



SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Education Committee of the Governing Body (the “Committee”) held on Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 17:30, in Meeting Room D Floor, Lisburn Campus

1. Chairs Business

a) Attendance and apologies

Present: Mr John Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body) Items 1-9 only, Mr Tommy Martin (Interim Principal & CEO) Mr Darren Stewart, Mrs Deborah O’Hare, Mr Samuel Hagen, Mrs Carolyn King, Mr Alan McCrum, Ms Majella Corrigan, Mr Derek Wilson, Mr Michael McQuillan (Agenda item 3-11 only), Ms Vikki Pinkerton, Mr Mark Huddleston, Dr Danny McConnell, Mr Steven Lee (Agenda item 3-11 only), Mrs Nuala Reid, Mrs Nicola Wilson, Mrs Pauline Leeson

In attendance: Mrs Heather McKee (Deputy Principal Student Support Services) Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mr Gary Ritchie (Deputy Principal Curriculum), Mrs Madeline Bridgman (Senior Communications Officer) Agenda Item 4 only, Mrs Emma Carson (Acting Director of HR & Facilities) Items 1-9 only, Mr Andrew Emmett (Acting Director of IT & Finance)

Apologies: None

In the Chair: Mrs O’Hare

b) Declarations of Conflict of Interests

The following conflict were declared:

- Mrs O’Hare advised she is employed by The Board of Governors of the Wallace High School (a NDPB) as Principal. The sponsor department for funding and development work and other applications is DENI supported by or delegated to the EA as appropriate. She is also current member of the College Advisory Group (Education) CAFRE DAERA CAFRE offers level 2 to level 6 + qualification and a member of the NI Skills Council.

•Ms Corrigan declared she is employed by CCMS whose sponsor department is DENI. She is a current member of the Governing Body of Stranmillis College.

- Mr McQuillan declared he is Chief Executive of Enterprise NI and a board member of Invest NI. No action was taken in relation to the declared conflicts.
- The Interim Principal & CEO declared his daughter was a part time lecturer at the College.

No action was taken in relation to any of the declared conflicts.

c) Minutes of Education Committee meeting, held on 18th June 2024.

Minutes previously issued to all members.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting held on 18th June and agreed they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting. The minutes were agreed on the proposal of Carolyn King and seconded by Alan McCrum.

d) Matters Arising

Paper previously issued to all members.

Members noted the actions points from the previous meeting were complete. The Chair highlighted that as discussions progress in the meeting, members could suggest appropriate issues to invite a Departmental rep to attend a future meeting.

e) Committee Cycle of Business 24/25

The Chair advised she had met with the Secretary and CMT to review the work plan now the new management structure had time to embed. Members reviewed the plan and noted that it remained fluid throughout the year to address any urgent agenda items that may come up.

Agreed: The Committee Cycle of Business was approved on the proposal of Sam Hagen and seconded by Derek Wilson.

2) Correspondence

Correspondence previously issued to all members.

a) Publication of Further Education Outcomes 22-23

The Deputy Principal Student Support Services asked members to note the enclosed correspondence. She highlighted some of the key SERC statistics to the committee including 61% of leavers are currently employed and 4% unemployed which compares favourably to the rest of the Sector. In response to a members question the Deputy Principal Curriculum confirmed that the College uses these statistics to help inform curriculum delivery and to map the needs of industry to the offerings.

3) Update on Restructuring

The Deputy Principal Student Support Services advised that the staff briefing, and development program is being implemented, with a focus on transparency and communication. A new Leadership Group is being established to harness experience across the College and provide a supportive and structured way forward. The group is working on an annual cycle to embed change in the college culture. The work program is expected to be effective and will be evaluated by the wider group at the end of the year. The staff briefings are planned to be routine and involve a well-understood role. The school structure change was implemented pre-summer, allowing staff to reflect and return ready for implementation.

4) Update on Marketing and Prospectus

At this juncture the SCO joined the meeting.

The Senior Communications Officer presented an overview of the marketing and PR activity within the College. The Chair commented that it was a very informative overview and displayed the range of activity being carried out to promote the College.

The SCO highlighted to members that the use of digital and social media had been central to the overall marketing campaigns and increasing enrolments.

