

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **GOVERNING BODY**

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 5.30 pm on 16 October 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 S Davidson, Mrs Judith Eve, Mr I Goldsworthy, Mr R Jay, Mr S Kelly, Mr A Kennedy, Alderman PJ McAvoy, Mr S McCartney, Mrs G McConnell, Mr M Murray and Mrs A Rankin

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Mrs C Moore, Dr C O'Mullan, Dr M Mclvor and Mr A Cole (DEL representatives for minute 49.1) and Mr JA Hunter

### **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **49.1 College Vision Post Business Improvement Plan**

The Chair welcomed Dr M Mclvor and Mr A Cole to the meeting. He reminded Members that the Governing Body (21 August 2013) had had a lengthy discussion regarding the College Vision for the Future post the Business Improvement Plan. The Principal had written to the Department regarding the development of the Vision and both Dr Mclvor and Mr Cole had kindly agreed to come to the meeting to discuss this matter.

Mr Cole referred to the emerging risks facing the College in relation to:

- a) Curriculum. He said that there were concerns regarding the quality of provision particularly in training. The econometric analysis had placed NRC in sixth place in the Sector in regard to student performance. The curriculum planning has been weak and this has impinged on the FLU delivery.
- b) Staffing. Progress has been made in this area but the income to staff ratios are higher than the rest of the Sector.
- c) Estates. The Outline Business Case has been slower than expected. Any underspend in relation to the project would place the investment at risk.
- d) Finance. There had been disappointment at the financial out-turn for 2012/2013. The subsequent interventions by the Governing Body had been welcomed.

Dr Mclvor said that this was a good time to look at the development of the College. The BIP had been about survival but it was now necessary to examine the way forward with a view to enabling the College to thrive. In this context it was important to conduct an independent stock-taking exercise to provide a base line from which to develop a Vision for the Future. She mentioned that Article 18 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 permits such a review. She identified two stages in the process:

- Stage 1 would involve the analysis of the College by consultants, who would be procured and funded by DEL. Their Terms of Reference would be shared with NRC and would involve, inter alia, the examination of the BIP, the Staffing Plan and the OBC. It was hoped to procure consultants, to commence the review in mid-January 2014 and to complete the exercise by the end of March 2014. The analysis would provide recommendations for the way forward.
- Stage 2. The Governing Body would be responsible for implementing the recommendations of the consultants and may require the procurement of further consultants to assist in the preparation of the Vision statement.

Several comments were made by Governors. One Member considered it essential for consultants to confer with Governors during the stock-taking process. Another raised a query as to whether both stages could run in parallel to save time. It was regarded as difficult to progress Stage 2 without having the recommendations from the stock-taking analysis. It would be possible, however, to procure the services of consultants and to examine the Minister's strategy for the future during Phase 1.

Dr Mclvor stressed that the Department had not taken this course of action without due consideration. It had been discussed at a senior level and had been taken under the powers of the FE (NI) Order 1997. It was noted that a review had recently been undertaken at the Belfast Metropolitan College and the College had now met all the recommendations detailed by the consultants.

The Chair thanked Dr Mclvor and Mr Cole for an informative and helpful session. In summary the Chair stated that DEL was being supportive but at the same time critical of the College. He added that it was essential to have clear recommendations from the consultants as to the way forward.

#### **49.2 Membership and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Mr Kennedy, who has been appointed as the NEELB representative on the Governing Body for the period from 13 May 2013 to 12 May 2017 and Mr Stephen Kelly, the Student Governor for the academic year 2013/2014. It was noted that both Mr Kennedy and Mr Kelly would serve on the Education Committee.

He also welcomed back Mrs J Eve and extended his sympathies to her on behalf of the Governing Body, on the recent death of her husband. She thanked Members for their concern.

Apologies were received from Mr K Nelson and Dr D Lennox. The Chair informed Governors that Mr Nelson had undergone surgery that morning and that further surgery would be required,

The Chair stated that a student of Engineering at the College had lost his life in a motorcycle accident earlier in the day. The College would be in contact with his family.

