

SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Governing Body – Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2017, 5pm, Bangor Campus

Item No	Item
1.	<p>Chairman’s Business</p> <p>a) Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mrs H. Reid (Chair), Mr K Webb (Principal/CEO), Prof A Woodside (<i>to 645pm</i>), Mr D Sagar (Chair of the Governing Body), Mrs K Scott, Mrs C King, Mr A Corbett, Ms S Corbett, Mr S Pollard</p> <p>Apologies: Mrs B Larkin, Ms C Meharg</p> <p>In Attendance: Dr Michael Malone (Director of Curriculum and Information Services), Mrs H McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support), Ms Claire Henderson (Head of Quality Excellence and Development), Ms Heather Miller (Head of Quality Excellence and Development), Mr Roger Duncan (Head of SERC Extra), Mrs. Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Ms Rachael Heaney (Student Governor-elect), Mrs. Annie Hamilton (Boardroom Apprentice), Mr. Colm McAlinden (Community Radio Coordinator) Items 1-3 only, Michael Clarke and Paul Cromie (My Radio Project Officers) Items 1-3 only, Rihanna Kilburn (Past student) Items 1-3 only</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. The Chair outlined the chronology of the development of the Draft CDP. Since there had not been an Education Committee meeting in the period between 12th June and 20th September the Draft CDP was presented to the full GB on 18th September and was agreed by all GB members. The Chair asked members if anyone had any issues with this, no one expressed any issues.</p> <p>b) Declarations of conflicts of interest</p> <p>The Chair asked if any member had an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with any item on the agenda. There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.</p> <p>c) Minutes of the meeting held on 6TH June 2017</p> <p>The Chair invited members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting held on 6th June 2017. Mr Corbett highlighted an amendment was required on page 2 to reflect the correct number/scheduling of College terms. Members confirmed subject to these changes being made the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Proposer: Andrew Corbett; Seconder: Carolyn King</p> <p>d) Review of Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Chair advised members the Chair of the Governing Body had highlighted two agreed areas of work are missing from the committee’s terms of reference, marketing and customer services, the Chair also invited</p>

comment on the size of the business the Education Committee has been assigned through these terms of reference; specifically, if it is too large. The following points were noted during a brief discussion:

- Mr Pollard commented that he took the point around the breadth of business but noted that some areas relate to strategy and others to compliance and performance and could therefore be reviewed and consolidated.
- The Chair highlighted the College Development Plan is included in the committee's remit this year. It went straight to the Governing Body for review, the Chair asked members if they felt the CDP still sits with this committee. In response to this Mr Pollard suggested that the CDP should be given appropriate time and focus and could therefore be a discrete item on its own.
- The committee briefly debated whether it was appropriate for marketing to sit with this committee. It was suggested that as this area is very broad it should be taken back to the Governing Body to oversee, the Principal advised that as the Governing Body already has a heavy agenda there is a risk there will be no time to review this area properly.
- The Chair asked members to consider where they felt marketing and customer services fit and to feedback their views by email to the Secretary.
- Mr Pollard suggested it would be useful to have a thematic approach to the areas included in the terms of reference.

Action Point: Members were asked to email the Secretary their views on the terms of reference so that the next meeting can reconsider.

e) Plan of Work 2017/18

The Chair advised members a plan of work for the meetings for the rest of this academic year still needs to be agreed, members briefly discussed if the Education committee needed to further discuss the College Development Plan that had been agreed by the Governing Body on 18th September. It was agreed the target enrolment of 30,000 included in the CDP is quite a decline but the committee noted the rationale provided by the management to commit to this target. The Chair proposed waiting until the Governing Body Strategy Day on 16th October before finalising the plan of work for 2017/18, this will ensure the committee can choose a focus to align with the main body of work the GB will follow. Members confirmed they were content with this approach.

Action Point: The Chair will finalise the programme for work 2017/18 after the Governing Body Strategy Day on 16th October.

2. Matters Arising

a) Action Points from meeting 6th June 2017

The Chair noted that most actions were complete or on the agenda. The Student Governor-elect agreed to review the previous Student Governor's suggestion to produce a student friendly version of the CDP document

and feedback any ideas to the committee. The Principal suggested the management could work with the Students Union on the CDP 2017/18; to get views from students and perhaps produce something based more on infographics.

