

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

Agenda Item 1: Chair’s Business:

a) Attendance and Apologies for Absences:

Present:

Mr John Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body), Mr John Mackell, Mr Ken Webb (CEO/Principal), Mrs Deborah O’Hare, Mr Alan McCrum, Mr Derek Wilson, Mr Darren Stewart, Mr Mark Huddleston, Ms Majella Corrigan, Mr Samuel Hagen, Mr Michael McQuillan, Mrs Karen Fraser, Mr Andrew Corbett; Ms Sophie Leigh Francis (Student Governor), Ms Wilma Fee Item 2 and 3 only (via Microsoft Teams)

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 (“Director of SPQ&S”)), Mr Paul Smyth (Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)), Ms Louise Watson (FE Director, Department for the Economy)

Apologies: Dr Danny McConnell, Mrs Carolyn King

In the Chair:

Mr Nugent

The Chair began the meeting by welcoming the FE Director to the meeting and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

b) Declarations of Conflicts of Interest:

The Chair invited members to declare any known or perceived conflicts of interests.

- Mrs O’Hare declared 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 a current member of the College Advisory Group (Education) CAFRE DAERA CAFRE offers level 2 to level 6 + qualifications. No action was taken in relation to any of the declared conflicts.

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

- 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.
- Ms Fee declared she is a current member of the Governing Bodies of Wellington College and Stranmillis College. No action was taken in relation to the declared conflicts.

c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body held on 6th February 2023:

The Governing Body reviewed the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th February 2023

Agreed: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body, held on 6th February 2023, be approved, and adopted.

Proposed by: Majella Corrigan

Seconded by: Sam Hagen

d) Matters Arising/Action Points from previous Meetings:

The Chair confirmed there were no outstanding actions from the previous meetings.

e) Board Effectiveness Review

The Secretary presented the draft framework to members for consideration, she highlighted the proposed three-year approach to members which will begin with an internal review. The purpose of the review is to enhance the board’s effectiveness by harnessing improvement opportunities identified by members underpinned by best practice and research. The Secretary added that further work would be done on the appendices before the next meeting when members would be asked to approve the framework, in order for members to be content with the proposal she sought volunteers to review the documents to provide feedback.

Action: The Secretary will work on the appendices with a group of volunteers before re-presenting the framework for approval at the June meeting

f) Boardroom Apprentice Programme 23/24

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the "GB")
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

The Secretary advised that funding is still to be finalised for next year's programme and organisations are being asked to sign up as normal until it has been secured. Members agreed the programme was worthwhile and were content to sign up to the 23/24 intake.

Agreed: The Governing Body agreed to take part in the Boardroom Apprentice Programme

Proposer: John Mackell

Seconder: Alan McCrum

Agenda Item 2: Correspondence:

a) GB Correspondence Log

The Chair advised that log presented contained correspondence issued from the Department since March, the log was noted by members.

b) Update on the review of FE Delivery Model 180423

The Chair advised the correspondence from Donna Blaney sets out the intention to move to stage 2 of the review which will be a desktop review over the Summer. The FE Director advised that she will be leading on the review in the absence of Ms Blaney who has now left the Department, Louise Drennan will also work as part of the review team.

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

The Principal talked to the written report provided and began by highlighting the recent success of the College which was contained within the appendix of the report.

Agenda Item 4: Items for Approval

a) Governing Body Meeting Schedule 23/24

The Secretary asked members to review the enclosed schedule, she highlighted that meetings would begin at 5pm from September.

Agreed: The Governing Body agreed the meeting schedule for 23/24 on the proposal of Michael McQuillan and seconded by Derek Wilson.

b) Audit Committee minutes from meeting held on 18th January 2023:

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

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

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of John Mackell and seconded by Deborah O’Hare.

c) Education Committee minutes from meeting held on 24th January 2023;

Mrs O’Hare, Chair of the Education Committee, presented the minutes for adoption.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Mark Huddleston and seconded by Andrew Corbett.

d) Finance and General Purposes minutes from meeting held on 17th January 2023:

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

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

5. Policies for approval

a) Records Management Policy

The Chief Finance Officer presented the policy for approval and advised that it was a new policy that sets out the College’s legal obligations in terms of data storing, GDPR and records management. The Chair requested that the grammar was reviewed and that where it states ‘should’ within the policy was changed to ‘must’ to ensure that all staff comply with the obligations.

Agreed: The Records Management Policy was approved (subject to the requested changes being made) on the proposal of Sam Hagen and seconded by Sophie Francis.

b) Budget Policy

The CFO advised members the policy sets out the budget shift for the College to focus on the Departmental March year end instead of July. In response to a question the CFO confirmed that while the College was not subject to two full audits currently, there is a lot of duplication of work. Members noted that this year will be a transitional year for the process.

Agreed: The Budget Policy was approved on the proposal of Alan McCrum and seconded by Deborah O’Hare

6. Items for Information

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

a) DfE and Sector joint strategic priorities for 23/24, the importance of a focus on Outcomes and Savings

The Principal addressed members to present an overview of DfE and Sector strategic priorities for the academic year 2023/24, he began by advising the FE Director asked Principals to set out a number of joint high level key strategic priorities to focus future collaborative working during the next academic year 2023-24. The sector was tasked with finding £12m of savings and have offered £8.6m.