#### **49.3 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **49.4 Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body held on 16 September 2013 were approved subject to the following adjustments:

Minute 48.1 d) insert 'rephrasing' delete 'rephrasing'

Minute 48.8 insert 'the generation of income' and delete 'income generation'

Minute 48.8 insert 'Mrs Crotty' delete 'Mrs Moore'

#### **49.5 Matters Arising**

##### **49.5.1 Strategic Workshop (minute 48.5.2)**

It was agreed that a decision as to the date of the Strategic Workshop should be delayed until the next meeting of the Governing Body (20 November 2013).

##### **49.5.2 First Trust Bank (minute 48.10.2)**

It was noted that First Trust Bank had withdrawn its services from Ballymoney and is now in breach of its contract with the College. The College will incur costs as a result of the closure

as a transit company will be required to move funds between Ballymoney and the Ballymena campuses.

#### 49.5.3 Outline Business Case (minute 48.1)

Mrs Crotty, Director of Planning and Customer Services, provided Governors with an update regarding the Outline Business Case. She stated that a firm had been identified to provide schematic drawings of the Union/Brook Street site and that an application was being made to the Department regarding the PAD process. Mrs Crotty advised the Governing Body that she had been in contact with the Planning Department in advance of the completion of the schematic drawings and that she was keeping the Department fully informed of the situation.

#### 49.5.4 Any Other Matters

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

### 49.6 Chair's Communications

a) Engagements. The Chair provided Members with a list of several meetings and events, which he had attended, addressed or chaired since the last meeting of the Governing Body (16 September 2013). He also stated that he had carried out appraisals for the majority of Governors.

b) Governors' Council. The next Governors' Council has been scheduled for 3 December 2013. It is anticipated that the meeting will take place in the Belfast area around 6.00 pm.

### 49.7 Principal's Report

The Principal referred to the following developments detailed in his Report to the Governing Body:

a) Stormont Events – Worldskills and College Showcase. The DEL Minister, Dr Stephen Farry, hosted a reception at Stormont on 25 September 2013 to mark the achievements of the Northern Ireland members of the UK team at Worldskills in Leipzig in July. Among those present were NRC students David Cargill and James Overend, who made up the UK team in the Mechatronics event and who finished 10<sup>th</sup> out of 32 countries achieving Medallions of Excellence for reaching the designated world standard. To add to the NRC achievement the team manager, as in 2011, was David Russell with Mark Maginty, who was a student and competitor in 2011, as assistant team manager. This is the second Worldskills event in a row where the UK Mechatronics team was made up of NRC students. This, added to the two successive gold medals in Mechatronics at UK Skills, confirms NRC as the leading College in the UK in this area of engineering. The Principal stated that five NRC students would be taking part in the UK Skills competition in November 2013.

b) Sports Academies. The Employment and Learning Committee sponsored a College Showcase event at Stormont on 1 October 2013. NRC featured its Sports Academies at the event with students and staff present representing the Darren Clarke Golf Academy in Greenmount, the Michael Hughes Soccer Academy in Newtownabbey and the GAA Academy in Magherafelt. The College was unable to feature the new Manchester United Soccer School as this has yet to be officially launched. It is hoped to launch the School in December 2013.

c) Future of Further Education. The Minister intends to conduct a review on the future vision for the FE sector. This will follow on from the review of Apprenticeships, which is currently underway. This review, which is likely to lead to an expansion of apprenticeships as an alternative vocational progression route to the established academic pathway, will have significant implications for Colleges. Any new vision developed for NRC will need to align itself to the policy development and priorities emanating from DEL as a result of the Minister's reviews.

