

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 21 October 2015 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus commencing at 5.30 pm.

Present Ms C McKinney (Chair), Professor T Scott (Principal). Mrs I Allison, Mr R Bradley, Mr K Chambers, Mr B Hutchinson, Mr R Jay, Mr A Kennedy, Dr D Lennox, Mrs G McConnell, Mr B McCluggage, Ms Y Mallon, Mr M Murray, Mr K Nelson

In Attendance Mr Mungavin (CIPFA for Minute 65.5), Mrs Brenda Crotty, Mrs C Moore, Dr C O'Mullan and Mr J Hunter

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

65.1 Membership & Apologies

The Chair welcomed Governors to the first meeting using MinutePad and thanked Mr N Roddy and members of the IT Team (Mr A Cannon, Mr S Hasson and Mrs K Kerr) for their assistance.

Apologies were received from Alderman J Brown, Mr H Crossey, Mrs J Eve and Mr S McCartney.

The Chair advised that Mrs Kerry Reilly has been elected unopposed as the non-teaching staff representative on the Governing Body for a 4-year period from 1 November 2015. She thanked Mr Steve McCartney, the retiring non-teaching staff representative, for his contribution to the work of the Governing Body and its Committees

She congratulated Mr Matt Murray, who has been appointed Head of Engineering and Built Environment.

65.2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests. On a question from Mr Hutchinson, the chairperson agreed that should he feel he had a conflict of interest during board debate on any matter he could announce this and withdraw from the meeting for the duration of that.

65.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 25 September 2015 were approved subject to adjustments to indicate that: Mr C Andrews DEL had been in attendance for the Training Session; Mr Nelson and Mr Jay would be the Governing Body representatives on Appointment Panels for Heads of Department and the Vice Principal Teaching & Learning posts

65.4 Matters Arising

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

65.5 Communication from Chair

a) Governing Body Self Assessment 2014/2015. The Chair drew attention to the Governing Body Self Assessment document. She said that she had also scrutinised the Self Assessment Reports for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014; these had emphasised the need for governor development and involvement. She was keen to access the Governors' action plans, which flowed out from the previous assessment documents and also training received by Governors over that three year period before Professor Scott and herself as the new chair had taken up post. She advised colleagues she would liaise with relevant personnel to access all of these. The chairperson advised the Governing Body that she had invited Mr Mungavin (Chief Executive CIPFA) to address the meeting to give an overview of the work of CIPFA and the Excellence Chartermark for Governance.

It was noted that the Department has asked the Governing Body to give considerations and formulate action steps in relation to the Self Assessment exercise. **The chairperson confirmed that these would be considered at the Governing Body Workshop on 24 February 2016.**

The chairperson welcomed Mr Mungavin CIPFA to the meeting

b).. Mr Mungavin gave an overview of the CIPFA assessment process for Good Governance and made special mention of the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector, which he recommended to governors across all bodies to read. The Framework had been put in place to encourage better service delivery and improved accountability by establishing a benchmark for aspects of good governance. He outlined the benefits obtained through achieving a CIPFA Governance Mark of Excellence, which draws on the International Framework as the basis against which organisations are assessed. He outlined the various stages in the process:

- the initial self-assessment phase to determine if the organisation has the governance basics in place to proceed to the full assessment;
- the independent assessment conducted by CIPFA detailing strengths/areas for development and identifying what needs to be undertaken to achieve the requisite standards for the award
- the final report which will confirm the Mark of Excellence Award or will make further recommendations for governance improvement
- monitoring and evaluation will continue for a two-year period from the Award to ensure compliance with the standards

The financial cost was raised. Mr Mungavin stated that the initial self-assessment would cost c£2K and the independent assessment phase up to £15k.

The Chair thanked Mr Mungavin for an informative presentation. Mr Mungavin would send through copies of his Powerpoint presentation to the Secretary for upload on to the minute Pad

c) Forthcoming Training events. The Chair provided details of the following training events

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| 29 October 2015 | New Board Members DEL training at SW College Dungannon |
| 3 November 2015 | FE Showcase hosted by CNI 3rd November Long Gallery |
| 3 December 2015 | Governors Council CNI Hilton Templepatrick |
| 9 December 2015 | New Board Members course CIPFA/DEL – this to be confirmed. |
| 9 December 2015 | CIPFA Lessons from Audit - Breakfast briefing |
| 16 December 2015 | Graduation NRC- venue to be decided |

These dates would be uploaded on to the Minute Pad for ease of reference. Any additional events would be also be uploaded. The chairperson would liaise with DEL on additional training opportunities.

The chairperson made reference to the recent very successful FE conference organised by CNI in Le Mon Hotel.

The chairperson also thanked Mrs Allen and Mr Jay for their attendance at the conference on 16th October.

