that, prior to the meeting of the Governing Body, he and the Secretary had met with Mr Clyde, Student President, and Mr McCartney, Student Support Manager, to

discuss student affairs. Mr Clyde and Mr McCartney had expressed the wish to have a formal event to recognise outstanding student achievements. They had also discussed the need to improve interaction between the Governing Body and the Student Council. Mr Clyde and Mr McCartney had agreed to forward suggestions for their progression to the Secretary.

44.4.3 Amendment to Instrument of Government (minute 43.7)

It was noted that the Governing Body (23 January 2013) had given consideration to a letter from the Department (6 December 2012) concerning proposed amendments to the Instrument of Government to provide DEL with the necessary authority to remove members of Governing Bodies from office, should the need arise. The Chair had written to the Department regarding a number of observations raised at the meeting. The Department in its response (18 February 2013) has indicated that the clause 'six years in office', which had been queried by the Governing Body, should be removed. It has also accepted that the Department would not act without recourse to the Governing Body during any dismissal proceedings.

The Governing Body agreed that the proposed amendments be approved in light of the Department's response.

44.4.4 Any Other Matters

There were no other matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

44.5 Strategic Workshop

The Committee received a summary of proceedings at the Governing Body Workshop on 12 February 2013 when the following topics were discussed:

a) Strategic Overview. The Principal addressed a number of areas in his strategic overview. He highlighted the major external factors, sector issues and internal issues, which would have implications for the College over the next three years.

b) Review of Balanced Scorecard. Governors reviewed and made several observations regarding the use of the Balanced Scorecard. The Scorecard was regarded as a useful means of providing an overview of the College's activities and of aligning them with its strategic objectives. The Principal advised Governors that Mrs Moore had produced a revised format for the Balanced Scorecard in light of Governors' comments. Mrs Moore drew attention to the Statement of Targets, which included not only the present and projected status of the targets but also a comments column indicating actions to minimise projected shortfalls and under-achievements. She also referred to the new format for the balanced scorecard, which had two components, one indicating the current level of achievement and the other the predicted level at the year-end. She also pointed out that each component consisted of two concentric circles; the outer referring to domains and the inner to targets.

In response to a query it was explained that the Scorecard was a pictorial representation of the College's domains and targets. Mr Davidson observed that the Scorecard was 'balanced' as one side referred to 'the Student Experience' and the other to the domains to support and achieve the student experience targets, such as Finance, Staffing, Relationships and College Operations

c) Strategic Aims and Objectives. It was noted that it would be necessary for Governors, at their meeting on 6 March 2013, to have a further opportunity to discuss these before incorporation in the College Development Plan. During discussion a view was expressed that the 'Staffing' aim needed to be more explicit; no mention was made of staff ratios and the Staffing Plan.

Following consideration by the Governing Body it was agreed that the Strategic Aims and Objectives be approved, subject to the Staffing Committee giving further consideration to the 'Staffing' aim.

e) IQ:RS Submission. Governors agreed that the IQ:RS document should be forwarded to DEL and considered at the meeting of the Governing Body on 6 March 2013 for endorsement. This matter appears as a separate item on the agenda at 44.11

f) Self Evaluation Review. Governors undertook a Self Evaluation Review (SER) on the performance of the Governing Body during 2011/2012/2013. The views of Governors were obtained in respect of each of the targets selected: achieving Investors In People Status; providing opportunities to meet with staff and students; monitoring KPIs; and undertaking a mid-term SER review. Governors selected four key priority areas for Quality Improvement during 2012/2014. It was noted that the SER 2013/2014 will be forwarded to the next meeting for approval.

