

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2019 AT 18.30 IN THE ORACLE BISTRO, PORTADOWN CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Mr Andrew Saunders (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (SRC CEO)
Mr Scott Alexander
Mrs Teresa Campbell
Mr Arder Carson
Mr Gordon Gough
Mr Aidan McCormick
Mr John Nugent
Mr Tom Redmond
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mr Kieran Swail
Mrs Judith Thompson
Mr Matthew Turner
Mrs Nicola Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Keith Kilpatrick, Director of Curriculum
Mr Terry McGonigal, Director of Finance and Planning
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Mrs Michelle Currie, Marketing
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body
Mrs Carla Shields, Boardroom Apprentice
Dr Helen Young, ESRC Project

The meeting convened at 18.39.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Prof Gregory O'Hare and Miss Tanya Troughton.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interests held in matters to be discussed. Mr McCormick declared an interest as an employee of the Education Authority and gave an undertaking to exclude himself from decisions that could potentially be perceived to cause conflict.

3. MARKETING PRESENTATION

Mrs Currie provided a comprehensive presentation detailing school engagement, school partnership progression and top feeder schools to SRC.

Mrs Currie provided a three year comparison of enrolments by level and mode of study and informed of increased difficulty in accessing schools to provide guidance on study progression.

Mr Redmond arrived at the meeting at 18.43.

Members discussed the upturn in schools providing vocational qualifications, including work related BTEC qualifications and expressed concern at the level of duplication of provision between schools and colleges. Discussion followed on a number of DE policies that has led to the current level of duplication including sustainable school and entitlement framework policies.

Mr Carson arrived at the meeting at 19.02.

Mrs Currie advised Members on several methods the Marketing Team are employing to address the decline in new enrolments and informed on the increased usage of student ambassadors, the importance of providing detail on progression pathways and a planned update to the College website following feedback from Governors.

**ACTION
by whom**

She advised on Open Days and sector specific events promoting career pathways, provided Members with a list of planned events and informed Members on a range of promotional activity throughout the academic year.

Mr Doran informed on the level of support from local employers for the College's Big Apprenticeship Events highlighting the growing interest from parents and young people in apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships. He also informed Members of use of online applications replacing the need for individuals to use Open Days to submit applications.

Members noted the report and thanked Mrs Currie for the information.

Mrs Currie left the meeting at 19.23.

4. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD 23 JANUARY 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 23 January were reviewed for accuracy and unanimously approved on the proposal of Mr Alexander and seconded by Mr Carson.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that the FE Director has accepted an invitation to attend the June Governing Body meeting.

6. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Saunders stated that he has received communication from the founders of the Boardroom Apprentice scheme requesting SRC's consideration to become a Host Board in 2019-2020. Mrs Shields thanked the Governing Body for their support in the project and informed she has found the experience extremely useful. Members unanimously granted their approval to reengage in the programme.

Mr Saunders reminded Members to notify the Secretary of their intended attendance at the School Partnership and Student Recognitions events and to register their attendance at the Banbridge new build event 'Looking Back, Looking Forward'.

Members were advised that the Student Activities Team has extended an invitation to Governors to attend the student formal on 21 March.

Mr Saunders spoke of excellent engagement at the Department's Effective Governance event. Members congratulated the College on the official opening of the Graduate Restaurant and expressed their pleasure on having attended the superb event.

7. COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- **Staffing Committee 30 January**

Mr Alexander provided an overview of discussions taking place at the Staffing Committee on 30 January and informed that Committee Members are satisfied that Staff Side are content with the wording within the Reasonable Force and Safe Handling policy.

Mr Alexander confirmed that Members discussed a recent supreme court ruling regarding a breach of human rights and historic disclosure enquiries. Mrs Thompson stressed the importance of balancing perceived risks and safeguarding responsibilities.

Mr Alexander confirmed that the Committee reviewed the KPI report and were provided with an Investors in People and Health and Wellbeing update. He informed Members of the HRD Team's intention to undertake an annual health check on IIP accreditation.

Governors

- **Education Committee 5 February**

Mr Gough informed Governors of items considered at the Education Committee on 5 February and confirmed that the Committee had sought authorisation regarding the establishment of a forum of the Sector's Chairs of Education Committees.

Mr Gough advised that Committee Members approved the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan and were provided with details regarding the WBL and Essential Skills Recovery Plans and the role and responsibilities of the Recovery Plan Management Team.

Mr Gough confirmed that Members had reviewed the Level 2 Balance Scorecard, been provided with an update on work undertaken by the Curriculum Directors Working Group and approved the Student Charter policy.

Mr McCormick congratulated the College on the Open University STEM assured centre accreditation and commended Mr Kilpatrick and Mrs Division for all their hard work and advice.

Mr Carson left the meeting at 19.41 and returned at 19.42.

- **Audit Committee 12 February**

Mr Nugent provided Members with details of considerations undertaken at the Audit Committee on 12 February. He advised that Members had reviewed the Corporate Risk Register noting a new risk concerning leadership capacity and poor performance of training provision within the School of Construction and Engineering. Mr Nugent confirmed that Members had considered risks relating to a failure to provide a safe working environment and an inability to recruit lecturing staff leading to a failure to deliver the College's strategic aims and objectives.

