

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, NEWRY WEST CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Mr Andrew Saunders (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (SRC CEO)
Mr Scott Alexander
Mr Arder Carson
Mr Gordon Gough
Mr Aidan McCormick
Mr John Nugent
Prof Gregory O'Hare
Mr Tom Redmond
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mr Kieran Swail
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
Mr Stephen Todd, Assistant Director ILT Development
Mrs Kimberley Neill McCready, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.35.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Hollie Burton, Mrs Teresa Campbell and Mrs Judith Thompson.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interest held in matters to be discussed. Mrs Wilson declared an interest as an employee of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. Mrs Neill McCready declared an interest as employee of Steer Training Academy. The interests were noted and both parties gave an undertaking to exclude themselves from decisions that could potentially be perceived to cause conflict.

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 22 October were reviewed for accuracy and unanimously approved on the proposal of Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Alexander.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

- **Communication policy – Governor communication**

Mr Saunders welcomed Mr Todd to the meeting. Mr McGonigal stated that he had asked Mr Todd to explore options for Governor supporting communications in a secure format.

Mr Todd referred Members to the paper tabled exploring alternative methods for communicating and sending data to College Governors in a secure format that complies with data protection and GDPR principals. He advised that the emphasis is to steer Governors away from using personal email. Mr Todd informed that out of the three options considered, from an IT security and technical feasibility viewpoint, the preferred option would be to distribute Governing Body papers via SharePoint.

Mr Carson arrived at the meeting at 18.41.

ACTION	By whom
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Mr Todd advised that the favoured decision would be for Governors to be issued with College accounts that provide access to email and SharePoint via the SRC website to access Board papers. He stated that a personalised site would be created for Governors and relevant SRC personnel only.

A discussion took place considering access via the SRC website, the motivation to move away from contacting Members on their personal email and the provisions necessary. Mr Carson specified that no personal private data should ever be sent to Governing Body Members via email.

Mr Saunders requested, that as the move to using SharePoint will require access to College provided laptops or tablet devices, that there should be a costs analysis provided at the Planning Day.

Individual Members of the Governing Body agreed to pilot the scheme.

Dr Stewart left the meeting at 19.01 and returned at 19.04.

Mr Todd left the meeting at 19.05.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- **Permanent Secretary budget correspondence**

Mr Saunders referred Members to the Permanent Secretary's correspondence to Arm's Length Bodies on future year financial position.

A discussion took place with Members expressing concern and uneasiness over the significant impact a reduced budget will have on the curriculum offer and staffing levels. Governors conversed on the critical development of the 14-19 strategy, adversity and statutory obligations. Members agreed to convene an exceptional meeting in January to consider scenarios.

- **Annual Assurance Returns**

The Governing Body agreed to delegate scrutiny of the College Self Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan and Higher Education Self Evaluation report and related approvals of the assurance returns to the next meeting of the Education Committee.

Mr Saunders expressed his best wishes to the 19 students representing the College at the World Skills UK. Governors agreed to invite the participants to the Strategic Planning Day to relay their congratulations.

Mr Sloan left the meeting at 19.36 and returned at 19.40.

Mr Kilpatrick informed that the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) have paid a visit to the College to carry out a follow up inspection of work based learning and essential skills. He advised on positive feedback with the ETI acknowledging the significant level of work undertaken to deliver improved outcomes. He advised that a more detailed report would be provided to the Education Committee.

Members congratulated the College on the encouraging feedback and relayed their thanks to staff for their efforts to date.

Mr Todd

Miss Armstrong

Miss Armstrong

A06. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Staffing Committee 21 October 2019**

Mr Alexander referred Members to the minutes of the Staffing Committee of 21 October and advised that Committee Members had considered and approved their Annual Report and reviewed the KPI Annual Report noting good sickness management, the rank causes for sickness absence and the measures in place for addressing and managing absenteeism.

Mr Alexanders confirmed that a detailed discussion took place regarding proposed amendments to the disciplinary policy and that Members had conducted a review of IIP and Health and Wellbeing initiatives.

Mr Alexander advised that the Committee reviewed the Employee Development Plan, were informed of considerations on the provision of payroll services and were advised of a request from the Department regarding overtime and holiday pay. Mr Alexander clarified that the request was connected to the recent PSNI legal case and confirmed that there should be minimal financial implications for the College.

A07. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

- **Audit Committee**

Mr Nugent presented the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for the 2018-19 academic year detailing membership, good attendance and providing a summary of work undertaken by the Internal and External Auditors.

Mr Doran left the meeting at 19.52 and returned at 19.54.