44.6 Chair's Communications

a) Significant Meetings and Events. The Chair indicated that he had attended several significant meetings and events since the last meeting. He mentioned in particular his attendance at the Ambassador Group and the Entrepreneurs' Group at Coleraine Borough Council; the Skillbuild Competition; meeting with Staff representatives on the Governing Body; Northern Ireland Children's University meeting at Stormont; informal meeting of Colleges Northern Ireland's Chairs' Group; video conference with Kansas State University; visit to the Psychology Department, Queen's University Belfast to discuss sporting matters; and meeting with the Student President and Student Support Manager. Referring to the visit to QUB the Chairman stated that the Psychology Department was interested in working with NRC on sport related issues.

b) North West Regional College Industrial Relations Report. The Chair made reference to the recent North West Regional College Industrial Relations Report, which contained items of interest to the Sector. The Principal suggested that the Report should be discussed by the Staffing Committee at its next meeting on 15 April 2013.

44.7 Principal's Report

The Principal highlighted a number of topics in his Report:

a) Partnership with Kansas. The development of a potential partnership with Kansas State University and Johnston County Community College will be taken forward through an exchange of visits over the coming months. The Chair, the Director of Curriculum and the Principal will be visiting Kansas on the week beginning 11 March 2013. The areas under consideration for collaboration at present are: Hospitality and Tourism, Sport, Counselling and Mediation and Community Development. The Principal advised Governors that representatives of Kansas State University would meet with representatives of the Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster on the return visit

b) Ministerial Visit. On 28 February 2013 the College hosted the Minister for Education, Mr John O'Dowd. The purpose of the visit was to allow the Minister to see NRC's partnership work with schools in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework. There had been concerns regarding the removal of earmarked funding for Entitlement Framework provision in schools. However, the Minister has announced a continuation of funding for the next two years, which should secure the current levels of provision made by the College for the duration of this period.

The Principal stated that Dr Stephen Farry, the Employment and Learning Minister, had had to cancel his visit to the Larne Adult Education Centre on 25 February 2013. It was noted that the Department had approved the previous Economic Appraisal of the Larne Adult Education Centre on the basis that a recommendation as to the future of LAEC would be included in the OBC. Concern was expressed that the cancellation of the visit could delay the necessary ministerial approval on the future of the Larne site.

c) Liam Neeson. The Video made by Media Students was very well received at the event and copies are being prepared to send to the star, along with an invitation to visit Media and Performing Arts students in the College.

d) Student Success. NRC Media Studies students have achieved another notable success. This time it was Ballymoney-based students who were successful at the Royal Television Society Awards at a recent ceremony in Dublin. Rosie McNamee received the Best Factual Programme-making Award and goes through to a UK Final at the Barbican in London in May. Jamie Graham, Nuala Clyde and Mark McAuley, who are currently second year students at NRC, were runners-up in the Fiction Programme category. This is the first time that any secondary level student from Northern Ireland has won a Royal Television Society Award.

e) Skillbuild. NRC is hosting the Annual Northern Ireland Skillbuild competitions at the Newtownabbey Campus on 20 and 21 March 2013. The Principal extended an invitation to Governors to attend the event.

f) Other Significant Events and Meetings. The Principal has: attended the NI Dinner for the President of Kurdistan at Hillsborough Castle; opened the NRC Conference on Psychological Trauma and Dissociation; attended the launch of Skillbuild 2013; attended the Graduation Ceremony for Foundation Degree in Retail; and visited St Killian's College, Carnlough.

44.8 College Inspection and Action Plans

The Principal stated that the Inspection Report had finally arrived on 1 March 2013 and had been emailed to all Governors. He said that the document had arrived too late to allow a full discussion at the Governing Body meeting. He indicated, however, that the next meeting of the Education Committee (19 March 2013) would have a full discussion of the Report and the Action Plans. He suggested that the meeting should be open to other Governors, who might wish to attend.

Referring to the Action Plan for Whole College and Quality Improvement Plans for Work Based Learning, the Principal stated that they had been prepared on the basis of the verbal feedback and summary of main findings provided by ETI. He explained that when the documents had been submitted to DEL on 18 January 2013, he had requested that the College should have flexibility to alter and adapt the Action Plans, as necessary, following receipt of the written report.

