
MINUTES OF THE NINETY FOURTH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON 28 JUNE 2022 IN LIMAVADY CAMPUS, COMMENCING 1815

PRESENT:

Mr G Killeen, (acting in the capacity of Chair)
Mr P Canavan
Mrs D Creevy
Mrs R Dougherty
Mr S Gillespie
Mr P McKeown, (Interim Principal & Chief Executive)
Mr S McGregor
Prof M Ó Néill – joined remotely
Mr B Quinn
Mrs C Shongo
Ms V Toland

IN ATTENDANCE;

Dr C O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards
Ms S Kelly, HR Manager (joined during item 94.6)
Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services – joined remotely
Mr L Murphy, Interim Principal & CEO, South West College (for items 94.5, 94.6)
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

94.1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

The Governing Body Acting Chair formally welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the first meeting for many in person for some time due to the restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic. He congratulated Ms V Toland to her first Board meeting and wished her every success in her role as the Staff Governor, Academic representative on the Board. He also extended the Board's sympathy to Governor, Mrs M Gormley on the recent passing of her mother.

Apologies were received from Ms M Breslin, Mrs M Gormley, Mrs J McKeever, Mrs S Fisher, Mr P Thompson and Mrs C McWilliams.

The Governing Body Acting Chair stated that for some agenda items it was considered appropriate to invite Mr Murphy, the current Interim Principal and CEO of South West College into the meeting as an attendee for items 94.5 and 94.6 (the Education and Resources Committee Agenda items). It was considered important that Mr Murphy is updated in respect to the specific items of the College Development Plan 2022/23 and the Budget 2022/23 discussions in preparation for his return to the College in the capacity of Principal & CEO no later than December 2022. Governors agreed to this arrangement.

**94.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/ DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS/
REGISTER OF INTERESTS SUMMARY/**

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

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Summary Register of Interests Report – June 2022

The updated Summary Register Report was noted. This included new entries in respect to Mr P McKeown, Ms V Toland and updates for Mrs D Creevy, Mrs C Shongo and Ms M Breslin.

94.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 23 February 2022

The Draft Minutes of the Governing Body meeting were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Minutes. These Minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Governing Body Acting Chair.

PROPOSED, Mrs C Shongo

SECONDED, Mrs D Creevy

Report 1 Matters Arising

There were no actions arising from the Governing Body meeting held on 23 February 2022.

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

94.4 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 24 May 2022

Report 3 Risk Management Group Report 2, 2021/22

Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 24 May 2022

The Draft Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 24 May 2022 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Minutes.

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mr G Killeen

The Committee Chair reported that members completed the annual self-assessment exercise. The Committee considered it was performing effectively. A few actions were

noted. There were no Direct Award Contracts. Prompt payment for the 30 days to April 2022 was 98% and for the year to date was 97%.

Referring to the Risk Management Group Report 2, 2021/22 (Report 3) the Committee Chair reported that there are currently nine risks on the Corporate Risk Register. Updates on the Risk Register since it last came to the Committee were highlighted.

Risk 7, 'Failure to maintain Financial Stability' – The scoring on this risk has been increased (3 – 6). The Department (DfE) has not confirmed the budget for 2022/23. A budget cut is likely. Significant pressures have been identified in energy and pay together with other general inflationary rises. The College have made cost reductions to the Estates, IT and teaching materials.

Risk 8, 'Risk of CPD & PD Processes' - The scoring of this risk has been reduced (6-3).

The Internal Auditor presented several reports to the Committee. The Internal Audit Follow Up Report noted the progress made by the College to implement previously agreed actions. It was considered that the College had demonstrated reasonable progress in implementing the agreed management actions.

The Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22 noted the work completed for the year against Plan apart from the Learner Management System final report. A draft report has been issued. This is a Sector advisory review. The Internal Auditor intends to include any key issues across the Sector in the final report. The final report will come through the September 2022 Committee meeting.

The Review on Academic Framework Governance achieved a satisfactory assurance opinion with three low priority actions. The Committee received a Benchmarking of Internal Audit Findings 2020/21 for the Sector which was a useful report for the Committee. The Committee also received a copy of the Internal Auditors External Quality Assessment Outcomes Report which confirmed that RSM had complied with the IIA's (Institute of Internal Auditors) and the PSIAS (Public Sector Internal Audit Standards) professional standards.

The External Auditor presented the Audit Strategy 2021/22 to the Committee.

For the benefit of new Governors, the Governing Body Acting Chair reported that following the next cohort of Governors joining the Board on 1 July 2022 there will be a requirement that Mr S Gillespie step down from his current position as Chair to the Audit & Risk Committee. Under the Audit Code (2018, Chapter 6) a co-opted Governor is not permitted to be Chair of this Committee. The Department (DfE) had permitted the College to make a temporary change to the College Articles of Government to support the continuity of the Committee during the period that no public appointments were made.

