

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 22nd November 2021 at 17:30 (GMT) via Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

Agenda Item 1: Chair’s Business:

a) Attendance and Apologies for Absences:

Present:

Mr Gareth Hetherington (Temporary Chair of the Governing Body), Mr John Mackell, Mr Steve Pollard
Items 1-6a only, Mrs Karen Fraser, Mr Ken Webb (CEO/Principal), Mrs Deborah O’Hare, Mr Alan McCrum,
Mr Derek Wilson, Mr Darren Stewart, Dr Daniel McConnell, Mr Mark Huddleston, Ms Majella Corrigan,
Mr. Sam Hagen, Mr. Michael McQuillan

In Attendance:

Mrs Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mr Tommy Martin (Chief Finance Officer
 (“CFO”), Mrs Heather McKee (Director of Strategic, Planning, Quality and Support), Ms. Amy Frazer
(Boardroom Apprentice) Agenda Items 1-8 only

Apologies: Mr Andrew Corbett, Mr James Lee

In the Chair:

Mr Hetherington.

b) Declarations of Conflicts of Interest:

The Temporary Chair invited members to declare any known or perceived conflicts of interests. Ms
Corrigan declared that she is employed by CCMS and is a Council Member of CCEA, she noted the
reference to CCEA in the papers for item 3. Mr Pollard advised that he has standing conflict as a staff
member of Ulster University and his wife is an employee in the payroll department at SERC. Mr
Hetherington also declared his standing conflicts that he is an employee of Ulster University, and his wife
is Finance Director at the Department for Economy.

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c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on 27th September 2021:

The Governing Body reviewed the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th September 2021. Following due consideration, it was agreed that the Minutes were a true and accurate reflection of the Meeting.

Agreed: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body, held on 27th September 2021, be approved, and adopted.

Proposed by: John Mackell

Seconded by: Steve Pollard

d) Matters Arising/Action Points from previous Meetings:

Members noted that all actions were completed or addressed on the agenda.

e) Governing Body Vice Chair role

The Chair advised that Mr. McCrum had expressed an interest in the role and asked members to approve the appointment as per Standing Order 4 of the Governing Body.

Agreed: Mr. McCrum was elected to the role of Vice Chair with immediate effect

Proposer: Mark Huddleston

Secunder: Steve Pollard

f) Gifts and Hospitality Register

The Secretary presented the latest register for information, members noted that there were no declarations made on the register and were reminded of their personal responsibility to inform the Secretary should they need to make a declaration.

g) Confirmation of Governing Body Strategy Day Date

The Temporary Chair advised members that the Strategy Day was scheduled for Monday 7th February, the Secretary will confirm the details with members shortly.

h) Annual Self-Assessment Review

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The Temporary Chair began by reminding members that the results of the DfE annual survey are used by the Governing Body as a discussion tool, it allows members to reflect on performance and how the board can operate more effectively in the future. The Temporary Chair noted that the results were largely positive, however as indicated one member felt their expertise was not being utilized the Temporary Chair asked members to speak to him directly to address this issue. He advised that committees could be changed if necessary to ensure that all members expertise was being used to the full potential. Other points noted were that newer members found it difficult to engage online and the use of jargon also made it difficult to follow discussions and read reports. The Temporary Chair added there is a responsibility on everyone to be aware of the use of jargon.

Action Point: The Secretary will re-circulate the list of abbreviations to members to aid them with the abbreviations used in meetings and documents

i) Record approval of Co-opted member as agreed by the GB via email

The Secretary reminded members that the approval to co-opt Mr. McQuillan was sought via email to ensure the process could be expedited with the Department between GB meetings, with agreement that the formal decision would be recorded in this meeting.

Agreed: The Governing Body agreed on the recommendation to co-opt Mr. McQuillan to the Governing Body subject to the appropriate Departmental checks being made

Proposer: Gareth Hetherington

Secunder: Deborah O’Hare

j) DfE Review of Sponsorship Model Update

Members were provided with a brief verbal update on the DfE review. The Temporary Chair informed members that he had met with EY (who have been tasked with collating responses to the review from the Sector) along with the Principal and Vice Chair. SERC have highlighted issues to EY around the

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departmental structure, specifically in how it will deliver on the 10x Strategy and the multiple layers of governance in place for FE. In response to a query from Mr Pollard on the CEO’s role as Accounting Officer members noted that this adds another layer of governance and that there is not enough reliance on the role of the Governing Body or audit. The Temporary Chair concluded the update by advising that the EY consultant will issue a draft report on their findings to the Department in the next month.