65.6 Principal's Report

The Principal referred to the following issues contained in her Report:

a) Change Programme. The Change Management Team is now focussed on the implementation of the College's Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP). Mechanisms have been set up for reporting progress to the Governing Body and DEL. As part of the implementation of the Change Programme and the achievement of targets set out in the SIP, challenge meetings have been held with existing Heads of School in early October to address student enrolment, class size and staff utilisation. These were chaired by the Principal

b) Restructuring. Two stages of the restructuring process have now been completed

- Appointments have been made to the Chief Operating Officer post (Mr Mel Higgins) and the Vice Principal Engagement and Innovation post (Dr Steve Brankin). Both are due to commence employment before Christmas.
- Four Heads of Department have been appointed; Mr Aaron Ballantyne (Science & Service Industries), Mr Matthew Murray (Engineering & Built Environment), Mr Steven Lavery (Care & Access) and Mr Stephen Price (Business, Computing and Creative Industries). It was noted that existing Curriculum Managers will remain in post until the Assistant Heads of Department take up appointment in the New Year.
- Recruitment will commence in early November for Assistant Head of Department posts

c) Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). 75 employees have accepted offers to exit in Tranche 2. A further call for expressions of interest in VES in the budget year 2015/2016 has gone out on 16 October 2015

d) Campus and Capital Developments. The Business Case for new campus developments has been forwarded to DEL for ministerial approval before submission to DfP.

e) Academies. A new Welding Academy was launched at the Newtownabbey Campus on 1 September 2015. A Game Development Academy has also been launched at Newtownabbey by the game development companies with support from DEL, Invest NI and NI Screen.

f) Staff & Student Achievements. The Principal referred to a number of events involving staff and students: USA for Frontiers Programme; DETI Permanent Secretary visit; launch of a new Welding Academy at the Newtownabbey Campus; SMART Educational Buildings seminar; and Business Improvement Techniques course at the Belfast International Airport. The Governing Body congratulated the College on achieving the Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 2015 Award for Education and Business Partnership.

g) Entrepreneur Seminar. Mr L Farrell, a world leading authority on entrepreneurship, addressed delegates at an entrepreneurial leadership seminar at the beginning of October in Newtownabbey.

h) External Meetings and Events. The Principal provided details of a number of external meetings and events attended during the period from July to mid-October 2015. Mr Hutchinson stressed the need for the College to have dialogue with the Councils in its area of responsibility regarding community planning. The Principal agreed and advised governors that she had met all four Chief Executives and that a series of follow up meetings had taken place. She would keep governors fully informed on progress.

65.7 Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report

65.8 Amendment Outline Business Case for Capital Projects

Governors were asked by email to note an amendment to the Outline Business Case (approved on 25 September 2015) and to contact the Principal if they had any queries or objections by 12 noon on 15 October 2015; no objections were received and **the following amendment has been accepted as approved:**

'With the inclusion of VAT/Stamp Duty, general inflation factor and an allowance included for construction inflation, the project costs increase to £84.9m (not discounted)'.

65.9 Project Initiation Document

The Governing Body received a presentation regarding the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the Change Programme from the Principal. The PID had been developed to:

- outline programme governance arrangements and the stakeholder engagement plan detailing how the Change Programme will be led and gather momentum;

- detail the overall scope of the Change Programme and how it links to the agreed strategic priorities and KPI;
- articulate the delivery strategy and
- develop a project plan outlining the main milestones over the period

She emphasised that this is a “live” document and that it will be updated at key milestones throughout the Programme lifecycle. It will be primarily used by the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and the Strategic Improvement Committee to monitor detailed progress of the Change Programme.

Professor Scott described the structure of the Change Programme showing workstreams relating to student provision, internal resources and external stakeholders and cross cutting themes including Governance & Accountability. She said that a workstream consisted of a number of projects; Project Managers are in the process of developing detailed project plans for each workstream.

She drew attention to the bodies/officers responsible for the management of the Programme such as: the Strategic Improvement Committee (SIC) responsible for overseeing the implementation of the SIP; the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) advising the SIC on progress being made; Workstream Lead accountable to the SLT for the delivery of the workstream; and Project Managers responsible for the day to day management of Projects. She said that due regard would be given in the development of the Programme to issues such as quality, cost, benefits and risk. She added that the Risk Register for the Change Programme would dovetail to the Corporate Risk Register.

Professor Scott provided details of the KPI Reporting Schedule, which will be submitted to each meeting of the Governing Body. The KPIs included in the Schedule relate to the SIP recommendations. She referred Governors to the updated reporting format that reflected feedback from governors. The Governing Body noted that recruitment to Full-Time FE and HE had exceeded target. The College had yet to meet its FLU target, however, as recruitment would still be continuing throughout the academic year for Part-Time provision. The Principal referred to progress against actions included in the Change programme in relation to governance, curriculum and planning, and infrastructure. She also drew attention to a ‘Slippage in Achievement’ pro forma indicating actions to be taken to address underachievement of targets.

Governors made a number of comments relating to the PID and Reporting Schedule

- Financial Tables. The figures presented reflected the requested revisions to those previously tabled in the Strategic Improvement Plan (2015-18).
- Colour Code. A legend should appear on the same screen for ease of reference.
- Gateway Processes. It was noted that there was no requirement for gateway processes other than for capital developments such as the Outline Business Case
- Stakeholders. Mr McCluggage referred to the need to develop stakeholder satisfaction (KPI 12 refers). He asked if there was a need to establish a sub-group to address this matter. It was suggested that there was scope for the Strategic Improvement Committee, from time to time, to co-opt persons (governors and non-governors) to provide specialist advice.

