
MINUTES OF THE EIGHTY SECOND MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2020, COMMENCING 1700

PRESENT:

Mr G Finnegan, Governing Body Chair
Ms M Breslin
Mr P Canavan
Mrs R Dougherty
Mr S Gillespie
Dr N Hand
Mr G Killeen (from 1712)
Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive
Mr S McGregor
Mr M O’Kane
Prof M O’Neill
Mr B Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE;

Mr P McKeown, Director of Finance & Economic Engagement
Dr C O’Mullan, Head of Curriculum & Operations
Ms S Kelly, HR Manager (from item 82.6)
Mrs C McGovern, Boardroom Apprentice
Mrs É Doherty, Governance Secretary

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

82.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Governing Body Chair welcomed everyone and passed on congratulations to Mrs L Taggart on the recent birth of her baby boy. On a somber note the Governing Body Chair informed members of the sad passing of Mr Colman O’Driscoll, who was the Hospitality and Catering Manager for the College. Members respectfully held a moment’s silence. It was agreed the Governance Secretary to send a sympathy card to his wife on behalf of the Governing Body.

82.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no conflict of interests declared. The Governing Body Chair indicated he wished to update his own Conflict of Interest form. He will advise the Governance Secretary and an updated Summary Register will come to the next Board meeting. There were no declarations of any other business.

82.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 30 September 2020

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting.

PROPOSED; Mr S Gillespie

SECONDED; Mr B Quinn

81.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – Governing Body Meeting held on 30 September 2020

There was one matter arising from the Governing Body meeting and this had been actioned.

The Governing Body Chair then invited Mr S Gillespie, Committee Chair to report on behalf of the Audit & Risk Committee.

82.4 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

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| Report 1 | Committee Chair's Summary Report |
| Report 2 | Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 3 November 2020 |
| Report 3 | Risk Management Group Report 1, 2020/21 |
| Report 4 | Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee 2019/20 to the Governing Body |
| Report 5 | NIAO Draft Report To Those Charged With Governance |
| Report 6 | Annual Report & Financial Statements Year Ended 31 July 2020 |
| Report 7 | Student Council & Financial Statements Year Ended 31 July 2020 |

Mr Gillespie highlighted the key business that took place at the Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020. The Risk Management Group Report was presented to the Committee; all risks were reviewed by the Risk Management Group in September 2020 and updated to reflect the impact of COVID-19. The Health and Safety Report for 2019/20 stated the College did not have to report any accidents under RIDDOR.

The Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report to the Governing Body was presented to the Committee and had now progressed to this Board meeting for acceptance. The Committee welcomed the invite from the Internal Auditor to facilitate a workshop to Governors to help prepare an effective Board Assurance Framework. One Internal Audit Review on Risk Management Framework was presented at the Committee. This review was completed remotely and received a 'satisfactory' assurance rating. Two low priority issues were identified.

The External Auditor reported that the audit of the Financial Statements for year ended 31 July 2020 was also conducted remotely. The External Auditor highlighted a few items of work in progress that required to be finalised. The Director of Finance & Economic Engagement provided the Board with a number of updates on these outstanding items which related to the provision for holiday pay and the pension

liability (NILGOSC). As a result of these outstanding matters the Board will not be in a position to certify and sign off the Financial Statements at this meeting. When this work is complete and the Financial Statements and the RTTCWG Report amended a Special Governing Body meeting will be called to manage this.

The Draft Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes.

PROPOSED; Mr S Gillespie

SECONDED; Mr P Canavan

Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee 2019/20 to the Governing Body

PROPOSED; Mr S Gillespie

SECONDED; Mr P Canavan

Student Council & Financial Statements to 31 July 2020

PROPOSED; Mr S Gillespie

SECONDED; Mr M O’Kane

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mr S Gillespie for his report and indicated if members had any further queries on the Risk Management Report to direct their queries to the Governance Secretary in the first instance. He then invited Mr M O’Kane, Chair of the Education Committee to present his report to the Board.