In response to a members question the Interim Principal and CEO advised that despite a substantial budget cut the marketing team have done an excellent job and the focus on digital has been genius. He added that the Department had previously capped the marketing budget, and the budget was reduced further in the recent savings plan by the College, by 30-40%.

In response to a suggestion on capturing further data the SCO advised the team would consider the use of QR Codes to capture data more easily. The Deputy Principal SSS added that the website allows for tracking spending on landing pages and conversions, which will be integrated into the marketing plan next year.

The Chair thanked the SCO for attending committee and thanked her for the excellent presentation.

At this juncture the SCO left the meeting.

5) Delivering the Economic Vision A three year forward look & 2024/25 Action

Members reviewed the Departmental document and noted the thread of skills highlighted in the document and so there is a lot in this vision for the sector. Members commented that it is evident the Minister is supportive of FE and it is helpful to see targets and baselines within the report.

6) Sustainability Framework Update

The DPSSS talked to the written paper at 006 and highlighted to the committee as discussed at GB Strategy Day, the document serves as an umbrella to consolidate various aspects of college operations without overburdening them with excessive reporting.

Agreed: The Sustainability Framework Update was approved on the proposal of Mark Huddleston and seconded by Majella Corrigan.

7) Risk: Maintaining qualification availability and delivering qualification reform

The Chair began by explaining that the Chair of Audit & Risk had requested this item was discussed after it had presented to ARAC on 12th September and was apparent that this risk was both fast moving and posing a risk to students achieving.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum provided members with a brief overview of the risk and began by advising that BTEC level 3 hospitality was removed for delivery in August, but a close qualification was identified through alternate providers to align with career and entitlement work.

The Institute of Motor Industry is proposing to withdraw a suite of 54 quals, impacting 112 enrolments in SERC Level 5 programmes. The College is exploring alternative qualifications, and it is hoped learners will not be fully impacted unless specific modules are not available. The College is requesting letters of support from employers to submit to the Department to highlight the issues around this withdrawal.

The DPC highlighted the engagement work across the Sector on this issue and advised that he has reached out to Scottish awarding organisation, and they are open to idea of being reaccredited in NI, there is a cost involved and so they are asking for broader sector approach. He added that while sector engagement is crucial in order to respond the Sector needs engagement from CCEA, for example 6 different sustainability courses were developed by the sector and they have been sitting with CCEA for 6 months waiting to be reviewed.

The committee discussed the role of both the regulator and Department and noted that the sector is limited in the control it has over the English market of qualifications.

Action: Committee agreed to invite a Departmental Official to a meeting to discuss the qualifications risk

Action: Committee suggested that a special meeting or workshop is held for GB to discuss the qualifications matter further if it cannot be resolved swiftly and poses further risks to learners

8) College Development Plan

Papers previously issued to all members.

A) Draft CDP 24/25

The DPSSS presented the draft CDP and highlighted to the committee how it links to both the Programme for Government Framework and the Minister's economic priorities. She advised of some of the delivery planned for 24/25.

B) Applications and Enrolments

The Deputy Principal Curriculum talked to the written report provided at 008B and highlighted there has been an increase in applications since the report was produced, he also advised that the next paper will include part time provision. He added that he expects enrolments to exceed last year's overall total, and further highlighted that it is about building pathways for progression in the college for the learners. The Chair thanked the DPC for the update and commented that this report was much more user friendly, and the information was very clearly set out.

9) Higher Education/Further Education

At this juncture the Chair of the Governing Body and Acting Director of HR & Facilities left the meeting

Members were advised that the next HERB meeting was scheduled for 24th October.

10) Items for Information

Papers previously issued to all members.

- a) Engagement Update Report and update on funded programmes

The DPSSS talked to the written report provided at item 008a and highlighted the shift in demographic profile in the Lisburn area, the team will work on this however it is difficult to tell if its change in boundaries that has impacted numbers.

- b) Safeguarding report

Members noted the report at 010B.

11) Policies for review

Nothing to note.

12) Any other business

At this juncture the Chair asked for members to ratify the appointment of the student governor elect Chris Bruton.

Agreed: The student governor's appointment was ratified on the proposal of Carolyn King and seconded by Vikki Pinkerton.

No other business was discussed, and the Chair closed the meeting at 6.50pm