Agenda Item 2: Correspondence:

- a) Commencement of the Initial Stage of the Review of the Further Education Delivery Model 271021

Members noted the update regarding the DfE review, the Principal advised that the first phase of the review will be an information gathering exercise and it is unlikely any decisions will be taken on the review until there is a new mandate in the NI Assembly post elections.

Agenda Item 3: Principal and Chief Executive’s report:

The Principal asked members to note the written report provided and he highlighted the application and enrolment figures that were included in the appendices. He then moved on to inform members that Ministers approved the introduction of the Traineeship and in the Covid Recovery Plan Advanced Technical Awards with enrolments for both commencing in Sep 21. DfE have now established a new division to consider HE in FE and Vocational Qualifications headed by Mark Lee.

In discussing the options available the Principal highlighted that there is a need for a professional technical awarding body to meet the needs of industry in Northern Ireland. Members were reminded of the work undertaken by SERC to develop Transversal Skills within Advanced Techs as part of the strategy to meet the needs of industry.

The Temporary Chair noted the achievements of staff and students within the report and asked the Principal to congratulate all concerned on behalf of the Governing Body.

Agenda Item 4: Items for Approval

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a) Annual Report and Financial Statements (including Governance Statement) for Year ended 31st July 2021

b) Report to Those Charged with Governance 2020-21

The Chief Finance Officer presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements and advised members that they have been fully audited by NIAO/PWC since they last reviewed the draft in September. He advised that the audit returned no comments, adjustments or material misstatements. The Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Mackell, commended the CFO and his team on an extremely positive result especially in such a challenging environment. The Principal echoed these comments and asked that thanks were passed on from the College Management Team especially to the Financial Controller who had led the audit.

The CFO thanked members for their comments and confirmed that the documents would be signed by E-Signature.

Agreed: The Governing Body reviewed and approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2020

Proposer: Gareth Hetherington

Secunder: John Mackell

c) Audit Committee Annual Report 2020/21

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Mackell, presented the annual report to members, he provided a brief summary of the report and advised that the committee had reviewed the report and had recommended it for adoption.

The Secretary will share the report with the Department following its approval.

Agreed: The Governing Body reviewed and approved the Audit Committee Annual Report 2020/21

Proposer: Gareth Hetherington

Secunder: Steve Pollard

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d) FGP Committee Structure

The Chair of the FGP Committee, Mr McCrum, reminded members that a query had been raised at the previous meeting whether the GB would revert to the 4-committee structure that had been in place prior to October 2018. He gave members a brief overview of the decision made in 2018 and advised that the Department had been informed and were supportive of the decision given the low membership numbers at the time.

The FGP committee robustly discussed this issue at their recent meeting and agreed that the status quo should remain as there was a direct link between finance and people. The committee also felt that there was not always sufficient work to justify a standalone Staffing committee and at time this led to a duplication of work. Another issue arising from this was the risk that there could be blurred lines between strategic and operational work and so they unanimously agreed that the current structure should remain in place.

The Temporary Chair advised that it had been suggested that any urgent staffing matters could be dealt with under a subcommittee of the GB, if required, as allowed in The Articles of Government. He concluded by advising members that he would write to the FE Director to inform her of this decision.

Agreed: The Governing Body agreed to keep the 3-Committee Structure in place (with staffing and finance merged under FGP)

Proposer: John Mackell

Seconder: Michael McQuillan

Action Point: The Temporary Chair agreed to confirm the GB’s decision regarding the committee structure with the FE Director in writing

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e) Audit Committee minutes from meeting held on 15th September 2021

Mr Mackell, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes for adoption.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Darren Stewart and seconded by Karen Fraser.

f) Education Committee minutes from meeting held on 21st September 2021

Mr Pollard, Chair of the Education Committee, presented the minutes for adoption.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Majella Corrigan and seconded by John Mackell.

g) Finance and General Purposes minutes from meeting held on 14th September 2021

Mr McCrum, Chair of the FGP Committee, presented the minutes for adoption.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Derek Wilson and seconded by Alan McCrum.

5. Policies for approval

a) Raising Concerns Policy

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Mackell, presented the policy for approval. He began by advising members that the policy was previously known as the Whistleblowing Policy and the title has been changed in line with good practice and guidance from the NIAO. He asked members to note that the policy will be relevant to internal and external concerns and will be available to view online and can be requested in hard copy at the request of the committee. In response to a query from Mr McQuillan members requested that communication with staff was made to ensure there was an understanding between this policy and raising a concern regarding a student’s welfare.

