
MINUTES OF THE FIFTY SIXTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE ON 14 APRIL 2021, COMMENCING 1600

PRESENT: Mr M O’Kane, Committee Chair
Mr P Canavan
Mrs R Dougherty
Mr D Ferns
Dr N Hand
Mr G Killeen
Mr S McGregor
Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive
Prof M O’Neill (from 1616)

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr C O’Mullan, Head of Curriculum & Operations
Mrs C McGovern, Boardroom Apprentice
Mrs É Doherty, Governance Secretary

Due to restrictions associated with COVID-19 pandemic all members and attendees joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

56.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Mr O’Kane, Committee Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received.

56.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr P Canavan highlighted a potential conflict of interest in respect to Report EC 56.5, Report 7. There were no declarations of any other business.

56.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2021.**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Paper EC 56.3 Draft Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PROPOSED; Mr P Canavan

SECONDED; Mr G Killeen

56.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – 10 February 2021 Committee Meeting

A matter was referred to the Committee from the Resources Committee. This related to a Governor’s query regarding reduced enrolments in some engineering courses in Limavady Campus. The Head of Curriculum & Operations provided a verbal report to the Committee and it was agreed that further details on the matter would be passed to the individual Governor. In summary, a review of the engineering curriculum in Limavady had taken place. It is planned to refocus the

Engineering BTEC Level 3, Extended Diploma course with a manufacturing pathway to align with project opportunities within the Product Development Centre. This change in course content will provide a unique offering. The Entitlement Framework provision with the Schools at Limavady remains strong with years 13 and 14, however pupils only attend the College on a part-time basis, remaining as pupils in their respective schools. The engineering curriculum staff continue to work with the College Business Support Centre to engage with employers and respond to training needs in the Limavady area.

AGREED ACTION; The Governance Secretary to provide Mr McGregor with further details on the review.

55.5 Mr G Killeen reported that a planned presentation by the Principal or the Head of Curriculum & Operations will be provided at the next Education & Skills Delivery Partnership Group meeting.

55.6 The Interim Self Evaluation Report 2019/20 and Quality Improvement Plan 2021/21 was approved at the Governing Body meeting held on 23 February 2021.

- Members received a copy of the 'A Higher Skills Ambition for N Ireland' on 9 March 2021.

Prof M O'Neill joined the meeting during this item.

56.4 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Committee Chair had no further business to discuss and invited Dr C O'Mullan, Head of Curriculum & Operations to present the Education Management Report.

56.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

PAPER EC.56.5 Management Report

Report 1	CDP Targets Overall and by Department as at 31 March 2021
Report 4	DfE Commissioning Memo for HE in FE 2021/22
Report 7	Presentation to Essential Skills Staff
Report 11	DfE Communication on CDP 2021/22 March 2021
Report 12	Draft Academic Standards Committee Minutes – February 2021

The Head of Curriculum & Operations referred members to Table 2, Enrolments for the Sector for the last five years, which showed a reduction for all colleges over the period. A contributing factor for this College is the reduction in the population of the 15-24 year olds in the Derry City & Strabane District and the Causeway Coast and Glens Council areas. This together with the lack of a 14-19 year policy has impacted the whole Sector. The Principal added that concerns moving forward of the increasing ageing population projected from 2018 to 2028 has resulted in the flattening of population growth across both council areas.

In terms of full-time, HE enrolments 2019/20, the College is the second largest provider across the Sector. However, there continues to be a drift downwards on previous years. Part-time enrolments for the Sector for 2019/20 were showing the College as lowest ranking.

Data on performance by subject area for 2019/20 showed the College ranked first in the Sector in Education and Training, second in the subject areas of Science and Mathematics; Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies; Construction, Planning and the Built Environment.

The Head of Curriculum & Operations continued her report stating that work continues to improve retention rates that were showing as at 31 March 2021, full-time at 88% and part-time at 94%.

Discussion took place on the reasons for withdrawals, despite the COVID challenges, the number of cases where the College had withdrawn students from courses for non-attendance, albeit remotely, the numbers were in line with previous years. The Student Governor provided members with some detail on the challenges he has faced with working remotely during the current pandemic.

Following on, the Head of Curriculum & Operations advised members that the Department has requested projected MaSN enrolments for 2021/22. The College will submit a projected MaSN of 579 enrolments up on existing MaSN. The increased enrolments are a result of increased provision of three additional courses.

