SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Tuesday 26th April 2016 at 6.00 p.m. in the Bangor campus

Item No	Item				
1.	Attendance/ Apologies				
	<u>Present</u> : Mr G. Hetherington, Mr D. Sagar, Mr K. Webb, Mrs B. Larkin, Mrs K. Fraser, , Ms C Goodwin, Mrs H. Reid, Mr N. Bodger, Miss C. Meharg, Prof A. Woodside, Mrs C. King, Mr A. Corbett, Mr J. Mackell, Mr J. Taylor, Mr E. Jackson, Ms K. Scott,				
	<u>In attendance</u> : Mr T. Martin (Chief Finance Officer), Ms V. Healy and Miss C. McDermott (Note Taker)				
	Apologies: Mr S. Pollard, Ms S. Corbett				
	In the Chair: Mr G. Hetherington				
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to Mr D. Sagar, the newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair also welcomed the newly appointed Staff Governors, Mrs C. King who has agreed to sit on the Audit Committee and Mr A. Corbett, who has agreed to sit on the Finance and General Purposes Committee.				
2.	Presentation by Head of ICT Infrastructure on SERC login/accessing Governing Body Team-site				
	Ms Healy will email all members a user guide for logging on and troubleshooting.				
3.	Declarations of conflicts of interest				
	The Chair asked if there were any conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to any item on the agenda. There were no such declarations.				
4.	<u>Minutes</u>				
	Minutes of the meeting held on 23 rd February 2016				
	Miss Mc Dermott noted a date typo at item 10.3, which states (20)15, requiring amendment to (20)16.				
	The Chair requested for the context of wording to be corrected in relation to KPMG, under item 8.1. Amended as follows,				
	"He said that four of the Partners from KPMG (the Internal Auditors) were under investigation by HMRC, which had resulted in administrative leave"				
	With these amendments, these minutes were agreed as a true record on the proposal Miss Meharg, seconded by Mrs Fraser.				
5.	Matters arising/Action points:				
	Moving to paperless meetings and using SERC email accounts The Chair reminded members that Meeting Papers can be accessed on the Governing Body Team site for all future meetings and that SERC email accounts will now be used instead of personal or work email addresses, to ensure maximum security and confidentiality.				

Update - Tender Evaluation for the Provision of Waste Management Services

The Chief Finance Officer has provided the requested breakdown which has been sent to the members of the Governing Body.

<u>Update – Consolidation Report requested for Tranches 1-3 of the Voluntary Exit Scheme</u>

The Chair updated members that the Principal will report the final position for 2015/16 VES at the next Staffing Committee and then to Governors at the next Governing Body meeting in June.

<u>Update – Colleges NI Communication, Manifesto and Newsletter documents</u>

The Chair updated members that the Principal has distributed these documents to Governors as requested.

6. Chairman's Business

6.1 Gifts and Hospitality Policy

The Chair highlighted the following statement within the Policy that "Any hospitality offered or received should further the College's or taxpayers' interest and involve no reasonable suspicion that personal judgement or integrity has been compromised". He also noted the test in both the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality which asks "could this course of action be satisfactorily defended in public?"

The Chair also highlighted a monetary value noted within the Policy stating that gifts of a value of less than £50 may be accepted. The Chair indicated to the Governing Body that the monetary value guidance should be treated with caution and members should not assume that gifts and hospitality with a value of less than £50 would necessarily be considered acceptable. Personal judgement must be exercised at all times.

Members noted the Policy.

6.2 Expense Claims

The Chair reminded members to submit expense claims within the three month deadline. He stressed the importance of Governors adhering to the guidance

6.3 HE Graduation Ceremony - 2nd September 2016 - Waterfront Hall, Belfast

The Chair said the event will begin at 3pm with drinks reception and the ceremony will commence at 4.00 pm

6.4 Previous Staff Governors

The Chair informed members that a letter of thanks will be sent to the previous Staff Governors from the Chair of the Governing Body, for their contribution to the Governing Body.

6.5 Mr D. Sagar, Newly appointed Chairman

Mr Sagar informed members of his first meeting with DEL. He said he met with the Director of FE and the Head of Governance and noted from that meeting that the College is performing well and the Management Team and Governing Body are strong.

Mr Sagar highlighted the following objectives for the College, the Chair and the Governing Body:

- To deliver a balanced budget, neither a surplus nor a deficit.
- To achieve the Funded Learning Unit (FLU) target for this year as the target had not been met the previous year

Mr Jackson reminded members of his attendance at the bilateral meetings in March, where FLU targets were discussed and noted that while it was understood that the FLU target was not met this was to achieve a balanced budget. He highlighted that in terms of outcomes, SERC's success rates were above the sector average and therefore provided better value for money.