- The Principal talked to the presentation and gave an overview of the proposed priorities on enhanced collaboration and sustainability.
- The Chair of the GB asked the FE Director if there a view forming in DfE on an NI awarding body as a strategic priority. She replied that for DfE it is about synergy and best in class, the Department recognise skills across sector and are eager for a world class system.
- Members discussed if an NI Awarding Body was viable. The Principal added that terms of being financially viable it would be as the Awarding Organisation OCNNI is viable and the largest provider of vocational qualifications in NI. He believed there are savings to be made and allowing colleges to be more responsive to industry and non-monetary benefits will be significant.
- The CFO advised that in terms of the financial focus for 23/24; he highlighted the March year end shift, review of financial processes to bring all consolidated accounts into line across public sector. The different funding models are sometimes in direct contradiction with each other which makes planning extremely difficult. The FE Director advised she was aware of the funding issues.

Action: The Chair asked members to consider the presented strategic priorities and to provide feedback on them and any other suggestions they have to the Secretary no later than 31st May 2023

b) 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). The forecasted outcome for the Departmental year to 31 March 2023, is a Resource Requirement of £43,308k. This represents a pressure of £208k, that is made up of pressures around traineeships, accounting treatment of leases and TfS funding. The CFO detailed the pressure of traineeships and highlighted to the committee that the College is still running 92% of planned cohorts and therefore the delivery costs cannot be reduced.

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

The CFO advised that the overspend was authorised, smaller item is accounting treatment of leases. Two sizeable adjustments are around holiday pay and an additional payment of £170k for Ukrainian refugees. In terms of the additional holiday pay accrual, it is based on July year end, and has been moved to march which is a sizeable increase, as most lecturer staff have most of their leave to use still in July.

The Chair of the GB enquired about PFI Contracts and if it was anticipated they would go up?
The CFO confirmed that PFI costs are solely inflationary, the contract ties up to RPI, 700k 10% increase.

c) Strategic Risk Register

The Chair of the Audit committee advised he had requested the risk register was presented to members given the huge financial uncertainties the College is operating in. He highlighted that the 3 red risks on the registers are relevant across the committees and he wanted to bring it to member’s attention.

d) First Draft Interim Review – SERC Strategy 2030

The Director of Strategic, Planning, Quality & Support presented the draft document to members, she advised that changes had been incorporated into the document as per the agreed discussion at the recent strategy day. She asked members to review the document and provide feedback so that a final document could be re-designed for sign off at the Education Committee in June.

Action: Members were asked to confirm if they agreed with the content of the Strategy 2030 document with the Secretary no later than 31st May

e) Staff Governor Reports

In the absence of Mrs King, Corporate Staff Governor, the Chair asked members to note the written report she had provided.

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

Mr Corbett, Academic Staff Governor, talked to the written report he had provided that highlighted the use of Artificial Intelligence by students to complete their work. The FE Director advised that her colleague in DfE will soon attend a meeting of the 4 nations that will look at the impact AI will have on learning. In a detailed discussion the Governing Body acknowledged the associated risks with the development of AI, however they noted that the College need to also embrace it as learning tool while still ensuring that assessments remain valid.

Action: The Governing Body asked that Artificial Intelligence was assessed by the risk management team and to consider whether this need to be incorporated into a plagiarism policy

f) Student Governor Report

The Student Governor talked to the written report provided and advised members of the recent work the Student’s Union have been doing across the College. She advised that the new student governor elect is Vicky Patterson, and she will take up the post in October 2023. Members noted the success of the free student breakfast and that the SU have had over 23k engagements this year which a very positive outcome delivering on the pride alliance and period conference initiatives.

g) Audit Committee briefing on meeting held on 19th April 2023

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

- The committee focused on the risk management report that detailed the risks across the college with the uncertain financial position, in particular he highlighted the risk to the learner if IT equipment is not upgraded. He added that the list of cuts proposed was extremely stark and the committee will focus on the impact to students and staff in the coming months.
- Internal audit presented 3 reports all with satisfactory outcomes and there are no changes to the proposed internal audit plan to date.
- The CFO confirmed that the NFI exercise had been completed with all matches investigated and nothing of concern was flagged.

h) Finance and General Purposes Committee briefing on meeting held on 18th April 2023

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

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’s business focussed on the uncertainty of the 23/24 budget, and they had a lengthy discussion around the challenges and impacts that will face the College in the year ahead.
- They noted that in the Estates report, utilities still remain a significant issue in terms of costs and the Estates team are working to mitigate the impact of this on the overall budget.
- The Head of the Learning Academy gave a presentation on their work and the committee commended the team on the work as it is reflected of the quality and depth of the provision in SERC in terms of leadership and career development opportunities.
- The Staff Survey action plan was presented, and members noted that there are 54 actions to be completed.

g) Education Committee briefing on meeting held on 25th April 2023

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

- The committee reviewed their ToR, they were discussed and approved.
- The Senior International Development Manager gave a presentation on international work and this ties into the earlier discussions on a world class education system.
- The Head of School for Performing and Creative Arts Essential Skill, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, presented on T-skills and members noted this underpins the very good work happening in FE on curriculum and skills development.
- In the standard items presented the committee reviewed the HE Curriculum plan and approved the HERB mins from the recent meeting.

h) Chair’s Working Group Minutes of meeting held on 7th March 2023

The Chair asked members to note the enclosed minutes for information.

7. Any Other Business:

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”)
held on Monday, 15th May 2023 17:30 (GMT) in Meeting Room D17, Lisburn Campus and via
Microsoft Teams**

No other business was discussed.

8. Confidential Business

A separate note was taken for this item.

Date of next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for Monday 26th June 2023, 17.30, Lisburn Campus.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.22pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

John Nugent

Chair of the Governing Body