d) Employment and Learning Committee visit to Magherafelt. On 2 October 2013 the Assembly Committee for Employment and Learning visited the Magherafelt Campus to see the work of the Living and Learning Together project. The Living and Learning Together project is a 5 year Big Lottery funded programme providing courses and activities, which promote health and well being in the Magherafelt and Antrim areas. To date there have been over 21,000 participants. The members of the Committee were very interested in the work of the project and complimentary about what they saw. It is hoped that the visit may help to secure an extension to the existing contract.

e) CNI Reviews. The two major reviews initiated by Colleges Northern Ireland, which were reported in June, are now under way. Sir Bob Salisbury is conducting a review of industrial relations in the sector and the Association of Colleges (AoC) is carrying out a review of CNI itself. Chairs, Principals and other senior staff have been involved in the reviews which are both expected to report to the CNI Board on 19 November 2013. Both reviews will have implications for the College.

f) Higher Education Graduation. The two HE Graduation ceremonies will take place on Thursday 12 December 2013 at the Dunadry Inn at Templepatrick.

g) Business Awards. The Principal attended two local business awards ceremonies recently, at Coleraine on 27 September 2013 and Ballymena on 10 October 2013, to present NRC sponsored awards. The College sponsored the awards for Best New Product/Service at Coleraine and the Apprentice of the Year at Ballymena.

h) Other Significant Meetings and Events. The Principal listed several meetings and events, which he had attended since that last meeting of the Governing Body.

#### **49.8 Balanced Scorecard**

The Governing Body received a copy of the **2012/2013** out-turn in respect of the following Balanced Scorecard domains:

a) Student Experience. The College is 214 FLUs and 121 Apprentice/Trainees short of its 2012/2013 target. NRC has achieved its target of 90% for retention rates but information is still being collated in respect of achievement and success rates. It has also achieved its target rates for student surveys. The College had set a minimum Grade 3 or equivalent target for all inspections and surveys; it achieved Grade 3 for FE, Grade 5 for WBL and an overall Grade 4 in the ETI inspection. **eti** indicated, during its monitoring visit in May 2013, that the College had made satisfactory progress in addressing issues arising from the **eti** Inspection in November 2012.

In response to a query the Principal advised that there had been a high response rate in respect of the student survey on induction. There had also been a high response rate (51%) for the recent staff survey, which would be forwarded to the next Staffing Committee and Governing Body meetings.

b) Relationships. The College has achieved its targets in regard to the evaluation process for business courses and income generation.

c) Staffing. NRC failed to achieve its staff cost to income ratio of 70%; the ratio for 2012/2013 was 74% (75% in 2011/2012).

d) College Operations. Satisfactory progress has been made in relation to the Outline Business Case and a draft Schedule of Accommodation was submitted to DEL in July 2013. The College has achieved its target of a minimum 'satisfactory' assurance in all internal audit reviews.

e) Finance. The College had a deficit of £634k for operational activities and £579k for redundancy costs against targets of £181k for normal activities and £148k for redundancy costs during 2012/2013.

The Governing Body noted the domain targets, which have been set for the Balanced Scorecard for **2013/2014**. Information is not yet available to comment on the current status in relation to most of the domains but the Governing Body noted the position as at 8 October 2013 regarding enrolments, which were as follows: FEFT (3,143, predicted 3,372), FEPT (6,655, predicted 6,818), HEFT (270, predicted 289), HEPT (1,030, predicted 1,193). 571 Apprentices plus 128 partnership trainees have enrolled at 8 October 2013 against a target of 635 apprentices plus 96 partnership trainees. Dr O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum, indicated that the College was currently 169 FLUs below target but a further 83 FLUs had to be added. She drew attention to the QAA Summative Review scheduled for 5-7 November 2013, the *eti* Monitoring visit scheduled for December 2013 and the Whole College FE & HE SER Scrutiny visits scheduled for January 2014.