The Chair added that the Governing Body were aware of these objectives and monitor them closely.

7. Student Governor Report

The Student Governor presented his report and provided an update to members on the following items:

- Upskilling Uganda- Abseil raised over £2200.
- The Next Fundraising Events Pamper Session 28th April 16 and Roller Disco, 18th May 16.
- Money management sessions, PSNI Road Safety presentation and Samaritans presentations took place
- Successful fundraiser for Ards Student who raised £220 for a local family following tragic road accident involving a young child.
- Class reps met with Principal, and discussed Moodle Changes, the Zest restaurant in Downpatrick and the possibility of using it for a common room instead of a canteen facility.
- Water fountain to be installed in refurbished reception area, Bangor campus.
- Elections are to be held for new Student Governor in May 16.
- All 3 Lifts to be replaced in Bangor and CCTV to be installed inside lifts.
- Car Parking is still an issue in Bangor and bollards are being placed on footpath near Bangor Academy to prevent illegal parking.

Mrs King enquired if students are allowed to use the carpark situated at Aurora Leisure Centre, Bangor, to ease the parking problem. The Principal said this was previously permitted and asked Ms Healy to confirm with Aurora, if they are still happy for the students to utilise the car park. The Principal added that he received very valuable feedback at the class rep meetings.

Ms Goodwin added that the money management sessions would be very useful for those requiring the hardship fund service.

The Chair thanked Mr Taylor for his comprehensive and insightful report.

Action: To enquire if Aurora, Bangor still permits students to park within their grounds.

8. <u>Committee Report – Education</u>

8.1 Report from the Committee Chair

Mrs Reid updated members on the recent Education Committee meeting. She referred members to the Enrolment update document that features within every Education Committee and added that the Education Committee monitor how the curriculum delivery impacts on enrolments. Mrs Reid noted the marketing presentation given at the 5th April Education Committee meeting and added that the Committee were satisfied with the promotion and marketing carried out by the College. Mrs Reid asked members for their views on Dr John Kelly attending the next Governing Body meeting to present his findings from his research report on Entrepreneurial Learning Preferences. Members discussed this and agreed for Mrs Reid's proposal to be actioned.

Mrs Reid presented the College Development Plan for consideration and asked members to send any comments or suggested amendments to Ms Healy. Mrs Reid added that it has been suggested that the CDP is presented in a business format from 17/18 and would like any comments on this, while of course considering the audience of the document and that it is a three year rolling document. The Chair noted that as a public document, there is also a promotional aspect to be considered.

Mrs Reid discussed the recent inspection reports and said the College is performing well. Mrs Reid noted the First Impressions Survey and requested that members access this document. Mrs Reid asked members for their support for the Curriculum Plan noting that it was a constantly

evolving document. Mr Sagar requested that the Curriculum Plan is circulated before approving. Ms Healy agreed to circulate to all members.

Mr Sagar highlighted the College targets listed within the draft of the CDP and made reference to their importance. He proposed that both the Committee and Senior Management give more attention to these within the plan. He suggested the targets are developed further by detailing how the College plans to achieve the targets. The Principal said that the Department do not approve or wish to monitor the CDP and view the CDP more as an informative document for a public audience.

Mr Sagar highlighted the Cause for Concern Referral tables featured within the minutes of the committee meetings and asked if the Committee addresses resolutions and outcomes. Mrs Reid confirmed this is monitored with updates from Pastoral Care and the Safeguarding Team, but they do not intervene at an operational level.

Mr Jackson noted the reduction in the marketing spend. Mrs Reid said that the marketing presentation demonstrated the use of social media for marketing purposes that has decreased the marketing spend considerably, as the cost of this marketing method is exceedingly less than previous marketing methods.

8.2 Minutes of meeting 9th February 2016

These minutes were adopted on the proposal of Mrs Fraser and seconded by Professor Woodside.

8.3 Minutes (unconfirmed) of meeting 5th April 16

These minutes were noted.

8.4 <u>Draft College Development Plan</u>

Mr Jackson enquired about the "Listening and Influencing Quotient" within the CDP. Members agreed to review the document and email comments and suggestions to Ms Healy as a priority.