Agreed: The Governing Body reviewed and approved the Raising Concerns Policy

Proposer: Sam Hagen

Secunder: Gareth Hetherington

Action Point: Members requested that staff are made aware of this policy, specifically that it is different to the Raising Concerns policy regarding students’ welfare

b) Curriculum Policy

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The Governing Body reviewed the policy and agreed the amendments which included new areas of traineeships and Advanced Techs.

Agreed: The Governing Body reviewed and approved the Curriculum Policy

Proposer: Alan McCrum

Secunder: Michael McQuillan

c) Complaints and Compliments Policy

The Chair of the Education Committee, Mr Pollard, presented the amended policy for approval, he advised a minor change had been made to make reference to the online complaint form.

Agreed: The Governing Body reviewed and approved the Complaints and Compliments Policy

Proposer: Alan McCrum

Secunder: Danny McConnell

d) Data Protection Policy

The Chair of the FGP Committee, Mr McCrum, presented the policy for approval. He highlighted the changes made related to CCTV and the disclosure of information outside of the UK.

Agreed: The Governing Body reviewed and approved the Data Protection Policy

Proposer: Alan McCrum

Secunder: Darren Stewart

6. Items for Information

a) Financial Governance Report

In presenting the Financial Governance Report the CFO advised that it aims to set out the forecasted financial position as at both 31 March 2021(DfE year-end) and 31 July 2021(SERC year-end). He advised that there are two headlines impacting the forecasts, Covid-19 pressures: and an easement of approximately £1m in relation to the introduction of Traineeships. The CFO advised that the additional Covid funding should be received imminently, and this will bring the College back on target.

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In response to a query from Mr. Stewart the CFO provided members with a breakdown of the “lost learning” piece and advised members that it is essentially around extra delivery to ensure retention and quality is of the high standard that it would be usually. He advised that the Director of Curriculum & Information Services has specific ideas on supplementary learning rather than given every cohort an extra hour, which has been the approach for most other Colleges.

At this juncture Mr. Pollard left the meeting.

b) Staff Governor Reports

In the absence of both staff governors this item was deferred to the next meeting.

c) Student Governor Report

The Student Governor talked to her written report, and she advised that was she looking forward to getting involved in the Student Union campaigns that have been planned for this year.

d) Audit Committee briefing on meeting held on 1 0th November 2021

Mr Mackell, Chair of the Audit Committee, provided an overview of the recent meeting, the following points were highlighted in summary:

- The committee reviewed and approved their Annual Report & Financial Statements and recommended the very positive Annual Report and Financial Statements for adoption as discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Internal Audit presented reports on Covid-19 Funding Initiatives and the Risk Management Framework, both of which received a satisfactory rating. He highlighted in particular it was important for the committee to receive a satisfactory rating on the Covid-19 report as this was requested by the Department.
- Other items of standing business were reviewed including the risk management reports and a review of Direct Award Contracts.

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e) Finance and General Purposes Committee briefing on meeting held on 9th November 2021

Mr McCrum, Chair of the FGP Committee, addressed the meeting and provided an update on the recent committee meeting, the following points were noted:

- The committee reviewed the Annual Report & Financial Statements. In terms of finance items standing items were reviewed including budgeting and forecast updates, review of the current debt level and the estates report.
- The committee reviewed HR Priorities and metrics as per the usual standing staffing items. A presentation was received from the Head of Learning Academy and the committee noted the excellent work the team are carrying out across the College, the Chair advised it affirmed for him the significant investment in staff made by the College.

f) Education Committee briefing on meeting held on 16th November 2021

Mrs O’Hare, Vice Chair of the Education Committee, provided an update on the recent meeting and highlighted the following in summary:

- The Director Strategic, Planning, Quality and Support provided the committee with a useful update on the College Development Plan and a robust discussion on HE took place.
- A very interesting presentation was delivered from the engagement team primarily on their outreach work and the committee commended them for their exceptional efforts.
- Standing items of business were discussed including the safeguarding report, policy review and an enrolments update.

g) Chair’s Working Group Minutes of meeting held on 21st October 2021

Members were asked to note the enclosed minutes for information. The Temporary Chair highlighted this group is not a decision-making group and its focus is to ensure that GB is co-ordinated.

7. Any Other Business:

There are no other notified items of business.

8. Confidential Business

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A separate note was taken for this item. At this juncture the Boardroom Apprentice and the Director of SPQS left the meeting.

Date of next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for Monday 21st February 2021, 17.30, via Microsoft Teams

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:02pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Temporary Chair of the Governing Body