

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2019 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, NEWRY WEST CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Mr Andrew Saunders (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (SRC CEO)
Mr Scott Alexander
Mrs Teresa Campbell
Mr Gordon Gough
Mr Aidan McCormick
Mr John Nugent
Prof Gregory O'Hare
Mr Tom Redmond
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mr Kieran Swail
Mrs Judith Thompson
Mr Matthew Turner
Miss Tanya Troughton
Mrs Nicola Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Terry McGonigal, Director of Finance and Planning
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Dr Helen Young, ESRC Project
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.51.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Arder Carson and Mr Keith Kilpatrick.

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. Mrs Wilson declared an interest as an employee of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and gave an undertaking to exclude herself from decisions that could potentially be perceived to cause conflict.

3. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 7 May were reviewed for accuracy and unanimously approved on the proposal of Mr Alexander and seconded by Mrs Wilson.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Mr Doran informed Members that he received communication earlier in the day with regard to charitable status. He stated that he will review the information with the NIFON group and convey back to the Governing Body.

Mr Doran advised of a meeting with Property Services Division to address service delivery issues, and concerns raised with the Permanent Secretary over PSD's performance.

Mr Nugent recommended that the sector's Estates team develop a Service Level Agreement to set out colleges' expectations on service delivery.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

On behalf of the Governing Body, Mr Saunders thanked Mrs Shields for her participation in the Boardroom Apprentice scheme and commended her input and enthusiasm. Mrs Shields expressed her appreciation to Members for the fantastic opportunity and worthwhile programme.

**ACTION
by whom**

Mr Sloan

Mr Saunders stated that he has meet with the 2019-2020 Boardroom Apprentice, Mr Joel White and has invited both him and Mrs Shields to the Corporate and Wellbeing Day on 19 August. Mr Saunders encouraged Members to attend.

Mr Saunders stated that his tenure as Governing Body Chair and Mr Gough's tenure as Governing Body Member has been extended for another ten months and thanked the five BIP Members who have agreed their membership for another term. Mr Saunders requested that Members consider their committee membership and contact the Secretary with expressions of interest.

Mr Saunders informed Members that the meeting in September will now take place in Killylea Road, Armagh following an inspection of the new build scheduled for 17.30. Members were encouraged to attend and note the progress to date.

Mr Doran informed the Governing Body of preparations in place regarding the official opening of the new builds.

Mr Saunders reminded Members to register their attendance at the HE Graduation on 30 August.

Governors

Governors

6. COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

• Staffing Committee 8 May 2019

Mr Alexander referred Members to the minutes of the Staffing Committee on 8 May and reminded Members to return the self-assessment questionnaire.

He advised that the Committee reviewed and approved their Terms of Reference and were provided with the KPI in year report which recorded that SRC's sickness absence rate is well below the sector average.

Mr Alexander informed Members that the Committee made recommendations to the draft Employee Development Plan and noted priority areas being addressed within the Investors in People Continuous Improvement Action Plan.

He stated that the Annual Fair Employment Return has been submitted to the Equality Commission and that the College's submission is reflective of the catchment area.

Mrs Wilson left the meeting at 19.17 and returned at 19.19.

Mr Alexander confirmed that the Committee approved the Identification policy and were advised of difficulties the College faces in monitoring entry to the various campuses. He stated that Members approved the Mental Health and Stress policy and were provided with details in relation to the lecturers' pay award being progressed by management.

• Audit Committee 14 May 2019

Mr Nugent provided an overview of discussions taking place at the Audit Committee on 14 May and urged Members to complete and return the committee self-assessment questionnaire.

He stated that Members conducted a comprehensive review of the Corporate Risk Register and discussed the ongoing service delivery problems with Property Services Division. Mr Nugent advised Governors that the NI Audit Office regarded the issue as an area of interest within the NIAO External Audit Strategy and Members tasked Mr Ovadia to relay the seriousness of the Committee's concerns to the Department.

Mr McGonigal spoke to the Internal Audit report on Data Protection and remarked that recommendations appear reflective across the sector and not necessarily specific to SRC. Mr Nugent informed that Members were provided with a sector wide review of the Hardship fund, Additional Support fund and Care to Learn scheme. He stated that he is aware of delivery problems in the conducting and production of internal audits across the sector and will keep the matter under review.

Mr Nugent advised Members that the progress against audit plan is broadly on track and paid tribute to Mr Doran and Mr McGonigal for their input in developing the Internal Audit Strategy 2019-2020.

Mr Nugent advised that Mrs Patterson from PWC presented the External Audit Strategy, stating that she is aware of the sector's various concerns over the directive to use Property Services Division and informed that a strategic review of procurement is planned as part of the NIAO's public reporting programme.

Mr Nugent informed that Members queried the frequency of DfE compliance audits, noting minimal financial and administrative errors identified.

Mr Nugent confirmed that on behalf of the Governing Body, he had presented Mrs Shields a gift and relayed Members' messages of congratulations on the safe delivery of her daughter.

- **Education Committee 21 May 2019**

Mr Gough referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee on 21 May. He advised that he was unable to attend the Education Chairs forum.

Mr Gough confirmed that approval of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups policy has been further delayed to allow for the development of a sector policy in conjunction with DfE. He requested Members complete and return their self-assessment questionnaires for informing the Committee Annual Report.

Mr Gough confirmed that Members were presented with the Student Council Summary report and noted a rise in student satisfaction across the campuses. He advised that legacy concerns relate to the variety of food on offer, equipment in the Newry East Beauty Salon and toilet facilities. Mr Gough advised that Members were given assurance that students' concerns are being acted upon by management and were informed that a recovery plan is in place regarding the upkeep of motor vehicle equipment at the Greenbank campus.

