

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 via Teams, commencing at 5.00pm.

Present: Mr B McGahan (Chair), Mrs I Allison, Mr K Chambers, Ms A Close, Dr P Graham, Mrs M Hamilton, Ms Y Mallon, Dr K McCambridge, Mr W McCluggage, Mrs G McConnell, Mr T Montgomery, Mr I Murphy, Prof T Scott and Mr G Wilkinson

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr M Higgins, Ms J Small and Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

98.1 Welcome/Apologies

The Chair welcomed Ms Close and Dr Graham to their first meeting of the Governing Body and extended congratulations to Mrs Alison and Mrs McConnell on the extension to their terms of appointment.

Apologies were noted for Ms Dynes and Mr Hutchinson.

98.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

98.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were agreed.

Proposed: Mr McCluggage Seconded: Mr Murphy

98.4 Matters Arising

Prof Scott advised that, following training on finance delivered on 27 October, dates for two further areas of training would be confirmed in due course.

ACTION: Presentation on finance training would be uploaded to the documents section of Decision Time.

Members noted that documentation relating to the September meeting of the College Employers' Forum (CEF) had been circulated by email on 11 November 2020.

98.5 Chair's Communication

- Members noted that a CEF meeting on 26 November would be the first in a series of discussions on pay claims.

- The Chair reported that a meeting between College Chairs and the Director of FE had taken place on 1 October, with another scheduled for 26 November.

ACTION: Note of the October meeting would be circulated to members.

- The Chair reported on his visits to Farm Lodge and Trostan Avenue, where he noted the impact of restrictions on student numbers.

- The Governing Body agreed the appointment of Dr Philip Graham to the Education Committee and to the Audit & Risk Committee.

ACTION: Dr Graham would be added to the membership of the Committees.

98.6 Correspondence

Two items of correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

- Governing Body Self-Assessment and Board Effectiveness analysis report, previously circulated to members on 9 November, was noted along with actions being taken and proposals for moving forwards.
- DfE Returns Timetable 2020/21 – requirements were noted along with adherence issues during the year for the College and the NIAO.

98.7 Principal's Report

Prof Scott drew attention to the summary of papers attached for each agenda item. Members noted these had been introduced following governors' feedback on quantum of papers provided in order to ensure transparency and good governance. Members' feedback on the efficacy of the summaries at Committee and Governing Body level was welcomed.

The Principal's Report was taken as read. Prof Scott highlighted a number of key issues including communications to staff, student enrolments and new build project. Members discussed the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and noted the College's role in contact tracing. Revised arrangements for College graduations were noted, details of which would be circulated and governors were encouraged to join the virtual events taking place on 14-17 Dec at 6.30pm.

ACTION: Prof Scott would circulate a high level summary of new build project milestones following New Build Project Board Meeting.

98.8 Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

Members considered the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and noted the corporate responsibilities of the Chair and the Governing Body and the Principal and Chief Executive's responsibilities in her role as Accounting Officer.

98.9 Draft Fees and Charges Policy 2021/22

Members considered the draft policy and proposal not to increase fees for the incoming year. Approval was given in principle to the fees policy and fees regulations 2021/22, subject to an analysis of the financial implications.

ACTION: Mr Higgins would present financial implications to the January meeting of the Resources Committee.

98.10 Resources Committee

The Resources Committee Terms of Reference were approved.

Proposed: Mr Murphy Seconded: Mrs Allison

The minutes of the Resources Committee meeting on 12 October 2020 were adopted.

98.11 Education Committee

The Education Committee Terms of Reference were approved.

Proposed: Mrs Allison Seconded: Mr Murphy

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting on 30 September 2020 were adopted.

Mrs Allison's update on the meeting on 17 November 2020 was noted.

98.12 Audit & Risk Committee

- i. The Audit & Risk Committee recommended the Annual Accounts 2019/20 to the GB for approval. Mr Higgins reported that a request for clarification on actuarial advice given to colleges on pension valuations was ongoing, although no material adjustment was anticipated.

The Annual Accounts 2019/20 were approved in principle, subject to resolution of the pension deficit.

- ii. The Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report was approved:

Proposed: Mr McCluggage Seconded: Dr Graham

- iii. The Draft Report to those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) was approved in principle, subject to no significant amendments to the final report by NIAO.

- iv. The Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference were approved.

Proposed: Mr McCluggage Seconded: Dr McCambridge

- v. The minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 23 September 2020 were adopted.
- vi. Mr McCluggage updated members on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 18 November, outlining the presentation on health and safety and noting difficulties experienced in achieving quorum on a number of occasions and welcoming Dr Graham as a member of the Committee.

ACTION: Updated Raising Concerns policy would be brought to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

98.13 Finance Update

Mr Higgins presented the management accounts to September 2020 and College finance update to 31 March 2021. Members noted the College's revised allocation of £26,195k; that the Emergency Efficiency plan was on target for 2020/21; additional Covid-19 bid placed to DfE; and that the College was within financial tolerances target for 2020/21.

Mr Higgins reported positive feedback had been received from members on the recent finance training.

In response to members' questions relating to Covid-19, Mr Higgins outlined measures put in place to ensure safe resumption of College activities, noting that the recent Internal Audit analysis of governance and controls had received a satisfactory assurance rating.

98.14 Any Other Business

None.

98.15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 27 January 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 6.29 pm



Mr B McGahan _____

Date 22 February 2021

(Chair)



Mrs K Wallace _____

(Secretary)