

**MINUTES OF A MEETING THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON  
TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2024 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS**

<b>PRESENT:</b> Dr Thomas Moore (Chair) Mrs Lee Campbell (Principal / CEO) Mrs Hilary Singleton Mr Stuart Harper Mrs Tracy Strachan Mr Gary McMurray Mrs Geraldine Campbell Mr Sean Fitzsimons Mrs Monica Kelly Dr Laura Milner Mrs Angela Whiteside Mr Andrew Sloan Dr Liz Finnigan Mrs Sharon O'Hare Mr Nick Harkness Mrs Patricia McCaffrey Mr James Hutchinson	<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b> Ms Joanne McGuigan, Interim Director of Finance & Planning Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services Ms Sandra Barry, Acting Secretary to the Governing Body  <b>APOLOGIES:</b> None received
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The meeting convened at 17.30

<p><b>A01. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.  Mr Hutchinson is the incoming Student Governor and was welcomed to the meeting.  Mrs Kelly joined the meeting at 17.36.</p> <p><b>A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b></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><b>A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 03 September 2024</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 03 September 2024 were reviewed for accuracy and approved as an accurate record on proposal from Mrs O'Hare and seconded by Mrs Singleton.</p> <p><b>A04. MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>Members reviewed the action log and considered all matters therein.</p> <p><b>A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS</b></p> <p>Dr Moore advised that he attended the DfE Partnership Agreement Engagement event on 10 October 2024 with the Principal and Chief Executive, Mrs Lee Campbell. The slides relating to this have been issued to Members via SharePoint.</p> <p>Dr Moore urged all Governors to review the Remuneration of Governing Body Chairs and Members Circular FE 07/17 to ensure they are clear on the arrangements for the payment of Governing Body Chairs and Members, drawing particular attention to paragraph 7.</p>	
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There are no updates to report on the FE Review or the CEF / Collaboration Review.

All Colleges have signed up to the Governing Body Effectiveness Review. Innovation and Consultancy Services (ICS) are undertaking this Review and required purchase order (PO) numbers in order to proceed. SRC's PO number has been submitted. Dr Moore expressed his thanks to all for agreeing the document. We shall await Next Steps. A Steering Group has been established across the 6 Colleges, chaired by the Chair of NWRC.

Dr Liz Finnigan hosts the Interdisciplinary Conference in Arts and Science (ICAS) Conference each year, this will take place at 6pm on Friday 31 January 2025. Dr Moore encouraged Members to attend. Dr Finnigan will issue invitations to the Governors via Ms Barry in due course.

#### **A06. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**

Mr Bronte presented the Sustainability Report and noted that the three underpinning objectives are:

1. To develop and support a sustainable workforce.
2. To embed the UN Sustainability Goals in all aspects of College life and to provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote sustainable development.
3. To embed sustainable practice in all aspects of College operations.

Mr Bronte reported that in May 2024 the College was named as a reporting body under the Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland). This means the College will be legally bound to report emissions produced via its activities. To ensure we are best placed to meet these requirements, the College has sought to participate in the DAERA Co-design Working Group to support in relation to these regulations.

Mr Bronte took Members through key achievements and plans as detailed in the report.

Mr Young presented on the Estates Energy section of the report and SRC's programme of ongoing improvements, including the College's new build strategy.

Mr Young illustrated the downward trends in heating and electricity consumption over 4 years advising Members of the mandatory requirement for Energy Certificates to be appropriately displayed.

Mr Bronte and Mr Young gave Members an update on initiatives:

Dr Moore thanked Mr Young and Mr Bronte for their presentation to the Committee and commended the amount of work undertaken by both them and their staff.

*Mr Young and Mr Bronte left the meeting at 18.11pm*

#### **A07. COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR ADOPTION**

- **Staffing Committee 07 May 2024**

Mr McMurray advised the minutes were approved at the Committee meeting and he had no issue to bring to the Governing Body's attention.

- **Audit & Risk Committee 14 May 2024**

Mrs Singleton referred Members to the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee convened 14 May 2024 and asked Members to note the escalation of governance

from the operational risk register to the corporate risk register. There is a new Partnership Agreement with a new structure bringing a potential risk on non-compliance until this is embedded. Skills and training of Board Members is under review and the Director of Finance and Planning is appointed on an interim basis.

- **Education Committee 28 May 2024**

Mr Harper referred Members to the minutes of the Education Committee convened on 28 May 2024 confirming these were approved at the recent Committee Meeting. Mr Harper asked Members to note the success of the College in both WorldSkills and IFEX competitions.

Members adopted the Committee minutes on proposal from Mrs Kelly and Mr McMurray. Note; The Finance and General Purposes Committee only took place on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024. No minutes available at this time.

#### **A08. POLICY APPROVAL**

The Health and Safety Policy Statement had been approved at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 16 October and is presented to the Governing Body for noting.

#### **A09. COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORTS 2023-24**

- Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report
- Education Committee Annual Report
- Finance and General Purposes Committee Annual Report
- Staffing Committee Annual Report

The Governing Body unanimously adopted the four Committee Annual Reports 2023-2024.

#### **A10. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Mrs L Campbell referred Members to the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 July 2024. Mrs L Campbell confirmed these were presented to the 16 October Finance and General Purposes Committee and will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee before being tabled for final approval by the full Governing Body.