Proposals for new HLA courses for 2021/22 in the subject areas in Business & Enterprise, Electrical Electronic Engineering and General Engineering have been submitted to the Department (DfE) with projected enrolments of 84, an increase on current HLA's of 69.

The Principal reported that once the Furlough Scheme completes the Sector will have to be able to respond to support the upskilling for those affected.

The Head of Curriculum & Operations continued her report referring to the presentation made to Essential Skills Staff. An outline was provided on some of the key actions taken to address the challenges around Essential Skills, including work to re-engage students to achieve their qualifications and planning for the academic year 2021/22. The Essential Skills Working Group continues to meet fortnightly and reports to the Curriculum Leadership Team.

The Operational Recovery Group Sub Committee – (Teaching, Learning and Student) also continues to meet weekly to plan for the delivery of essential and unavoidable classes. Learners and staff are permitted on-site to undertake examinations and assessments in line with relevant government issued industry and workplace restrictions and guidance for occupational settings. It is hoped that the next phase of the pathway will permit significantly larger number of learners on site.

Discussion followed on the potential of delayed qualifications for 2020/21 and the potential costs associated with these delays. The College has estimated that 1073 qualifications may be delayed into 2021/22, some of these being qualifications that were originally scheduled to complete in 2019/20. The figure stated includes a significant number of qualifications within industry related part-time courses.

The Head of Curriculum and Operations was pleased to report that the new Service Level Agreement had been signed between NIPS and the College. This builds on the great work already taken place in the delivery of education within Magilligan Prison. In relation to the 2021, College Development Plan the Principal referred to the recent communication from the Department (DfE) to confirm that the revised approach will continue for 2021/22. The draft CDP is to be submitted to the Department (DfE) by mid September 2021.

Members noted the Academic Standard Committee Draft Minutes for 17 February 2021.

The Committee Chair thanked Dr C O'Mullan for her comprehensive report and invited the Principal to bring members through the Business Support Centre Report.

56.6 BUSINESS SUPPORT CENTRE UPDATE REPORT

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

PAPER EC 56.6 Business Support Centre Update Report – 2 April 2021

The Principal was pleased to report that the Department (DfE) has agreed that financial support for local businesses will continue to help the apprenticeship system respond to the impact of the COVID crisis. The College has launched a Graduate Software Testers Programme in the Causeway Coast & Glens Council area. The Assured Skills Academies continue and the Welding Academy in Springtown will complete shortly with potential for further Welding Academies to take place.

In line with the College being the lead hub for Health & Social Care discussions are currently taking place on an apprenticeship programme in Nursing Assistant. Prof M O'Neill supported and welcomed this development.

56.7 REVISED CENTRE ASSESSMENT POLICY

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report EC 55.7 Revised Centre Assessment Policy

The Head of Curriculum & Operations provided background to the Policy that was drafted following the disruption to teaching and assessment during 2020-21 due to the COVID pandemic. The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that Centre Assessed Grades, Centre Determined Grades, Teacher Assessed Grades and qualification level – Teacher Assessed Grades are determined fairly, consistently, free from bias and effectively accordingly to Awarding Organisations guidance within and across departments. The College will implement a four-stage process to ensure transparency and integrity within the process for awarding arrangements to allow for completing of qualifications in June 2021. A few minor amendments will be made to the draft version.

The Board is responsible for approving the Assessment Policy prior to it being forwarded to the Regulator, CCEA by 23 April 2021. As this date is before the next Board meeting, it was agreed;

- **The Education Committee recommend approval to the Governing Body subject to the final version of the Policy being received.**
- **The Governance Secretary to arrange with the Governing Body Chair to share the final version with all Board members.**
- **To request those Governors not members of the Education Committee or those members who were not in attendance at the Education Committee meeting on 14 April 2021 to consider and approve the Policy within the timescales.**

PROPOSED; Mr M O' Kane

SECONDED; Mr G Killeen

56.8 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received.

56.9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business to discuss.

That being the end of business the Committee Chair thanked everyone and the meeting ended at 1732.

Date of Next Meeting: 9 June 2021

Signed: _____ **Committee Chair**
Mr M O'Kane

Date: 9 June 2021