#### **49.9 FE College Health Check Report**

The Governing Body noted the following issues highlighted in the FE College Health Check Report Issue 3: 2012/2013:

a) Budget Out-Turn. The Budget Out-Turn for NRC is based on the Quarter 3 monitoring returns provided by the College. The Finance and General Purposes Committee (16 September 2013) noted that the comments in relation to the Budget Out-Turn for 2012/2013 had been superseded by subsequent events and this had been noted in the Report.

b) Performance Against CDP Curriculum Targets. The Report indicates that NRC will fail to meet its targets across FE, Essential Skills and HE with a total shortfall of almost 200 FLUs, equating to £667k. Comparative figures for the Sector indicate similar or more severe problems in three other Colleges for FE and HE and in all Colleges for Essential Skills provision. It was suggested that there was a ceiling to the number of students Colleges can attract.

It was further noted that the NRC staffing cost per head (FTE) was in line with other Colleges yet the College had the highest staff costs to income ratios in the Sector. The Chair stated that this is essentially an income problem and that members of staff were not as productive as they should be in earning income. The Principal explained that one of the contributory factors was the College's lower allocation of HE places, which generated higher income. He also indicated that income from Training, particularly in the area of Construction, had been less than anticipated. The allocation of increased HE places would be a gradual process and it would not be possible to vary the three-year DEL contract in relation to Construction. Dr O'Mullan drew attention to planned business development across Faculties in 2013/2014, which planned to generate some £400k

c) Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education. In its Summative Review the QAA Review Team expressed 'confidence' in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities and for the standards of awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. No judgement is made against the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers. The QAA has concluded that 'reliance' can be placed on this information. The QAA Team has identified a number of features of good practice and has issued a recommendation for action.

d) Estate Maintenance. A Governor drew attention to reference in the Report to the NRC Risk Register, which indicated that the College inability to afford appropriate investment in infrastructure was regarded as a high risk. It was noted that the NRC estate costs as a % of total costs ratio was the lowest in the Sector and that there was always a risk that ageing infrastructure would give way and incur high replacement costs.

d) Survey of Further Education Governors. The Survey shows that Governors are generally skilled and committed to Governing Body work.

#### **49.10 Correspondence**

The Governing Body noted the following correspondence:

a) Correspondence from DEL, dated 18 September 2013, indicating that the Department had published its Corporate Plan and Business Plan for 2013-15. The Plan contains information about Departmental commitments and spending plans over the next two years. A link has been provided to the document: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/corporate-and-business-plan-2013-2015-reduced.pdf> . The Chair said that it would be important for the College's planning process to reflect the Department's Corporate Plan and Business Plan for 2013/2015.

b) Correspondence from DEL, dated 25 September 2013 indicating that the document on Financial Management and Reporting, at the link below, would be a useful resource for members of the governing bodies, especially those serving on the Audit Committee: [http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Adding\\_Value.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Adding_Value.pdf)

#### **49.11 Audit Committee**

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 24 September 2013. Mrs Rankin, the Chair of the Audit Committee, stated that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes but drew attention to:

a) Pre-Meeting. The Audit Committee, less staff representatives, met with the Internal Auditors and representatives from DEL and NIAO prior to the meeting. Mrs Rankin, drew attention to the out-turn for 2012/2013, during which the College had reported an historic cost deficit of £1,427k compared with the original estimated deficit of £329k. The Finance and General Purposes Committee had been informed that the financial position was behind target for most months of the year but was advised that this was a timing issue and would be rectified later in the year. The Governing Body was first made aware that the projected deficit for 2012/2013 was likely to be exceeded at its meeting on 26 June 2013. Had the College been accurately reviewing and monitoring the out-turn throughout the financial year then Governors would have been alerted at an earlier stage and could have taken remedial action. The Committee agreed that the Internal Auditors should undertake a review of the effectiveness of the financial controls and key processes within the College as a matter of urgency. It also agreed that KPMG should draft the terms of reference for approval by the Chair. The Chair reported that she had shared the Terms with the Chair of the Governing Body and the Principal. It was noted that this assignment would be undertaken in addition to the pre-agreed internal audit Operational Plan.

b) Statement of Recommended Standards (SORP).The Committee noted that three members of staff will be attending a forthcoming meeting being hosted by KPMG to prepare Colleges for the implementation of the new SORP, which will be International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) compliant.

c) Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements. The Committee received the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements 2012/2013, which had been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel. It was noted that the College has reported an historic cost deficit of £1,427k for 2012/2013 compared with the College's original estimated deficit, as per the College Development Plan, of a £329k deficit. The College has accumulated income and expenditure reserves, excluding pension reserves of £711k (£1,923k in 2012) and cash balances of £2,226k (£3,170k in 2012).

