

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE
HELD ON TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2026 at 17.30 VIA TEAMS.**

<p>PRESENT: Dr Thomas Moore (Chair) Mrs Lee Campbell (Principal / CEO) Mrs Hilary Singleton Mr Stuart Harper Mr Sean Fitzsimons Mrs Monica Kelly Mrs Angela Whiteside Mr Andrew Sloan Mrs Sharon O’Hare Mrs Geraldine Campbell Mrs Patricia McCaffrey Mr Gary McMurray Mr Nick Harkness Ms Celine Maria Corhea</p>	<p>IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum Mrs Emma Foster Secretary to the Governing Body Mrs Michelle Khan, Assistant Director of Finance Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services Mrs Janis Scallon (FE Director DFE)</p> <p>APOLOGIES: Dr Liz Finnigan</p>
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The meeting convened at 17.35

<p>A01. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and also welcomed Mrs Scallon to the meeting and congratulated her on recent appointment as FE Director, as of February 2026.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Dr Finnigan.</p> <p>It was noted that this meeting was originally scheduled as an in-person meeting, but reverted to Teams, due to reported travel disruption / blockades, Province wide.</p> <p>A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interest held in matters to be discussed. No interests were disclosed.</p> <p>A07. Department for the Economy (DfE) UPDATE</p> <p>This item was brought forward, to allow Ms Scallon’s introduction to and participation in the meeting.</p> <p>Ms Scallon provided members with an update on the Minister’s Four Priorities, along with progress on the recent launch of FE Reform, which took place earlier in the day, and was attended by FE Sector representatives. She advised that Task and Finish groups will be established to support this work.</p> <p>She also noted that engagement sessions and workshops are scheduled to take place in the coming weeks across each of the six colleges. These sessions will bring together members of the FE team, Governing Body representatives, college senior management, and lecturers to together explore and discuss how FE Reform will be implemented within colleges.</p> <p>Ms Scallon informed members that the Stormont Executive has yet to agree a budget. In the interim, the College should proceed in line with its contingency plan, noting that existing pressures may not be met and that a potential 3% budget reduction is also possible.</p>	
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She advised that consideration should be given to identify alternative sources of income, including exploring additional funding streams to help mitigate financial pressures.

She went on to convey the central value and importance of all the FE Colleges to meeting the Ministers Objectives for driving improvement in the economy; and meeting the Dual Mandate. She advised she will advocate for the College Sector in her role as the Director of Further Education.

Dr Moore thanked the previous FE Directors Mrs Watson and Mrs McCamley for their work in the role and welcomed Ms Scallon into this position.

Mrs Singleton emphasised that focus should be placed on the cost to the College of providing SEN support, including the provision of scribes and readers required during examinations. She also sought clarity from Ms Scallon on when the budget would be confirmed to the College. Ms Scallon advised that no update is currently available however, she and her team are actively seeking a response from the Executive and will inform the College as soon as possible once a budget has been agreed.

Ms Scallon told members she looks forward to working closely with the Principal/CEO, Chair and the College.

Mrs L Campbell thanked Ms Scallon for attending tonight's meeting and looks forward to working with her and her department.

Ms Scallon left the meeting at 18.20

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Governing Body Minutes 16 December 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 16 December 2025 were reviewed for accuracy and unanimously approved as an accurate record on proposal from Mr Harkness and seconded by Mrs Kelly.

Dr Moore thanked members for attending the recent Strategy Day held on 17 February in Portadown Campus. He also thanked Mrs L Campbell for organising it and the colleagues who attended and prepared / delivered presentations. This formed a sound basis for future developments to help ensure the College played a leading and prominent role working in collaboration with others, in meeting the Executive's Programme for Government (PfG),

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted the outstanding action with a completion date of June 2028.

A05. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Dr Moore thanked Mrs L Campbell for informing members of various Public Accountability and Governance Workshops due to be held in June 2026. These are run by Northern Ireland Audit Office in which members can attend. Dr Moore thanked those members who have confirmed their attendance.

