
MINUTES OF THE NINETY FIFTH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS, COMMENCING 1710

PRESENT:

Mrs J McKeever (Governing Body Temporary Chair)
Ms M Breslin
Mr P Canavan
Mrs D Creevy
Mr S Gillespie
Mrs M Gormley
Mr K Kennedy
Mr L Murphy (Principal & Chief Executive) from item 95.3
Mr B Quinn
Mrs C Shongo
Ms V Toland

REMOTE ATTENDANCE:

Mrs S Fisher
Prof M Ó Néill
Mr P Thompson
Mr F Smyth

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P McKeown, Finance Director
Dr C O'Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards
Ms S Kelly, HR Manager (from item 95.6)
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

95.1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

Mrs J McKeever welcomed everyone to her first meeting as the Governing Body Temporary Chair. She thanked College management and staff who had been a tremendous support to her in her new role.

The Temporary Chair extended the Board's deepest sympathy to Mrs M Gormley on the recent passing of her brother. Sympathy was also noted to the families of Mrs Brenda Begley and Mr Martin Duffy, staff members who had passed away during the summer break. Sympathy cards had been sent on behalf of the Board to the families of the deceased (RIP).

For the benefit of new Governors, a round of self-introductions took place.

Apologies were received from Mr B O'Neill and Ms G Moss.

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

There was no conflict of interest declarations. Mr P Canavan noted an item of any other business. It was decided this matter would be taken under Reserved Business (95.11).

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Summary Register of Interests Report – October 2022

The updated Summary Register Report was noted. This included new entries in respect to Mr K Kennedy and Mr F Smyth. Amended entries for Mr P Canavan. Following his return to the College Mr L Murphy's entry had been updated.

Mr L Murphy arrived to the meeting at this juncture.

95.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2022**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 28 June 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. The Draft Minutes had also progressed through the previous Governing Body Acting Chair, Mr G Killeen. Mr G Killeen was content with the Minutes.

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mrs C Shongo

Report 1 Matters Arising

94.6 The expression of interest invite in relation to the Safeguarding Representative on the Board was sent to Governors on 21 July 2022. The Governing Body Temporary Chair thanked Mr Thompson for taking on this vital role.

94.7 It has been agreed that an invite be extended to Mrs D Blaney, Director of Further Education (DfE) to attend the Board's Strategy Day scheduled for January 2023.

94.7 Mr S McGregor, previous Governor had requested an update on the Council's position on the proposed Food Village Project within the Causeway Growth Deal. The Finance Director reported that a few meetings had been planned with Councillors however these were subsequently cancelled. Further meetings are scheduled with Councillor representatives.

The Governing Body Temporary Chair then invited Mr P Canavan, Committee Chair to report on the business of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

95.4 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1	Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022
Report 2	Committee's Terms of Reference
Report 3	Internal Audit Plan 2022/23
Report 4	NIAO Board Effectiveness – A Good Practice Guide, June 2022

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had received a useful presentation from the IT Services Manager on the cyber security work within the College. This included an overview on the users and computer profile. There have been significant increases in the active users in Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Teams. The IT Services Manager provided the Committee with details on the various cybersecurity enhancements since September 2020.

The Committee welcomed Mr F Smyth to his first Committee meeting. Mrs M Gormley had kindly agreed to take on the role as Vice Chair to the Committee. The Committee had received the Internal Audit Review Report on the Learner Management System. This was an advisory report with three key findings. The Committee Chair emphasised the importance of undertaking a full disaster recover testing of the Learner Management System.

The Internal Auditor presented the Annual Internal Audit Report & Opinion – Year Ended 31 July 2022 to the Committee. The report stated that overall, there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control within the College.

Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022

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

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mrs M Gormley

Report 2 Committee's Terms of Reference

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mrs C Shongo

Report 3 Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 - including an additional review to take place on Lost Learning as agreed by the Committee.

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mrs C Shongo

The Chair of the Education Committee Prof M Ó Néill who was joining the meeting remotely had connection issues. The Governing Body Temporary Chair advised a change to the Agenda and invited Mrs D Creevy, Chair of the Resources Committee to commence her report.

95.6 RESOURCES COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1	Committee Chair's Summary Report
Report 2	Draft Minutes of the Special Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 August 2022
Report 2.1	Draft Minutes of the Resources Meeting held on 20 September 2022
Report 3	Draft Annual Report & Financial Statements Year Ended 31 July 2022
Report 4	Budget Update 2022/23
Report 4.1	DfE Correspondence – June Internal Planning Update Sept 2022
Report 5	HR Business Plan 2021-22 update
Report 6	Equality & Good Relations Progress Report (Section 75) April 2021-March 2022
Report 7	Compliance Annual Report 2021-2022

The Committee Chair reported on the Special Resources Committee meeting that took place on 24 August 2022. This special meeting was called to update the Committee members on the budget position at that time. An update was also provided to the Committee on the Tribal benchmarking exercise.