A Governor expressed surprise that it had taken the ETI team such a lengthy period to produce a written report, which was essentially the same as the summary of findings produced in November 2012. He stated that the Report remained unbalanced and little effort had been made to address the aggregation of weightings attributed to FE and WBL.

In response to a query the Principal stated that the College had commenced the implementation of the Action Plans as soon as it had received the verbal briefing from the ETI team. Management has carried out a review of Work Based Learning provision in the interim, which is likely to lead to a reduced provision and related redundancies. A Governor enquired if the actions referring to the target dates of January and February had already been implemented. The Director of Curriculum stated that the action plans were already being implemented.

It was noted that there had been a mixed reaction from staff regarding the outcomes of the Inspection. The majority of staff, who had received good and very good grades, had reacted positively to their own performances but had felt let down by Work Based Learning, which represented only 7% of the College's activity. The Director of Curriculum stated that both staff and management in WBL will be expected to show significant improvement by the time of the follow-up inspection.

A Governor enquired if there had been any adverse publicity since the publication of the Report. The Principal assured the Governor that the College had prepared a press release,

should the need arise, which would stress the FE provision and Work Based Learning Engineering/Motor Vehicle was good or better at NRC.

An observation was made regarding the scrutiny role of the Governing Body. In this context it was considered important for as many Governors as possible to be present at the open meeting of the Education Committee on 19 March 2013. If Governors were unable to attend the meeting, they should submit any comments on the Final Report to Ms Brannigan, PA to the Principal.

The Principal advised the Governing Body that he had submitted a complaint to eti as part of its complaints' procedure. This matter would be further dealt with under reserved business.

44.9 FE College Health Check Report

The Governing Body received the FE College Health Check for the 1st Quarter 2012/2013. It was noted that the Education Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee had already given consideration to the Health Check at their recent meetings.

A Governor drew attention to the staff cost as a percentage of income ratios, which indicated that NRC had the highest ratios in the sector. She asked for assurance that this matter was being addressed by the College. Another Governor stated that there was a need to get within the DEL target range as a matter of urgency.

The Principal said that there was no quick fix for bringing the income to staff ratios into line with the Sector parameters. He reminded Governors that the Governing Body had agreed to address this matter through the Staffing Plan. He referred to the reduction of 40 FTEs, which had been achieved during 2011/2012 and he indicated that new targets had been set for the current year, which would lead to a voluntary redundancy process. He stated, however, that redundancy can take up to 10 months to process. The Principal reminded Governors that it was also necessary to protect income; the Staffing Plan would identify changes in the curriculum provision and ensure that resources were allocated to income generating areas. Dr O'Mullan added that the College was monitoring underperformance, which would influence the College's curriculum portfolio.

Attention was drawn to a new measurement, staff costs as a percentage of student related income, which shows the College's ratio to be closer to the rest of the Sector. This ratio would appear in the next Health Check.

The Governing Body agreed that an updated Staffing Plan should be submitted to the next meetings of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Staffing Committee

44.10 Student Council Annual Report and Action Plan

Mr Clyde, the Student President, presented the Student Council Annual Report 2011/2012 and the Action Plan 2012/2013 from the Student Council. He highlighted the following issues referred to in the Report:

a) Elections. Mr Clyde reported that Six Deputy Presidents, one from each site, had been elected in 2011/2012; the overall President had been elected from Deputy Presidents. He also mentioned that Student Education and Welfare Officers (SEWOs) had been elected for each site.

b) Training. The Governing Body noted that officer training had been offered for all the SEWOs and that the Student President had attended a DEL Seminar for all new Governors at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick.

c) Health Clinic. A new satellite branch of the Sexual Health Clinic opened in January 2012 at Northern Regional College Newtownabbey Campus supported by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and in partnership with NRC,

d) Christian Union. He reported that the Christian Union continued to operate in the Ballymena Campus. The Governing Body noted that a Chaplaincy had been established at the Ballymena Campus.

e) College Action Plan The Student President drew attention the Student Council Action Plan 2012/2013. He said that several of the targets had been or were in the course of completion. He mentioned in particular that Council representatives had arranged fund raising events at all campuses as follows: Children in Need; Wear It Pink Day; and Comic Relief. He also highlighted a number of new ventures for 2012/2013 including a 'Day in the Life of a Student' scheme during which a Student Council member shadows a student for a day.

