

SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Governing Body – Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st November 2018, 5pm, Bangor Campus

Item No	Item
1.	<p>Chair's Business</p> <p>a) Attendance and Apologies</p> <p>Present: Mrs H Reid, Mrs C King, Mr K Webb (Principal/CEO), Mr G Hetherington (Vice Chair of the Governing Body), Mr A Corbett, Mrs K Scott, Mr J Mackell Items 2-10 only, Miss A Gallagher Items 3-10 only, Mr N Bodger</p> <p>Apologies: Prof A Woodside, Mr S Pollard, Mrs K Fraser</p> <p>In Attendance: Dr Michael Malone (Director of Curriculum and Information Services), Heather McKee (Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support), Heather Miller (Head of Quality Excellence & Development) Items 3-10 only, Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), William Greer (Chief Training and Contracts Officer) in attendance for all items except item 4, Richard Armstrong (Schools Partnership Manager) Item 4 only</p> <p>In the Chair: Heather Reid</p> <p>b) Declarations of Conflict of Interest</p> <p>Mr Corbett declared a potential conflict in relation to item 4 presented on the agenda (Schools Partnership Presentation), the Chair noted Mr Corbett's declaration and in consultation with the committee agreed that there was no requirement for him to leave the meeting during the discussion. No other member declared a perceived conflict of interest.</p> <p>c) Minutes from meeting 19th September 2018</p> <p>The Chair invited members to review the minutes and highlighted that a change was made to the reference of the Safeguarding Governor role and the discussion around the College Development</p>

Plan since the minutes had been circulated to members for review. The committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting and agreed they were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Proposer: Andrew Corbett

Seconder: Kim Scott

d) Annual Review of the Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair advised members that the Chairs Committee had planned to cross reference the terms of reference for all committees to ensure there is a structured approach to work. The Chair advised that a meeting with all committee Chairs and the Vice Chair was planned after this meeting and the ToR would be cross referenced with the other committees to ensure they were fit for purpose.

Action Point: The committee proposed to agree the terms of reference after they had been cross referenced with the other sub committees

e) Program of Work 2018/19

The Chair asked members to note that one amendment had been made to the approved program of work, which is that the College Development Plan was moved to the September meeting as this reflects the approval of this document in the previous meeting. The Chair advised that the program of work is a working document and topics can be added to it as they are brought to the committee's attention throughout the remainder of the academic year.

2. Matters arising:

a) Action Points from meeting 19th September 2018

The Chair advised members that most of the action points had been completed or were addressed on the agenda. The Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support updated the committee on the action point requesting promotional posters were produced for the College Development Plan. She advised that this was very much led by the Student's Union and a draft will be presented to the committee at their next meeting. This is in response to the recent focus groups conducted by the SU.

The Chair highlighted that the request to review the role of the Safeguarding Governor was in response to the current Governor's in post terms coming to an end not to review the actual role as this is clearly defined.

Action Point: The Vice Chair of the Governing Body agreed to request expression of interests for the role of the Safeguarding Governor at the next Governing Body meeting on 26th November 2018

b) Life Long Learning Week Update and 14-19-year-old Strategy

The Director of SPQS provided an update on the development of the Life Long Learning Week and advised that it is anticipated the program will raise awareness of what the College is doing and especially for the economically inactive which is a focus for the College in terms of addressing social inclusion. The program will run over the inter-semester week which will allow staff to attend. The Director advised that the week will finish with a conference on 24th January which aims to raise the profile of Further Education in driving social and economic wellbeing and demonstrate that a change in thinking in education and business could have mutual benefit for the economically inactive and local businesses. International keynote speakers have been confirmed.

The Principal reported that DfE had recently advertised a vacancy for a Curriculum Advisor for the 14-19 Working group that Richard Armstrong, Schools Partnership Manager has successfully been seconded to for a one-year period. The Chair advised the committee that in relation to the 14-19-year-old Strategy that as a committee she would like to look at the proportion of 14-19 students in the College, the balance of services and the impact on the College.

