

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, NEWRY WEST CAMPUS.

Present:

Mr Stuart Harper (Chair)
Mr Raymond Sloan (Interim Chief Executive)
Dr Liz Finnigan
Miss Evie Martin
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Mrs Angela Whiteside

In Attendance:

Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mrs Carolyn Davison, AD HE & FE Quality Improvement
Mrs Elaine Nesbitt, Acting AD Apprenticeships & Essential Skills
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.31.

Mr Harper welcomed new Members Dr Finnigan and Miss Martin to the meeting.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting interests held in any matter to be discussed. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mrs Singleton and seconded by Dr Moore, subject to correction of a minor spelling error.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted the close out of three matters on the action plan.

Dr Milner advised that the sector Safeguarding policy is awaiting Departmental approval.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr Harper reminded Members of SRC's success at the recent WorldSkills competition. Ms Shackels informed that SRC have retained the top position for the second consecutive year and that twelve out of fourteen competitors returned with medals.

Members were reminded that College students were awarded 2 Golds and 1 Bronze at the recent CITB construction trades competition in Milton Keynes.

The Committee were informed that there are eight females enrolled in L3 Engineering.

ACTION BY WHOM

Dr Moore spoke to the need to promote females in STEM courses, to highlight that the 10X Strategy is being delivered and to stress the benefit of Further Education (FE).

Mr Harper advised that the Education Workshop on 6 November focused on quality assurance, performance management, the student voice and teaching and learning. He informed that the slides are available within the Governance Common Materials site.

Mr Harper confirmed that Members were informed on planning for student progression, monitoring and compliance, retention and success and self-improvement. He advised that Members discussed benchmarking, how targets are set and achievement is measured.

In response to a query from Dr Moore, Ms Shackels advised that lecturers are required to maintain lesson plans during the probation period. She informed on changes to the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection process, encouraging more collaborative engagement.

A06. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Hardship Fund**

Members noted minor amendments to the Hardship Fund in line with the Departmental circular FE 07/23. Mr Harper recommended providing the policy to Mr McMurray in his capacity as Hardship Governor for comment.

Mr Sloan committed to review 4.4 the reporting of the Hardship Fund for approval of the Education Committee and Governing Body.

Mr Sloan

- **Educational Visits**
- **Assessment Appeals**
- **Assessment Malpractice**
- **Admissions Criteria**
- **Learning Support**

Members noted recommended changes to the six policies. Discussion took place on the requirement to include AI concerns within the Assessment Malpractice policy. Dr Moore recommended enquiring about the policy position of the sponsor Department.

Ms Shackels

Members recommended a minor amendment to the Learning Support policy.

Mrs Singleton enquired about the number of learners availing of learning support and the measurement of the effectiveness of the assistance. Members requested that a short report is provided to the next Education Committee meeting.

Ms Shackels

The six policies were approved on proposal from Dr Milner and seconded by Mrs Singleton, subject to the recommendations raised and any comments received from the Hardship Governor.

A07. WHOLE COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-23 close out

Mr Harper reminded the Committee that following submission of the WCQIP, the College received feedback in March 2023 that a Grade A outcome was awarded.

Mrs Davison advised on management's decision to present the Plan in two phases. She advised that Phase 1 was for the Committee to review and approve the close off of achievements for the academic year 2022-2023.

Mrs Davison informed that the full Plan will be presented to Members early in the New Year for approval. Members noted that in order to meet the Departmental deadline of 22 January, an extraordinary Education Committee meeting will need to be scheduled.

Mrs Davison advised on the self-evaluation process to assess every course from the ground up and spoke to a wonderful opportunity for granular insight. Dr Moore remarked on a transparent, process driven programme enabling impact and thanked Mrs Davison for her diligence.

Phase One of the WCQIP was approved on proposal from Mrs Singleton and seconded by Mr Harper.

A08. ETI DfE BRIEFING PAPER

Mr Harper informed Members that the expectations of ETI are changing. Ms Shackels advised that impact reporting in Further Education is moving to a more concise critique of curriculum.

Members were informed that the data set has changed from a two-year plan to a five-year trend and a great deal of work required.

Mrs Singleton commented that it would be helpful if the Department would highlight areas of concern and showcase areas of best practice. Dr Moore recommended engaging with English counterparts to gauge their experience of the process.

A09. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mrs Davison referred Members to the Higher Education Profile and Projections Report and advised on key achievements in 2022-2023 and degree classifications awarded. Mrs Finnigan commented that success is achieved by working closely and recruiting internally. She spoke to the cohesion between FE and HE.

Mrs Davison referred to the College's HE curriculum provision, enrolments and challenges for retention. Members were informed that responses to the NSS Survey only yielded results for four programmes due to the set criteria and low response rate. Mrs Davison advised on the College's intent to conduct their own survey. Members noted responses that had deviated at least 5% from last year's survey.

Ms Shackels advised on continuous staff development, commenting that course coordinators are working collaboratively with industry and staff avail of industrial work experience.

Members discussed the variations and restrictions in partnership with awarding bodies and organisations underpinning the HE provision.

Mrs Nesbitt advised on revalidation of the traditional HND L4&5 provision.

Mr Harper remarked favourably that overall student satisfaction has increased to 91.9%. Miss Martin advised that learners are articulating a higher satisfaction in student support post Covid.

Members noted the report.

A10. CURRICULUM DIRECTORS WORKING GROUP (CDWG)

Ms Shackels advised that the CDWG are focused on the Quality Assurance Agency accreditation and advised on a sector workshop in November 2023.

The Committee noted the report.

A11. FE OUTCOMES REPORT 2021-2022

Ms Shackels referred to the DfE survey of FE College leavers and advised that 57% of students leaving SRC enter employment and 36% return to study.

A12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to report.

A13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the need to convene an extraordinary Education Committee meeting in the New Year.

The meeting concluded at 20.18.

signature redacted

19 March 2024.
DATE

