

Mr Turner concurred, stating that he has witnessed an upturn in participation rates, however reported that media communication on school closure had created confusion.

Mr Saunders recommended that a short survey be issued to staff and students to identify issues with delivery model.

Mr Saunders and Mr Doran advised that the planned official openings of the new builds have been postponed and informed that a low key launch event was being planned for Banbridge in early December and a similar event to be arranged for Armagh in January.

Mr Saunders advised that progress has been made in regard to the replacement of the co-optees, that contact has been made with Chartered Accountants Ireland as a result of the Governor skills audit and thanked Mrs Campbell for all her assistance. Mr Saunders remarked that participation with the Boardroom Apprentice scheme has proved valuable and may aid the co-option process. Mr Saunders advised that Members may provide further comment on the process to himself, Mr Doran or Miss Armstrong.

Miss Armstrong and Mr McGonigal advised that they will make further enquiries regarding sourcing appropriate finance training for the Governing Body.

The minutes of 22 September were approved as a true and accurate record on the proposal of Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Alexander.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Saunders informed that he is in the process of completing the Board's annual appraisals and advised that he available to discuss any queries should Members so wish. He requested that the appraisals be completed at Members' earliest convenience upon receipt of the Chair's comments.

Mr Saunders thanked Mrs Thompson for volunteering to take up membership on the Education Committee and invited expressions of interest should Members wish to extend or refresh their committee membership.

A06. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Audit Committee 15 September**

Mr Nugent presented the draft Audit Committee minutes of 15 September when they welcomed the new Internal Auditors, RSM and the Boardroom Apprentice, Mr McGuigan to their first meeting of SRC's Audit Committee.

He confirmed that the Committee reviewed the NIAO correspondence, scrutinised the Corporate Risk Register and agreed the Internal Audit Strategy. Mr Nugent advised that five key areas of risk were identified for review in the 2020-2021 academic year as risk management framework, cyber security, key financial controls, Covid-19 compliance and contracted-out services.

Mr Nugent informed that the Committee agreed that the Plan may be amended as necessary to be reactive to emerging risks.

- **Education Committee 29 September**

Mr Gough referred Members to the draft minutes of the Education Committee held on 29 September and thanked Members for completing and returning their self-assessments for informing the Annual Report.

He confirmed that Members reviewed the Student Council Summary Report noting an increase in the quantity of issues raised at student council meetings.

Mr Doran

Miss Armstrong
Mr McGonigal

Mr Gough informed that the Committee reviewed and approved the Hardship Fund policy, noting that 394 students were assisted through the Fund in 2019-2020. He thanked Mr Redmond for assisting in his dedicated role as nominated Hardship Fund Governor.

Mr Gough confirmed that Members reviewed the Level 2 Balance Scorecard and discussion took place regarding recruitment and the enrolment position. He advised that Members reviewed the ETI evaluation of curriculum planning at level 3, noting encouraging comments in regard to engineering and manufacturing technologies and evidence of good relations.

Mr Gough stated that Members recommended that a review of HE provision plans take place at the annual Strategy Day.

- **Staffing Committee 6 October**

Mr Alexander presented the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 6 October and advised that Members had noted a good KPI Annual Report. He informed that sickness absence is low and Members agreed not to revise the target of 3.5%.

Mr Alexander thanked the HRD team for their good work, advised that Members reviewed the S75 Annual Progress Report and noted the difficulty in engagement due to C-19.

Mr Alexander informed that after much debate the Committee declined to approve the policy presented on staff recognition rewards, and that Members reviewed the Employee Development Plan and agreed that a fluid approach in the current circumstances is appropriate.

- **Finance & General Purposes Committee 20 October**

Mrs Campbell referred Members to the draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee convened on 20 October. She advised that Members of the Estates Team had attended part of a very busy meeting in which Members were provided with comprehensive reports health and safety, the Estates budget paper and planned works and the sustainability report.

Mrs Campbell informed that the Committee were advised of a total of 73 occurrences that were reported in 2019-2020 and two RIDDOR reportable incidents. She informed that there have been eight liability claims over the past five years with associated estimates or payments in excess of £10,000 and that insurance liability has increased significantly to £86k.

