

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Training Session and Governing Body held at the conclusion on Friday 25 September 2015 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus commencing at 12.30 pm.

Present Ms C McKinney (Chair), Professor Scott (Principal). Mrs I Allison, Alderman J Brown, Mr H Crossey, Mr B Hutchinson, Mr R Jay, Mr A Kennedy, Dr D Lennox, Mrs G McConnell, Mr S McCartney, Mr B McCluggage, Ms Y Mallon, Mr M Murray, Mr K Nelson

In Attendance Mr C Andrews (DEL for Training Session), Mr G Campbell (Colleges Northern Ireland) and Mr J Hunter

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

64.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs J Eve, Mr K Chambers and Mr R Bradley

64.2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

64.3 Training Session

The Chair welcomed the following new Governors: Mr H Crossey, Mr B Hutchinson, Mr B McCluggage and Ms Y Mallon to their first meeting. The Governing Body received the following presentations:

a) Overview of NRC Strategic Priorities by the Professor Scott, Principal. Professor Scott provided the Governing Body with details of the Northern Regional College's Strategic Improvement Plan 2015-2018, which has been developed in response to the challenges currently facing NRC, in order to place it on a three year journey towards financial stability and success. She detailed the Strategic Priorities and KPIs which had been developed in respect of the College's Students, Internal Resources and External Stakeholders. These KPIs align the College's performance with Sector benchmarks and the reporting requirements of DEL.

b) Further Education Strategy by Mr C Andrews (DEL). Mr Andrews explained the role and remit of the Department for Employment and Learning. He explained that the Department has responsibility for policy, strategic development and financing of the statutory Further Education Sector. He highlighted the Department's key objectives and the challenges facing it in its major drive to enhance skill levels of the workforce to higher levels ranging from Levels 3-8. During discussion Governors raised a number of concerns about the provision for students from deprived areas, competition from secondary schools, and the need to provide up-skilling for people in workshops as well as new entrants to Colleges.

c) Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MS/M) presentation by Mr C Andrews (DEL). He explained that the rationale for the new MS/M resulted from the change of status of FE Colleges as NDPBs. The old FM was no longer fit for purpose. The new document sets out how Colleges should address a number of issues including annual budgets. Governors raised a number of issues regarding the identification and funding of capital needs; opportunities for NDPB to continue generating income; College reserves; and the difficulties encountered by colleges by the non-alignment of the Financial and Academic year.

d) Role and Function of Colleges Northern Ireland (CNI) presentation by Mr G Campbell, Chief Executive. He stated that the role of CNI was to promote and support FE Colleges in contributing to the economic and social well-being of Northern Ireland. He said that CNI provided a voice for the FE Sector and indicated that it had an important role lobbying government and other stakeholders. He added that CNI had provided a platform for FE Colleges to work in partnership and collaboration. Mr Campbell

highlighted a number of interesting statistics, which provide a challenge to the Sector: 42% of students come from deprived areas; and 28% of members of the workforce have no qualifications. A Governor asserted that it was essential to make FE more attractive to post GCSE students.

The Chair thanked Professor Scott, Mr Andrews and Mr Campbell for informative presentations. She then progressed to Governing Body business

64.4 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body held on 24 June 2015 were approved.

64.5 Structure and Membership of Committees

The Governing Body received a paper recommending a revised Committee structure reflecting the recommendations of the Strategic Improvement Plan. It agreed that the revised structure should consist of the following Committees with membership and chairs as detailed below:

Audit & Risk	Finance & Resources	Education	Strategic Improvement
David Lennox (Chair)	Hugh Crossey (Chair)	Richard Jay (Chair)	Carmel Mc Kinney (Chair)
Billy Hutchinson	Yvonne Mallon	Matt Murray	Isobel Alison
Jim Brown	Gillian McConnell	Bill McCluggage	Andy Kennedy
Stephen McCartney	Kevin Chambers	Ken Nelson	Terri Scott
Judith Eve	Terri Scott	Recce Bradley	
		Terri Scott	

64.5 Communication from the Principal

64.5.1 Voluntary Exit Scheme

The Governing Body received an update regarding the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). Professor Scott advised the Governing Body that 20.87 FTEs had left the College at the end of August 2015 under Tranche 1. Under Tranche 2, 31 FTEs will be leaving by the end of October 2015, 15 FTEs by the end of December 2015, 3 FTEs by the end of January 2016 and 19 FTEs by the end of March 2016. She indicated that the College intended to replace 35 of the departing 69 members of staff

64.5.2 Recruitment

The Principal provided details of the recruitment process in respect of the following appointments: Vice Principal Curriculum, two Heads of School and a Head of HR. She said that Mr Nelson would be a member of the Appointment Panel for Head of Department posts and Mr Jay for the Vice Principal Teaching & Learning post

64.6 Outline Business Case (OBC) for Capital Projects at the Northern Regional College

The Governing Body received a paper and presentation from the Principal regarding the OBC for Capital Projects at the College.

It was noted that in July 2012 Deloitte MCS Ltd (Deloitte) was commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the estate at the Northern Regional College. In June 2014, a draft OBC (agreed by the NRC Governing Body) was submitted to DEL with an anticipated approval date of July 2014. The OBC was not approved at the time and the Department confirmed that a decision would be

postponed pending the outcome of a 'Review of the Finance, Curriculum, Staffing and Estate' undertaken by Tribal Consultancy Group on behalf of DEL.

Deloitte was appointed in June 2015 to provide an updated OBC with reference to inter alia: the Strategic Improvement Plan; changing demographics and demand; availability of suitable dates ensuring flexible accommodation suitable for future needs; and the new Curriculum Plan and associated Schedule of Accommodation. Over the course of 2014/2015 the College has worked closely with DEL and ETI to ensure the OBC meets with the Departmental requirements. The updated OBC identifies the preferred option with a reduced footprint and corresponding revised costs (£36m at Coleraine and £51.8m at Ballymena).

The preferred option indicates: a new build at the existing site at Coleraine with expansion into a nearby Church Hall; and a consolidated campus at Ballymena on the existing site at Farm Lodge. Due Diligence Reviews have been carried out at both sites.

The Principal advised that the OBC included an Economic Appraisal on the Larne Adult Education Centre (LAEC) 2011. The LAEC had been underutilised by NRC and had been operating with a net cash outflow making it unsustainable to continue to operate the Centre in its current form. The LAEC Appraisal recommended that the Centre should be leased to a third party and that NRC would rent space as needed to meet the demand for part-time further education and training in the area. This recommendation has been implemented since 2012 at Larne and Acceptable Enterprises Ltd, a locally based social enterprise, operates the Centre on the basis of the recommendation. The College has also undertaken a review of the LAEC and has recommended that LAEC should continue with a 10-year lease for Acceptable Enterprises Ltd

In response to queries from Governors the Principal confirmed that: the new campuses would be fit for purpose; she was confident that following the submission of the OBC by the end of September that DEL/DfP would be able to process the case within a week; the College intends to communicate with the local communities regarding the new build and plans to go out to public consultation.

The Governing Body endorsed the revised OBC for submission to DEL by 30 September 2015.

64.7 Next Meeting

The Chair reminded Governors that a further training session has been arranged at the Newtownabbey Campus on Wednesday 7 October at 4.00 pm. This session would be preceded by an Audit & Risk Committee meeting commencing at 2.00 pm.

