

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, BANBRIDGE CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Dr Thomas Moore (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)
Mr Scott Alexander
Mr Nick Harkness
Mr Stuart Harper
Mr Aidan McCormick
Mr Gary McMurray
Dr Laura Milner
Mr Tom Redmond
Miss Daniela Sanches Egas (via TEAMS)
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mrs Tracy Strachan
Mrs Judith Thompson
Mr Matthew Turner

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Miss Clodagh Palmer, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.16.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Prof Gregory O'Hare, Mrs Carla Shields and Mr Kieran Swail.

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 disclosed.

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 21 MARCH 2023

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 21 March 2023 were reviewed for accuracy, and unanimously approved on proposal from Mrs Strachan and seconded by Mr Alexander, subject to the inclusion of a comma on page 3 referencing sickness absence.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that there has been no objection to the proposed 2023-2024 Governing Body and Committee schedule.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Dr Moore advised that he, the Vice Chair, Executive and Secretary have met and conducted an induction with the five new Members. He informed that the induction was initiated by the Secretary, that full assistance has been provided to date and final administrative tasks, including the updating of marketing materials is in hand. Members were advised that the formal Departmental announcement is expected imminently.

He spoke to the success of the student celebration event on 25 May at the Armagh City Hotel.

Dr Moore informed that he has been appointed to the Board of the Youth Justice Agency.

Miss Armstrong confirmed that Mr Chris Evans and Mrs Sharon O'Hare secured the most votes in the Staff Governor election and expected to take up position in November 2023.

**ACTION
By whom**

Members were informed that the new Student Governor, Miss Evie Martin is to take up post in October 2023.

Miss Palmer arrived at the meeting at 18.27. Mr McCormick arrived at the meeting at 18.29.

Dr Moore reminded Members that all Governing Body meetings were convened online for a substantial period after the Government imposed lockdown was implemented. Members were advised that minutes were approved during lockdown restrictions in line with agreed governance protocols. Dr Moore advised therefore that many of the approved minutes remain unsigned by the person chairing that meeting. Due to a change in personnel, special dispensation was given to the signing of some minutes during that period. The Committee Chairs were encouraged to sign the backdated minutes and the hardcopy of minutes were signed at the meeting.

Dr Moore encouraged Members to complete the DfE self-assessment by 30 June. He advised that individual appraisals will be completed during the summer months upon receipt of the relevant documentation from the Department.

Miss Sanches Egas joined the meeting at 18.31.

Dr Moore advised that a luncheon has been arranged on 31 August to say farewell to Mr Doran and the departing Members who come to the end of their tenure. He thanked all parties for the positive impact they have imparted on the College and advised that they leave a strong legacy behind.

Dr Moore paid special tribute to Mr Doran and commented that he leaves the FE sector in a much richer position due to his diligence and strong leadership.

Dr Moore congratulated Mr Sloan on his offer of appointment as Interim Principal and Chief Executive of Southern Regional College. All Members endorsed the panel's decision to appoint Mr Sloan.

Mr Harkness advised that it was his belief that the Permanent Secretary must endorse Mr Sloan as Accounting Officer. Dr Moore stated that that information was not provided to him in earlier discussions with the Department on the appointment process. He further advised that additional Departmental guidance has since been received and that this is being attended to.

Dr Moore advised that the Governing Body are seeking representation on a number of positions that will become vacant over the summer months. Miss Armstrong to write to Members to seek expressions of interest.

Miss Armstrong

A06. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Staffing Committee 2 May 2023**

Mr Alexander referred Members to the draft Staffing Committee minutes of 2 May and advised that KPI trends will be reported to the next meeting. He informed of a lot of good work undertaken relating to the Organisational Development Plan and advised that further work on staffing representation will be conducted when comparator information becomes available.

- **Audit & Risk Committee 16 May 2023**

Mrs Singleton advised on matters discussed at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting of 16 May and confirmed that Members approved the Anti-Fraud and Fraud Response Plan.

She advised that Members conducted their regular review of the Corporate Risk Register and informed that this is now supplemented with a heatmap and risk appetite paper. Mrs Singleton informed of significant risks relating to budget pressures and releasing income due to problems with the TAMS system. She relayed that Members noted concerns due to lecturer trade union industrial action which could lead to significant reputational damage and legal challenge by learners.

Mrs Singleton confirmed that Members reviewed two internal audit reports which were awarded a 'Satisfactory' rating, RSM publications, ISA Enquires of Those Charged with Governance and the NIAO audit strategy. Mrs Singleton relayed concerns over the NIAO increase in fees and advised on the outcome of the NAO ARC effectiveness tool.

She advised that the Committee will focus on cyber security risks and ESG concerns.

- **Education Committee 30 May 2023**

Mr McCormick referred Members to the draft Education Committee minutes of 30 May. He spoke to a strong skillset in Committee membership and commented that the forum is critical in ensuring the welfare of curriculum delivery. Mr McCormick advised that Members were apprised of the student council summary report and the enrolment position.

He further advised that he and Dr Moore met with a cohort of students who spoke enthusiastically about staff encouragement and relayed that Higher Level Apprenticeships appear to be the course of choice for an increasing number of learners.

Mr McCormick confirmed that Members reviewed the Faculty Action Plans, noted two circulars and the work of the Curriculum Directors' Working Group.

- **Finance & General Purposes Committee 6 June 2023**

Mrs Strachan informed on discussions taking place at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 6 June. She advised that Members are saddened that Mrs Thompson and Mr Redmond will be departing as Committee Members and commented that it is good to hear that incoming Members possess a strong financial skillset.

Mrs Strachan relayed that Members approved several policies and conducted their regular review of SRC Management Accounts. She advised that the Committee noted the Departmental authorised overspend, the difficulties accruing the apprenticeship income due to the TAMS system, Direct Award Contracts and the Complaints and Compliments report.

Mrs Strachan advised that Members approved changes to the Banking Contract and provided formal ratification on the asset management of the Eason Building.

The four Committee minutes were adopted by the full Board.

A07. STANDING ORDERS

Miss Armstrong advised Members on the annual requirement to review the Standing Orders and referred to recommended amendments to advise that for those meetings that have taken place online, the Chair will sign the minutes at the next available opportunity.

The Standing Orders as presented were unanimously approved on proposal from Mrs Strachan and seconded by Mr Turner.

A08. REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2022-2023

Members noted the Register of Interests for the period 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023.

A09. DfE UPDATED RISK ASSESSMENT

Mr Doran referred Members to the Departmental letter of 1 June and associated return advising that DfE deemed the College to be 'low' risk. He advised that the assessment will inform the new Partnership Agreement which is expected to be implemented in the 2023-2024 academic year and aims to replace the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

Members noted the report.

A10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were advised that access arrangements for departing Members will cease from 1 August 2023 and the Secretary will arrange for the return of any College IT equipment and identification thereafter.

Miss Palmer thanked the Board for their participation in the Boardroom Apprentice scheme. Members thanked Miss Sanches Egas and Miss Palmer for their contribution.

A11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Governing Body meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 29 August 2023 at 18.30 in the Armagh campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.10.

signature redacted

DATE

29/8/23.