The Governing Body Acting Chair stated that the positions of Committee Chair and Vice Chair were now vacant.

The Governing Body Acting Chair thanked Mr Gillespie and invited Prof M Ó Néill, Education Committee Chair to present his report to members.

Mr L Murphy joined the meeting at this juncture.

94.5 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1	Committee Chair's Summary Report
Report 2	Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 1 June 2022
Report 3	College Development Plan 2022/23 – verbal report
Report 4	College Curriculum Plan 2022/25
Report 5	Safeguarding Report

Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 1 June 2022

The Draft Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 1 June 2022 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Minutes.

PROPOSED, Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED, Mr G Killeen

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had acknowledged the members who were leaving the Committee/Board. Mr G Killeen, Mrs R Dougherty and Mr S McGregor were thanked for their significant commitment and services to the Education Committee.

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards reported that since the Education Committee meeting the MaSN targets have been reviewed. These have been reduced from 513 to 483. A Level 5 course has been withdrawn from offer for 2022/23 due to no enrolments.

The Director of Curriculum & Academic standards reported that the Department (DfE) has to date not issued the College Development Programme (CDP) template for 2022/23. The Interim Principal added that this will not be received until the Budget letter has been received by the College. In the interim the College recruitment targets have been collated for 2022/23. These targets have been aligned to the draft budget position. To accommodate this the Governing Body Acting Chair indicated there may be a requirement to convene a Special Education Committee meeting during August. Considering the challenges faced it is hoped to sustain the enrolments for 2022/23 as of 2021/22.

College Curriculum Plan 2022/25 new FE and HE courses planned for 2022/23
(Report 4)

PROPOSED, Mrs R Dougherty

SECONDED, Mrs C Shongo

Committee Membership – approval required for Ms V Toland, Staff Governor Representative (academic) to serve on the Education Committee

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mr G Killeen

Members noted the Safeguarding Report (Report 5), The Head of Client Services reported that Safeguarding continues to be a high priority for the College. Numbers continue to increase for students referred to the Safeguarding Team.

The Governing Body Acting Chair thanked Prof M Ó Néill and Ms G Moss and invited Mrs R Dougherty, Committee Chair, Resources Committee to present her report.

94.6 RESOURCES COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1	Committee Chair's Summary Report
Report 2	Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 7 June 2022
Report 3	Management Accounts for 10 Months to 31 May 2022
Report 4	Budget 2022/23
Report 4.1	DfE Correspondence Budget Position 2022/23
Report 5	Procurement Contract Items – Suggested Spend items £100K and over
Report 6	Staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy Review and Action Plan 2021-24
Report 7	People Strategic Framework Review 2021-2024

Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 7 June 2022

The Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 7 June 2022 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Minutes.

PROPOSED, Mrs D Creevy

SECONDED, Mr S McGregor

The Committee Chair reported that challenges continue with some tenders with a number of single tender bids being received. There has been no change in respect to the Springtown issues.

The Management Accounts were presented to the Committee for the 9 Months to 30 April 2022. Traineeship income has not been as high expected. TFS programmes have been replaced with the new L2 Traineeship programmes.

The Interim Principal advised Governors that an offer has been accepted for the Maydown Site. This is currently going through the legal process. Regarding the budget which is normally approved by the Board at the June meeting, the Budget Act has not been approved as there is no Executive in place. There is a planning allocation that has been received by the Department (DfE). A concern is that the reduction on budget may be based on the budget allocation for 2020-2021. If this is the case this

will leave considerable pressures, together with the current significant rising energy and pay pressures. The College has already made significant cuts to the budget areas in Estates, IT and teaching materials. To date front line services in respect to curriculum provision have been protected as per the Department's (DfE) request. Another concern that might impact the budget is the reductions across the Sector in enrolments.

At this juncture Governors got the opportunity to place their queries to the Senior Leadership Team.

Procurement Contract Items – Suggested Spend items £100K and over

PROPOSED, Mrs C Shongo

SECONDED, Mr B Quinn

The Governing Body Acting Chair concluded the budget discussion and alerted Governors that a Special Resources Committee meeting may be called in August to consider approving the Budget for 2022/23.

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee discussed the proposal to split the Committee back into a two Committee structure, a Finance & General Purposes Committee and a Staffing Committee. It was agreed it would be more appropriate to wait until the new cohort of Governors join the Board in July 2022 and for the new Governing Body Chair to be appointed.

Following on the Committee Chair then reported on the Staffing matters discussed within the Committee meeting.

