

# Northern Regional College

## Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday, 30 June 2016 at the Newtownabbey Campus **commencing at 5.00 pm and concluding at 6.55 pm.**

### Present:

Ms C McKinney (Chair), Professor T Scott (Principal), Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey, Mrs J Eve, Mr R Jay, Mr A Kennedy, Mrs G McConnell, Mr B McCluggage, Dr D Lennox, Ms Y Mallon, Mr K Nelson.

### In Attendance:

Mr M Higgins, Dr S Brankin, Professor M McKinney, Mr D Hewitt, Mrs R Bell

## UNRESERVED BUSINESS

### 71.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr B Hutchinson and Mrs K Reilly.

Councillor J Brown and Mr R Bradley were not in attendance.

### 71.2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

### 71.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Mr Kennedy, seconded by Mr Nelson and unanimously approved by members.

### 71.4 Matters Arising

**70.15 Proposed Calendar of Meetings 2016/17** KPMG has requested that the Governors meet a week earlier in November to facilitate the sign off the annual accounts in line with NIAO requirements. It was proposed that the meeting scheduled for 23 November 2016, be moved to 16 November 2016. Members unanimously agreed to this request.

With regard to the Workshop scheduled for Thursday, 27 April 2017, Governors were asked for their agreement to re-schedule this for Wednesday, 26 April 2017; Governors unanimously agreed.

**Action: A revised Calendar will be sent to all Governors.**

**70.6 Principal's Report** Mr Chambers enquired about the DfE Presentation which was to be uploaded to MinutePad. The Secretary confirmed it had been uploaded to the documents section within MinutePad.

**70.13.1 Update on OBC** Mr K Chambers enquired about the costs associated with the Project so far and if DfE would be refunding these; Mr Higgins confirmed that the DfE were refunding SIB, CPD and LPS costs. In response to a further query from Mr Chambers, Mr Higgins confirmed that the College has received confirmation from DfE regarding this.

Mr McCluggage enquired about the handling of VAT in relation to the refund of the fees; is college any worse off? Mr Higgins confirmed that DfE refunded the gross costs.

## **71.5 Communications from the Chair**

- a) The Chair was pleased to share with members that LEDCOM Ltd has been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The Chair congratulated Mr Nelson and all of his team on their amazing achievement. Mr Nelson thanked the Chair.
- b) The Chair was pleased to advise members that the Pearson Silver Teaching Award for Outstanding Use of Technology in Education had been awarded to Stuart Cullen, who is Assistant Head of Department in Business, Computing and Creative Industries. The Chair offered congratulations to Mr Cullen on this significant achievement.

Professor McKinney confirmed it was a fantastic achievement.

Dr Lennox suggested that the Chair might write on behalf of the Governors to congratulate Mr Cullen; this was agreed.

Action: Chair to send letter of congratulations to Mr Cullen.

- c) CIPFA Document, Good Governance in the Public Sector. The Chair recommended this document to members as excellent reading.
- d) CAL Training, information previously circulated. Noted by members.

## **71.6 Principal's Report**

The Principal's Report had been previously circulated to members.

Professor Scott drew attention to the Staff Conference in particular; it was a positive indicator of significant change in engagement with staff; feedback afterwards was also positive.

Professor Scott outlined the format for the Conference, explaining that the format was changed to an interview style presentation, rather than formal presentations. This change was made as a result of feedback after the last Conference and had been very well received.

Professor Scott addressed the Staff Survey Summary of Results, which had been previously circulated to Governors. With regard to communication, it is intended that the introduction of Team Briefs will improve the channels of communication.

Mr Hewitt addressed specific issues within the Summary and responded to queries from Mr Crossey regarding communication.

Professor Scott highlighted the actions taken throughout 2015/16, in particular with regard to communication with staff and addressed the proposed Actions for 2016/17. The proposal to review the process of staff appraisals and performance management was highlighted as an

example of planned improvement; staff are now in place to implement these proposed changes.

Professor Scott highlighted item 2 in her Report with regard to Recruitment. The updated Recruitment Schedule had been previously shared with the Governors.

Mr McCluggage enquired about staff perception on the issue of well-being.

Mr Hewitt responded highlighting various existing services, such as Carecall and confirmed there are plans to implement a well-being service within HR.

## **71.7 Correspondence**

- a) DfE Communication regarding the position of Secretary to the Governing Body. Contents have been noted. Currently looking at an interim arrangement to carry us through July and August; post is now advertised, with a closing date of 8 July 2016.
- b) DfE Communication regarding the appointment of Isobel Allison and Gillian McConnell, each for a further four-year term with effect from 1 August 2016. The Chair offered congratulations to the two members.

## **71.8 SIP Sub-Committee Update**

### **NRC KPI Report**

Mr McCluggage suggested that incomplete KPIs should be closed and re-labelled for 2016/17, rather than retain the status as amber.

3.7 Mr McCluggage suggested that this should be changed to blue and the action re-named.

8.2 Mr McCluggage and Mr Chambers suggested this point should be changed to blue then raise a new action for OBC.

10.2 and 10.4 should be changed to amber.

10.6 Dr Brankin advised that this Strategy is currently under development

**Action: Document to be re-issued, with changes marked in red.**

### **SIP GB Report**

Mr Jay enquired about the document for next year, when would governors receive it?