65.10 Further Education Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Governing Body received a copy of the Further Education Strategy for Northern Ireland consultation document and noted Colleges Northern Ireland’s response to DEL on behalf of the Sector.

65.11 Audit & Risk Committee.

Dr Lennox presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 7 October 2015. He highlighted the following issues considered by the Committee:

- a) Terms of Reference. The Committee considered its Terms of Reference and agreed that they should be forwarded to the Governing Body for approval. **The Governing Body approved the Terms of Reference.**

- b) Follow-Up Review of Payments to Part Time Lecturers. The Internal Auditors have revised the assurance rating from Limited to Satisfactory for the Follow-Up Review of Payments to Part-Time Lecturers in light of the progress that has been made in relation to four issues raised in the initial Review. The Committee agreed that the Internal Auditors should return and review the Control System for e-claims in early 2016 making use of reserve days in the Audit Operational Plan.
- c) Annual Statement of Assurance. The Internal Auditors have issued an unqualified Satisfactory Assurance over the internal control environment at the College.
- d) Internal Audit Plan. The Internal Auditors presented the Audit Operational Plan 2015/2016, which will require an expected 57 days of audit time.
- e) Draft Annual Report & Financial Statements 2014/2015. The Committee received a presentation regarding the draft Annual Report & Financial Statements 2014/2015. It noted that the College had generated an historic cost surplus of £652k compared with the College's original planned outturn of £0.4k surplus. The College had accumulated income and expenditure reserves, excluding pension reserves, of £2,341k and a cash balance of £4,787k. It was further noted that the document would be forwarded to the Audit & Risk Committee (18 November 2015) for recommendation for approval to the Governing Body (25 November 2015).
- f) Membership of Committee. Attention was drawn to the fact there were no qualified accountants on the Committee. This matter was to be followed up by the DEL representative on the Committee. The Chair of the Governing Body stated that she had communicated with the Department regarding this matter and had been informed that there was no requirement for the Committee to have a qualified auditor as a Member as the skills mix currently on the committee was considered as sound. She advised that DEL was supportive and if a specialist competency for the committee was considered necessary she would liaise with Mr Andrews to have further discussion on the matter.

65.12 Strategic Improvement Committee

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Improvement Committee held on 5 October 2015. She highlighted the following matters discussed at the meeting: she also advised that the committee would when deemed appropriate invite chairs of other committees to join them for discussions pertaining to their committee work.

- a) Terms of Reference. The Committee considered its Terms of Reference and agreed that they should be forwarded to the Governing Body for approval. **The Governing Body approved the Terms of Reference.**
- b) Project Initiation Document (PID). The Committee received a presentation in relation to the PID, from Ms J Small (Deloittes). The Committee agreed that the PID document, subject to minor adjustments, should be endorsed and forwarded to the Department.

65.13 Fees Policy & Fees Regulations

The Governing Body received a paper regarding the College's Fees Policy and Fees Regulations 2016/2017. It was noted that the fees compare favourably with other providers. **The Governing Body approved the Fees Policy and Fees Regulations for 2016/2017.**

65.14 Calendar of Meetings 2015/2016

The Governing Body received and **approved the Calendar of Meetings for 2015/2016.** The Chair advised that it had been necessary to arrange meetings of the Governing Body on Thursdays in May and June 2016 due to the Principal's professional commitments on the two Wednesdays in May and June. She advised that should chairs of committees which to add additional meetings to their calendars this was very acceptable. The committee structure would also be reviewed at the end of the academic year 15/16. Governors were asked to note that Newtownabbey campus would now be the venue for a number of committee and governing body meetings.

65.14 Any Other Business

65.14.1 Vice Chair of Governing Body. The Secretary confirmed that he had sought expressions of interest from all Governors and had received two nominations. Subsequently one had withdrawn and as a result Mr H Crossey has been appointed unopposed. **The Governing Body approved the appointment of Mr Hugh Crossey as Vice Chair of the Governing Body**

65.14.2 Mr Kennedy drew attention to a recent media article where DE had announced a reduced 6th form intake for Cambridge House, which may impact on recruitment at the NRC. Governors discussed this, and reaffirmed their views that the DE/DEL partnership approach to the 14/19 policy matters was essential going forward.

65.14.3 Retirement. The Chair stated that this was Mrs Brenda Crotty's last Governing Body meeting as she was due to retire on 31 October 2015. The Chair thanked her for her work and contribution to the College and wished her well in the future.

65.15 Next Meeting

The Chair reminded Governors that the next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for Wednesday 25 November 2015 at 5.30 pm at the Newtownabbey Campus.

65.17 Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES)

The Governing Body received a paper regarding the VES. The Governing Body were updated on the risks associated with the VES and the measures taken to ensure continuity and mitigate risks.

65.18 Any Other Notified Reserved Business

As there was no other notified business the meeting concluded at 8.25 pm

Ms C McKinney
Chair of Governing Body _____ Date _____

Mr J Hunter
Secretary Governing Body _____