This followed the matters relating to the Committee meeting held on 20 September 2022. At this meeting the Estates Manager provided an update on the Estates Strategy 2021-2031. Work is currently taking place within the Estates Department to look at options to help reduce the energy costs.

The Equality & Good Relations Report (Report 6) had progressed through the Equality Commission. Feedback is expected but not yet received. The extensive work taking place in the College and its commitment to the promotion of equality was acknowledged. The Compliance Annual Report 2021-2022 was presented to the Committee with no major queries.

The Department (DfE) issued the Space Utilisation Report for 2019-20. This is an annual exercise conducted by DfE on the FE Sector. Due to challenges relating to enrolments the College and the Sector has seen utilisation figures drop in recent times. The Finance Director provided the Board with further clarification on the formula used and provided explanation to the Board that the College's reduced figure of 27% mainly relates to the drop in enrolments.

The Committee received the Draft Annual Report & Accounts Year Ended 31 July 2022 (Report 3). The external audit of the Accounts commenced on 26 September 2022. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounts Direction and relevant accounting standards. The Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure for the Year Ended 31 July 2022 showed Total Comprehensive Income of £18.2m. This was represented by book entries relating to

an actuarial gain in respect of the NILGOSC pension scheme of £15.6m. The NI Teachers Pension Scheme is not included. Additionally, an unrealised surplus was showing £6.6m following a revaluation of land and buildings by the Land and Property Services (LPS) as at 31 July 2022. The Operating Deficit for the year is £3.9m. This mainly relates to depreciation of £3.6m. The final Draft of the Financial Statements for the Year End 31 July 2022 will be presented to the Committee/Board November 2022 meetings.

Referring to Report 4, (Budget papers) the Committee Chair reported that a further budget update was received from the Department (DfE) on 14 September 2022 (Report 4.1). Members were referred to the Budget breakdown (Annex A) which showed the Total Indicative Budget of £31.1m (including STS £86K). The Finance Director reported to the Board that this was a more favourable position. The College would expect to manage within budget for the year to 31 March 2023. The Budget paper will be updated to reflect the changes within Report 4 and brought to the Committee/Board again in November 2022.

Referring to the College Insurance Cover 2022/23, the Finance Director highlighted to the Board that the Sector premium had doubled in three years. There were increases to premiums across most areas but most significantly in Property & Liability, Legal Expenses and Cyber. In June 2021, the Department (DfE) gave approval for the provision of Insurance Services for the FE Sector for the next five years (2021/22 – 2025/26). Due to increased premiums a new Business Case or an addendum to the original Business Case will be required in advance of the year 5 to cover the additional premiums.

Draft Minutes of the Special Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 August 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 B Quinn

The Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 20 September 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 K Kennedy

Budget Update 2022/23

PROPOSED, Mrs D Creevy

SECONDED, Mr B Quinn

This concluded the reporting of the Finance matters.

Prof M Ó'Néill re-joined the meeting and the Governing Body Temporary Chair invited him to present the Education Committee Report.

95.5 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Draft Minutes of the Special Committee Meeting held on
27 September 2022

Report 2 Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Policy & Procedures

Report 3 Draft College Development Plan 2022/23

Report 1 Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 27 September 2022

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

PROPOSED, Mr P Canavan

SECONDED, Mrs J McKeever

The September 2022 Committee meeting focused on reporting on the current enrolment position and the closing of the 2021/22 academic year. In respect to enrolments for 2022/23, full-time student enrolments in both FE and HE has been challenging across the Sector. The College enrolments for Apprenticeships for 2022/23 was 82% on target.

The Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards briefed Governors on the annual review of the Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Policy & Procedures (Report 2). The changes to the Policy and Procedures mainly relate to wording, additional types of abuse have been included and some additional appendices added.

Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Policy & Procedures

PROPOSED, Mrs C Shongo

SECONDED, Ms M Breslin

Draft College Development Plan 2022/23 (Report 3) this final draft was submitted to the Department (DfE). The strategic context, the current operating environment and the guiding principles were referred to. It was noted the targets were shown within the planned activity for 2022/23 and for 2021/22. These targets were presented by funding streams.

Governors were content to approve the Plan.

PROPOSED, Mrs J McKeever

SECONDED, Mrs C Shongo

The Governing Body Temporary Chair highlighted that the positive outcome from the National Student Survey (NSS) in July 2022 which reported the overall student satisfaction at the College was 90% with the Sector achieving 76% overall.

Staff Governor, Ms V Toland reported on some positive student feedback to the Board.

It was agreed to pass on a note of thanks to the Staff involved in the recent success stories relayed by the Staff Governor to the Board.

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

The Governing Body Temporary Chair welcomed Ms Kelly to the meeting and the remaining items from the Resources Committee (Staffing matters) were then brought to the Committee by the Committee Chair, Mrs D Creevy.