The Committee also noted that it would be necessary to include a number of inserts in the Annual Report and Financial Statement and that the revised document would be forwarded to the Audit Committee (12 November 2013) for approval and submission to the Governing Body (20 November 2013).

A Governor expressed the view that redundancies had not created as high a savings as expected as new appointments had been made in growth areas. The Principal advised that both the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Staffing Committee had agreed to this course of action. It was noted that in future the College would provide the Chair of the Staffing Committee the reasons for appointments prior to seeking his approval for appointments.

It was also noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving a summary of the following additional issues considered by the Committee:

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

(i) DEL Circular FE 10/13, dated 28 June 2013, setting out the requirements for Colleges to prepare their 2012/2013 Annual Report and Financial Statements.

(ii) Correspondence from DEL, dated 8 August 2013, regarding the payment of progression-related increases in the Further Education Sector

b) Draft Audit Committee Annual Report. The Committee received the draft Audit Committee Annual Report for 2012/2013. During discussion reference was made to the following sections:

(i) Internal Audit. The Internal Auditors stated that they were not in a position to confirm that the overall level of assurance in relation to the adequacy of the systems of internal control in place within the College was satisfactory, and that the forthcoming review would inform same.

(ii) External Audit. The NIAO representative advised that it would be in order to include reference to the out-turn and the unanticipated overspend in 2012/13 in the document.

(iii) Value For Money. It was noted that collaborative Sector procurement exercises have realised efficiencies by providing free banking charges of approximately £12k per annum and removing insurance broker charges of some £2k.

(iv) Education Training Inspectorate Report. The Chairperson stated that the document did not fully reflect the total output of the Whole College Inspection. No mention was made of the cost of remedial action necessitated by the ETI recommendations. It was suggested that this information should be presented as an Appendix to the Annual Report.

(v) Opinion. This section remains incomplete until the views of the Internal and External Auditors are known.

It was noted that the Report will be finalised at the next meeting of the Audit Committee (12 November 2013) and approved for submission to the Governing Body, DEL and NIAO.

c) Follow-Up Review of FLU Funding 2012/2013 Audit. The Committee received the Report of the Follow-Up Review of the 2009/2010 FLU Audit findings, which was carried out on 2010/2011 data. The overall assurance rating for the review of the systems of control in the College for the 2009/2010 FLU Funding was found to be satisfactory and no change was made following the 2010/2011 review and the 2012/2013 follow-up review. There were no priority 1 issues identified during the course of the audit.

d) Purchase Order Direct Award Contracts. The Committee received details of Direct Award Contracts for the months of June, July and August 2013. It was noted that Award Contracts less than £5,000 are provided for only June and July; there is a nil return for August. There were no Direct Award Contracts greater than £5,000 in all three months. The DEL representative agreed to seek clarification regarding the correct procedure to be followed in respect of direct award contracts between £5k and £30K.