It was noted that the Student Council works closely with the Quality Improvement Unit and meets regularly to discuss student issues, student survey feedback and aspects of the student voice.

44.11 IQ:RS Submission

The Governing Body received a copy of the IQ:RS document, which had been submitted to DEL to meet a 15 February 2013 deadline. The document is a resubmission of the March 2012 document, first submitted in April 2012 and resubmitted in August 2012. It was noted that the document had been considered by Governors at the Strategic Workshop on 12 February 2013 and by the Education Committee (26 February 2013).

The Governing Body agreed that the document be endorsed.

44.12 Correspondence

The Governing Body received correspondence from Colleges Northern Ireland, dated 7 February 2013, providing details of a Policy Paper 'A Vision for the 14-19 Provision', issued by Colleges Northern Ireland. The paper refers to the absence of an effective strategic partnership with DE and the absence of a joint 14-19 framework, which have led to increased uncertainty, unnecessary competition and duplication of resources and provision across both the DEL and DE sectors. The paper sets out the issues and challenges that are impacting on the sector and makes a number of proposals that it hopes will define the future role of further education.

The Governing Body agreed that comments on the paper from Governors would be welcome

44.13 Draft Calendar Of Meetings 2013/2014

The Governing Body received the draft Calendar of Meetings for 2013/2014, which had been scrutinised by the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chairs of Committees. The Calendar follows the same format as for the current year with 6 scheduled meetings of the Governing Body and a Governing Body Strategic Workshop. The Committees of the Governing Body will meet as follows: Audit Committee (5 occasions); Education Committee (5 occasions); Finance and General Purposes Committee (7 occasions); and Staffing Committee (6 occasions). Meetings of the Chairs' Committee have also been scheduled, as has the Governing Body Christmas Dinner.

It was noted that several adjustments were required and **it was agreed that the Calendar should be adjusted accordingly and circulated to Governors in the forthcoming week.**

44.14 Audit Committee

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meetings of the Audit Committee held on 12 February 2013. Mrs Rankin, the Chair of the Audit Committee, stated that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes.

It was noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving the following details considered by the Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2013:

a) Presentation Risk Management. The Committee received a presentation from Mrs C Moore, Director of Finance and Corporate Development, regarding Management of the Corporate Risk. Mrs Moore detailed the College's main sources of income from public funding, contracts, fees and funded projects. She highlighted the relationship between funding and services such as staffing, accommodation, equipment, books and IT infrastructure. Mrs Moore then examined the financial risks, which could result in services not being effectively delivered. She outlined the controls, which were in place to minimise such risks

b) Risk Management Group. The Committee received a Report from the meeting of the Risk Management Group on 28 January 2013, when the following topics were discussed:

(i) College Risk Management Policy. The Committee noted the Risk Management Policy, which had been forwarded by the Risk Management Group.

(ii) College Risk Register. It was noted that there were no major changes to the College Risk Register, which lists the nine key risks facing the College as identified by the Risk Management Group.

(iii) Departmental Risk Registers. It was noted that all Departmental Risk Registers have been received and have been uploaded to Sharepoint; and

(iv) Schedule of Presentations. The Audit Committee considered and approved the Schedule of Presentations from EMT members on the Management of Corporate Risks, accepting that there was scope for the schedule to change in line with the operating environment

c) Suspected Fraud. The Chairperson informed the Committee that a lodgement of £160 had gone missing. The preliminary investigation had indicated that the lodgement had been made but there was no trace of the deposit at the Bank at Magherafelt. A fuller investigation has been initiated.

d) Correspondence. The Committee noted the following correspondence received since the last meeting:

(i) Press Release from the Northern Ireland Audit Office on 13 November 2012 concerning the Report to the Northern Ireland Assembly by the Comptroller and Auditor General regarding Property Asset Management in Central Government.