Actions:

- Invitation to be sent to Dr John Kelly to attend a Governing Body Meeting
- First impressions survey and curriculum plan to be circulated
- CDP suggestions and comments to be emailed to Ms Healy

9. <u>Committee Report – Audit</u>

9.1 Report from Committee Chair

The Chair updated members on the latest Audit Committee meeting on the 15th March 16. He said the external Audit contract has been awarded to and accepted by PwC for the next three years. The Chair discussed the risks from the risk management report that are monitored by the Audit Committee and highlighted a new risk to be considered by the risk management Team, as "Managing Implications of Demographic Change". The Chair added that this risk relates to falling demographics and an increase of sixth form provision in many schools which has the potential to have a significant impact on FE enrolments in the medium to longer term. The Chair said this is a Sector wide risk and therefore it was suggested at the Audit Committee that this risk is included in the Health Check Document and recognised Sector wide as an imminent risk.

The Chair updated the members about the ongoing HMRC investigation into four former KPMG partners (including the partner responsible for FE internal audit). He added that Mr Poole is now the permanent internal audit partner for KPMG. The Chair said they will be monitoring the outcome of the HMRC investigation, and any further developments from the NIAO, alongside the Chief Finance Officer and the NIFON group. The Chair discussed the internal audit reports and highlighted the Review of Management of VES. The Chair was pleased to inform members that the College received a substantial assurance rating for the Review of Management of VES and only one Priority 3 issue to be addressed.

Mr Mackell enquired about the KPMG investigation and asked what assurances members have that the HMRC investigation is not related to KPMG itself or its clients? The Chair highlighted that the NIAO, as the body responsible for external audit across the public sector, had not discontinued any existing contracts with KPMG and therefore it would be an extreme step for the College to take that decision at this time. The Chair indicated that the Governing Body should take comfort that we were in line with the approach being taken by the NIAO and that the Audit Committee would continue to monitor the outcome of the HMRC investigation. Mr Mackell further asked if Mr O'Hara could provide evidence to his letter of assurance on behalf of KPMG, which was discussed at the last Audit Committee under Item 8. The Chair agreed to this request.

9.2 Minutes of meeting 26th January 16

These minutes were adopted on the proposal of Mr Hetherington and seconded by Mr Bodger.

9.3 Minutes (unconfirmed) of meeting 15th March 16

These minutes were noted.

Action: Request for Mr O'Hara to provide evidence with his letter of assurance, on behalf of KPMG

10. Committee Report – Finance and General Purposes

10.1 Report from Committee Chair

Mrs Larkin updated members on the latest Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting. She highlighted the update received at the last meeting, on applications and enrolments and asked the Principal if there was any data analysed when students left their courses. The Principal informed members that exit data is collected and analysed and forms part of the programme self-evaluation. He added that student retention rates are monitored monthly through IMPMS alongside the School QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) and through Student Case Conferences.

Mrs Larkin said that two contract award recommendations were presented to the Committee for ratification as the Lift Upgrade Works and Alterations to the Entrance. She added that both of these contracts had already started before ratification was granted and therefore this raised an issue highlighted by the Committee for either non-commencement of such awards pending Governing Body approval or presentation of such awards to the Governing Body for noting or information, rather than for ratification. Mr Jackson suggested email approval for items above the £500k limit set for the Principal to approve as a solution, based on previous experience. Members discussed the issue and agreed that if a contract above £100k and below £500k had commenced the details would be presented for noting or information and not for ratification.

Mrs Larkin said that the Budget Policy and the Financial Governance Policy were presented to the Committee. Mrs Larkin highlighted Item 5.3 within the Financial Governance Policy stating "the College Governing Body should fulfil the responsibilities detailed in the Code of Governance, Instrument of Government and Articles of Government". Mrs Larkin suggested that members review these three items, detailing their responsibilities as members of the Governing Body, via the College Learning Engine and then again annually. Members agreed to review the Code of Governance, Instrument of Government and Articles of Government.

Mr Jackson discussed the surplus of £1million with the Chief Finance Officer who added that with agreement from DEL we are targeting a £1million surplus to cover cash responsibilities of PPP contracts. He added that in order to maintain a standard of working capital the College has to deliver a surplus.

Mr Jackson discussed the possibility of sharing Policies through the Collaboration Programme and the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that policies are shared through the NIFON Group on request.

10.2.1 Minutes of meeting 10th February 16

These minutes were adopted on the proposal of Mr Jackson and seconded by Ms Goodwin.

10.2.2 Minutes (unconfirmed) of meeting 11th April 16

Members noted the contents of the unconfirmed minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 11th April 16

10.3.1 PATIC Board minutes 4th February 16

These minutes were noted

10.3.2 PATIC Board minutes (unconfirmed) of meeting 11 March 16

Mr Mackell enquired if the letter was received by the Engineers to confirm the structural integrity of the acoustic soffit in a recording studio. The Principal confirmed the letter has been received but it has not been presented to the board as yet due to remaining in a defects period.