Mr Nugent referred Members to the internal audit recommendations and advised that the Audit Committee believes that Management has appropriately responded to recommendations made by the Internal Auditors. Mr Nugent advised Members on the areas of work monitored and approved throughout the year and the outcomes of the self-assessment questionnaires. He remarked on a very satisfactory year's work and thanked Miss Armstrong for her assistance throughout.

A06. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Audit Committee 12 November 2019**

Mr Nugent provided a summary of discussions taking place at the Audit Committee meeting of 12 November. He acknowledged the DfE audit training scheduled for 29 November and confirmed that Members had reviewed the Internal Audit Reports on absence management, the Banbridge new build and the review of procurement and the use of business cases.

Mr Nugent informed that the Committee conducted a review of the Corporate Risk Register and were advised that the College continues to participate in a national fraud initiative.

Governors unanimously adopted the Audit and Staffing Committee minutes.

A07. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS

- **Staffing Committee**

Mr Alexander presented the Staffing Committee Annual Report and Self-Assessment for

2018-19 noting membership, meetings held and positive self-assessment outcomes. Mr Alexander referred Governors to the training needs analysis and items monitored and approved in year. Mr Alexander acknowledged that Committee Members participated in disciplinary hearings and recruitment for the Assistant Director for Curriculum, and remarked that these were well facilitated.

The Governing Body formally adopted the two annual reports.

Mr Saunders thanked the Committee Chairs and Members for their assistance throughout the 2018-19 academic year in observing the College's audit and staffing obligations.

A08. ANNUAL REPORT AND STATUTORY ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 JULY 2019

Mr Doran referred Members to the Annual Report and Statutory Accounts for the period ended 31 July 2019 and confirmed that the document has been reviewed previously by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the full Governing Body and scrutinised by the Audit Committee on 12 November. Mr Doran confirmed that there had been minimal amendments to the report.

The report was unanimously approved on the proposal of Mr Alexander and seconded by Mr Gough.

A09. REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE

Mr McGonigal presented the Report to Those Charged with Governance reviewed by Audit Committee Members on 12 November. He referred Members to the uncorrected misstatement totalling £41k not accrued for at year end and advised that this was viewed as immaterial for adjustment, commenting on openness and transparency.

Mr McGonigal reminded Members that for the previous year's accounts, the College were advised to record a contingent liability regarding a possible obligation in relation to outstanding pay revalorisation for lecturing and senior staff.

Mr Carson remarked on an excellent report highlighting the unqualified accounts, declaring that it demonstrates that the College is running exceptionally well and paid credit to the senior management team. Mr Doran thanked Mr McGonigal, Ms McGuigan and the finance team for all their efforts.

The Governing Body noted the report.

A10. LEVEL 1 BALANCE SCORECARD

Mr Doran presented the first review of the Level 1 Balance Scorecard, referring Members to items carried over and detailing enrolments in further and higher education, training for success and apprenticeships.

The Members noted the report.

Mr Nugent left the meeting at 20.11 and returned at 20.14.

Mr Carson left the meeting at 20.14 and returned at 20.17.

A11. SRC GOVERNING BODY SELF-ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS 2018-19

Mr Saunders referred Members to the Governing Body Self-Assessment 2018-19 and remarked a clean reflection on good governance at SRC.

The Governing Body noted the report.

A12. POLICY REVIEW

- **Disciplinary policy & procedure – support staff**

Mr Saunders reminded Members that the revisions to the policy had previously been discussed and deferred to this meeting. He reflected on the different views and proposed the inclusion of one Governor at the appeal hearing in order to provide independent oversight.

The Governing Body agreed that the addition to the proposed amendments was reasonable and recommended that the policy be brought to the Staffing Committee for approval following consultation with the trade unions.

Members agreed that the policy should remain under review should there be changes to the advice received on retaining charitable status,

Members were informed that the policy does not apply to Tier 1 and Tier 2 management.

A13. STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY

Mr Doran presented the draft agenda for the Governing Body Strategic Planning Day and requested Members’ feedback.

Members’ proposals were noted for revision of the agenda.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Saunders thanked Members for returning their annual assessment and encouraged any outstanding appraisals be completed and forwarded to the Secretary at the Governors’ earliest convenience.

Mr Saunders informed that he and Mr Doran had attended a conference entitled Independent Commission on the College of the Future. He advised that the onus of the forum is to encourage collaborative working and senior leadership interaction.

Mr Doran remarked on the usefulness of the forum and informed Governors on the membership on the formation of a commission for the future of further education as part of the work of the FE 4 Nations Alliance.

Miss Armstrong agreed to distribute details of the forum’s website.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled to take place on 24 March 2020 in Oracle Bistro, Portadown campus.

The meeting concluded at 20.52.

Governors

Miss Armstrong

CHAIR

DATE