Mr Higgins advised that it would be presented at the September Governors' meeting.

Mr Jay suggested that Recruitment and Retention be separated into 2 KPIs; Mr McCluggage supported this.

KPI 7 After discussion, members agreed that the consideration of IIP accreditation should be re-visited.

## **71.9 Education Committee Meeting Minutes, 26 May 2016**

Mr Jay summarised the key issues from the Education Committee Meeting; he advised that the presentation from Mrs O'Boyle, AHOD for Essential Skills, improved Governors' confidence in the process. Mr Jay noted that a communication had been received from DfE regarding the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative; a favourable report in relation to NRC was noted as was the need to improve the level of collaboration between schools and colleges. The detailed curriculum plan had been received and approved; an informative report from the Corporate Challenge Unit received; the Digital Learning Strategy had also been approved.

As a follow up to the DLS, Dr Brankin referred to the staff conference when curriculum staff were asked to submit their curriculum plan digitally and was pleased to report that the response has been excellent, at 99%.

Mr Kennedy asked about the MaSN under 30.9. Mr Jay explained that the college struggles to gain more MaSN allocation every year. Professor McKinney confirmed that the College received a modest increase for 2016/17, which we hope to increase over time.

Mr Chambers enquired if we always meet the allocation? Professor Scott advised that previously the College had not met their targets, but that has changed and the college is now meeting the target. Professor Scott highlights to DfE at every opportunity the need for increased MaSN to improve progression routes from Level 3 upwards.

Mr Jay noted that in relation to the previous allocation, the proximity of HE establishments was a criteria for allocation.

## **71.10 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting, Minutes 15 June 2016**

Dr Lennox highlighted the Internal Audit Review; he referred to the information given by Mr Higgins.

Mr Chambers, under 46.14 c) asked for clarification on recommendation which had not been accepted. Dr Lennox gave assurance to Governors that this was not of concern; Mr Higgins explained that it was in relation to signing off of internal journals; management had previously felt it was not necessary to sign internal journals; the policy has now been changed to satisfy auditors. The recommendation had no significant impact.

Mr Jay commented on the new budgetary system; he had found the paper very informative.

## **71.11 Resources Committee Meeting Minutes, 20 June 2016**

Mr Crossey highlighted the Draft Budgetary Scheme and confirmed that the Committee was very happy to accept this. The Committee did highlight the £1m reduction in the budget and felt that it was important to note why this amendment was made. The Outsourcing paper was very detailed and the Committee endorsed the recommendation. Mr Crossey reported that in relation to Shared services, it was agreed that there would be potential savings. In relation to the Staff survey, given the extent of change within the organisation, relatively positive feedback had been received. In relation to action on areas of improvement, Mr Crossey emphasised that it was essential to follow these up. With regard to the BDT structure, the Committee was very supportive of the structure; concern was expressed regarding the detail of the increased proposed cost. Mr Crossey had requested that more detail should be given to explain the £150k.

Draft budget – Mr Higgins addressed the papers circulated, highlighting key income and expenditure issues; he provided reassurance to Governors that a reduction in income will coincide with a reduction in expenditure.

Mr Chambers enquired about page 2 highlighted the planned £1.6m deficit; Mr Higgins confirmed this was correct.

BDT paper - Agreed in principle, subject to quantification.

#### **71.12 FE Healthcheck**

Mr Higgins advised that this has not yet been received from the DfE.

#### **71.13 Widening Access and Participation**

The WAP Plan was previously circulated to Governors.

Professor McKinney addressed the Plan; he explained it was a requirement that we submit this to the Department. The purpose of the Plan is to make education more accessible to lower quintile groups. The proposal for a WAP Working Group was advocated to ensure the Plan is taken forward in an appropriate professional manner.

The Chair enquired about Employer consultation and asked if there were any plans to widen the field of employers; Professor McKinney advised that this would be something the Working Group could consider.

Mr Chambers enquired about the source of funding. Professor McKinney advised it was in relation to the excess charged to HE students which is re-invested.

Mr Chambers requested further clarification on the level of support.

Mr McCluggage enquired about the bursaries; are there any scholarships planned? Professor McKinney advised this would be considered next year, as the Plan progresses.

Professor Scott advised that we would also be looking for Commercial business to provide sponsorship.

Governors endorsed and agreed the WAP Plan.

#### **71.14 Student Union Constitution**

Professor Scott emphasised the importance of the role of the Student Representative on the Governing Body. Documents had been presented to the Governors; the provision is made for students to have a voice. It is planned that each cohort of students will have a representative. The representatives will form the student council and out of that group, the officers would be elected; there would be a Vice President at each site then an overall President.

Mrs Eve sought clarification on 5.4; First sentence to be amended to read ‘... will elect a Students’ Union President, from amongst their number.’ Third sentence to be changed to read ‘...their position as Students’ Union President will ...’, Mrs Eve sought and received clarification regarding the difference between union and council.

Mr Jay enquired about the age restriction of 16 years; it was explained this was to ensure that the main student FE body only was included.

**71.15 Any Other Notified Business**

None.

The Unreserved meeting finished at 6.55 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_