Mr G Killeen joined the meeting during this item.

82.5 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

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| Report 1 | Committee Chair’s Summary Report |
| Report 2 | Draft Minutes from the Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020 |
| Report 3 | Draft College Development Plan 2020/21 |
| Report 4 | Compliments, Complaints & Assessment Appeals Annual Report 2019/20 |

Mr O’Kane reported that the Committee had received a presentation from Mr M Peoples, Head of Technology, Enhanced Learning & Support (TEs) on the work of the TEs Team who are supporting staff and students on the virtual digital platforms throughout the COVID period. The Committee Chair acknowledged the work of the team during these challenging times and recognised the impact on the lack of social interaction students may be having.

In respect to enrolments the College had achieved an overall enrolment target of 85% in 2019/20. Additional enrolments from March 2020 did not materialise due to the impact of COVID-19. Fulltime, HE enrolments was 527 against a target of 541. The full time, FE enrolment target has been achieved. There have been 66 HLA enrolments against a projected figure of 69.

In view of the current challenging landscape the retention target for 2020/21 was reduced to 90%, down 2% on the target for 2018/19 at 92%.

Continuing his report the Committee Chair stated that the Committee had received the ETI Report on the Review of Level 3 Provision. Actions are in place to address the items identified requiring improvement. The Head of Curriculum & Operations reported that reference was made in the ETI Report of the College's DIAL Centre as an example of best practice in innovation in health and social care. The feedback on the review was positive with some areas identified as exhibiting effective practice in the areas of hairdressing and barbering, music and performing arts.

Additional funding had been received for the delivery of short-term skills interventions targeted at individuals impacted by COVID-19. Each qualification will be accredited and completed on or before 31 March 2021.

Referring to the Draft College Development Plan (CDP) 2020/21 the Committee Chair stated this had been submitted to the Department (DfE). A bi-lateral meeting has also taken place with the Department. (DfE). The Principal added that the CDP for 2020/21 was more of a bridging document with focus on an Operational Recovery Plan in adjusting to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In concluding his report the Committee Chair was pleased to acknowledge and congratulate the Business Support Centre (BSC) in winning the prestigious, 'Best Economic Engagement Award' in the UK at the Times Educational Supplement (Tes) FE Awards 2020. Members mirrored the Chair's sentiments of thanks and congratulations.

The Principal suggested it would be useful for a presentation to be made at a future date to the Education Committee on the projects of the BSC. Members agreed with this.

The Draft Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes

PROPOSED; Mr M O'Kane

SECONDED; Mr P Canavan

Draft College Development Plan 2020/21

PROPOSED; Mr M O'Kane

SECONDED; Ms M Breslin

Members were content to approve the recommendation for the newly elected Student Governor, Mr Deaglán Ferns to serve on the Education Committee and for Ms Carla McGovern, Boardroom Apprentice to attend the Committee meetings for the academic year 2020-21.

PROPOSED; Mr G Killeen

SECONDED; Mr P Canavan

82.6 RESOURCES COMMITTEE**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1	Committee Chair's Summary Report
Report 2	Draft Minutes from the Committee meeting held on 2 November 2020
Report 3	Management Accounts for 2 Months to 31 September 2020
Report 4	Budget Update 2020/21
Report 5	Bad Debt Write-off Report

Ms S Kelly, HR Manager joined the meeting at this juncture.

The Committee Chair reported that at the Committee meeting the Springtown Redevelopment Project was discussed, from the six items in dispute the adjudicator had found the College liable for one item, that being the additional costs incurred by the provider for the hire of the temporary accommodation. The College was also liable for the adjudicator costs. Since that Committee meeting on 2 November 2020 the Director of Finance & Economic Engagement advised the Board that the provider of the temporary accommodation was dissatisfied with the adjudicator's decision and intends referring the matter to Tribunal. The Contractor of the Project has also advised the Architects of the Project that a dispute exists with the College. To date the College has not received any formal notice of this. Discussion followed and the Director answered members' queries.