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

The Governing Body Acting Chair welcomed Ms Kelly to the meeting

The Resources Committee had received a summary of the breakdown of staff which currently shows 756 staff employed in the College as at 12 May 2022. The People Strategy Framework Review 2021-24 (Report 6) provided some of the key outcomes in respect to the five key themes of leadership, performing culture, employee engagement and partnership working, recognition and reward and learning and talent development.

There were 53 recruitment exercises during the period January – May 2022. Updates to the Get Got website will improve accessibility for applicants with a disability and will facilitate engagement for managers with job details in recruitment exercises. An increase in the absence rate for both teaching and support staff was reported in comparison to the 2020/21 period. Personal stress and mental health were identified as the main reasons.

A Hybrid Working Framework for the Sector has been developed. If staff request this option, consideration will be given for one day per week working remotely.

Going forward to improve the completion rates for mandatory training the training modules will be included within the induction process for part-time lecturers. The Resources Committee received the Fair Employment Monitoring Return as at 1 January 2022 and the Equality Update Report. Affirmative actions are being taken to address imbalances in the workforce.

The Governing Body Acting Chair apprised Governors of the vacancies for the positions of Chairs and Vice Chair for various Committees. The Safeguarding representative position on the Board will also become available. He indicated that for Governors to get the full Board experience and to assist with quoracy it might be useful for members to consider serving on two Committees.

An expression of Interest to be sent to Governors in respect to the Safeguarding representative position.

The Governing Body Acting Chair thanked Mrs Dougherty and invited Mr P McKeown, Interim Principal & Chief Executive to present his report.

Mr L Murphy left the meeting at this juncture.

94.7 INTERIM PRINCIPAL'S BUSINESS

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1 Interim Principal's Report
Report 1.1 Strabane Town Centre Regeneration Project
Report 1.2 Food Park Proposal

The Interim Principal referred Governors to Report 1 which provided detail to the various meetings he and senior colleagues attended recently with the Sector and industry partners.

It was agreed to invite Ms D Blaney, Director of Further Education to a Governing Body meeting during 2022/23 to update the Board on the Review of the FE Delivery Model.

Governors welcomed the news that the inaugural Gerard Finnegan (RIP) award in memory of the previous Governing Body Chair's integrity and his passion for education. The award was presented at the BEST in FE Education Awards Ceremony on 16 June 2022. The launch of the Eileen Cairns Scholarship Trophy was also made at the event in memory of an esteemed colleague Ms Eileen Cairns (RIP).

A charity Sector campus-to-campus cycle event took place recently with the proceeds being donated to the Air Ambulance NI.

The Interim Principal on behalf of the Senior Management Team formally congratulated Mrs J McKeever on her appointment as Governing Body Temporary Chair. The Board echoed these congratulations. Mrs McKeever will take up her new position on 1 July 2022.

Referring to the Strabane Town Centre Regeneration Project (Report 1.1) it was highlighted that the revised scale for the College Campus was now 2,000m². The Principal sits on the City Project Board. An internal College Project Board has also been established. The completion date for the OBC is now scheduled for 31 August 2022 however the Interim Principal reported this will be dependent on the risk (high) relating to the affordability of this Project. This risk relates to the recent high inflation within the construction trade. Estimates received now show the gross cost has moved from £8.12m to £14.38m.

Moving to the Food Park Proposal (Report 1.2), part of the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal, the Interim Principal provided an overview of the process to date. The Further Education (NI) Order 1997 prevents the College from operating aspects of the proposal (for example incubation space) and so if the project is to work it will require a partnership/consortium style approach.

Governor Mr S McGregor requested further information as to where the Project has been discussed in Council. The Interim Principal agreed to look into this.

On behalf of the Board the Governing Body Acting Chair noted the Board's appreciation and thanks to the Interim Principal and the Senior management Team for their work over the last few months.

94.8 GOVERNING BODY ACTING CHAIR'S BUSINESS

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

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| Report 1 | Schedule of Meetings 2022/23 |
| Report 2 | Safeguarding Representative on the Board – verbal report |
| Report 3 | Chairs/Vice Chairs to Committees – verbal report |

Members noted the Schedule of meetings for 2022/23 for the Governing Body. Reports 2 and 3 had already been discussed during Agenda item 94.6.

94.9 CORRESPONDENCE

Other than the correspondence noted during the meeting there was no other correspondence.

94.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business to discuss.

The Governing Body Acting Chair thanked everyone for joining the meeting. As this was his last meeting, he wished to thank everyone for their support over his time at the College. The meeting closed and went into private session.

94.11 RESERVED BUSINESS – taken separately

Date of next meeting: 28 September 2022

Signed:



Mrs J McKeever, Governing Body Temporary Chair

Date: 5 October 2022

APPROVED