



Minutes of a Meeting of the Governing Body (the “GB”) held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 17:30, Lisburn Campus

Agenda Item 1: Chair’s Business:

a) Attendance and Apologies for Absences:

Present:

Mr John Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body), Mr Tommy Martin (Principal/CEO), Mr Alan McCrum, Mr Darren Stewart, Ms Majella Corrigan (Agenda Items 1-6 only), Mr Derek Wilson, Mrs Carolyn King, Mr Michael McQuillan, Dr Danny McConnell, Mr Samuel Hagen, Mrs Nuala Reid, Mrs Pauline Leeson, Mr Chris Bruton, Mr Steven Lee, Ms Grainne McVeigh, Mrs Nicola Wilson, Ms Catherine McKay, Mr Paul Finnegan (via Microsoft Teams)

In Attendance:

Mrs Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body), Mrs Heather McKee (Deputy Principal Planning, Performance and Engagement), Mrs Emma Carson (Acting Director HR & Facilities), Mr Andrew Emmett (Acting Director IT & Finance), Mr Gary Ritchie (Deputy Principal Curriculum), Ms Grainne Sann (Department for the Economy)

Apologies: None

In the Chair: Mr Nugent

b) Declarations of Conflicts of Interest:

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

- Ms Corrigan declared she is employed by DENI. She is a current member of the Governing Body of Stranmillis College.
- Mr McQuillan declared he is Chief Executive of Enterprise NI and a board member of Invest NI.
- Mr McCrum declared his wife is employed at ETI.

- The Principal & CEO declared his daughter is employed as a lecturer at the College.
- Mr Lee declared his wife is employed as a Deputy Head of School at the College.
- The Deputy Principal Curriculum declared his wife and sister-in-law are both employed in support staff roles at the College.

No action was taken in relation to any of the declared conflicts. Members were reminded that they should declare any potential conflicts to agenda items should they arise during the meeting.

c) Minutes from meeting on 17th April 2025

Papers previously provided to members.

The minutes from the meeting held on 17th April were approved on the proposal of Sam Hagen and seconded by Danny McConnell.

d) Matters Arising/Action Points from previous Meetings:

Papers previously provided to members.

The Secretary advised there were no outstanding actions from the previous meetings.

e) Governance Framework

The Chair reminded members that both he and the Secretary are always open to any suggestions or improvements members may wish to make in terms of the Governance Framework.

f) Staff Governor Roles

The Chair advised that a query had risen on the role of the Staff Governor recently after attending the JCF Meeting. In response the Chair has asked both Staff Governors to be more interactive with staff on their role as a Governor and asked members to note that they will circulate a newsletter 4 times per year to keep staff abreast of their role. The Chair highlighted that the Staff Governor attendance at the JCF is in an observation role and not to represent the Governing Body.

Agenda Item 2: Secretary's Business

Papers previously provided to members.

a) Activity and Engagement Schedule 24/25

Members noted the schedule, and the Secretary reminded members of the HE Graduation date - 19th September at the Waterfront Hall.

b) Training/Briefing requirements

The Secretary asked members to note the enclosed training plan and advised if there are any specific training requirements members should advise the Secretary or the Chair.

c) Governing Body Register of Interests

The Secretary highlighted the Register of Interests policy to members and reminded them it is everyone's personal responsibility to update the register with the Secretary should their circumstances change.

d) Sector Effectiveness Report

The Chair advised that ICS have produced a draft Sector Report. On initial review the report is generally positive, however ICS have been asked to reformat the report before it is signed off. Members noted the report will be reviewed at the next meeting in September.

e) Governing Body and Committee Cycle of Business 25/26

The Secretary advised that the work plan for next year will be reviewed when the committee membership is finalized over the Summer.

Action: Members were asked to advise the Secretary of any areas of interest that they would like to be considered for the 25/26 work plan

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

Paper provided to members in advance.

The Principal talked to the written report provided at 003 and highlighted the current financial performance and enrolment figures.

Members noted the Peace Plus offer letter had not been received on time and that several work streams had been impacted by this along with the KPI on the CPD progress report to increase enrolments.

The Principal highlighted the College met its financial target for 2024/25 and provided a brief overview of the operational budget for 2025/26.

Agenda Item 4: Items for Approval

Papers provided to members in advance.

a) Baseline Operational Budget 2025/26

The Principal presented the Baseline Operational Budget 25/26 for review and approval. He began by advising that this had been approved by the FGP committee at their recent meeting.

Members noted the following:

This baseline operational Resource Requirement of £47,038k provides a £624k easement from the baseline presented in March 2025.

This improvement is the result of ongoing refinement to live within the draft budget allocation, as follows:

- Apprenticeship NI: Additional income of £595k relating to further refinement of assumptions of student numbers, retention, and achievement of milestones.
- Step Up Income: Additional income of £60k in 2025/26 due to application of revenue recognition rules for the 2024/25 scheme.
- Other Operating Income: Additional income of £95k in relation to revenue recognition of PFI income.
- Purchase of Equipment: Additional expenditure of £126k to reflect replacement cycle of IT equipment.