Dr Moore informed members of a FE Reform Engagement meeting due to take place on 21 April in Newry West and thanked the Chairs for confirming their attendance. This was a follow on from the launch of FE Reform, by Minister Archibald at Stormont, earlier today. Dr Moore and Mrs L Campbell were in attendance at this FE Reform launch.

Dr Moore also placed on record his thanks to Ms Shackels and Ms McGuigan for the work undertaken to prepare papers for the recent Accountability Review meeting held with Department Officials in DFE building Belfast on 20th March.

Mr Harkness and Mr Harper's first term of office are due to end in October and September 2026, respectfully; and this matter has been raised with DfE. Both members have expressed an interest in reappointment for a second term to the Chair and Secretary. The Secretary has informed the Department of their wishes.

A06. PRINCIPAL AND CEO'S BUSINESS

Mrs L Campbell updated members and congratulated Mrs Khan on her recent promotion as Assistant Director of Finance. After a successful interview process a candidate has been appointed to Director of Finance. Mr Burns will take up the position effective from 3rd August.

Mrs L Campbell placed on record her thanks to Mr A Sloan and Mrs Kelly for their participation on the interview panel.

Recruitment for the Principal and Chief Executive Personal Assistant post, has concluded with the successful candidate expected to take up the role by mid-May.

The Newry Innovation construction project is scheduled to officially begin on 14th May. The Economy Minister was invited but is unfortunately unable to attend; however, a representative from the Department for the Economy (DfE) will be present.

Mrs L Campbell shared the good news that five students from the College had recently been selected to represent the UK at WorldSkills which will be held in Shanghai 2026. She noted this is the highest number of participants sent from any other college or university in the UK.

The annual Accountability Review meeting held on 20th March was reported as positive. The College Development Plan performance was discussed and will be explored in further detail later in this meeting. Reference was also made to the pay offer, which will also be addressed later in this meeting.

Following the Accountability Meeting a Budget Meeting was held via Teams, with the Permanent Secretary, Principal/CEO, Chair and several Governing Body members. He emphasised the budget pressures facing the Stormont Executive and his Department, in the upcoming period. Mrs L Campbell thanked members who were able to attend. She reassured members that the College will continue to manage its budget closely.

A08. COMMITTEE MINUTES – FOR ADOPTION

The following committee minutes were presented to members for information:

- a) **Staffing Committee 07 October 2025**
- b) **Education Committee 21 October 2025**
- c) **Finance and General Purposes Committee 04 November 2025**
- d) **Audit and Risk Committee 18 November 2025**
- e) **Finance and General Purposes Committee 20 January 2026**
- f) **Education Committee 27 January 2026**

The Audit and Risk Committee Minutes of 18 November 2025 were withdrawn from this meeting due to some amendments to wording being required and will be brought to the next ARC meeting for approval.

Each Chair took members through the minutes of their Committee giving an overview of what was presented on at each meeting.

The minutes of the meetings were reviewed for accuracy and unanimously approved as an accurate record on proposal from Mrs G Campbell and seconded by Mr Harper.

A09. COMMITTEE MINUTES – FOR REVIEW

The following draft committee minutes were presented to members for information:

- a) **Staffing Committee 24 February 2026**
- b) **Audit and Risk Committee 09 March 2026**

These were taken as read and nothing further was added.

A10. UPDATED ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT

Members noted this. The updated Articles will be uploaded to the website by Mrs Foster.

Mrs Foster

A11 GOVERNING BODY & COMMITTEE MEETING PLANNER 2026-2027

Members noted the dates enclosed.

Mr Mc Murray left the meeting at 19.10pm.

A12. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

Ms Shackels took members through the Quality Improvement Plan, which is aligned to the College Development Plan. This includes the Essential Skills and Traineeship Action Plans.

The Traineeship and Essential Skills actions plans were previously submitted to the DfE, and an update on Traineeships was received by the College in March. A further and final update is expected from DfE on 28th April 2026.

Ms Shackels conducted analysis across three programmes and different entry levels the College has provided over the past three years. The average retention rate is 86%, and overall programme success rates which ranges between 80% and 83%.