(ii) DAO (DFP) 11/12 - Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), dated 17 December 2012, providing information regarding the introduction of the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which are available separately on the AFMD website.

(iii) Circular FE 1/2013, dated 7 January 2013, providing details of amendments to economic appraisals.

(iv) Correspondence from DFP, dated 10 January 2013, providing details of the DAO (DFP) 01/13 - Annual Compliance Report on the Use of External Consultants 2011/12.

e) Purchasing Guidelines. The Committee received a paper regarding the College's revised Purchasing Guidelines, which incorporates the Direct Contract Award approval process and takes account of the recent DEL guidance on procurement. The Committee agreed that

approval of the Purchasing Guidelines should be deferred until further guidance has been received from the Department.

Mrs Moore drew attention to details of Direct Award Contracts less than £5,000 and greater than £5,000 for the period May 2012 to January 2013.

f) Internal Audit Reviews. The Internal Auditor presented the following Internal Audit Reviews:

(i) Review of Financial Planning and Budgetary Control. The Report details the findings of the Internal Audit Review of systems and controls at Northern Regional College relating to Financial Planning and Budgetary Control, which has been awarded a substantial assurance rating. They note, however, that the College is operating outside the target range as set by DEL for a number of Key Health Check KPIs specifically in relation to the historic deficit; staff costs as a% of income; and cash days.

(ii) Review of General Financial Controls. The Report details the findings of the Internal Audit Review relating to General Financial Controls, which received a satisfactory assurance. The Internal Auditors have noted two priority 2 and two priority 3 issues and have made recommendations to assist management in enhancing the control environment.

(iii) Review of Procurement. The Report details the findings of the Internal Audit Review of Procurement, for which the Internal Auditors have issued a satisfactory assurance. There were two new Priority 2 issues with recommendations to assist management in relation to competitive tendering and the updating of procurement policies and procedures.

g) Internal Audit Service Progress Report. The Committee received the Internal Audit Service Progress Report, which provides an update on progress against the 2012/2013 Internal Audit Plan.

h) FAST Inspection of DEL Training Programmes. The Committee received a Report regarding an inspection on 21/22 November 2012 by FAST to provide an assurance on the propriety of DEL funding made in relation to the financial administration of the Apprenticeship (NI) Programme at the Newtownabbey Campus. Based on the inspection findings, FAST has provided a satisfactory assurance on the College's system of control

28.12 Outstanding Audit Issues. The Committee received a Report providing details of progress in relation to the implementation of a number of outstanding audit issues.

44.15 Education Committee

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee held on 26 February 2013. Mr Jay, the Chair of the Education Committee, stated that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes but drew the Governing Body's attention to a summary sheet relating to the FLU Bid attached at Appendix 1 to the Education Committee minutes.

It was noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving the following details considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 26 February 2013:

a) HE MaSN. The Committee noted that Mr Gilpin, Mr Neilands, Mr Jay and Dr O'Mullan had met with Ms Kerr and Mr Mannion on 22 January 2013. There was an expectation at DEL that the College would be bidding for additional HE places and that additional places would be available for NRC over the next 5 years subject to meeting DEL criteria

b) IQ:RS 2011/2012. The Committee received a copy of the IQ:RS document, which had been submitted to DEL to meet a 15 February 2013 deadline. The Committee noted that the IQ:RS document for 2013/2014 was being prepared at present and would be forwarded for consideration by the Education Committee (19 March 2013).

c) Balanced Scorecard. The Committee received an update regarding the 'Student Experience' domain of the College's Balanced Scorecard. The Committee noted:

(i) FLU Performance. The College had recorded an under-delivery of 39.60 FLUs against the DEL target of 6,657.40 FLUs at 18 February 2013. It is predicted that there will be an under-delivery of some 200 FLUs by the year-end. Dr O'Mullan said the NRC compared favourably with the Sector's performance.