Mr Gough advised that Committee Members were presented with the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and informed of the introduction of an onsite counsellor and the provision on additional counselling support accessible. He confirmed the Committee's review of the College Development Plan, the Director's KPI report and WBL learning recovery plans.

Mr Gough informed Members that a discussion had taken place regarding the suitability of SharePoint and advised that Members had recommended the Management Team seek assurances from the IT Team.

Mr Gough confirmed that Education Committee Members had reviewed and approved five policies.

- **Finance & General Purposes Committee 28 May 2019**

Mrs Campbell presented the Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes of 28 May and urged Members to return the completed self-assessment questionnaires at their earliest convenience.

**Senior
Management
Team**

Mrs Campbell advised that Members were presented with a new financial reporting procedure of management accounts and remarked on a good report and clear quality of data.

She confirmed that Committee Members reviewed the aged debtors, aged creditors, investment summary, prompt payment and credit card expenditure report. She reported that Members noted an overspend on Governors pay administration and travel expenses attributed to the two unscheduled Governing Body meetings.

Mrs Campbell advised that Committee Members had reviewed the March Outturn Financial Return and been informed of an authorised overspend permitted due to the backdated VAT issue and additional resources. She confirmed that Members reviewed the draft budgets in relation to both the financial year and the academic year.

On behalf of the Governing Body, Mr Saunders thanked Mr McGonigal and his team for their hard work in compiling the two reports.

Mrs Campbell stated that the Committee reviewed the Financial Management Contract, approved a change of signatories on the Bank Mandate and nine College policies.

Governing Body Members unanimously adopted the Committee minutes.

7. COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019-2020

- **Qualifications**
- **Business Support**
- **Social Inclusion**

Mr Doran presented the College Development Plan and informed Members of separate engagement the Chairs group and the Principals group have had with the Permanent Secretary. He briefed Members on the budgetary position and pay pressures and advised of significant impact on the long term position.

Mr Doran advised that the Permanent Secretary has allowed the College to proceed with the planned provision, acknowledging that the College will be operating at risk.

Members noted information contained in the Plan regarding Brexit preparedness and the sector Value for Money review. A detailed discussion took place with Members noting policy statements, NDPB status and the need to progress the sector communication plan.

Mr Sloan left the meeting at 20.02 and returned at 20.07.

8. DRAFT BUDGET

- **Financial year April 2019 to March 2020**
- **Academic year August 2019 to July 2020**

Members reviewed the draft budgets for the two reporting periods and noted the Departmental letter of 5 June providing an update on the indicative resource budget.

Mr McGonigal stated that measures will have to be considered to address accumulating difficulties.

The Governing Body noted the report and requested that the Chairman write to the Permanent Secretary to express thanks for taking the decision to allow the College to progress its curriculum plan subject to additional resource being found in year.

Mr Saunders

9. LEVEL 1 BALANCE SCORECARD 2018-2019 UPDATE

Members reviewed the Level 1 Balance Scorecard noting RAG ratings and the status of objectives. Mr Doran advised Members on certain activities not completed against their original target date and HLA activities stalled until January 2020.

Mr Saunders suggested Governors review the key changes to the curriculum provision at the Governing Body Strategic Planning day in December.

Mr Nugent left the meeting at 20.14 and returned at 20.16.

Prof O'Hare recommended a change to the colour coding of information contained from table 5 onwards.

10. REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2018-2019

Members were presented with the 2018-2019 Register of Interests and requested to inform the Secretary of any additions or amendments.

11. POLICY REVIEW

- **Charity policy**

Mr Sloan referred Members to the first edition of the Charity policy. The policy was approved on the proposal of Mr Alexander and seconded by Mr Nugent.

- **Standing Orders**

Members noted minor amendments to the Standing Orders. The policy was approved on the proposal of Mr Alexander and seconded by Mrs Campbell.

12. SPORTS TOP POLICY

Mr Sloan reminded Members of Governors' approval to implement a relaxation on the sports top policy in May 2019. He informed that no issues of concern have been raised and requested Members' approval to continue with the current position for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Governors unanimously agreed to keep the matter under review.

Mr McCormick left the meeting at 20.27.

13. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL CRAIGAVON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Doran referred Members to development proposals for the future of Craigavon Senior High School and informed Members of significant implications for SRC should the Education Authority progress with its recommendation to change the designation of the school to a 14-18 provider.

A detailed discussion took place regarding the significance of this development proposal and the fact that this would lead to increased duplication of provision between schools and the College. Members recommended that Mr Doran write to the Department of Education to express Governors' concerns and to seek a further engagement with the Education Authority.

Mr Gough left the meeting at 20.36 and returned at 20.38.

Mr McCormick returned to the meeting at 20.52.

**Miss
Armstrong**

Governors

Mr Doran

14. STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr Alexander presented the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference reviewed and approved by Members to reflect working practices.

The Governing Body unanimously approved the changes.

15. FE 06/18 CARE TO LEARN (NI) SCHEME

Members noted the FE06/18 circular Care to Learn (NI) Scheme.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Doran thanked the Governors for their guidance over the 2018-2019 academic year and informed them of the various charity events that have taken place.

Mr Saunders thanked Dr Young for her assistance.

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled to take place on 3 September 2019 in Killylea Road, Armagh campus.

The meeting concluded at 20.53.

A.P.Sy
CHAIR

03/09/19
DATE

