

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

Present:

Mr Gordon Gough (Chair)
 Miss Hollie Burton
 Mr Brian Doran
 Mr Aidan McCormick
 Prof. Gregory O'Hare
 Mr Andrew Saunders
 Mr Matthew Turner
 Mrs Nicola Wilson

In Attendance:

Mr Keith Kilpatrick, Director of Curriculum
 Mrs Kimberley Neill McCready, Boardroom Apprentice
 Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.31.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting interests held in any matter to be discussed.

Mrs Wilson declared an interest as employee of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. Mrs Neill McCready declared an interest as employee of Steer Training Academy. Both interests were noted.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 4 FEBRUARY 2020

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting on 4 February 2020. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mrs Wilson and seconded by Mr Turner.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members clarified that it would be helpful to register class numbers alongside percentage retention rates within the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan.

Mr Doran advised that in normal circumstances the College Development Plan and report cards would be presented to the summer meeting of the Education Committee. He informed that discussions with the Department are taking place to consider extending the submission to August 2020.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

A06. COVID-19 IMPACT

- Remote Working
- Qualifications – Awarding Panel

ACTION BY WHOM
<p>Mr Kilpatrick</p>

- **OFQUAL Consultation response**
- **CCEA Guidance**

Mr Doran referred Members to the previously distributed CCEA guidance material to generate calculated results. He informed that a conflict of interest has arisen as a family member is attending the LEAP programme. Mr Doran stated that he is seeking Governors' approval to delegate the sign off of calculated results to Mr Kilpatrick. Members agreed that this was an appropriate action to take.

Mr Doran advised that due to the impact of Covid-19 Mr Kilpatrick has effectively been seconded to CCEA Regulation to support their efforts in progressing decisions on vocational qualifications.

Mr Kilpatrick provided an update on progress by the regulator and awarding organisations in a range of qualifications. He advised Members of the process involved in categorising qualifications, stating that Essential Skills is a unique curriculum programme within Northern Ireland and explained the process that was to be followed to award centre assessed grades.

Mr Kilpatrick informed on work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and advised that it is within the regulator's remit to issue instruction to awarding organisations in order to set the brief for the guidance protocols. He advised of concerns regarding the position of regulation and the alignment to Ofqual highlighting the lack of communication to date, the timeline aligning to England and the lack of information on how adaptive assessment and appeals will operate.

Mr Kilpatrick stated that awarding organisations have been contacting staff directly with regard to submission dates, which has been causing confusion. He advised on the process of approving guidance from awarding organisations in NI and highlighted the fact that this was not now happening.

Mr Kilpatrick informed that at a meeting on 18 May in which issues relating to Essential Skills, Work Based Learning and vocational training were to be addressed, he was informed that CCEA had no approval role and that awarding organisations were simply following the direction from Ofqual. He advised that this leaves the role of the Task and Finish Group largely redundant and confirmed that there has been no communication received from the Department about the regulators standing down from the process. He advised that the College will continue to work directly with the awarding organisations.

Mr Saunders requested baseline data on the numbers of students affected in various curriculum programmes.

Mr Doran

Mr Doran referred Members to the sector consultation response to Ofqual highlighting the issues referred to by Mr Kilpatrick and expressed his concern also at the lack of communication on this from DfE and the regulator.

Prof. O'Hare stated that he was troubled by the regulators stepping back, the lack of communication from the Department and enquired about the rationale involved. Discussion followed on the need for the Governing Body to write to the Department. Mr Doran advised that the matters raised were also being raised by Principals with DfE and through their representatives on the Task and Finish group. It was agreed that Mr Doran would provide an update to the Chairman following these meetings.

Mr Doran

Mr Kilpatrick assured Members that the College has robust mechanisms in place and are constructing their own timeline. He informed of good engagement with Pearson and OCN, however cautioned that City & Guilds had furloughed staff which is likely to impact on their responsiveness.

Mr Doran advised that he has written to students to update them on the current position.

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to the SRC award panel paper for centre assessed grades detailing membership, terms of reference and roles and responsibilities, to ensure fair outcomes for learners. He advised that staff are working diligently to certify calculated grades are based on predicted and historical performance, and advised on the methodology applied to minute and document evidence. Mr Kilpatrick informed that this will form the foundation to provide solid, robust validation if challenge is received from students or awarding organisations.

Mr Turner provided detail on procedures strengthened to provide enhanced verification on tutor predicted grades.

Discussion took place with Members commenting on a lack of Departmental direction, and expressing concern over the change of circumstance relating to the regulator CCEA.

Mr Doran informed that the Principals Group are meeting on a regular basis and advised on the proposal to seek a meeting with the Director of Apprenticeships, Careers and Vocational Education Division to address concerns.

The Committee noted the report.

A07. KPI IN YEAR REPORT

- **Level 2 Balance Scorecard**

Mr Kilpatrick referred Members to the Level 1 Balance Scorecard and informed on the substantial repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic. He advised that part time enrolments have stalled and a number of apprentices furloughed with increasing numbers likely to be made redundant.

The Committee noted the report.

A08. WHOLE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Committee Members reviewed the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan and were informed of the impact on retention due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Mr Kilpatrick advised on a similar challenges reflected across the sector and concerns for delivery for the next academic year where social distancing requirements remain. Mr Doran stated that he would be bringing a paper setting out the College's approach to reopening to the next Governing Body meeting.

Member noted the information.

A09. WBL RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE

Mr Kilpatrick expressed disappointment in progressing certain areas of work within the recovery plan and informed on good momentum before Covid-19 lockdown.

He referred Members to the recovery plan closed out April 2020 and measures carried over into the new plan for the year ahead. Mr Kilpatrick advised that some initiatives on tracking and monitoring are working well and informed on challenges that will occur as WBL moves into the next academic year. He referred to actions captured within the plan to address governance and recovery management.

Mr Doran informed on good work undertaken by staff, especially within Essential Skills, and the benefit that this is having on predicting calculated results.

Mr Kilpatrick confirmed that the data demonstrates considerable improvement and advised that reassurance on progress has been received from OCN.

A10. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP

Mr Kilpatrick advised Members on work taking place within the Curriculum Directors Group to address the various challenges that have arisen from Covid-19.

He advised that the new traineeship programme has been postponed, remarked on the urgent requirement of deep reform and alignment to the English awarding organisations.

The Committee noted the information.

A11. POLICY REVIEW

- **Student Charter**
- **Examinations Support**

Mr Doran referred the Committee to minor amendments within the Student Charter policy to reflect GDPR regulations and identification. He informed that modification within the Examination Support policy reflects an extraction of the procedure for implementation to within the policy statement.

Both policies were approved on the proposal of Mr Turner and seconded by Mrs Wilson.

A12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Doran advised of an audit of HLA apprenticeship employers carried out to address Covid-19 and highlighted that the number of employers committing to taking on new apprentices has dropped. He advised that further audits are ongoing and informed Members that measures would be in place to try to move apprentices into alternative employment or alternatively agreement to complete the programme free of charge in order to obtain qualification.

Mr Doran provided Members with a briefing on considerations for the next academic year with regard to buildings and social distancing. He informed of new curriculum delivery models and work taking place to plan for the new year.

Members asked that their huge congratulations be forwarded to former student Mr Alex Greene on his excellent success as finalist on the Great British Menu.

Mr Doran

A13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education Committee is scheduled to take place on 29 September 2020 at 18.30 in the Boardroom, Portadown Campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.12.

CHAIR

DATE