95.6 RESOURCES COMMITTEE - CONTINUED

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Report 5 | HR Business Plan 2021-2022 update |
| Report 5.1 | HR Business Plan 2022-2023 |
| Report 6 | Equality & Good Relations Progress Report (Section 75) April 2021-March 2022 |
| Report 7 | Compliance Annual Report 2021-2022 |

The Committee Chair reported that a total of 51 recruitment exercises were carried out from 20 May 2022 – 07 September 2022. During this period 43 appointments were made, 33 permanent and 10 temporary. Currently there are 71 'live' posts going through the recruitment and selection process. Challenges continue in recruiting.

HR Department continue to work through a digital transformation plan to enhance the work within the Department.

In reporting the absence data within Committee, the percentage lost time rate was showing as at August 2021/22, 4.85% and 3.57% on the same period last year. For Teaching Staff as at August 2021/22, 0.84% against 0.97% on the same period last year. Mental health issues were the highest percentage for the reason for absence from September 2021 – August 2022. The HR Manager advised that HR would focus on

mental health for 2022/23. The College has signed up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter for employers to promote good mental health.

Continuing the Committee Chair reported that during August 2022 the College launched its Hybrid Working Framework on a pilot basis for six months. Staff may request to work from home one day per week, with four days per week on campus. Not all posts are suitable for hybrid working. At the time of reporting to the Committee 94 staff had forwarded requests with 52 being approved.

The HR Manager updated Governors on the high completion rates for the Staff Mandatory Training modules. The Staff Development Brochure for Semester 1 has been released. A new programme is currently being developed for newly appointed Curriculum Managers.

The HR Manager provided a summary of the key targets for 2022/23 within the Business Plan to the Committee.

Ms M Breslin, Staff Governor reported on the Equality & Good Relations Progress Report (Section 75) April 2021- March 2022. (Report 6). The Report has been forwarded to the Equality Commission for review. The Report outlines the valuable work of staff on the College's commitment to its equality scheme and to the promotion of equality.

PROPOSED, Mrs D Creevy

SECONDED, Mr B Quinn

In referring to the Compliance Annual Report 2021-22 (Report 7), which contained details on the work that took place during 2021-22. Data was provided on the access requests, data incident trends, DPIAs. No complaints under data protection legislation were received during 2021-22. There were no personal data related incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office during 2021-22.

95.7 PRINCIPAL'S BUSINESS

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Principal's Report

Mr P McKeown (Interim Principal and Chief Executive up to 26 September 2022) acknowledged Mr Murphy's return to the College following his secondment as Interim Principal & Chief Executive at South West College (SWC). Mr Murphy was reappointed as Accounting Officer and a member of the Governing Body of the College on 26 September 2022. Best wishes were recorded to the newly appointed Principal of SWC, Ms C McCartan.

Staff welcome back meetings took place in Strand Road, Limavady and Strabane Campuses on 9 September 2022. The Mid Year Assurance Statement for 2022-23 has been completed and returned to the Department (DfE).

Mr Murphy was pleased to report that a student has been awarded the JP McManus Scholarship.

Referring to the FE Review of the Delivery Model the Principal reported that he and the Governing Body Temporary Chair attended a meeting earlier that day with the Department (DfE). Tribal, an external contractor had been commissioned to conduct a benchmarking exercise on the Sector (Stage 1). The current exercise looked at the outputs and in terms of the statistics. The enrolments in the Sector indicate areas have been decreasing due to factors including demographics and competition from schools. The Sector with DfE will be asked to address the issue. This will require some fresh thinking.

95.8 GOVERNING BODY TEMPORARY CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Governing Body Temporary Chair read out to the Board the correspondence she received from Mr M Brennan, Permanent Secretary, DfE to express his thanks on behalf of the Department to the Governing Body for agreeing to the successful secondment of Mr Murphy to South West College. The Governing Body Temporary Chair also noted appreciation from herself and the Sector to Mr P McKeown who acted as Interim Principal and to Dr C O' Mullan, Director of Curriculum & Academic Standards for their great work during Mr Murphy's secondment.

An invite was extended to all Governors to attend the forthcoming HE Graduation event on 28 October 2022.

95.9 CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was received from Ms K Clarke, UCU Regional Official congratulating Mrs McKeever on her appointment as Governing Body Temporary Chair. The Governing Body Temporary Chair reported that she has since had a meeting with Ms Clarke.

A letter was received from Mr S McGregor thanking the Board during his term of office. Mr McGregor left the Board in June 2022.

95.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business to discuss.

The Governing Body Temporary Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting ended and went into private session.

95.11 RESERVED BUSINESS – taken separately

Date of next meeting: 16 November 2022

Signed: 

Governing Body Temporary Chair

Date: 16 November 2022