
MINUTES OF THE SEVENTY EIGHTH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS ON 27 FEBRUARY 2020, COMMENCING 1705

PRESENT:

Mr G Finnegan, Governing Body Chair
Mr P Canavan
Mrs R Dougherty
Dr N Hand
Mr E Kelly
Mr G Killeen
Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive
Mr M O’Kane
Dr M O’Neill (from 1725)
Mr B Quinn
Mrs L Taggart (from 1715)

IN ATTENDANCE;

Mrs D McElwee, Acting Vice Principal, Curriculum & Information Services
Mr P McKeown, Director of Finance & Economic Engagement
Ms S Kelly, HR Manager (until 1740)
Mrs É Doherty, Governance Secretary

78.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Governing Body Chair welcomed everyone. He reported this was the last meeting for Mrs D McElwee, Acting Vice Principal and he wished to record his thanks for her contribution to the Education Committee, the Board and for her commitment to the College over her many years’ service. Condolences were also passed to Mrs McElwee on the recent bereavement of her mother.

Apologies were received from Mr S Gillespie, Mr S McGregor and Mrs C McFarland.

The Governing Body Chair indicated that he would take the Resources Committee report (78.6) first on the Agenda and invited Mrs R Dougherty, Chair to the Committee to report to the Board.

78.6 RESOURCES 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 17 February 2020 |
| Report 3 | Management Accounts for 6 Months to 31 January 2020 |
| Report 4 | Fees & Charges Policy 2020/21 |
| Report 5 | Recruitment & Selection Policy – Panel Arrangements |
| Report 6 | Delegation of Authority Policy |
| Report 6.1 | Delegation of Authority Policy – Summary of amendments |
| Report 7 | Safeguarding Report – October 2019 |

The Draft Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17 February 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee.

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Dr N Hand

The Committee Chair reported that Mr G McCole, IT Services Manager had provided the Committee with a presentation on the replacement telephony project. A timeline and cost projections on the four options available were covered. This item was then followed by a presentation and discussion on cyber security.

The Director of Finance & Economic Engagement provided the Board with an update on the Springtown Project. Concerns continue with both the ICT team and the contractor on the Project despite formal performance review meetings including CPD and the Department. The final account is estimated to be £6.7m, an increase of £313k on the accepted tender price. The updated completion date is now late March 2020.

In relation to the Management Accounts for 6 months to 31 January 2020, DfE Grants were showing a significant positive variance of £1.2m as a result of advanced allocation from the Department. VEP Income was showing an adverse variance of £85K however invoices were issued in February which cleared this variance. In reference to expenditure, Pay Direct Teaching costs was showing a favourable variance to 31 January 2020 of £134K. Non Pay Administration costs was showing a substantial decrease on last year (£2.1m - £927k) the 2019 figure included an exceptional item relating to the repayment of cash reserves to the Department.

The Director of Finance & Economic Engagement discussed the NDPB Return that relates to the year end 31 March. The Management Accounts report to the 31 July year end. The different reporting dates may be challenging to ensure that the spend profile to the 31 March year end (NDPB) is aligned with the DEL Resources allocated. The Director agreed to provide further explanations at the next meeting. In concluding the finance matters the Committee Chair reported that the Prompt Payment figure for the year to date was 89% and for January 2020 was 83%.

The Committee Chair then invited Ms S Kelly, HR Manager to report on the next item. Ms S Kelly advised that the Recruitment & Selection Policy is under review. A proposed pilot, to run for a 6 month period has been drafted to allow more flexibility in the composition of panels. The HR Manager brought members through the proposed changes. Members considered the revised panel arrangements and approved them, subject to amendments to the wording 'nominated representative' to 'relevant senior officers'.

Absence data, percentage lost time rate for December 2019 for teaching staff was 5.59% an increase on December 2018 which was 2.79%. Support staff data for December 2019 was 4.59% a reduction on the same period last year which was 6.8%. Work is progressing to align the staff health and wellbeing programmes to the issues identified in the absence reports.

Members noted the Staff Development Programmes for Semester 2 and the Safeguarding Report. The Committee Chair added that she had participated, as the Safeguarding governing representative in meetings with the Inspection Team undertaking the ETI Evaluation on Level 3 Provision. The oral feedback from the inspectors was excellent in relation to good practice, initiatives in place and pastoral support provided by the Safeguarding Team.

The Committee Chair requested Board approval for:

Recruitment & Selection Policy – Panel Arrangements, subject to amendments

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Mr P Canavan

Acceptance of the Fees & Charges Policy 2020/21

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Mr B Quinn

Delegation of Authority Policy

PROPOSED; Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED; Dr N Hand

Mrs L Taggart and Dr M O'Neill joined the meeting during this item.

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mrs Dougherty and Ms Kelly for their reports.

Ms Kelly left the meeting at this juncture.

The Governing Body Chair returned to the normal running order of the agenda items.

78.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS/REGISTER OF INTEREST

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Register of Interests – Feb 2020

There was no conflict of interest declarations and no declarations of any other business.

**78.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON
13 NOVEMBER 2019****➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 13 November 2019

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

PROPOSED; Mr L Murphy

SECONDED; Mr P Canavan

78.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – Governing Body Meeting held on 13 November 2019

All the matters arising from the November 2019 Board meeting had been actioned.

The Governing Body Chair then invited Mr G Killeen to report on behalf of the Audit & Risk Committee.

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

Report 1 Committee Chair's Summary Report

Report 2 Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 10 February 2020

Report 3 Internal Audit Key Performance Indicators 2019/20

Mr G Killeen, Committee member reported that all matters arising from the Audit & Risk Committee meeting of November 2019 had been closed off. Internal Audit completed reviews on Procurement and Management of Contracts and on Strategic Planning and Performance Management. Both reviews received satisfactory assurance ratings with no recommendations.