Dr Moore and Mrs O'Hare thanked Ms Shackels for her report and noted that the summary was clear and easy to follow.

A13 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AND RISK REGISTER HEAT MAP

Mrs L Campbell having taken the item as read, reassured members that the Corporate Risk Register is reviewed monthly by the Risk Management Team, and by the Executive Team who meet every six weeks. It was also confirmed that the Risk Register and Heat Map are standing agenda items on the Audit and Risk Committee and are reported on and

discussed in detail. Mrs L Campbell assured members should the risk ratings change the Governing Body would be informed at the earliest opportunity.

It was highlighted that risk appetite will be revisited following discussions to risk ratings at the recent Strategy Day. Mrs L Campbell advised that this will be brought back annually to the Governing Body with the next review after the Strategy Day due to be held in February 2027. Dr Moore agreed that an annual report would be sufficient as this is managed at an operational level and sits in the Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee.

A14. CDP ACTION PLAN 25-26

Mrs L Campbell advised that this item was brought to the Accountability Review Meeting for members to note. She explained that the framework is developed by the Department, which sets the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) while the College sets corresponding targets. Four aims have been developed, which form the basis of the KPIs.

These are brought to and monitored by the Education Committee.

Dr Moore suggested that a cover note be added to items / papers for future meetings. This would help to set out the key points and make clear the purpose each paper presented for the Board's consideration.

A15. ACCOUNTS DIRECTION

Mrs Khan drew members' attention to the eight-month reporting period. Draft accounts are due to be ready by 26th June, with final accounts and report scheduled for 6th November 2026. The signing of the accounts will take place at the Audit and Risk committee scheduled for 20th October 2026.

Dr Moore also congratulated Mrs Khan on her recent promotion to Assistant Director of Finance.

A16. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT REVIEW

Dr Moore reassured members that there has been no change to the Agreement, noting that this is an annual standing agenda item for review / consideration.

He advised that the Department is due to review the Partnership Agreement every three years as stated in the document and confirmed that he has raised this matter with Department officials. This review is yet to be undertaken, and members will have the opportunity to engage further at that time.

Members noted the agreement.

A17 UPDATE ON DfE 2025 TEST DRILL EXERCISE

Mrs L Campbell advised members of the test drill for business cases produced by the Department of Finance. She noted that two college submissions were sent and subsequently returned with positive feedback, confirming they were of good quality. Members noted the letter.

A18 ICS EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW ACTION POINTS UPDATE

Dr Moore provided assurance to the members that himself and other Chairs are following up on the points raised within the Sector Report. This was placed on a recent Chairs agenda for consideration.

A19 GB APPRAISAL / ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

The results of the recent annual DfE Survey had been previously circulated; and formed part of the discussions at the recent Strategy Day, on the 17 February 2026, in Portadown.

Dr Moore reminded members to contact himself the Principal/CEO or Secretary if they have any suggestions on how to improve the Board or the running of meetings. This is important to ensure expectations are met and engagement is maximised.

A20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Ballot Vote for Chair of Staffing Committee.**

Members were advised that, as the meeting was now being held online due to unforeseen circumstances (traffic disruption across the Province), they should submit their vote in confidence, by email, to Mrs Foster.

It was confirmed that both candidates would be informed of the outcome by the Secretary in due course, and members would also be emailed details of the successful candidate.

Dr Moore placed on record his thanks to Mr McMurray for his time as Interim Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Chair of the Staffing Committee. Dr Moore informed members that Mr McMurray would be taking up the role as the substantive Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee from September 2026.

A21 REVIEW OF MEETING

Members were content with the organisation and conduct of the Governing Body meeting.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Governing Body meeting is scheduled for 16 June 2026 at 17.30 in Boardroom Newry West Campus. This will be an in-person meeting

Mrs O'Hare and Ms Corhea left the meeting at 19.55.

The meeting concluded at 19.56

CHAIR

16.06.26 **DATE**

Mrs Foster