## 49.12 Education Committee

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 8 October 2013. Mr Jay, the Chair of the Education Committee, drew the Governing Body's attention to:

a) Membership of Education Committee. The Committee noted its membership, which is as follows: Mr R Jay, Mrs J Eve, Mr S Kelly, Mr A Kennedy, Mr M Murray, Mr K Nelson and Mr T Neilands. The Committee reappointed Mr R Jay as its Chairperson and appointed Mrs J Eve as Vice Chairperson on an interim basis during Mr Nelson's absence due to illness.

b) Terms of Reference. The Education Committee reviewed and endorsed its Terms of Reference subject to minor adjustments. It agreed that the revised Terms should be forwarded to the Governing Body for approval. **The Governing Body approved the revised Terms of Reference.**

It was noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving a summary of the following additional issues considered by the Committee:

a) Whole College Curriculum Strategy. The Committee noted that the Whole College Curriculum Strategy had been completed and was being embedded in the College Development Plan, which would form the basis of the next three years' planning.

b) **eti** Scrutiny Visit. The Committee noted that the next **eti** monitoring visit was expected at the end of November/beginning of December 2013. Dr O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum, provided details of the key priority area for development in preparation for the forthcoming visit.

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

(i) Progress against 2012/13 Corporate Development Plan. The College has failed to achieve its initial targets in respect of FLUs. The overall result of projected FLU against target has resulted in a shortfall of 129 in the FE provision, 41 in Essential Skills and 27 in Higher Education. Retention rates are on target but achievement and success rates are still incomplete.

(ii) Enrolment Update 2013/14. The Committee received an update of actual against predicted enrolments for 2013/2014. 86% of planned part-time HE enrolments have been achieved and 97.6% of planned FE enrolments. It was also noted that part-time Essential Skills enrolments were currently at 75% of target. It was explained that enrolments would increase as several courses have enrolments throughout the year. Enrolments for full-time FE and HE were 229 and 12 MASN respectively below target. A Governor questioned the validity of the targets set for 2013/2014 and was assured that they had been the subject of long discussion before insertion in the College Development Plan

(iii) Work Based Learning. Enrolments in the Built Environment and Engineering and Motor Vehicle are 37 and 27 places below target as at 30 September 2013. Recruitment to courses involving partnership with companies was already in excess of targets.

(iv) Entitlement Framework. Initial planned enrolments for Entitlement Framework are approximately 2,500.

(v) Economic Engagement. The Committee received details of several external income generation activities, which are attached at Appendix 2.

d) FE College Health Check Report. The Committee received the FE College Health Check Report, which had been prepared on the Quarter 3 monitoring returns submitted to the Department in May 2013. The Committee noted the section of the Health Check referring to



the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Report (see Minute 49.9 c) above).

e) Quality Improvement. The Committee considered the following documents: revised Quality Improvement Strategy; Quality Planning, Monitoring and Review Quality Cycle; the recently prepared Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy; and the Quality Assurance Agency Summative Review Self-Evaluation document submitted to QAA. It also received a presentation from Mrs Suzanne Kennedy, Head of Quality Improvement regarding the QAA Summative Review (5-7 November 2013).

f) Education Committee Annual Report. The Committee received and forwarded its Annual Report to the Governing Body.

### **49.13 Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 September 2013. Mrs Collins, the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, stated that the Governing Body had no action to take in relation to the minutes but drew attention to:

a) Additional FLU Allocation, The Committee noted that DEL had been unable to fully fund all college requirements during the annual college development planning process in May 2013 and that additional funds had now become available. DEL had requested Colleges to review their original bids and advise the Department by 11 September 2013, if they were still in a position to achieve the bids originally submitted or alternatively provide it with revised figures. It was noted that NRC had replied to DEL indicating that it would have capacity to deliver an additional 100 FLUs. The Department has allocated an additional 83 FLUs to the College.

b) Monthly Management Accounts. The Committee received the following papers:

i) Monthly Management Accounts for the periods up to 30 June 2013 and 31 July 2013. It was noted that the June Account indicate that the College had a £352k historic cost deficit, £767k behind budget. The July accounts indicate that the historic cost deficit amounted to £1,427k, £1,098 behind budget.

ii) Financial Out-Turn 2012/2013. The Governing Body (21 August 2013) gave consideration to the Financial Out-Turn for 2012/2013 and agreed that a Report should be forwarded to the next meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Governing Body providing reasons for the greater than expected deficit.