Mr Mackell enquired if the planned works for a suitable scheme to prevent illegal parking was completed over the Easter period, as discussed in item 6. The Principal said this is referring to bollards that will be erected and this work has not been completed. The Chair summarised that the College may not have a legal requirement to address illegal parking, but does have a wider responsibility for student safety and to the neighbourhood to address this problem.

Mr Mackell enquired about the Drinks Licence and the increase in Counsel Fees from £1k to £2k. The Principal said that the College would pay the original fee but not the incurred fee. Mr Mackell added that there was no requirement to appoint senior counsel in order to obtain a drinks licence.

These minutes were noted

10.3.3 PPP Project Board minutes 4 February 16

These minutes were noted

The Chief Finance suggested that PATIC and PPP updates are added to the restructured Estates Report instead of the current format of full minutes.

10.4 Tender Reports:

10.4.1 Lift Upgrade works

10.4.2 Alterations to Entrance

Members noted the reports.

10.5 Management Accounts – Period 7

Mrs Larkin updated the Management Accounts detail for Period 7 as a historic cost surplus of £1.9M compared with a budgeted surplus of £1,189k, giving a positive variance of £670k for the period. She added that total Grant-in-aid & income of £27,237k was £429k below budget due primarily to a lower level of Employer Support Programme Training for Success; Steps to Success; and Commercial Income than originally budgeted for the first seven months. Mrs Larkin highlighted the Total Resource Expenditure was below budget by £1,119k or 4.4% due to a £699k underspend in staffing and a £422k underspend in operating expenses in the year to date.

Ms Goodwin noted the lower levels of Employer Engagement Activity and suggested that this is addressed and focused on in 16/17 to increase income streams.

10.6 Financial Framework Analysis

Mrs Larkin reported that the Financial Framework was provided to the Committee as a medium term report to supply a higher level summary of the management accounts, incorporating the prior year actual result, the current full year forecast plus a high-level forecast for the next two financial years.

The Chair enquired about the Income and Expenditure Account and the forecasts for 16/17 and 17/18 represented an operational surplus. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that is correct.

Members noted the report 10.7 DEL Health Check – Issue 1

Members noted the contents of the DEL Health Check and Mrs Larkin brought the relevant points to the attention of the Committee.

10.8 <u>DEL Health Check – Issue 2</u>

Mr Jackson noted that in relation to the diversity of income ratio, the College is the lowest in the Sector.

Members noted the report

10.9 FE Funding: Recurrent Budget Final Allocations 2016/17

Mrs Larkin reported on the final budget allocation for 2016-17 as £23,780,909 for the College, in comparison with £23,730,000 last year out of £141.761 million allocated for the sector.

The Chair highlighted the £8 million End Year Flexibility (EYF) that cannot be guaranteed. And asked if there are any assurances around this. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that this has never been declared as a concerning issue by the Department.

Action: All governors to review Code of Governance, Instrument of Government and Articles of Government.

11. Committee Report – Staffing

11.1 Report from Committee Chair

Ms Goodwin reminded members of the one year healthcare pilot in place, to address wellbeing and sick absence and noted it has been very well received and results are positive with an improvement on short term and long term sickness absence rates. Ms Goodwin reminded members the scheme has been extended for a further year which will continue to address and manage the Sickness Absence Risk

Ms Goodwin reported on the General Teaching Council and the discussions occurring to widen their powers over the Further Education Sector. She said there is no legislation as yet in this area. Ms Goodwin informed members that a working group has been reconstituted and the first meeting was held on 22nd April 2016.

Ms Goodwin updated members on Pay progression, stating that it has been given temporary approval by the Department of Finance and Personnel, however, the Department of Finance and Personnel are requiring a business case for the removal of time served related increments to pay. Ms Goodwin highlighted the employee engagement survey, noting the very positive results and a particular compliment to management and the strong leadership of the College, considering the impact of VES and the review of the senior management structure. She added that a Quality Improvement Plan is being re-developed for each of the schools and with a small decrease noted in management support in the survey results this will be a significant part of the OIP. Ms Goodwin stated that targets will be included in the next survey

Mr Mackell enquired about the employee relations and if they continue, with UCU and NASUWT not attending any forum at which AMIE would be present. Mr Webb confirmed that this is still the situation and remains an on-going issue. The Chair added this can be discussed further within confidential business items at the end of the meeting.

Mr Mackell enquired if the Equality Scheme document could be shared with the members of the Governing Body and Ms Goodwin agreed that this document could be shared, once reviewed and passed through the Staffing Committee.

11.2 Minutes of meeting 18th January 16

These minutes were adopted on the proposal of Mrs Reid, seconded by Mr Hetherington.

