

## Northern Regional College

### Strategic Improvement Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Improvement Committee held on 10 October 2016 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus commencing at 4.00 pm.

**Present** Mrs C McKinney (by conference call); Mr A Kennedy; Mrs I Allison; Prof T Scott (by Lync)

**In Attendance** Dr S Brankin, Mr M Higgins, Prof M McKinney (all by Lync)  
Mrs M McKeag and Mr V Taggart  
Mrs C Robinson (Secretary)

The Committee noted that Mr Kennedy had agreed to Chair the meeting.

Professor Scott reported that the revised paper circulated prior to the meeting had been updated to include target dates at the Department's request.

#### 5.1 Apologies

None.

#### 5.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

#### 5.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2016 were unanimously approved.

#### 5.4 Matters Arising

None.

#### 5.5 Correspondence

None.

#### 5.6 Strategic Improvement Plan Update

Professor Scott spoke to the SIP update report highlighting key points for note and discussion. She pointed out that student numbers for the previous year were available for the first time and drew attention to the performance against targets as detailed within the report introduction. The Committee noted that whilst FLU targets for Essential Skills and FT/HE had been exceeded other areas were marginally below target. Overall performance however, showed improvement on the previous 5 years. The College's focus on retention was noted along with retention figures for 2015/16 and actions to support retention were outlined. With regard to enrolment for 2016/17 Professor Scott advised on the current position, noting that plans were in place to address potential shortfall in certain areas (PT/FE and ES).

Queries raised by Committee members prompted discussion on the impact of changes to essential skills assessment; academic requirements and extended vocational provision within post primary schools; and the effect of a recent advertising campaign. Particular reference was made to the College's position on higher level apprenticeships; long term financial sustainability; and income diversification. The Committee noted the challenges and commended the SLT and staff on the progress in the various areas.

The Committee also considered the high level summary on actions for the twelve individual KPIs, focussing discussion on the actions with amber status. Additional information was provided where required.

**KPI 1** – the Committee noted that the new online application process adopted in 2016 had not met expectations and a further review would be undertaken during 2016/17 to identify more efficiencies. The new approach put in place for 2016/17 to improve engagement with the student body had been more effective.

In response to Mr Kennedy's enquiry on staff response/commitment to the new processes Professor Scott indicated that protocols had been established to assess this. A staff conference, staff survey and team briefings had been introduced and would continue in the future.

**KPI 2** – the design and development of an integrated curriculum planning process was underway and on track to produce a draft plan by end of 2016. Improved data analysis would result.

It was confirmed that an annual recognition system would be introduced during the course of 2016/17.

**KPI 4** – Professor Scott reported that work was on-going in the development of mechanisms to capture student/stakeholder views. A social media policy had been approved by SLT and training would be provided for staff.

**KPI 5** – the College was committed to the review of business processes and work was on-going although behind schedule. It was expected that things would move forward when the newly appointed Head of Systems and Process Transformation (PST) took up post in November and recruitment of the PST team gets under way

**KPI 7** – Mr Higgins advised that several skills audits had already been undertaken and training identified but the planned wider audit had been delayed due to difficulties in appointing a Learning and Development Manager. Professor Scott indicated that this area had been identified as a priority in the coming year.

Mr Kennedy was advised of possible reasons for the difficulty in filling the post and action taken to facilitate an appointment.

**KPI 8** – the new IT manager was now in post and implementation of the IT strategy was underway. The Committee accepted the revised target date of January 2017.

The Committee noted the update on issues associated with the outline business case for work on the four Campus model and latest developments in progressing the Coleraine campus. Agreement had not yet been reached on the acquisition of adjoining land and Professor Scott was waiting for confirmation of a meeting date with representatives for the vendor. The Committee noted the possibility of having to return some of the capital funding to the Department should an arrangement not be reached.

## 5.7 Any Other Business

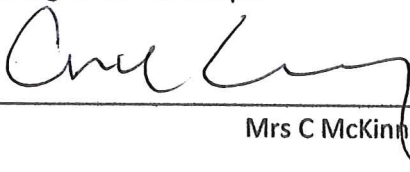
### Review of Strategic Improvement Plan

Professor Scott reported that the internal audit review of the SIP had resulted in a satisfactory assurance outcome. She indicated that as part of the process KPMG had spoken with Mrs McKinney (GB Chair), Mr Higgins, Dr Brankin and Mr Taggart and had also reviewed the SIP committee minutes. Professor Scott noted that it was helpful that the review had been completed in advance of the next Departmental meeting and that the recommendations would be taken forward.


## 5.8 Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 16 November 2016 at 4pm and would be held at the Newtownabbey Campus.

The meeting ended at 4.50pm.

  
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Mrs C McKinney (Chair)

Date: 16/11/2016

  
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Mrs C Robinson (Secretary)