In continuing her report the Committee Chair notified members that the Draft Estates Strategy will come through the next Committee and Board meeting.

The Management Accounts for the two months to 30 September 2020 noted that tuition fee income had been estimated as a result of issues with the online payments to the new Educational Business Systems (EBS) and the interface between the system and Agresso (financial system). This was a Sector issue.

The Budget update 2020/21 reported a historic deficit of £3.98m, a movement of £1.94m, most of this relates to pension charges. There has been a significant decrease in income (£155K) in the College canteens during the COVID crisis. The College has loss of income from this provision of approximately £36K. Negotiations are ongoing with the OCS Group. The College has submitted a bid to the Department (DfE) for additional funds for £741K to operate the College in these challenging times.

Staffing matters discussed at Committee included a range of bereavement services available to staff through the Inspire Hub. Seventeen recruitment exercises have taken place since the last Resources Committee meeting. Lost time rates for absence for both lecturing and support staff were comparable with this time last year. Benchmarks were provided for the Sector for the period August 2019 - July 2020 and work will take place to endeavour to reduce the College statistics to the Sector average of 3.25%.

Staff development continues online and curriculum staff are being encouraged to use the Staff Development Days to complete any outstanding mandatory training to ensure compliance.

Discussion took place on the staff awards, it was agreed that the HR Manager and the Principal will bring proposals through the Resources Committee.

The Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 2 November 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Mr B Quinn

Budget Update 2020/21

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Mr B Quinn

Bad Debt Write-off Report – individual debts totalling £4.1K

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Mr S McGregor

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mrs Dougherty, Committee Chair, Mr McKeown, Director of Finance & Economic Engagement and Ms Kelly, HR Manager for their reporting and invited Mr L Murphy, Principal to present his report next.

82.7 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT/BUSINESS

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 82.7 Principal's Report

The Principal highlighted a number of items within his report including an update on the continuing work taking place due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. A proposal has been submitted to the Causeway Coast & Glens Council as part of the Growth Deal on the development of a Food Project in the area. The Principal reported on some of the Sector and external groups he represents the College on, including recent meetings he attended with the DfE Skills Advisory Group, Cross-Border Cluster Group and the Invest NI Partnership.

82.8 GOVERNING BODY CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Governing Body Chair advised members that the next scheduled meeting for the Board is normally held for a Strategy Day, in light of the current circumstances he requested members to consider any important strategic issues that could be placed on the Agenda and to pass these to the Governance Secretary on or before 25 November 2020.

The Governing Body Chair indicated that a number of members recently received from the Department (DfE) correspondence of the Department's intention to seek the agreement of the Minister to consider a further extension to their terms of appointment for a further six-month period. This will help support continuity in the functioning of the Governing Body. The Governing Body Chair stated he would be keen for these members to take up this request.

The Governing Body Chair reported that the Governing Body Self-Assessment Analysis Report 2019/20 had been received from the Department (DfE). He wished to thank those who completed this exercise. There was an increase in the numbers who responded on the previous year. All the views expressed on the five separate themes were more positive than in 2018/19. The data relating to attendance at Committee and Governing Body meetings had increased for 2019/20, however the College was still below the Sector average. The Governing Body Chair added that the move to remote meetings should help increase the attendance percentages for the current year. A summary report will be drafted and provided at the next meeting.

82.9 CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was received.

82.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Governing Body Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and requested those not required for the remaining items to leave the room at this juncture.

82.11 RESERVED BUSINESS

Recorded separately.

The meeting ended at 1825 and went into private session.

Date of next meeting: 22 January 2021

SIGNED; _____ **GOVERNING BODY CHAIR**
Mr G Finnegan

DATE; 23 FEBRUARY 2021