Action Point: The management will liaise with the Students Union to produce a student friendly version of the College Development Plan 2017/18.

3. My Radio Project Presentation

The Community Radio Coordinator (CRC) and members of his team attended the meeting to present an overview of the My Radio Project, a brief discussion took place afterwards and the following points were noted:

- Mrs. King suggested that the project could work with students who are involved with the Best Awards through Skills and Training Awards as they find that they need to speak publicly and speak about themselves, she noted it would be extremely beneficial for them, the CRC agreed to speak to her outside the meeting to take this suggestion forward.
- Mr. Pollard commended the CRC and noted it was a fantastic project, he further enquired if there was any opportunity to sell the project outside the College. The CRC advised this is currently where the next step for the project is and he plans to speak with colleagues in Business Services to enquire what opportunities there are for the project with regard to companies.
- Mr. Sagar suggested the project could be further promoted on the homepage of the web site. The CRC said will speak with the E Authors and the Marketing team to push further promotion of the project.
- The Chair thanked the team for their presentation and congratulated them all on its success, she noted that a main aim is about the empowerment of people which she personally believed was fantastic.

4. Items for Noting

a) Update on Curriculum on offer for 2017/18, Enrolments and Results

The Director of Curriculum and Information Services (C&IS) presented the latest enrolment figures to the committee, he highlighted that numbers are down this year, the committee had a discussion on the factors influencing these numbers; the following points were noted:

- The Director of C&IS advised the committee that from the beginning of term on 4th September 300 full time students have been removed from the system and this will most likely continue until the middle of October. This is mainly due to students returning to schools or gaining a university place.
- The Director of C&IS highlighted that schools are under pressure to make themselves viable and have therefore offered more in terms of vocational subjects in the last few years, this has directly impacted enrolments across the FE sector.
- The committee noted several other factors that are making a direct impact on the decline of enrolment numbers such as the decline in the number of 16-year olds, pilots have been stopped in traineeships as DfE redefine the curriculum, schools providing softer vocational subjects and some issues surrounding Higher Level Apprentices.

- The Chair reminded the committee that when the Director of FE had attended the Governing Body meeting in May 2017 she had been asked about these systemic issues and collaborative working between DfE and the Department of Education. The Governing Body had been advised that progress was slow at that time and the Chair noted no further progress seems to have been made.
- The Principal advised that schools are responding to policy from the previous Education Minister and are ensuring they remain viable. A DfE working group has been established to look at what impacts new provisions in schools have had on enrolments across the sector, the Principal advised that the College should be focussing on areas that we believe schools cannot offer.
- The Principal reminded the committee that applications had increased this year and therefore the advertising campaign has worked to increase awareness of the College. He also asked the committee that survey results have shown that some students stay in school because they are unsure what career path they want to take and advised the College can offer a careers service to engage directly with these students.
- The Chair thanked everyone for the discussion and noted that this will inform part of the discussion on the Governing Body Strategy day in October as it is such an important live issue.

b) College Development Plan/Outcome Based Accountability-Update

The Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Planning updated the committee on the progress being made with Outcome Based Accountability, she advised that progress has been slow. The Director advised she has attended workshops hosted by DfE, they are currently looking at 4-5 outcomes and the Executive Office is coordinating a mechanism for all Government departments to collaborate across each of the outcomes and ensure they are aligned with pillars in the Industrial Strategy. The Director advised she will continue to update the committee on the progress being made.

c) Cause for Concerns-Prevention

The Head of SERC Extra directed members to the written report provided on Cause for Concerns for the last academic year, a brief discussion took place and the following points were noted:

- The Head of SERC Extra acknowledged that there has been an increase in issues reported relating to mental health across the sector, however the College have several preventative strategies in place to try and provide support to students much quicker. He advised members that unfortunately in this area there are a lot of factors outside of the College's remit.
- Members were asked to note that the rise in overall numbers highlights the increase in awareness of support the College can provide across the student body.
- Mr. Sagar highlighted that Ms. McKee told the GB that most students needing such support are from deprived backgrounds, he suggested that some way of identifying students from these backgrounds at the beginning may facilitate preventive support to avoid issues further down the line. The committee agreed this would be

beneficial but a member added the College need to be mindful to be sensitive in the method of putting support plans in place to ensure that people are not labelled.