(ii) Retention. It was noted that retention was above target in all areas: FT HE, PT HE, FT FE, PT FE, Training and Entitlement Framework.

(iii) It was considered important that the Balanced Scorecard should include achievement and success. It was acknowledged that the figures provided would be dated and refer to the previous academic year.

d) Curriculum Planning. The Committee noted that the College's FLU Bid, which had been submitted to DEL for 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. The Department would discuss the Bid with representatives from the College in March at the Bi-lateral meeting. Targets and recurrent grant income for 2013/2014 would then be issued from DEL. This was likely to happen in April

Commenting on the Bid, the Director of Curriculum said that the College was planning for a small level of growth in Level 3 full-time FE provision and at Levels 1, 2 and 3 part-time FE for 2013/2014. She said that the College was also seeking an increase in its MaSN allocation of 16 places in both 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 and a further 32 in 2015/2016.

The Director of Curriculum examined the various components of the FLU Bid:

(i) FE Full-Time. She drew attention to a number of additional courses for 2013/2014 in the areas of Special Needs, Childcare, Computing, Travel & Tourism, Sport and Hospitality. She mentioned that there would be reduced provision in Art & Design & Hairdressing and that the L2 Construction course would be withdrawn.

(ii) FE Part-Time and Essential Skills. Dr O'Mullan indicated that the College would focus on a range of community provision.

(iii) HE Full-Time. The Committee noted that the College had been allocated 14 extra MaSN places in 2012/2013 and was bidding for an additional 16 places in both 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 and 32 places in 2015/2016.

(iv) HE Part-Time. The College was investigating new developments in the areas of Sport, Computing and Childcare.

(v) Training. Dr O'Mullan referred to reduced activity and reduced numbers in Training. She said that the level of activity was being reviewed in Brickwork, Carpentry & Joinery and Motor Vehicle and was likely to lead to a reduction in staff.

(vi) Entitlement Framework. Funding has been secured for the next two years and discussions are being held with schools regarding course provision for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. Overall activity is predicted to be comparable with the provision in 2012/2013, which resulted in an income of £1.5 million.

e) Student Council (minute 15.10). The Committee received the Student Council Annual Report 2011/2012 and the Action Plan 2012/2013 from the Student Council. This appears as a separate item on the agenda (see minute 44.10 above)

f) FE College Health Check. The Committee received the FE College Health Check for the 1st Quarter 2012/2013. Members noted a number of areas of particular interest to the Committee:

(i) Performance Against CDP Curriculum Targets. The results of actual FLU against target for 2011/2012 reflect under delivery against target in excess of £800k, the most significant under

delivery being in full-time Further Education provision at Level 3. The Report also indicates under recruitment in full-time HE enrolments. Dr O'Mullan stated that NRC had performed favourably against other colleges in the Sector and attributed this to more refined planning.

(ii) Staff Costs. The Committee noted that staff costs as a percentage of total income had reduced from 75% to 72%. Attention was drawn to the introduction of a new measurement, staff costs as a percentage of student related income, which shows the College to have higher staff costs than the rest of the Sector.

(iii) STEM Subject Areas. The Committee noted the section dealing with STEM subject areas: Science & Mathematics were well below the Sector average; Information and Communication Technology below average; and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies above average. The Director of Curriculum advised that the provision in Science & Mathematics and ICT were being revamped.

44.16 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 4 February 2013 and 25 February 2013. Dr Lennox, the Vice-Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, stated that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes. He raised a query as to whether the cancellation of the Minister's visit to the Larne Adult Education Centre would lead to a delay in the completion of the Outline Business Case. He was assured that the cancellation of the visit should not hold up the completion of the Case.

It was noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving the following details considered by the Committee at its meetings on 4 February 2013 and 25 February 2013:

4 February 2013

a) Monthly Management Accounts. The Committee noted the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 31 December 2012. The Accounts indicate that the College has an historic cost surplus of £206k, which is £567k less than budget. The Bank Balance as at 31 December 2012 was £2.6 million. Investments at the Ulster, Santander and First Trust Banks amount to £1.5 million.