Mr Nugent advised that considerations had been given to GDPR compliance and the impact the absence of local government is having on the progression of projects due to a lack of approval and funding.

Mr Nugent stated that Members reviewed various audit reports and compliance audits and approved the Risk Management policy. He informed that the Audit Committee reflected on the Report to Those Charged With Governance, DoF Guidance on Fraud Proofing and a Letter of Understanding between SRC and NIAO detailing the responsibility of auditors and the audit process.

- **Finance and General Purposes Committee 26 February**

Mr Redmond informed Members that in the absence of Mrs Campbell, he acted as Chair at a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 26 February. He confirmed that Members had reviewed the Working Capital Report and were advised of a reduction in cash balances.

Mr Redmond confirmed the Committee reviewed the Governing Body Budget Report, DfE Reclassification Returns and approved several policies.

Mr Redmond stated that Members reviewed the Complaints and Compliments report noting 4 formal complaints, 18 informal complaints, 5 comments and 13 compliments received since the start of the academic year.

The Governing Body unanimously adopted the Committee minutes on the proposal of Mr Alexander and seconded by Mr Gough.

13. BREXIT PLANNING UPDATE

Mr Saunders reported that Prime Minister May has lost the vote of Government's backing on the Brexit deal.

Mrs Wilson arrived at the meeting at 20.02.

Mr McGonigal informed Members of action planning and the development of a Brexit Risk Register highlighting areas of risk including data sharing, movement of goods and people.

8. GOVERNING BODY MEETING SCHEDULE 2019-2020

Governors were provided with the draft Governing Body meeting schedule for the 2019-2020 academic year and were requested to refer any conflicts to the Secretary by Friday 22 March in order to confirm meeting dates.

Governors

Mr Saunders and Mrs Shields left the meeting at 20.11. Mr Saunders returned to the meeting at 20.14.

9. COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS 2019-2020 INDICATIVE BUDGET POSITION 2019-2020

Mr Doran referred Members to the DfE College development plan commissioning note and advised Members of planning assumptions on the resource budget. He informed on financial pressures relating to the ability to draw down Year End Flexibility, increased pension contributions and pay cost pressures. Mr Doran advised that in year budget planning had been predicated on a VAT reclaim which is now prudent to withdraw in light of DfE communication on charitable status.

Mr Saunders stated that significant decisions may be required to consider cutting provision. He expressed concern that a restricted budget will impact on the community and prove difficult to adhere to the Programme for Government and FE agenda.

Members considered examples of areas wherein curriculum provision would have to be reduced or removed including full time entry level ASDAN, adult essential skills, adult part time provision, ESOL and a reduction of full time education provision. The Governing Body expressed concern over the potential impact of a flat line budget for 2019-20 highlighting that the TRIBAL report had shown the College to be operating efficiently and that the only way in which pay and operating pressures could be absorbed would be through significant cuts in curriculum delivery

Members noted the report and agreed to consider convening an additional Governing Body meeting to consider curriculum provision when the indicative budget is set.

Governors

Mr Doran advised Members of planned new provision and future developments in curriculum.

10. ARTICLES AND INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Mr Saunders referred Members to the new Articles and Instrument of Government effective from 18 February 2019.

Mrs Thompson left the meeting at 20.45 and returned at 20.47.

11. LEVEL 1 BALANCE SCORECARD 2018-2019 REVIEW 2

Mr Saunders referred Members to the Level 1 Balance Scorecard.

Mrs Campbell left the meeting at 20.47 and returned at 20.50.

12. WBL RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE

Mr Kilpatrick informed Members of work undertaken to address ETI findings on work based learning. He advised on a high level of activity including support for lecturers, addressing best practice, class observations and process reviews.

The Governing Body noted the report.

Mr McGonigal left the meeting at 20.52 and returned at 20.54.

14. POLICY REVIEW

- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Group policy**

Mr Doran advised that approval of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups policy is deferred to allow feedback from ETI over recommendations.

- **Communications policy**

Mr Sloan informed that approval of the Communications policy is deferred to allow Governors' consideration of the new procedural note.

- **Code of Conduct for Members of the Governing Body**

Governors approved the Code of Conduct policy, updated to reflect changes to the Instrument of Government, on the proposal of Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Nugent.

15. SRC INVESTMENT REPORT

Mr Saunders declared a conflict of interest due to his employment with the Ulster Bank Group.

Mr McGonigal referred Members to the SRC Investment Report detailing minimal cash reserves and informed of discussions taking place with the NIFON Group on cash flow concerns.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Swail briefed Members on his involvement with the Queen's University mentoring group and requested the Governing Body's consent for his nominated apprentice to observe the next Finance and General Purposes Committee and attend the June meeting of the Governing Body. Approval was unanimously granted.

Mr Swail invited Members to participate in the SRC charity cycle event on 14 June.

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Governing Body meeting is scheduled to take place on **18 June 2019** in the **Boardroom, Newry West campus**.

The meeting concluded at 21.00.

A.P.S
CHAIR

7/5/19.
DATE