The Committee noted the Report on the Financial Out-Turn 2012/2013, which provided details of: the Budget setting and financial monitoring process; the Budget pressures; and recommendations to address the events and processes, which led to budgetary pressures in 2012/2013

c) FE College Health Check. The Committee received the FE College Health Check Report Issue 3: 2012/2013, which is based on the Quarter 3 monitoring returns provided by the College. It was noted that the comments in relation to the Budget Out-Turn for 2012/2013 had been superseded by subsequent events and this had been noted in the Report

d) Progression-Related Increases. The Principal referred to correspondence from DEL, dated 8 August 2013, regarding the payment of progression-related increases in the Further Education Sector. The Sector is currently working with the Department on business cases for the payment of progression-related increases to staff and it will be necessary to delay such payments until approval has been obtained. It was noted that progression-related increases for 2012/2013 will be referred to as a 'Technical Points' within the forthcoming NIAO Report.

#### **49.14 Staffing Committee**

The Governing Body received the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 30 September 2013. Mr Davidson, the Chair of the Staffing Committee, drew attention to:

a) Terms of Reference. The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference paying particular attention to the remit of the Committee. It was agreed the Director of Finance and Corporate Development should draft an additional section relating to the oversight and monitoring of the implementation of the Staffing Plan for consideration by the Committee and submission to the Governing Body in due course

b) Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission. The Committee received a copy of the Annual Progress Report, which had been forwarded to the Equality Commission by 31 August 2013. The Report adheres to a template provided by the Commission which requires the College to respond to a number of questions relating to Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 2006.

The Committee noted in particular the Executive Summary, which highlights the numerous key policy and service developments made by NRC during the reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

It also noted that the Report includes the Northern Regional College Disability Action Plan 2008/2013. The Plan involves the development of detailed guidance and training for staff, the alignment and development of College policies and procedures and the identification of positive action measures

c) Sickness Absence Statistics 2012/2013. The Committee received a Sickness Absence Report for 2012/2013. It was noted that the overall sickness absence for the College for 2012/13 has decreased compared to rates for 2011/12. For 2012/13 the percentage days lost for the College is 3.23% and the average working days lost per employee is 8.37 against a target for 2012/13 of a maximum sickness absence of 3.5% and 9.1 average working days lost. This compares with 3.85% days lost and 10.06 average days lost per employee for 2011/12.

The Head of Human Resources and Equality stated that the target for 2013/14 has been set at a maximum of 3% working days lost or 7.9 days lost per employee, 0.5% below the UK average for public sector for 2012.

It was noted that a cover sheet had been provided for Governors giving a summary of the following issues considered by the Committee:

a) Balanced Scorecard Staffing KPIs. The Committee received a copy of the Balanced Scorecard indicating the status as at 31 July 2013 for the Staffing domain and related KPIs. It was noted that the College had achieved its targets by the year end in respect of: reduction of staff complement, absenteeism, and staff surveys. Progress had been made in regard to staff utilisation and staff appraisal. The College, however, failed to achieve its staff costs to income ratio of 70%; the ratio at the year-end, 74%, was in excess of the target ratio.

b) Review of Industrial Relations. The Principal advised the Committee that following the review of industrial relations at the North West Regional College, the CNI Board had requested Sir Robert Salisbury to carry out an industrial review of the Sector and report his findings to the Board before the end of November 2013. It was noted that he had already visited the NRC and had meetings with stakeholders. It was hoped to bring his Report to the December meeting of the Committee.

#### **49.15 Any Other Notified Business**

##### 49.15.1 Christmas Dinner

The Principal reminded Governors that the Christmas Dinner had been arranged for Thursday 28 November 2013 at the Ballymoney Campus. He requested Governors to let Ms Brannigan know by 18 October 2013 if they intended to be present at the Dinner.

#### **49.16 Next Meeting**

The Chair reminded Governors that the next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for 5.30 pm Wednesday 20 November 2013 at the Farm Lodge, Ballymena Campus.