The Accounts provide details of the Financial KPIs as at 31 December 2012 and projected to 31 July 2013. It was noted that a number of these KPIs are currently within DEL target range but will be outside the DEL target range by the projected date of 31 July 2013. This is as a result of income being more front-loaded and expenditure, in particular staff costs, more evenly spread throughout the year.

b) Estate Issues. The Committee received an update regarding estate issues. The Committee noted the following estate issues:

(i) Larne Adult Education Centre. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services informed the Committee that the lease and licence, signed on 23 January 2013, required a minor adjustment to the end date. She also advised the Committee that the sub-leases were still not ready for signature. The Principal said that the Minister would be visiting the Larne Adult Education Centre in the near future to examine the premises and the innovative partnership in place there.

(ii) Property at Portrush. The Committee noted that the College had still to receive a copy of deeds for the Portrush property.

(iii) Antrim Campus. Fold Housing has not provided details of its requirement at the Antrim site and is unwilling to proceed until planning permission is obtained. Mrs Crotty, Director of Planning and Customer Services, informed the Committee that there is a framework available for estate agent services should the College wish to make use of their services to sell the property. The Committee agreed that; the College should make use of the services of the

estate agency to sell the property; and the College should also consider appointing planning consultants to investigate the possibility of obtaining planning permission

c) Draft Schedule of Accommodation for Outline Business Case. The Committee received the draft Schedule of Accommodation (SoA), which sets out the accommodation needs for the Northern Regional College with respect to its Ballymena and Ballymoney / Coleraine campuses.

It was noted that the space demanded for each building was currently in excess of the DEL SoA guidelines of 10 square metres per FTE. Mrs Crotty indicated that the project was likely to be a phased development with the first phase potentially at Ballymoney/Coleraine. Mrs Crotty explained that a phased development would raise a number of curriculum issues, which will need to be addressed.

d) Fees Policy and Regulations 2013/2014. The Committee approved the Fees Policy and Regulations for 2013/2014

e) Learner Access and Engagement Tender. The Committee noted that the sector was currently in the process of tendering through the European Journal, in respect of the Learner Access and Engagement programme for learning support partners to engage with and mentor 'hard to reach students'; the programme is to be funded by DEL across the Sector.

e) Legal Services Tender. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported that the Sector Legal Services tender, which had gone out to tender in the European Journal, had been abandoned.

25 February 2013

a) Monthly Management Accounts. The Committee noted the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 31 January 2013. The Accounts indicate that the College has an historic cost surplus of £301k, which is £57k less than budget. Mrs Moore, the Director of Finance and Corporate Development, stated that the College was still on line to meet its budget target (-£329k) by the year-end. It was noted that the Bank Balance as at 31 January 2013 was £2.6 million and that investments at the Ulster and Santander Banks amounted to £1.75 million.

b) Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) Budget Submission. The Committee (4 February 2013) noted that Monthly Forecast Out-Turn Returns are required by DEL as a result of Colleges being reclassified as Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB). The Director of Finance and Corporate Development undertook to present a NDPB Budget submission to the next meeting of the Committee.

Mrs Moore presented the recent February Submission detailing the forecast expenditure from April 2012 to March 2013. The Chair asked if the NDPB Submission should be reconciled with the Monthly Management Accounts. The Principal advised the Committee that he is not held accountable for the NDPB Submission at present and the reconciliation process would be time consuming and the College would derive little or no benefit from the exercise. It was agreed that Mrs Moore should continue to bring the Monthly Forecast Returns to the Committee and that the Committee would keep the situation under review.

c) FE College Health Check. The Committee considered the FE College Health Check for the 1st Quarter 2012/2013. The College continues to work through its Business Improvement Plan including a Staffing Plan, which is reducing staff cost ratios. The budget ratios for 2012/2013 already forecast the consequences of changes in staffing levels in 2011/2012 with staff costs as a percentage of total income reducing from 75% to 72%. In response to a query regarding the time scale for bringing the income to staff ratio into line with the Sector parameters, the Principal said that this would be addressed through the Staffing Plan, which would identify changes in curriculum provision and ensure that resources were allocated to income generating areas.

