

Northern Regional College

Governing Body

Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 27 November 2024 in Farm Lodge campus commencing at 5.00pm.

Present: Mr K Nelson (Chair), Mrs L Crilly, Mr B Devlin, Dr P Graham (on Teams), Mr M Higgins, Mr A Hoey, Mr G McAllister, Mr D MacAuley (on Teams), Mrs McGovern, Ms D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Mrs P Martin, Mr I Murphy, Mr B Patterson, Mr S Shevlin, Mr D Small, Mrs J Taggart

Apology: Ms Hemphill

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr S Laverty, Mr C Fairless (124.6, 124.7 & 124.8 only)

Also in Attendance: Ms A McDowell, Innovation and Consultancy Services (ICS)

Secretary: Mrs K Wallace

The Chair welcomed Mrs McGovern's return following leave, and Ms McDowell who was attending the meeting as an observer.

124.1 Declaration of Interests None.

124.2 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2024 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Murphy Seconded: Mrs Crilly

124.3 Matters Arising

Employee relations training sessions will be held in January 2025 and members were reminded to book a place on one of the two available dates.

124.5 Chair's Communications

Members noted the Self-Assessment Analysis Report, learnings from which would be used alongside results from the completed GB Effectiveness Review, to develop a joint action plan.

The Chair advised that the CDP finalisation meeting had taken place and that Ministerial approval was awaited.

The College Christmas Lunch in the Causeway Campus would take place on 10 December and members were encouraged to attend.

Planning details for the GB Strategy Day on 22 January were on the agenda later in the meeting. A letter from the Permanent Secretary outlining the Minister's Economic Vision

would be reflected on at the Strategy Day. It was also intended to organise visits to each of the College campuses before 22 January, comments from which would feed into the event. Committee Chairs were encouraged to visit an event and dates would be advised when organised.

Action: Details of staff engagement events to be circulated to the Committee Chairs when available.

The Principal said that it was again intended to offer staff the opportunity to meet informally with the GB at future meetings. Members were supportive of engagement meetings being structured around College teams, to provide deeper insight on particular topics.

The Principal gave an update on the current position of the CEF review and the College's stance on same, and advised that the report from EY was still awaited. It was anticipated that, once received, a short response time would be required and options for communicating with members were discussed.

In answer to a question from Mrs Martin, the Principal confirmed that the report was in relation to structure and governance arrangements for the CEF.

Action: Members agreed that the Chair and Principal would formulate a recommendation to the EY report and communicate this to members via email, subject to a short Teams meeting taking place with members if any issues arise.

124.5 Principal's Report

The Principal presented his report and expanded on a number of key topics including sector matters; pay awards and negotiations; and learners achievements. He highlighted that efficiencies delivered in 2023 and the VES programme in 2024 had generated savings to make the College more financially sustainable but demands for pay rises and increases in Employers NIC will undo the savings generated.

Mr Murphy highlighted possibilities resulting from current industry demand for construction courses. The Principal noted that funding for further courses would be contingent on approval of bids to the Department.

Mr McKernan and Mr Fairless joined the meeting at 5.25pm.

124.6 Strategy Day Discussion Paper

The Chair welcomed Mr Fairless to the meeting and members' feedback on the options presented in his paper were invited.

Members discussed the options for the meeting venue, format and choice of meeting structure, and provided suggestions for contributors, which were noted by Mr Fairless.

The location for the event was agreed as Causeway campus, with the format to follow that of the 2022 Strategy Day, including 2 or 3 key speakers and panel discussion, and the main part of the day focussed on review of the College's current strategic plans to ensure alignment with the Minister's vision. A request for a contingency plan to be formulated was noted by Mr Fairless.

124.7 Draft Fees and Charges Policy 2025/26

Members' considered the Policy & Fees Regulations 2025/26.

Action: The Fees and Charges policy proposals were approved for 2025/26.

124.8 CDP

The GB noted the revised CDP 2024/25 and that Departmental approval was anticipated shortly.

The CDP Progress Report September 2024 was noted.

124.9 Education Committee

Dr Graham gave a verbal update of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 including realignment of the programme of Committee work; the annual report on safeguarding presented; the annual Student Experience report presented; and the SER/QIP.

Dr Graham referred to the feedback from the Education Training Inspectorate and steps taken to deal with delivery within the classroom.

Mrs Brown summarised the enrolment update presented at the meeting and outlined feedback and arrangements on ETI evaluations.

The draft minutes of 25 September 2024 were endorsed.

124.10 Resources Committee

Members noted the finance update presented.

The draft minutes of 14 October 2024 were endorsed.

124.11 Audit & Risk Committee

The draft minutes of 30 September 2024 were endorsed.

124.12 New Build Update

Members heard an update from Mr Lavery on the current status of the Ballymena new build, details of which were outlined in the Principal's report.

124.13 Disposal of Ballymoney Campus

Mr Laverty highlighted the restricted commercial and in confidence status of this report and provided a summary of the context for the proposed disposal of Ballymoney campus.

Action: The GB approved the closure of Ballymoney campus from the end of the 2023-24 academic year and the subsequent disposal as soon as possible thereafter.

Members noted that the Principal would proceed to advise the Department of the GB's decision and seek approval to dispose of the campus.

124.14 Any Other Business None.

124.13 Date of Next Meeting 19 February 2025.

The meeting ended at 6.35pm.

Mr K Nelson



Date 19.02.2025

Chair

Mrs K Wallace

