
MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS ON TUESDAY 1 APRIL 2008 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT: Mr E Beattie (Chair)
Miss E Cavanagh (from 5.25pm)
Mr H Faulkner
Mr L Gallagher (from 5.45pm)
Dame Geraldine Keegan
Mrs M Lestas
Mr D McMahan
Prof F Monds
Mr S Murphy (Director)
Mr A O'Connor
Mr A Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T Carson (LSDA) for item 6.10
Mr K Kilpatrick (LSDA) for item 6.10
Mr D Kinnaird (Assistant Director, Client Services) for item 6.11
Mr J Keegan (Network Services Support Officer) for item 6.11
Mr P McKeown (Assistant Director, Finance) for item 6.5
Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

The Chair thanked Mr T Mahon (Estates Manager) for arranging a conducted tour of the campus and showing a virtual tour of the other sites prior to the commencement of the meeting.

It was agreed that items 6.10, 6.11, and 6.5 should be taken at the beginning of the meeting to facilitate persons in attendance.

6.1 APOLOGIES

Mrs J Doherty

6.2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2008

It was proposed by Mr Faulkner seconded by Mr Murphy and agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. On the suggestion of a member it was agreed that Committee minutes coming to the Governing Body should be recorded as being 'adopted as draft minutes' when applicable.

6.3 MATTERS ARISING

5.3 (4.3) (3.5) Co-option of member. The Chair reported that enquiries were still continuing.

5.4 Instrument of Government. The Secretary reported that the amendments had been agreed with DEL and that members had received an updated copy. The Chair reported that he had spoken to the lecturing staff appointee who had not yet progressed his GB membership and he indicated that he would re-consider the situation.

5.8 Chairman's Business. The Chair reported that the meetings mentioned had taken place. He had been impressed by the understanding of the Minister in relation to matters affecting the sector. In particular the Minister had expressed his disappointment that his initiative to resolve the present pay dispute had not been successful.

A member requested clarification on the process for adoption of the Code of Conduct for members. The secretary is to enquire from DEL and report back.

5.11 Strategic Planning Day. The Chair reported that the draft plan circulated by AD to members was not yet in the desired format and that he preferred members to wait until input was received from senior management and himself before a further copy be circulated to members who would then be invited to comment on its contents. The plan would form a major agenda item at the GB meeting in May. He explained that the document was for internal use, to be a live working document containing broad targets and would be reviewed on a regular basis.

5.12. Register of Interests. The Director reported that the Register of Interests for Senior Management had been completed and that he would lodge a copy with the Secretary.

6.4 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair of the Committee reported on the meeting which took place on 18 March 2008. There was a separate item relating to the Secretary which he would raise at the end of this meeting. He highlighted the recommendations contained in the draft minutes pointing out that the settlement referred to under item 5.7 had, by agreement, been revised and did not now require DEL approval. It was proposed by Mr Rainey seconded by Prof Monds and agreed that the draft minutes be adopted and that the following recommendations be approved:

- the granting of working arrangements / leave requests from 3 members of staff
- the settlement of a legal case
- the policy on flexible working arrangements for staff
- the granting of retirement on the grounds of redundancy to 6 members of staff
- two non-teaching staffing posts be made redundant and that alternative employment be sought for staff affected.

The Chair of the GB suggested that the Committee might consider receiving regular reports on staff overtime.

6.5 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

The Secretary tabled amended draft minutes. The Chair of the Committee referred members to the following items contained in the minutes

- **NWRC Tender Procedures.** He indicated that the document was designed to promote good procurement practice and for the protection of staff. It was proposed by Prof Monds seconded by Dame Geraldine Keegan that the agreement that the Governing Body be kept informed of proposed tenders over £30000 should be incorporated in the document. Other comments by members included
 - The college needed to ensure that it specified a set of general conditions when inviting tenders for procurement of supplies
 - The college should consider moving to a framework arrangement rather than using select lists. It was agreed that this suggestion be incorporated when the document is next revised
 - Need to clarify uncertainty over whether Appendix A covered civil partnerships
- **Projected Financial Position.** The Assistant Director, Finance indicated that an anticipated

£1.3m surplus may occur prior to the close of the college financial year. The Director indicated that there were a number of items of capital spend and curriculum needs which were required by the college. It was proposed by Prof Monds seconded by Mr Faulkner and agreed that consideration should be given to expediting the surplus during this financial year. As no paper outlining proposals was available to the meeting it was proposed by Mr Faulkner seconded by Dame Geraldine Keegan and agreed that a special meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee be convened as soon as possible to consider the recommendations of the Directorate on the matter; and, following their deliberations on these, that the Chair then be given executive powers on this occasion.