Correspondence was received from the Internal Auditor, Grant Thornton stating they will not be exercising the option to extend the contract beyond the 2019/20 financial year. The Director of Finance & Economic Engagement provided detail to the Reserved Business matters of the Committee meeting.

The Director of Finance & Economic Engagement reported to the Board details of fraudulent activity of the College's debit and credit cards by external sources. The Director assured the Board that there has been no financial loss to the College. The Department (DfE) have been informed in line with the Fraud Policy.

The Draft Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 10 February 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee.

PROPOSED; Mr G Killeen

SECONDED; Mrs L Taggart

Internal Audit KPI's 2019/20

PROPOSED; Mr G Killeen

SECONDED; Mrs L Taggart

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mr Killeen and invited Mr O'Kane, Chair to the Education Committee to report to the Board.

78.5 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Committee Chair's Summary Report

Report 2 Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 11 February 2020

The Committee Chair reported that the February Committee meeting took place in the DIAL Centre. Members got the opportunity for a walkabout and demonstration hosted by Ms V Williams, the Centre Manager.

Fulltime, HE Enrolment targets for 2019/20 as at 6 February 2020 were showing 87% of target. The College's performance against the Sector for all enrolments for 2018/19 showed the College ranked 4th. The FE Sector for 2014/15 had 175,000 enrolments. 2018/19 enrolment numbers had reduced to 148,000. It was highlighted that the enrolment data does not represent student numbers.

The College retention target for 2018/19 was exceeded, achieving 92% retention with the Sector average retention at 89.9%. Performance has improved, the College exceeded the Sector average by almost 2% and was ranked in 3rd place in 2018/19 in comparison with 4th place in 2017/18. Tribute was paid to staff in delivering this level of achievement and who were a key part in sustaining retention.

Following on, the Committee Chair reported that he had attended meetings as Chair of the Education Committee on the recent ETI Evaluation of Level 3 Provision. The verbal feedback had been positive. The Principal stated this was not a graded inspection. A composite report across the six Colleges will be published. The general outcome from a recent Pearson Lead Standards Verification inspections visit was also very positive.

The Principal reported on correspondence received from the Department (DfE) on the proposed approach of Partnership Agreements that will replace the current MSFM. The Department had requested a Risk Assessment be undertaken by the College. This has been completed. Partnership Agreements are planned to be in place by 1 August 2020.

The Committee Chair referred to the correspondence which related to a previously reported item to the Board (ref GB 76.5) in respect to the Training for Success Contract. The correspondence dated December 2019 from the Department stated that a follow up compliance inspection was carried out in November 2019 and

following the implementation of the agreed actions the Department had reviewed the performance and the College now meets the requirements.

The Draft Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 11 February 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes of the Education Committee.

PROPOSED; Mr M O’Kane

SECONDED; Dr M O’Neill

Some Committees were experiencing issues of quoracy. To try and help alleviate this to ensure continuity of governance business the Governing Body Chair suggested he could attend, if available in these circumstances. The Department was made aware of this proposal and supported it.

Members were content that the Governing Body Chair serve as a member on the Education and Resources Committee.

PROPOSED; Mr M O’Kane

SECONDED; Mrs R Dougherty

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mr O’Kane for his report.

78.6 RESOURCES COMMITTEE – already reported on

The Governing Body Chair invited the Principal & Chief Executive to present his report.

78.7 PRINCIPAL’S REPORT/BUSINESS

The Principal was delighted to report that the Careers Academy Team were winners of the Careers Impact Strategy Award at the Irish Education Awards in Dublin. The Principal noted a request from the Department for an update on the Tribal VFM Action Plan. The Principal updated members on Sector issues and Level 3 curriculum.

AGREED ACTION; The Principal to reply to the Department that the Action Plan will be reviewed by the Education Committee at their April meeting and proceed to the Governing Body at their meeting on 30 April 2020.

The Principal also noted correspondence received from the Department of Health in relation to the Coronavirus, on advice and action to be taken by public authorities. The College will co-ordinate its own contingency plan to the crisis in conjunction with the Department of Health’s advice.

78.8 GOVERNING BODY CHAIR'S BUSINESS**➤ VERBAL REPORTS**

Report 1 Committee Membership

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 2 Strategy Day

Report 3 Chair's Business

The Governing Body Chair reported that Mr S Gillespie had accepted a further four year term as Governor. He was grateful to Mr Gillespie for accepting to serve for a further term. The Department (DfE) had also agreed that Mr Gillespie continue to serve as a temporary Chair to the Audit & Risk Committee. The Articles of Government had been duly amended.

Following the discussions at the Strategy Day on the Self-Assessment an Action Plan will be drafted and presented to the next Board meeting.

78.9 CORRESPONDENCE**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1 Partnership Agreements – Cover Letter, Director of FE, DfE

Report 2 Revised ALB Risk Assessment Template

Report 3 DfE Correspondence re College Email Addresses for Departmental Communication

The Principal had already covered Report 1 and 2 under item 78.5. Members noted the correspondence re College email addresses for Departmental Communication.

78.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business to discuss.

78.11 RESERVED BUSINESS

Taken separately.

78.12 RESERVED NOTE

Taken separately.

The Governing Body Chair brought this part of the meeting to an end, he thanked everyone for their attendance and requested those not required for the remaining items to leave the room at this juncture.

The meeting ended at 1825 and went into private session.

Date of next meeting: 30 April 2020

Signed: _____
Mr G Finnegan, Governing Body Chair

Date: 30 April 2020

APPROVED