
MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD IN THE BOARDROOM, TOWER BUILDING, STRAND ROAD CAMPUS ON WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2009

PRESENT: Mr H Faulkner (Chair)
Mr M Agnew
Miss E Cavanagh
Mrs J Doherty
Mr L Gallagher
Dame Geraldine Keegan
Mr W McBride
Mrs G McCafferty (from 5.45pm)
Mr D McMahan
Prof F Monds
Mr S Murphy (Director)
Mr T O'Connor
Mr A Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D McClelland (Secretary)

14.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs M Lestas and Mr A Smyth.

14.2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2009

It was proposed by Mrs Doherty seconded by Mr McBride and agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

14.3 MATTERS ARISING

13.6 DEL Guidance on investment. The Director reported that no advice had been received

ACTION Secretary to publish approved minutes

14.4 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: FC Draft Minutes – 24 August 2009)

The Committee Chair reported that a special meeting of the Committee had been held following discussions between members of the Committee and the consultants on their report on the Harmonisation of the Estates Service Delivery. The Committee felt that, on balance, option 2A (Status Quo + Strand Road in-house + Lawrence Building PFI) was to be recommended to the Governing Body as the preferred option. A member queried the wisdom of extending the PFI contract. The Director explained that it would be offset by closure of other sites and should result in minimal change. It was proposed by Mr Gallagher seconded by Dame Geraldine Keegan and agreed to approve the recommendation of the Committee that Option 2A be accepted as the preferred option subject to a satisfactory legal response being received that the alteration to the PFI contract would not contravene EU procurement directives.

The GB Chair thanked the Chair and members of the Committee for the work done in bringing this matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

14.5 **AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT (Ref: Draft Minutes of meeting held on 3 September 2009)**

The Committee Chair referred to a number of items contained in the draft minutes including

- The presentation of findings, pointing to 2 ‘substantial’ and 1 ‘limited’ assurance ratings given to the 3 areas audited. He felt that the matter of data protection and freedom of information was being addressed by the College. The Committee is to receive a further progress report on this area at its November meeting.
- The satisfactory outcome of the follow-up review
- The overall assurance rating awarded to the College over the year’s audit
- The Conflicts of Interest policy – a further draft to be considered at the November Committee meeting

He outlined the 2 recommendations which the Committee was making to the Governing Body

- The acceptance of the internal audit plan for 2009/2010
- The approval of the revised Whistleblower Policy.

It was proposed by Prof Monds seconded by Dame Geraldine Keegan and agreed to adopt the Committee minutes and approve the 2 recommendations contained therein.

14.6 **CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS**

The Chair referred to the following matters:

1. He encouraged members to attend the training on Child Protection to be provided on 25 November 2009 at 4.00pm in Limavady Campus prior to the Governing Body meeting
2. He mentioned the DEL requirement for members of the Governing Body to be appraised annually. He said he would be in touch with members shortly about this matter.
3. In relation to chairing of appeals / arbitration panels, members agreed that the Director should undertake this task on their behalf.

14.7 **DIRECTOR’S REPORT (Ref: Paper GB14.7)**

1. Regional Industrial Relations Issue. The Director indicated that the conditions contained in the new contract were now operational. An issue still to be resolved was the form of scheme to be used for job evaluation.

2. Local Industrial Relations. The Director said he had been encouraged by the progress made including resolution on how additional duties would be managed. He was hopeful that this improved climate would continue.

3. Enrolments – September 2009. The Director tabled an update on enrolments which showed considerable increase in all modes of attendance over equivalent figures for 2008. He reported substantial increase in higher education numbers, a trebling of numbers of full-time students in Strabane over a 2 year period and increases at the Limavady Campus. During discussion, issues raised included

ACTION

Director – further report to Audit Committee on progress on DP & FoI . Further draft of Conflicts of Interest policy

Secretary – circulate Whistleblower Policy

- An assurance that reserves are sufficient to meet the additional costs of the increase in enrolment numbers
- An estimate of additional costs involved will be calculated once efficiencies in class size are in place. A revised budget will be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee
- Opportunity to publicise the work the College is doing in the present economic climate including its use of reserves to meet the increase in demand
- A challenge still remains in seeking to reach substantial number of persons who are unemployed and who could benefit from further training.

14.8 PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES AND POLICIES (Ref: paper GB14.8)

The Director referred to the legal guidance which had been received which pointed out that certain specific issues listed in the Articles of Government could not be delegated. Apart from these it was a matter for the Governing Body to exercise its discretion in delegation of other issues. It was agreed that the Audit Committee should consider the matter further and report back.

ACTION

Director – refer issue to Audit Committee

14.9 SECRETARY'S BUSINESS (Ref: paper GB14.9)

The Secretary thanked members for the return of update on contact details and register of interests. He asked that he be advised of any further changes which may occur as the year progresses.

Secretary

– Update members' contact details & register of interests

14.10 CORRESPONDENCE

None

14.11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Following a query by a member it was agreed that members should be kept informed of any proposals to dispose of major assets.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 25 November 2009 at 5.00pm at the Limavady Campus.

This being all the business the Chair closed the meeting at 6.00pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____