

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2022 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

PRESENT:

Mr Andrew Saunders (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (SRC CEO)
Mr Scott Alexander
Miss Louisa Goss
Mr Aidan McCormick
Mr Gary McMurray
Miss Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Mr John Nugent
Prof Gregory O'Hare
Mr Tom Redmond
Mrs Carla Shields
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mrs Tracy Strachan
Mr Kieran Swail
Mrs Judith Thompson
Mr Matthew Turner

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Keith Kilpatrick, Director of Curriculum
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Mr Ruairi Lavery, Estates Project Director
Mr Sean Brolly, DfE Deputy Director FE Division
Mrs Jackie Smith, DfE FE Division
Mrs Janet Toal, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.31.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Keith Kilpatrick.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interest held in matters to be discussed.

No interests were declared.

Mr Doran joined the meeting at 17.32 and due connectivity problems left the meeting at 17.34.

A03. FE DELIVERY MODEL – PRESENTATION

On behalf of the Governing Body, Mr Saunders welcomed Mr Brolly and Mrs Smith to the meeting. He advised that the Chairs and Principals Group have had sight of the FE Delivery Model presentation.

Mr Brolly advised that the presentation to be given this evening is an introduction to stimulate conversation and advised that the 'ask' of considerations has been driven by the 10x economic vision. He commented that NI have an inbuilt strength for innovative growth and the colleges will play a critical role in ensuring closure of the skills gap and safeguarding inclusivity by giving all of our people better jobs with better wages and an improved quality of life.

Mr Doran joined the meeting 17.36 and left at 17.41.

Mr Brolly set out the five clusters and technologies where NI have global capabilities; digital IT and creative industries, Fintech / financial services, advanced manufacturing and engineering, agri-tech and life and health sciences. He informed on the strategic goals required for a 10x economy and advised on the need in ensuring the sectoral delivery is strategic, responsive, coordinated, efficient, effective and attractive.

ACTION By whom

Prof O'Hare arrived at the meeting at 17.46.

Mr Brolly commented that the colleges demonstrated an impressive strength in moving curriculum delivery online during the government imposed lockdowns due to the pandemic. He informed that budget pressures remain challenging, impacted by the change in funding policy and in the absence of a definite budget. He stated that this interfaced with difficulties in the 16-19 piece, pay and energy pressures, restrictions on delivery, grade inflation and a decline in enrolments, particularly in adult provision, continues to cause challenges in the FE sector.

Mr Doran returned to the meeting at 17.54.

Mr Brolly advised that Ministerial approval has been granted to take forward a review of the delivery model to assess quantitative and qualitative strands. He stated that there is no preconceived outcome and that the Department will be looking at the evidence provided. Mr Brolly informed on the timeline for receipt of the Tribal reports, presentation to DfE and submission to the Minister.

Mr Redmond arrived at the meeting at 18.01.

In response to a query from Mr Doran regarding the benchmarking process, Mr Brolly confirmed that data will be used from the 2019-2020 academic year and preliminary data from the 2020-2021 academic year.

Prof O'Hare questioned if any concerns have been raised about the Tribal Group's objectivity in conducting the reviews. Mr Brolly advised that Tribal have been involved in many Department projects over the years, that they able to provide consistency as they were commissioned to provide the 2018-19 VFM review and have a large benchmarking cohort. He advised that the client will ultimately lead on the direction of travel.

In response to a query from Mrs Thompson on the scope of the project, Mr Brolly responded by advising that the aim is to organise the delivery model, improve careers education, increase attractiveness and address the outdated mind-set creating a competition between schools, colleges and universities.

In response to a query from Mrs Singleton regarding the applied criteria, Mr Brolly confirmed that Tribal have been tasked to evidence benchmarking internally and look externally at areas of best practice.

Mr Redmond remarked that focus on the 14-19 piece should reflect on the individual rather than the institution and commented that funding policy should consider the achievement of learners.

Mr Saunders thanked Mr Brolly and Mrs Smith and remarked that the presentation proves helpful in advance of the upcoming Governing Body workshop. Mr Brolly and Mrs Smith left the meeting at 18.37.

Discussions taking place between 18.43 and 19.08 are recorded within the confidential minutes.

A04. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 18 NOVEMBER 2021

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 18 November 2021 were reviewed for accuracy, and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr McCormick.

A05. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that all matters arising have been actioned.

A06. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Saunders informed that the amendment to the Articles of Government has been accepted by the Department and the signed and sealed document is in effect.