3. Employers -Presentation on Professional Skills Centre

The Chief Training and Contracts Officer addressed the committee to provide an overview of the Professional Skills Centre which is located at CITB Nutts Corner Training Centre, Dundrod. He began by providing a detailed overview of the PSC and advised that the courses running out of the centre compliment the College's role as the lead College in the Construction Hub. In

response to questions from the committee the CT&CO confirmed that the College has already expanded into the Republic of Ireland market for example many ROI companies have used the College to train their employees to UK Gas qualification standards when they are awarded contracts in Northern Ireland, the Principal advised that there are further plans to work in Scotland; specifically with Forthvalley College who the College has already established a collaborative link in other areas.

The CT&CO advised members that the set-up costs for the period 2017/18 were £30k, there were minimal costs in terms of labour as SERC staff had conducted a large part of the refurbishment to the building in their own time and that a lot of the equipment was provided through sponsorship. The CT&CO advised that the building has been procured through a license with CITB and not a lease which is £18k per annum. Members commended the efforts made in setting up the PSC and noted the plans for expansion through the business services team, members noted that the increase in cost this year is due to the increase in the number of staff needed to deliver the courses and seek new opportunities with employers.

4. Qualifications -Presentation on Schools Partnerships

The Schools Partnership Manager addressed the committee to present the background to the Schools partnership, benefits to SERC in maintaining these links, the current position and the issues and challenges facing the partnerships. The SPM informed members that through the programme achievements rates have been very successful but there are a number of issues affecting both the Schools and the College that will affect the programme going forward, a brief discussion took place and the following points were noted:

- In response to a question from members the Principal advised that the drop-in demographics will not see an improvement for at least six or seven years which will continue to affect the College's enrollments and the number of pupils the College can engage with through the Schools partnership. The Schools Partnership Manager highlighted that the number of pupils staying on in 6th form at school has increased but there has been a decline in the number of programmes the College can run

(particularly after hours) because the Department of Education has stopped the funding previously allocated for them.

- Mrs. Scott noted that from the presented figures that some school pupils are going onto Level 3 without obtaining basic grades; she advised that is extremely worrying. She enquired if key stage 4 and 5 pupils are surveyed to allow the College to link the results with the marketing strategy, the SPM confirmed that surveys were carried out and that it is a complex picture. The committee were informed that for the first time local primary schools were invited to the FE open days as part of a long-term marketing strategy which aimed to expose children to the College at a younger age. The feedback from the event has been extremely positive from the children and the teachers that accompanied them many of whom had never been in the campuses despite the proximity to the primary schools.
- In response to Mrs. Scott's first comment the Principal advised that over 3,000 pupils are removed from school after the AS year because they have not achieved the sufficient grade to go onto the next year of A2. These pupils then come to SERC to complete a two-year course, however many have enough UCAS points to apply for university at the end of year one; which at times leaves these students struggling in university and has a negative effect on the College overall numbers.
- The committee noted the information provided by the SPM highlighting the drop in the number of courses offered at KS4 and post 16 and noted that this was concerning as there wasn't a strong rationale to amend the number of courses. The Chair advised that the pathway to university had been cut off for some pupils following this as checks had not been properly conducted on what subjects would be accepted by universities. The SPM advised that this has had a direct impact on the collaboration with schools as they have had to drop subjects that had been previously delivered through SERC such as electronics.
- The Chair thanked the SPM for his presentation and wished him well in his secondment.

5. College Development Plan

a) College Development Plan 2017/18 Report

The Chair noted that all targets had been met in the presented report, she advised the committee that there is a change in the agenda for this committee and the work presented will have a strategic link directly back to the Programme for Government which also provides a further rationale on why the Governing Body has requested the information presented to them through this committee.

b) College Development Plan 2018/19 Progress Report

The Chair began by provided an overview of the timeline of the approval process of the College Development Plan 2018/19, members were advised that the CDP would be presented to the full Governing Body meeting at the next meeting on 26th November as per this committee's recommendation at the last meeting in September. The Chair further advised that since the committee had reviewed and approved the CDP in September a commissioning note has been received from DfE that has requested a very specific style of template is used for reporting.