- The Chair highlighted strategically the Governing Body should ensure the SERC family is safe and at committee level this involves ensuring the data received is robust and the committee should be asking what else can be done to provide support. The Chair noted the proactive approach the College takes in this area and that students are often more open to talking to staff because of this and find the College environment a safe place.

Action Point: The committee requested if the management would consider a mechanism to identify students considered to be most at risk when they enter the college including those from deprived backgrounds to ensure they can be protected from becoming a cause for concern.

d) Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2017

The Principal asked members to note the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer Report 2017 and provided a verbal overview of the content of the report. The Principal advised members the statistics in the report will be considered when the College is using the Outcome Based Accountability method. He regretted that DfE had not provided regional data to the college as it could be more relevant.

e) SERC International Plan

The Head of Quality Development and Excellence (HoQE), Claire Henderson, presented the SERC International Plan 2017-2020 to the committee, the following points were noted:

- She highlighted the current collaborations, future plans and areas identified to expand. She asked members to note she is representing the College at a sector wide international working group which aims to share best practice.
- Mrs. Hamilton highlighted the international work conducted in FE is a unique selling point that schools cannot offer and enquired if it is promoted to potential students as this may increase enrolment figures. The Principal advised the work is promoted heavily through various marketing tools including the website, promotional videos and social media. He highlighted that students face visa issues if they have studied a foundation degree with the College, as they have to return home and apply for a new visa if they wish to continue to their studies with the College after this. The matter has been highlighted with UK Border Agency and in turn they have referred it back to DfE to review. He also said the lack of work entitlement is also a barrier.
- The Principal also advised the College is engaging with Invest NI who are soon to announce their education strategy, this will be shared with this committee when it is available and the International Strategy will be aligned with it.
- The Chair of GB asked if the next such paper can explain why the particular countries and projects had been chosen, i.e., why Uganda, Japan, etc. and not others.

Action Point: The committee requested rationale for country choices in the next paper.

	<p>f) Screened Care Welfare Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>The Head of SERC Extra presented the Safeguarding Policy to the committee and advised minor changes had been made to the policy since the committee had reviewed it at their meeting in June 2017. The Chair enquired if the safeguarding Governors had been named in the policy as she believed it was best practice, the Head of SERC Extra advised he would enquire if this was necessary with the trainers at the Safeguarding Training on 21st September and amend the policy accordingly.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Students Union (SU) Constitution</p> <p>The Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support advised members the Students Union had recently revised and amended the SU Constitution, the aim of this was mainly to update the language in the document and reflect more what the SU are doing. The document was recently presented to the Higher Education Review Board and they advised they were content with the document as it was presented. Members confirmed they were also content with the changes presented.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Quality Assurance (QA) and Higher Education QA</p> <p>The Head of Quality Development and Excellence (HoQE), Heather Millar, addressed the committee to provide an update on Higher Education Quality Assurance, the following points were noted during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HoQE advised the Higher Education (HE) provision of the College will be reviewed by Quality Assurance Agency during 2018 as part of the DfE requirement to develop the centre from entry level to established provider. The ability to demonstrate robust evidence of SERC HE governance is part of the review. • The HoQE advised the committee that an integral part of the review process is how risks are monitored in this area and how updates in this area are minuted. The HoQE stressed that minutes form part of the audit for this process. • The HoQE highlighted that it is essential to the review process that evidence is recorded correctly and she advised she is grateful for the committee's assistance in advance of the process starting. She also highlighted the committee will have sight of the review before it is submitted and it will be in the form of self-evaluation much the same as the Education Training Inspectorate reviews. A member of the Governing Body could meet with inspectors to answer any queries they may have on the submitted document.
<p>7.</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There was no correspondence to note.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Any other notified business</p> <p>The Committee Chair invited members to stay and watch the recent promotional videos produced by the College.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 15th November 2017, 5pm, Lisburn Campus.</p>

The meeting concluded at 8.15pm.