Mrs L Campbell advised that the Annual Report reflects the College Development Plan (CDP). Actions for the College under CDP are aligned with the strategic objectives. Mrs L Campbell gave an overview on innovation, inclusive growth, sustainability, enrolment, outcomes and achievement rates. Mrs Singleton queried the international exchange opportunities and was informed that the Turing Programme is deferred to the 2025-26 year.

Miss McGuigan gave an overview of the Financial Statement. Mrs Kelly reiterated some queries she had raised at the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Dr Moore suggested that it may be helpful to hold a small workshop on the budgetary process to aid better understanding. Mrs L Campbell noted that a query was raised on acronyms, some of which were campuses, and she advised that she would be happy to invite members of the Governing Body to see the different campuses as this may aid understanding.

Mrs Singleton referred to the 2022-23 Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) and the recommendation for all colleges to reassess their depreciation policy. Mrs Singleton queried the current position in relation to this. Miss McGuigan confirmed several conversations have taken place but there is limited appetite to change the policy within the sector finance group (NIFON).

**A11. BUDGET ALLOCATION UPDATE 2024-25**

Mrs McGuigan referred to a letter received updating the budget allocation for 2024-25. Annex A refers to a reallocation of Skills Focus and InnovateUs. In addition, there has been an increase in the Employers' Pension Contribution to maintain the budget position this year.

**A12. CYBER ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

Miss McGuigan presented the Cyber Annual Report to the Governing Body and confirmed following presentation to the Audit and Risk Committee there was a recommendation to table it at the Governing Body meeting.

Miss McGuigan reported that in the mapping of cyber threat and activity, the College scores 81.26% in security versus 46.52% for organisations of a similar size. Miss McGuigan referred Members to the questions asked at the Audit and Risk Committee, included at the back of the report.

Mr McMurray enquired about Phishing Awareness exercise and related training and was informed that training is ongoing and is currently being refreshed. All staff are required to undertake the training.

**A13. DfE MID-YEAR ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2024-25**

Mrs L Campbell referred Members to the DfE Assurance Statement for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 having been submitted to DfE on 07 October, following the Chair's review. The Accounting Officer is required to submit an Assurance Statement twice a year. The final Assurance Statement will be for the period up to 31 March 2025 and brought to the Governing Body in April 2025 before submission to DfE.

**A14. ENROLMENT UPDATE**

Ms Shackels reported on the outline enrolment position and advised on the Swop Don't Drop initiative, which allows students to move to a different programme if they decided the programme they enrolled on is not for them.

Despite excellent efforts and marketing, it is difficult to compete with the Universities in Belfast especially with new student accommodation. Ms Shackels advised Northern Ireland is the only area in the UK with MASN. Discussion took place on aspects of the report and how targets are set.

Mr Harkness referred Members to the current discussions by the Northern Ireland Executive around making it mandatory for people to remain in education / training until age 18. Ms Shackels advised that the Schools sector may have a bigger issue with this. FE are in a better position to capitalise on this going forward. We have invested in our estates over the years with 2 new campuses, with our curriculum offer industry facing and codesigned with industry.

**A15. COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP)**

Mrs L Campbell advised that the CDP commissioning letter was received on 15 August 2024 and DfE set out the framework on a template that the College has to work to. The initial draft was submitted on 11 September with feedback received on Friday evening 04 October. With a response due back by Wednesday 09 October, approved by the Chair.

#### **A16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dr Moore advised that all College Chairs met with DfE on 28 August at NRC in Coleraine. The Director of Further Education had advised they were going to open up to meeting with the Chairs and Principals on the first Wednesday of every month on key / upcoming issues. This has been referred to "The Drop In Conversation". Dr Moore and Mrs L Campbell will attend their first meeting on 23 October 2024.

#### **Principal and Chief Executive Business**

Mrs L Campbell advised that she had attended 18 key engagements. These included engaging with DfE, NI Chamber, the Economy Minister and the Finance Minister to inform and shape the strategic environment for the College. This is in advance of our upcoming Strategy Workshop, in mid-November.

Mrs L Campbell met with Niall Casey from Invest NI to discuss how the College could work with them to develop a pilot in Green Skills. A meeting also took place with the Permanent Secretary at the Partnership Engagement event on 10 October; and the Tertiary Education Senior Leaders Forum (TESLF) forum to look at how we work as a sector to deliver PSG targets.

Mrs L Campbell, Mr R Sloan and Mr Lavery attended a visit with the Historic Environment Division (HED) to discuss the impact of the listing of Marlborough House. They reported this was a really informative and positive engagement.

Mrs L Campbell will attend the launch of the Fintech L3 Academy. There will be meetings with the Chief Executives of the local councils regarding the Economic Forum. Monthly meetings have been arranged with the DfE FE Director for the rest of the year.

Dr Moore advised that the agenda in future, will be adapted so that Mrs L Campbell has a standing agenda item on Principal / CEO updates.

#### **A12. MEETING EVALUATION**

Dr Moore enquired if any of the Members were satisfied with how the meeting was conducted and asked Members to contact him and the Committee Chairs with any suggestions on improving the Governing Body and Committee meetings.

#### **A13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Governing Body meeting is scheduled for 18.30 on Tuesday 26 November 2024 in the Boardroom , Newry Campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.48.

*Mrs O'Hare, Dr Finnigan and Mr Hutchinson left the meeting.*

CHAIR

DATE

26/11/24