The Director of SPQS confirmed that the MILT team are currently working on collating the data to present in the report and therefore only one table has been populated so far, the Director directed members to the table providing information on Employers and advised that along with the table an infographic will also be provided, she reminded the committee that as part of the OBA rationale the information in the CDP should relate to the draft Programme for Government, , be publishable and easy to read. The Director advised that the refined data will be circulated to members by email for review.

The Chair sought members views that they were content to recommend the CDP 2018-19 for approval to the Governing Body on the proviso that as per the Commissioning Note there will be a change to the data presented, all members agreed with this course of action.

The Director of Curriculum & Information Services provided a detailed overview of how the data is quality assured, members noted that the College use the MIS System and internal reports to extract the information and the process of quality assurance is done when ensuring that the information tallies across the two-model approach.

Agreed: The committee agreed to recommend the CDP 2018-19 to the Governing Body at the meeting on 26th November, the committee noted that in order to be compliant with the DfE Commissioning Note further information will be provided in the reporting template

c) Applications and Enrolments

The Director of C&IS detailed enrolment data from the written report provided and highlighted the report has been reformatted to provide the most recent information at the start of the report. The committee noted the current enrolment figures provided and the Director highlighted that where the College have a unique product to offer the enrolment numbers are performing well, which he advised is extremely important from a strategic viewpoint.

The Director highlighted that there is a decline in the Higher Education figures and there are several factors effecting HE across the Sector, including demographics, competition from the universities and the lack of flexibility from universities with foundation degrees. New initiatives have been introduced to target HE this year including additional open nights specifically for HE and a collaborative approach from the Sector to get an agreed position on foundation degrees from DfE. The Director also highlighted the strategy aimed at primary schools that will also target parents and adult learners to get them into the campus to begin with to allow the College to showcase what it can offer. The Director advised that students' attitude to debt is changing so lower fees isn't necessarily attractive but in terms of unique selling points entrepreneurship will be a focus for the College to attract students so that they become the employer.

In response to a question on Essential Skills and end testing the Director confirmed that every campus now has a hub for Essential Skills to assist students that are struggling with some aspects of math's and English; the hubs have been utilized and are very successful.

The Director advised that it is difficult to produce data that compares like for like for a specific point in the year as it depends on when qualifications are processed, this can be a complex process in terms of mapping the qualifications.

Action Point: The Chair requested that a discussion was held at the next meeting on marketing vs. engagement; specifically, how it impacts on enrolments

d) Whole College Quality Improvement Plan and Whole College SER

The Head of Quality, Excellence and Development addressed the committee and requested members to review the assurance documentation for Whole College Self Evaluation, 2017-2018 and Whole College Improvement Plan, 2019-2019 and comment on the key areas for reflection.

A brief discussion took place and the following points were highlighted:

- The Head of QED asked members to note that these documents are used as part of any inspection the College will be subject to. The Chair highlighted that the documents are about self-evaluation and the College has a certain bar to meet in order to use the descriptors and provide evidence to demonstrate how this has been achieved.
- The Chair advised members that she had not seen any area of concern in the presented documents and as Chair of the Education committee she will tasked during the inspections to confirm the committee had reviewed the document and any areas of concerns had been raised, members agreed that they had no areas of concern to highlight.
- The Vice Chair of the Governing Body enquired what effort was being made to turn around construction crafts. In response the Director of C&IS highlighted that a meeting has taken place to discuss retention and the other issues in construction, this will be driven forward by the CT&CO. The CT&CO confirmed the big focus is on Essential Skills to ensure that students can complete courses by getting the buy in from them on English and math's, this will prepare students to sit the end testing exams for Essential Skills, a new app has been developed to provide further support to these students.
- The Chair stated she was pleased to see the areas for improvement that had been highlighted in last years report had been addressed and asked member if they were content to recommend the documents to the Governing Body for adoption, all members agreed they were. The Chair asked members if they would proof read the document again before it is presented to the Governing Body and email any typos etc. to the Head of QED.