Agreed: The Baseline Operational Budget 2025/25 was approved on the proposal of Alan McCrum and seconded by Pauline Leeson.

b) Audit Committee minutes from meeting held on 27th March and briefing from meeting on 12th June 2025

Mr Hagen, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes for adoption. He asked members to note the written briefing he had provided on the meeting from 12th June.

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Nicola Wilson and seconded by Danny McConnell

- c) Education Committee minutes from meeting held on 8th April and briefing from meeting on 17th June 2025

Ms Corrigan, Chair of the Education Committee, presented the minutes for adoption and asked members to note the written briefing from the recent meeting on 17th June

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Derek Wilson and seconded by Alan McCrum

- d) Finance and General Purposes minutes from meeting held on 25th March 2025 and briefing from meeting on 10th June 2025

Mr McCrum, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, presented the minutes for adoption. He advised a written briefing had been provided on the meeting held on 10th June 2025

Agreed: The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Nuala Reid and seconded by Steven Lee

e) Committee Membership

The Chair began by reminding members that the ICS report had recommended a review of the membership of the Education Committee. He directed members to the written paper setting out the following recommendations:

- i. to amend the membership of the Education Committee from September 2025
- ii. to retain the current 3 Committee structure for the 2025/26

There was a brief discussion, and the Chair highlighted that members should serve a 2-year term on the Education Committee during their 4-year overall term.

Agreed: The proposal to amend the membership of the Education Committee and retain the 3-committee structure was approved on the proposal of Nuala Reid and seconded by Danny McConnell.

f) Draft Schedule 2025/26

The Secretary presented the schedule for approval and highlighted the Governing Body meetings will rotate through the main campuses and this will be used as an opportunity for staff engagement, therefore members may be required to attend earlier than the 5.30pm start.

Agreed: The Governing Body meeting schedule was approved on the proposal of Alan McCrum and seconded by Catherine McKay.

g) Strategy Update

The Deputy Principal Planning Performance & Engagement presented the Draft Strategy document that has been reworked following the Strategy session in May. She highlighted that the terms of reference for the College Strategic Leadership clearly demonstrates how the strategic priorities are implemented and reported through committees to the Governing Body.

Members commented that this was an excellent piece of work and were particularly impressed with the level of staff engagement completed to get to this point as it should empower staff in their individual roles.

In a brief discussion on how the strategic priorities would impact on workload the Principal advised this work is driving forward through the leadership group, and that some concerns have been raised around workload. CMT will look at how our management structure is set up, and the RTS review will also take this into account. The Principal added there are challenges, and it's important that this Strategy doesn't create additional work for its own sake. He concluded by adding that this is a constructive piece of work, providing staff with a valuable opportunity to have a real, positive impact on the College direction over the next five years.

Agreed: The revised Strategy was approved on the proposal of Catherine McKay and seconded by Pauline Lesson

Agenda Item 5: Policies for approval

No policies were presented for approval.

Agenda Item 6: Items for Information

Papers provided to members in advance.

a) Accounts Update

The Principal & Chief Executive directed members to the written report at 006A for noting.

b) Staff Governor Reports

On the invitation of the Chair the Corporate Staff Governor presented an overview of her written report. She highlighted the excellent event hosted by the DPPPE for staff within her directorate. The

Staff Governor advised that it had been extremely informative, staff had welcomed the opportunity to come together, and it was testament to the supportive culture that is evident in the College.

The Teaching Staff Governor provided an overview of his report, and he highlighted the use of AI in classrooms and the duplication of work for students in T-Skills. The Principal added that engagement with the awarding bodies is ongoing to rectify the duplication issue and simplify the process for students.

Ms Corrigan advised that Ulster University are hosting AI conferences at the end of August that staff may find beneficial attending to aid with the use of AI by students.

c) Student Governor Report

The Student Governor presented his report to members and members noted the excellent work conducted by the Students Union.

The Chair advised members that this would be the Student Governors last meeting and on behalf of all members he commended Chris on the work and contribution he has made throughout the year. Members wished the Student Governor well and echoed the Chair's comments.

d) Strategic Risk Register

The Principal presented the register and reminded members that while it is periodically presented to Governing Body, the Chair of the Audit Committee provides a full update to members on risk in his committee briefings. Members noted there are currently **5 risks**: 2 Red Zone risks and 3 Amber Zone risks.

Red risks were noted as Financial Viability of the College and Cyber Threat. The 3 amber risks are Managing the College's Sickness Absence, Supporting the Increasing Number of Learners presenting with Special Educational Needs and Industrial Relations.

The risk on Industrial Relations was recently downgraded now that pay negotiations have been agreed and overall relations are now more positive across the sector.

At this juncture Ms Corrigan left the meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business:

No other business was discussed.

Agenda Item 8: Confidential Business

A separate note was taken for this item.

Agenda Item 9: Session without Management

A separate note was taken for this item.

Date of next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Governing Body is scheduled for Tuesday 7th October 2025 17.30, Bangor Campus.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed:

Date: _____

John Nugent

Chair of the Governing Body