

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON TUESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS.

PRESENT:

Dr Thomas Moore (Chair)
Raymond Sloan (Interim CEO)
Dr Liz Finnigan
Mr Sean Fitzsimons
Mr Nick Harkness
Mr Stuart Harper
Mrs Monica Kelly
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mr Gary McMurray
Dr Laura Milner
Mrs Hilary Singleton
Dr Eileen Stewart
Mrs Tracy Strachan
Mrs Angela Whiteside

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Ms Libby Shackels, Director of Curriculum
Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Interim Director of Client Services
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.32.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Geraldine Campbell, Miss Evie Martin and Mrs Sharon O'Hare.

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.

Dr Moore introduced the newly elected Lecturing Staff Governor, Dr Liz Finnigan to her first meeting of the Governing Body. He commented that the outgoing Staff Governors, Mr Turner and Mr Swail had served the Board admirably.

Dr Finnigan informed on her area of specialism and longstanding links with the College.

Dr Moore remarked that Dr Finnigan will bring an important contribution to the Governing Body.

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 24 OCTOBER 2023

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 24 October 2023 were reviewed for accuracy and were approved as an accurate record on proposal from Mrs Singleton and seconded by Mrs Strachan, subject to recommendations raised.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

None to report.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- **Actions Log**
- **Correspondence File**

Dr Moore welcomed Dr Finnigan and informed that he and the Vice Chair had a previous meeting with both new Staff Governors. He advised that Mrs O'Hare had stated her apologies for missing the meeting due to a prior commitment.

**ACTION
By whom**

Dr Moore reminded Members of SRC's WorldSkills success and having retained top of the leaderboard for the second consecutive year.

Mr Sloan advised that the College were awarded 5 Golds, 3 Silvers and 4 Bronze in the competition and commented that participants and staff should be rightly proud of their achievement. He advised that learners are competing in the CITB construction competition in Milton Keynes and results are expected shortly.

Dr Moore paid tribute to the competitors and related staff who assisted in their achievement. Mr Sloan advised that a recognition event will be planned for the New Year.

Dr Moore advised Members that the co-optee recruitment process closes Monday 27 November 2023 and interviews are scheduled for 15 December 2023.

Dr Milner advised that she had attending a Safeguarding meeting with Mrs McKeown on 8 November 2023.

Mr McMurray confirmed that he attended a Hardship Fund meeting with College personnel and reviewed challenges and the stipulations of the circular. He informed of further work to enhance student support and advised that he will report back to the Governing Body throughout 2024.

Dr Moore advised that Members attended the DfE Effective Governance training on 20 November 2023.

Mr Harper spoke to a useful Education Workshop on 6 November 2023. He informed that attendees were provided with assurance on quality, performance management, the student voice and teaching and learning.

Members reviewed their action log and extended an invitation to the FE Director, Mrs Louise Watson to attend a future meeting of the full Governing Body.

Miss Armstrong

A06. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) 20 November 2023**

Mrs Singleton referred Governors to the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee convened 20 November 2023 and confirmed that Members had conducted a detailed review of the Corporate Risk Register (CRR), advising on amendments agreed to risk descriptors and cause and effect. She informed that the updated, full CRR will be presented for review at the February 2024 meeting.

Mrs Singleton advised that Members conducted a review of the Annual Health and Safety report noting that SRC is the first NI College to be awarded full HASMAP compliance.

Mrs Singleton confirmed that the Committee reviewed the RSM Emerging Risk Register and were reassured that all emerging risk are captured in the College CRR. She provided detail surrounding the decision to remove the TAMS risk off the CRR.

Mrs Singleton confirmed that the ARC reviewed the draft Report to Those Charged with Governance and had noted one low priority recommendation which management have confirmed they accepted. She advised that having noted the findings of the report, the ARC had recommended that the Annual Report and Financial Accounts be presented to the full Governing Body for final approval.

Members unanimously adopted the ARC minute of 20 November 2023.

A07. DRAFT REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE (RTTCWG)

Mrs Campbell relayed that the NI Audit Office presented the RTTCWG to the ARC meeting of 20 November 2023 and proposed that the Comptroller and Auditor General will certify the 2022-2023 financial statements with an unqualified opinion, without modification.

She confirmed that throughout the audit, no evidence was found that would require adjustments to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure or statement of financial position, there were no uncorrected misstatements evidenced or identification of irregular expenditure.

Mrs Campbell advised that although management were accepting of the recommendations regarding the 800 assets, the depreciation policy set by the Departmental will need to be reviewed.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mrs Campbell advised that the items refer to IT equipment and although they have nil asset value, they are still being used. She advised that she would refer the matter to NIFON in the first instance.

A08. FINAL ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the period ended 31 July 2023

Mr Sloan reminded Members of the level of scrutiny required before the Accounts are presented to the Governing Body for final approval.

In response to a query from Mrs Kelly regarding the statement referred to under 'events after the reporting period', Mrs Campbell advised that SRC have the ability to consolidate should the College need to reduce its staffing complement.

Dr Moore advised that any management proposals will be presented for Governing Body approval at its meeting on 5 December 2023.

The Accounts were unanimously approved on proposal from Mrs McCaffrey and seconded by Mr Harper. Mrs Campbell advised on next steps prior to the laying of the Accounts.

A10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Milner provided further detail on her meeting in her capacity as Governance Safeguarding Officer. She reported that good mechanisms to monitor safeguarding are in place and statistical data is being captured in response to Inspire Counselling, Causes for Concern and benchmarking.

Dr Milner provided Members with detail on 'Operation Encompass'.

Mr Sloan confirmed that the Annual Safeguarding report is presented to the full Governing Body.

A09. GOVERNING BODY SELF-ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS REPORT

Members noted the outcome of the 2022-2023 Governing Body Self-Assessment Exercise.

Dr Moore asked that any responses or recommendations to improve performance be directed through the office of the Secretary.

A11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Governing Body meeting is scheduled for 10.00 on Tuesday 5 December 2023 in the Boardroom, Newry West campus.

Governors

The meeting concluded at 18.17.

signature redacted

DATE

5/12/23