11.3 <u>Minutes (unconfirmed) of meeting 13th April 16</u>

Mrs Larkin highlighted an amendment to be made to the minutes, to name the minute taker at the meeting.

These minutes were noted.

12. **Principal's Business**

Enrolment and FLU update

The Principal presented the updated report on enrolments and FLUs to the members and highlighted that the College is on target, with no significant issues with the FLUs at present. He added that the College is now accepting applications for full-time courses and they can apply online.

The Chair enquired if the ES FLUs were reallocated as requested by the College. Mr Webb said this was confirmed in the Funding Letter received.

Prof Woodside enquired as to why students are leaving. Mr Taylor provided a student's perspective on possible reasons for withdrawal to include the accumulation of uncompleted work and assignments. Mr Corbett provided a staff perspective and highlighted the student Case Conferencing procedure in place to monitor retention and prevent withdrawals, making lecturing staff accountable for every single student.

The members noted the contents of the report.

13. <u>Colleges NI Business</u>

13.1 Minutes (unconfirmed) of CNI Board Meeting 22nd February 16

The Principal reminded members of the background and role of Colleges NI. He said the Collaboration Programme is referenced within the minutes and updated members that the six main programmes under the Collaboration Programme are advancing in co-ordination with the "FE Means Success Strategy".

The Chair asked the Principal about the establishment of a CNI Remuneration Committee and what members would receive remuneration. The Principal informed members that the Chair, Mr G Roberts, was the only member to receive remuneration and this Committee would be established in order to review remuneration and performance of the Chair.

These minutes were noted.

13.2 Minutes (unconfirmed) of Colleges NI AGM 22nd February 2016

These minutes were noted.

13.2 Update from Principal on CNI Business

Ms Scott enquired how Colleges NI received funding. The Principal confirmed Colleges NI is funded through an equal subscription fee. Mr Webb highlighted that up until recently Colleges NI provided the Management Information Systems support (student, staff and finance systems) on behalf of the sector and SERC and SRC now provides that service, again on behalf of the sector and will receive funding from DEL and other colleges for providing this service.

14. Policies for Approval

14.1 Financial Governance Policy

Ms Goodwin proposed the approval of the Financial Governance Policy and Mrs Larkin seconded.

14.2 Budget Policy 2016

Ms Goodwin proposed the approval of the Budget Policy and Mrs Larkin seconded.

15. Correspondence

Letter from the Head of NICSO re Boardroom Apprentice

The Chair summarised the Boardroom Apprentice programme to be a process of identifying the next generation of non-executive Directors by providing non-executive experience.

Ms Goodwin noted that she supported the idea, but can see issues in attracting applicants from the voluntary sector or private sector as many of those require day commitment.

Ms Goodwin asked for clarification on the following:

- The term "diverse", as to mean either in relation to skills or equality?
- If current members of the board can participate in the certificate in boardroom practice for added benefit and enhancement of skills?

Mr Bodger supported the idea, adding it would contribute to the participant's skillset and suggested a business degree student would be suitable

Mrs Larkin noted that credit should be given to the current board of Governors for piloting a similar programme with the Student Governor and the Buddy System currently in place.

Mrs Scott asked for clarification on the costs involved with the programme.

The members supported the programme in principle, but would like further clarification on the issues raised.

Actions: Seek clarification and report back

16. Draft Calendar of Meetings 2016/17

Members approved the Calendar of meetings 2016/17.

17. Any other notified business

There was no further notified business.

18. Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28th June, at 6 pm, Lisburn Campus.

The Staff Governors, the Chief Finance Officer, the Student Governor, Mr Bodger and Miss McDermott left the meeting at 8:50p.m. The other Governing Body members remained for confidential business.

Confidential Business

A separate minute was taken for the confidential items

The meeting, including confidential business, ended at 21:54pm.

(Chairman)		(Date)
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Attendees	Time Arrived	Time Left	Duration	Entitlement to Payment
				Y/N
Gareth Hetherington	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Y
Deep Sagar	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Jack Taylor	6pm	8:50pm	2:50	Y
Christine Goodwin	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Heather Reid	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Neil Bodger	6pm	8:50pm	2:50	Υ
Kim Scott	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Karen Fraser	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Professor Alan Woodside	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Ed Jackson	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Barbara Larkin	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Claire Meharg	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
John Mackell	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	Υ
Andrew Corbett	6pm	8:50pm	2:50	N
Carolyn King	6pm	8:50pm	2:50	N
Ken Webb	6pm	9:54pm	3:54	N
Steve Pollard	-	-	-	
Shirleen Corbett	-	-		

Signed:		Date:	
Chairman of Governi	ng Body		