- Day Care Provision. (Ref: paper GB6.5). The Director reported on the past and present use of the facility, projected costs for 2008/09 and possible income scenarios. A discussion took place which included the following comments by members
 - The facility was originally set up to help returning female students with child care needs
 - Level of subsidy could not be justified if not substantially used by college students
 - There should be no subsidising of staff or outside users
 - Query on whether franchising was an option
 - The provision should not be part of college business

The Chair of the GB then invited proposals on the future of the facility. It was proposed by Mr Faulkner that the facility remain open with an increase in fees to commercial rates for outside users with a review taking place when numbers were known in September. It was proposed by Dame Geraldine Keegan that the facility be closed in June. When put to members, 7 voted for the facility to remain open and 3 members voted for its closure in June. The Chair declared the facility to remain open under the conditions outlined above.

On the proposal of Prof Monds seconded by Mr Gallagher it was agreed to adopt the amended draft minutes of the meeting and to approve the following recommendations:

- An estates review takes place following planning approval being given for the Boating Club Lane development
- The fees structure for 2008/09 as outlined the Director having reported that there was no consistency amongst colleges in relation to charges for ESOL courses.

6.6 EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair of the Committee reported on the meeting held on 10 March 2008. He referred members to a number of items recorded in the draft minutes including

- Quality issues. He mentioned that the GB as a whole would be interested in quality. The Director indicated that the Assistant Directors would be developing a quality agenda within their own areas of responsibility
- China Development Proposal (ref: paper GB6.6). The Director reported that the reply received from the British Council indicated that it was not necessary to pay NI salary and that procurement was not a matter for the British Council. He indicated that a local member of staff in China could be either employed directly or procured through an agency. A member commented that procurement should be in accordance with the college's procurement policy. The Chair of the Committee felt that, although there were uncertainties, the project was worth pursuing. It was proposed by Mr Gallagher seconded by Dame Geraldine Keegan and agreed to proceed with the proposal.

It was proposed by Mr Beattie seconded by Mr Gallagher and agreed to adopt the draft minutes of the Committee and to approve the following recommendation

- that the ICT Acceptable Use Policy be accepted and that its application be extended to include members of the Governing Body.

6.7 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair of the Committee reported on the meeting held on 10 March 2008. He highlighted some of the issues recorded in the draft minutes and emphasised the high level of assurance ratings which the college had achieved in its first 2 internal audit reports. He referred to the letter from DEL on the Management Letters from FE Colleges circulated with the agenda. He stated that none of the issues referred to in Annex 1 applied to NWRC. It was proposed by Mr McMahon seconded by Mr Beattie and agreed to adopt the draft minutes of the Committee.

6.8 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair commented on the following matters

- Papers coming to meetings need to show authorship
- A need to review the use of the building in Limavady originally used as a Lifelong Learning Centre. He suggested the matter be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

6.9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Ref: paper GB6.9)

The Director outlined the reasons for closing the IT Centre in Strabane. He indicated that there had been no adverse reaction to the decision.

6.10 LSDA TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Chair welcomed Mr Carson and Mr Kilpatrick to the meeting. Mr Carson outlined the role of the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) as providers of support for the post 16 sector. The range of support he mentioned included provision of training for members of Governing Bodies. He indicated that LSDA hoped to carry out a governors' health check from which specific training needs could be identified. Mr Kilpatrick outlined a pilot project facilitated by LSDA involving members of a governing body using a secure web-site for discussion and a sharing of resources. The Chair then thanked Mr Carson and Mr Kilpatrick for bringing to members' attention the work of LSDA.

6.11 SECURE WEB-LINK FOR MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Assistant Director (Client Services) and the Network Services Support Officer demonstrated the provision of a secure web-link which could be used by members to access governing body material. Members were provided with a user name and initial password which are required to access the site. It was agreed that its initial use would be to post papers of all Governing Body and Committee meetings from August 2007.

6.12 SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The Secretary distributed

- A draft timetable for meetings 2008/09
- Details of LSDA training events to be held late April & May 2008

6.13 CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) Letter from UCU Branch Secretary. Its contents were noted. UCU to be requested that any correspondence to the Governing Body be directed through the Secretary.
- (2) Letter from UCU Regional Official. The contents were discussed under AOB.

(3) Letters recently circulated. Members noted contents.

6.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) A member referred again to the need for a general template for projects to be drawn up. The Chair indicated that work was being done through the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

(2) The contents of a letter from UCU Regional Official were outlined. The Director was asked to comment before withdrawing so members could discuss.

The Director and Secretary withdrew at this point to allow discussions under 6.4 and 6.14(2) .

(3) See separate minutes.

Date of next meeting. It was agreed to meet on Tuesday 6 May 2008 at 5.00pm in the Strand Road Campus.

This being all the business the meeting ended at 9.10pm