Action Point: The Head of QED advised the documents would be proof read again before final sign off

<p>6.</p>	<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>The Director of SPQS presented the written report which detailed the background strategy informing the community engagement approach supporting Social Inclusion outcomes. The Director provided a brief overview of the main points detailed within the report and advised that recent statistics show that there are 320k economic inactive people across Northern Ireland, the strategy presented demonstrates how the College will support those people who are seeking employment from this number and shows the impact already made through the engagement work carried out in the Newcastle and Ballynahinch campuses.</p> <p>The Director advised the committee of the future plans for engagement such as a focus in the Hollywood area and attending mother and toddler groups to interact with the community. The Chair welcomed this approach, she noted that it is labour intensive but highlighted that face to face interaction is extremely positive.</p> <p>In response to a question on how the success of these students is measured the Director advised that the majority of these students will come through the Restart and Access programmes, she advised that most go onto FE or university, some of the students have started with nothing and have reached the level of PHD at university. The Director stressed that staff in the College work extremely hard to ensure that students have the support to stay on at College despite difficulties with the benefits system and that these students are at times more committed because they want to achieve. The Principal advised that if the issues with the benefit system did not exist these would be the best performing courses because of the commitment demonstrated by the students.</p> <p>In closing her overview of the report, the Director advised that she has had a number of meetings with the Department for Communities recently to address the issue surrounding the benefits system and the new Director of DfC was scheduled to visit the Newcastle campus to view the positive work going on for community engagement.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>a) HE Review Board Minutes</p>

	<p>The Chair advised that the Governing Body are responsible for reviewing the HE Review Board minutes having oversight of the HE element of the College. In response to a question on rebranding that had been highlighted in the minutes the Director of SPQS advised that this is a work in progress and the board meeting was a useful platform to discuss ideas.</p> <p>b) HE Annual Quality Assessment</p> <p>The Principal directed members to the written letter received from DfE seeking annual assurances about the quality of the College’s higher education provision. He informed the committee that the College is now an established provider of HE following the recent QAA inspection and as Accounting Officer he must assure the Governing Body have proper oversight of the overall process for HE.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Policies Review Schedule</p> <p>a) Library and Learning Resource Centre Policy.</p> <p>The committee noted the policy and that no changes had been made, the Chair highlighted that approval was required however as the review date had passed. The Chair asked the committee to note that an annual review schedule will be presented at the next GB meeting. The policy was approved on the proposal of Andrew Corbett and seconded by Neil Bodger.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Items for Information</p> <p>a) Cause for Concerns</p> <p>The Director of SPQS directed members to the written report and in presenting an overview of the report highlighted that staff have noted an increase in the number of young people reporting historical abuse to tutors; the increase could be attributed to the Me-Too campaign that was heavily publicized in the media recently.</p> <p>The Vice Chair of the Governing Body noted that the number of students with mental health was significant and this has been the same in terms of the staff absence numbers also, he highlighted that addressing these issues with both staff and students is critical. The Director provided an overview of the support systems in place for students including self-referral clinics and self-help courses which both staff and students can avail of. The Chair noted that the high figures around mental health are difficult to review and the committee should keep a focus on these updates to ensure as much support is provided as possible.</p>

	<p>In response to questions from members the Director also confirmed that the Students Union is very much involved in the initiatives taken to address mental health especially now a new Student Engagement Manager is in post she can liaise much more closely with pastoral care leads in each of the campuses.</p> <p>b) Careers Advisory Forum Report</p> <p>The Director of SPQS asked members to note the report provided on the Careers Advisory Forum and that Claire Henderson, Head of International, Quality, Excellence and Development has been nominated to sit on the group on behalf of the Sector.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>No other business was discussed.</p>
	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>Wednesday 20th February 2018, 5pm, Lisburn Campus</p>

The meeting concluded at 19.53