Mrs Campbell stated that the Committee noted encouraging momentum in regard to the HASMAP compliance map and were provided with detail on the OBC for the purchase and redevelopment of the Newry Sports Centre. She informed on the significant achievement of attaining BREEAM excellence for the Armagh and Banbridge new build campuses.

Mrs Campbell advised that Committee Members reviewed the draft Annual Report and Statutory Accounts for the period ended 31 July 2020, with particular focus on the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and the Balance Sheet.

She informed that Members reviewed the management accounts and noted the positive news on the Covid response resource allocation. Mrs Campbell informed that the Committee approved several policies, noted the circulars presented, reviewed the Complaints and Compliments Annual Report and sanctioned the bank mandate request.

The Governing Body were advised that certain insurance claims are contested and requested data on excess charges.

The Committee minutes were unanimously adopted by the Governing Body.

Miss Armstrong

Mr Sloan

A07. ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS 2019-2020

- **Audit Committee**

Mr Nugent presented the Audit Committee Annual Report 2019-2020 and thanked the Committee, remarking on excellence attendance and support provided by Members and Miss Armstrong during the term.

Mr Nugent confirmed that the Internal Auditors noted excellent progress made by management to implement current year and prior year internal audit recommendations and thanked Mr Doran and Mr McGonigal for all their hard work.

Mr Nugent advised that the Audit Committee were presented with the final Report to Those Charges with Governance and informed that the C&AG has formally approved and certified the 2018-2019 financial statement as an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.

Mr Nugent referred the Governing Body to items monitored and approved throughout the year, and advised on one instance of whistleblowing and two instances of attempted fraud reported to the Committee during the period.

Mr Nugent confirmed that all internal audits conducted throughout the year received a satisfactory assurance rating and the informed that the outcome of one respondent's self-assessment questionnaire recommended that Committee membership be increased.

- **Education Committee**

Mr Gough presented the Education Committee Annual Report for 2019-2020 and voiced his thanks to Committee Members, the Secretary and Chair for their assistance.

Mr Gough referred Members to items monitored and approved throughout the academic year, noting enhanced partnership with Open University and positive feedback from the Members' self-assessment returns.

Mr Gough welcomed Mrs Thompson to the Education Committee.

- **Staffing Committee**

Mr Alexander referred Governors to the Staffing Committee Annual Report and remarked on a positive account of work undertaken throughout the year.

He advised that in response to a statement received via the self-assessment questionnaire, Members agreed that more granular information regarding the appraisal process is to be presented to the Staffing Committee going forward.

Mr Alexander confirmed that the Committee Members were informed that South West College and Southern Regional College have partnered with Belfast Metropolitan College for the provision of payroll services.

- **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Mrs Campbell presented the Finance and General Purposes Committee Annual Report and remarked on good attendance and support provided by Members and the Secretary.

She referred Members to items monitored and approved throughout the period, and informed Members of the difficulty that arises from the College and Department operating in two different financial year ends.

Mrs Campbell advised Governors of work undertaken to review health and safety practices, a training requirement identified and confirmed that the annual report concluded that

Committee Members continue to maintain a strong working relationship with the Executive Team while offering constructive challenge, where appropriate, to ensure that the best interests of Southern Regional College are achieved.

Mr Saunders thanked the Committee Chairs for their sterling work and stated that he was saddened that Mrs Campbell is coming to the end of her tenure.

Mr Redmond congratulated Mrs Campbell for her exceptional leadership, guidance and commitment to the Governing Body. Members endorsed the comment and thanked Mrs Campbell, remarking that she will be missed when her term ends.

The Committee Annual Reports were unanimously adopted.

A08. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr Doran referred Governors the individual Terms of Reference for the Committees and endorsed that an additional statement, as recommended by Staffing Committee Members, to review and approve local policies that fall within the remit of the Committee, be included within all the committees' terms of reference. The request was considered appropriate and unanimously approved.

Miss Armstrong

A09. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND STATUTORY ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 JULY 2020

Mr Doran referred Members to the draft Annual Report and Statutory Accounts for the period ended 31 July 2020 and confirmed that the report has been submitted to the External Auditors. He advised that the report will be presented to the Audit Committee for scrutiny on 10 November along with the Report to Those Charged with Governance, and thereafter submitted for full Governing Body approval on 24 November.