He advised that Mr Doran has been asked to join the Four Nations Alliance advisory group as the NI representative, and also the Independent Commission on the College of the Future. Members fully endorsed the appointments.

On behalf of the full Governing Body, Mr Saunders offered his condolences to Mrs Strachan on the recent passing of her mother-in-law.

Mr Saunders noted that it is Mrs Toal's last meeting as SRC's Boardroom Apprentice. He wished her every success and commented that she has demonstrated great capabilities as a governing apprentice. Mrs Toal thanked Members for the opportunity and remarked on a good experience.

Mr Saunders advised that Mr Kilpatrick has tendered his retirement notice. Mr Doran advised that appointment for Director of Curriculum is due to be advertised this week and the recruitment panel has been agreed.

Members were referred to the Accounting Officer's formal assurance statement and Mr Doran's assessment of the current controls and responses. Mr Doran advised on ongoing accreditation commitments on cyber security and work progressing on post project evaluations.

Mrs Strachan left the meeting at 19.21.

A07. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Education Committee 30 November 2021**
- **Education Committee 22 February 2022**

Mr McCormick advised on good work taking place within the BUTE faculty and College success at the UK WorldSkills competition. He advised that recruitment is a concern in certain areas and commended the excellent work being progressed by Mr Kilpatrick, Mrs Davison and Mrs Bradley.

- **Finance & General Purposes Committee 18 January 2022**
- **Finance & General Purposes Committee 8 March 2022**

Mr Redmond referred Members to the tabled minutes and advised that although budget pressures remain challenging, the finance team are doing an excellent job under difficult circumstances.

- **Audit Committee 8 February 2022**

Mr Nugent advised that Members conducted their regular review of the Corporate Risk Register and remarked on concerns regarding the failure to successfully deploy the new learner management system. Mr Doran informed that the internal auditors are conducting a sectoral advice piece on the roll out of the new LMS and on disaster recovery planning.

Mr Doran also spoke of his concerns over the delay in seeking assurances on load testing of the system following difficulties experienced last September and advised that an external organisation was to be brought in examine these issues.

- **Staffing Committee 1 March 2022**

Mr Alexander advised on excellent work being undertaken in regard to employee development. He informed on a challenge in recruiting and confirmed that the IIP reaccreditation process has started.

The Governing Body adopted the Committee minutes.

A08. GOVERNING BODY MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr Saunders requested that Members consider the proposed meeting dates for the next academic year and inform the Secretary accordingly.

Governors

A09. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Mr Doran referred Members to the draft Partnership Agreement and advised that the approved document will supersede the Management Statement / Financial Memorandum currently in place. He spoke to an important document setting out the overall governance framework operating within the College, detail on assurances and roles and responsibilities.

Mr Doran advised that all comments are welcome and requested that feedback on the document be provided to the Secretary by 1 April.

Governors

Mr Saunders commented on new elements contained in the document as outlined in the briefing note, including the proposal of a 3 year external review of governance arrangements which will in turn need to be incorporated into the internal governance framework.

Mr Doran remarked on the positive endorsement from DfE and their recognition that the College has consistently demonstrated good standards of governance, financial management, compliance with relevant guidance and provision of reliable and accurate information, reflected in the overall 'low' risk assessment of the College.

A10. COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2022 – UPDATE ON ACTION PLAN

Mr Doran referred Members to the CDP action plan and advised that the College has not met some targets in regard to developing certain criteria provision with OU. He informed on the challenge in recruiting to FT FE target however advised that PT provision is on track and apprenticeships are recruiting well.

Members noted the report.

A11. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Code of Conduct for Members of the Governing Body**
- **Anti-Fraud**

Mr Doran referred Members to minor amendments to the Code of Conduct policy in regard to related documents, and an addition within the Anti-fraud policy in regard to fraud risk assessments.

Members unanimously approved the recommended changes.

A12. HE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

Mr Doran referred Members to the HE Assurance Statement and advised that the document is normally tabled for approval at the Education Committee.

The paper was considered by Governing Body Members and approval was granted for submission of the confirmation proforma on proposal from Mr Turner and seconded by Mr Alexander.

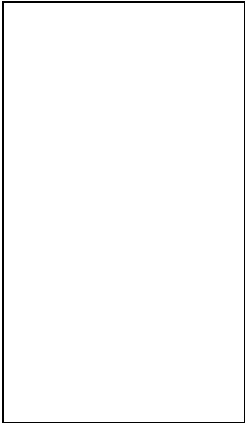
A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

A14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

A Governing Body workshop is scheduled for 29 March 2022.

The meeting concluded at 19.43.



CHAIR

DATE