d) Estate Issues. The Committee received an update regarding estate issues. The Committee noted the following issues:

(i) Outline Business Case. The Committee noted that sufficient funding may become available to complete a new build to replace the current Ballymoney and Coleraine buildings. The funding that may be available is unlikely to be sufficient to complete a new build at Ballymena. It may be possible to build a phase of a Ballymena new build but it would be preferable to invest the funding that may be available in the North of the College catchment area, where the buildings are in a poorer state than those in Ballymena.

Mrs Crotty, Director of Planning and Customer Services, referred to the Minister's visit to the Larne Adult Education Centre on 28 February 2013. It was noted that the Department had approved the previous Economic Appraisal of the Larne Adult Education Centre on the basis that a recommendation as to the future of LAEC would be included in the OBC. Mrs Crotty stated that it would not be possible to progress the OBC without ministerial approval on Larne.

(ii) Property at Portrush. It was noted that a copy of the deeds for the property at Portrush had now been received and had been forwarded to the College's solicitors. The College's solicitors and staff would meet with the NEELB solicitors to discuss arrangements for the disposal of the property.

e) Corporate KPIs. The Committee noted that four of the five Finance targets are projected to be achieved by 31 July 2013 and are colour coded green; they are: the anticipated historical deficit of no more than £181k for normal activities and £148 for redundancy; the generation of £2.3m Net Training income; the generation of £1.545m Entitlement Framework income; and the generation of £360k Bespoke Training income. The target regarding the generation of £827k External Grant Funded Income is currently coded red as it is less than budget; it is projected to be £92k less than budget by 31 July 2013 and continues to be colour coded red. The shortfall in grant received is matched by an underspend in expenditure. This shortfall was caused by difficulties in recruiting specialist posts within a time-bounded project.

f) Strategic Workshop. The Committee received a summary of proceedings at the Governing Body Workshop on 12 February 2013. Members were of the view that it had been a worthwhile session. The Principal stated that he had been pleased with the level of participation at the Workshop and mentioned in particular the detailed discussion relating to the Balanced Scorecard.

g) Funded Learning Unit (FLU) Bid. The Committee noted that the College's FLU Bid, which had been submitted to DEL for 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. The Department would discuss the Bid with representatives from the College in March at the Bi-lateral meeting. Targets and recurrent grant income for 2013/2014 would then be issued from DEL. This was likely to happen in April.

44.17 Staffing Committee

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meetings of the Staffing Committee held on 4 February 2013. Mr Davidson, the Chair of the Staffing Committee, stated that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes.

It was noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving the following details considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 4 February 2013:

a) General Teaching Council Northern Ireland. The Principal advised the Committee that Colleges Northern Ireland had forwarded a response on behalf of the Sector to the Department regarding the consultation on the proposed extension of the powers of the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland to cover Further Education.

b) Equality Staff Survey 2012. The Committee noted that the College had undertaken, in its 5-Year Equality Improvement Plan, to survey staff on equality issues bi-annually. A Whole

College Staff Survey was completed in May 2012 and a further survey focusing on equality and respect issues was conducted in September 2012. It was noted that the findings had been made available to all members of staff.

Members of staff were also asked to comment on the steps they think the College should take to improve Equality of Opportunity, Diversity and Good Relations. The main suggestions did not focus on these areas but stressed the need for: more integration with management; development of team building events; better communication; awareness of work of other departments; and further Equality, Diversity and Good Relations training.

A good response rate, 31%, was achieved. The response rate reflected the campus locations, staff profile, community background and gender breakdown of the College.

44.18 Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business

44.19 Next Meeting

The Governing Body noted that the next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for 5.30 pm Wednesday 1 May 2013 at the Farm Lodge, Ballymena Campus.

G Gilpin, Chair

J A Hunter, Secretary