Mr Doran referred Members to the enrolment profile detailing encouraging part-time statistics. He advised that with regard to student outcomes, the data is incomplete and currently under review, and will be updated in due course.

Members reviewed detail on student support, and noted that the report was also reviewed by Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 20 October.

A10. COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ACTION PLAN

Mr Doran presented the CDP Action Plan and advised on the move away from the Level 1 Balance Scorecard to a more simple action plan.

He referred Members to the key actions, strategic aims and underpinning objectives.

Members noted items highlighted in yellow as carried over. Mr Doran confirmed that the Plan will be presented to the next meeting of the Governing Body to note progression of actions following the first review.

Members noted the report.

A11. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Mr Doran presented the Corporate Risk Register and advised Members of the thirteen functional areas and individual risk registers maintained for informing the report.

Members noted that the residual risk remains high for Risk 3; the absence of a joint 14-19 strategy and policy from DE and DfE continues to inhibit the role of further education and reinforce the duplication of provision between schools and colleges. Governors noted that the risk is outside the control of the College.

Mr Doran referred Members to Risk 5; ineffective service provided by Property Service Division, and advised that the sector are sourcing an alternative provider through the NIFON Group and that this was progressing in line with the timeline agreed.

Mr Doran informed Members of a focus on Risk 15; impact on continued college services resulting from Coronavirus pandemic, and advised that more detail will be provided on Risk 16; potential industrial action taken by lecturer trade unions under confidential business.

Mr Nugent recommended that a Board wide review be conducted at the annual Strategy Day to assess the governance risk appetite.

Mr Doran relayed a request from the Senior Management Team to extend the annual Governance Strategy Day to January 2021 to allow for the SMT draft College Development Plan to be presented. Members noted the report and concurred that the request is entirely appropriate.

Miss Armstrong

Miss Armstrong

A12. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

- **Policy Statement**

Mr Sloan referred Members to the Health & Safety Annual report and confirmed that the document was presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for review in line with its Terms of Reference. Mr Sloan advised that he was seeking the Governing Body's approval on the policy statement.

In response to an earlier request, Mr Sloan advised on the insurance premiums stating that public liability has an excess of £5k and property damage £50k.

Mr Nugent remarked on a good improvement to occurrence reporting. Mr Sloan advised on plans for improvement, involving initial engagement with the insurance broker and liaising with the College's compliance manager.

Mr Saunders remarked on the growing importance of health and safety compliance given the current circumstances and recommended including as an agenda item at the Governance Strategy Day.

Miss Armstrong

The annual report was noted and the policy statement approved on proposal from Mr Nugent and seconded by Mrs Campbell.

A13. S75 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Sloan referred Members to the S75 Annual Progress Report presented to the Staffing Committee on 6 October and remarked on an informed document identifying how business is conducted and the good work operating throughout the College.

A14. ESTATES PROJECT – NEWRY OBC CASEWORK PROCESS

Mr Sloan confirmed that Members of the Estates Team met with the DfE case work panel on 22 October and advised on a positive meeting. He informed on an update to Land and Property Services to revise valuation and expressed optimism that the business case would be approved.

Members noted the information and remarked on positive progress.

A15. COVID-19 UPDATE

- **Covid tracker**

Mr Doran referred Members to the FE College information pack on managing Covid on premises and updated Governors on the revised procedure, method of risk assessment and the introduction of an automated text message service.

He advised on fortnightly reporting to the Department, the appointment of a dedicated Covid champion and provided statistics on staff and students who have tested positive or are self-isolating.

Mr Doran informed that the student body are largely compliant with the measures taken however advised that there is some evidence to suggest close contact occurring during comfort breaks and shared travel. He informed on a strengthening of the safety message and additional signage being deployed in appropriate areas.

Members noted the actions taken to address staff and student safety and thanked College management for their diligence.

Mr Sloan left the meeting at 19.39.

A16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr McCormick referred to the October edition of SRCzine and the positive report regarding the CEO scholarship award.

Mr Swail informed Members of a series of winter webinars scheduled.

Mr Saunders welcomed student governor, Mr Aaron Foy to his first meeting of the full Governing Body remarking on the valuable benefit of student insight on the Board composition.

A17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the full Governing Body is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 24 November 2020.

The meeting concluded at 19.49.

CHAIR

DATE

