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**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTY FIRST MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020, COMMENCING 1700**

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**PRESENT:**

Mr G Finnegan, Governing Body Chair  
Ms M Breslin  
Mr P Canavan  
Mrs R Dougherty  
Mr S Gillespie  
Dr N Hand (from 1710)  
Mr G Killeen (from 1714)  
Mr L Murphy, Principal & Chief Executive  
Mr M O’Kane  
Prof M O’Neill  
Mr B Quinn  
Mrs L Taggart

**IN ATTENDANCE;**

Mr P McKeown, Director of Finance & Economic Engagement  
Ms S Kelly, HR Manager (from item 81.5)  
Mrs K Moore, Head of Quality Enhancement (for presentation item 81.0 only)  
Mrs C McGovern, Boardroom Apprentice  
Mrs É Doherty, Governance Secretary

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Due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic all members and attendees were joining the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams.

**81.0 PRESENTATION – MRS K MOORE**

The Governing Body Chair welcomed Mrs K Moore, recently appointed Head of Quality Enhancement who was temporarily taking on the role as the College’s COVID Compliance Officer.

Mrs Moore apprised the meeting on the background to the phased return by staff and students to the College Campuses. It was highlighted that the last ten days had seen a significant spike in COVID incidents reported in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area. This had been followed up with increased messages going out to staff and the student body to reinforce the guidance provided. There is an instant reporting system in place for staff, to date 148 COVID incidents have been reported with 18 positive results. Two environmental cleans have taken place with enhanced cleaning on a daily basis. Regular newsletters with updates on COVID related matters are available to all staff on the Staff Portal.

A question and answer session followed.

The Governing Body Chair and the Principal extended their gratitude and thanks to Mrs Moore for her work in this area.

*Mrs Moore left the meeting at this juncture. Mr G Killeen and Dr N Hand joined the meeting during this item.*

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**81.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

The Governing Body Chair welcomed everyone and extended a warm welcome to Ms M Breslin, recently appointed Support Staff Governor and Mrs C McGovern, Boardroom Apprentice who were attending their first Board meeting. The Governance Secretary had agreed to take on the role as 'Board Buddy' to Mrs McGovern.

The Governing Body Chair also wished to pass on congratulations to Governor Dr Malachy O'Neill who had been awarded a professorship at Ulster University.

Apologies were received from Dr C O'Mullan.

**81.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mrs R Dougherty declared a conflict of interest in respect to the Reserved Business agenda item. No declarations of any other business were declared.

**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Summary Register – Conflicts of Interest – Sept 2020

Members noted the updated Register for the new academic year.

**81.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2020****➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 23 June 2020

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting.

**PROPOSED;** Mr P Canavan

**SECONDED;** Dr N Hand

**81.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – Governing Body Meeting held on 23 June 2020**

80.11 A welcome note was sent to all staff from the Governing Body Chair on 17 September 2020.

78.6 A training session pilot will take place for the Resources Committee members in the next few months.

The Governing Body Chair then invited Mr S Gillespie, Committee Chair to report on behalf of the Audit & Risk Committee.

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**81.4 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE****➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1	Committee Chair's Summary Report
Report 2	Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2020
Report 3	Audit & Risk Committee's Terms of Reference
Report 4	Internal Audit – Three Year Strategy 2020/21 -2022/23

The key points from the Committee meeting included a presentation provided by the IT Services Manager to the Committee on cyber security – risk management.

Following a recommendation from Internal Audit a successful pilot on a monitoring system has taken place and the College will now use this system to provide an extra layer of visibility to the IT Team.

Referring to the Annual Report & Financial Statements, Year Ended 31 July 2020 the Director stated that these were in draft form. The Director drew members' attention to a Balance Sheet book entry for the NILGOSC Pension Reserves Valuation which was showing a substantial increase in the pension liability – partly explained by changes to the assumptions made by the actuaries (AON).

PwC, the External Auditors on behalf of the NIAO have commenced the Audit of the Financial Statements and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 July 2020. The Audit is taking place remotely.

A revised timetable was issued by the External Auditor to meet the deadlines for the November Committee meetings.

The newly appointed Internal Auditor, RSM was welcomed to the Committee meeting. The Internal Audit three year Strategy, Internal Audit Plan and Charter was presented to the Committee for consideration and approval.

The Committee Chair wished to bring to the Board's attention that the level of the College's risk appetite is "cautious". The Board was in agreement with this.

The Draft Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 15 September 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes.

**PROPOSED;** Mr S Gillespie

**SECONDED;** Mrs L Taggart

Approval was sought from members for Ms M Breslin to serve on the Audit & Risk Committee. Approval was granted.

**PROPOSED;** Mr S Gillespie

**SECONDED;** Mr P Canavan

Approval was sought from members for Ms C McGovern to join as an attendee on the Audit & Risk Committee for the academic year 2020/21. Approval was granted.

**PROPOSED;** Mr S Gillespie

**SECONDED;** Mr G Killeen

The Committee's Terms of Reference were reviewed, no changes were required.

**PROPOSED;** Mr S Gillespie

**SECONDED;** Mr P Canavan

Approval was sought for acceptance of the Internal Audit Strategy 2020/21 - 2022/23, Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 and Audit Charter

**PROPOSED;** Mr S Gillespie

**SECONDED;** Mr G Killeen

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mr S Gillespie for his report and invited Mrs R Dougherty, Chair of the Resources Committee to present her report to the Board.

*Ms S Kelly, HR Manager joined the meeting at this juncture.*

## 81.5 RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### ➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1	Committee Chair's Summary Report
Report 2	Draft Minutes from the Committee meeting held on 21 September 2020
Report 3	Draft Annual Report & Financial Statements Year Ended 31 July 2020
Report 4	Management Statement/Financial Memorandum & Appendices (Oct 2018)
Report 5	Section 75 Equality Progress Report April 2019 – March 2020
Report 6	IIP Review July 2020

The Committee Chair reported that matters arising from the June 2020 Committee meeting had been closed off. Key points from the Committee meeting included that CPD had advised that normal procurement procedures would not apply in respect to COVID-19 supplies for PPE consumables.

Work on the Springtown Redevelopment Project was now complete, there were some minor snagging items outstanding. Dispute continues in relation to the outstanding Compensation Events.

The Committee were also apprised that the provider of the temporary accommodation in Springtown Campus as part of the enabling works had issued the College with a Notice of Adjudication in August 2020. The College is challenging this and is awaiting judgement. Concern was expressed at the Committee meeting on the length of time to close off the Compensation Events. The Director reported that it is hoped that these will be finalised by early October 2020. Members will be updated at the next Governing Body meeting.

The Committee Chair reported that some minor work programmes had been delayed due to the COVID situation. The Committee Chair added that the College had received an allocation of funding from the Department (DfE) to assist with the purchase of additional IT equipment. The Director added that a further allocation had been received to cover costs associated with PPE, IT equipment and loss of income.

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The Department (DfE) will request a further bid once the new academic year has settled in.

The final draft of the Annual Report & Financial Statements Year Ended 31 July 2020 had been submitted to the Department (DfE) on 25 September 2020. Members were reminded of the issue relating to the Balance Sheet book entry showing a substantial increase in respect to the NILGOSC Pension Reserves Valuation that had been reported on earlier by the Audit & Risk Committee Chair. The Director provided further detail on the reported loss within the Financial Statements.

A further increase was noted for the insurance premium for 2020/21. The Sector premium has increased by 73%, the most significant increase is within the property and liability category. The Director added that approximately 50% of the increased premium is related to COVID.

The Committee Chair moved on to staffing matters and was pleased to report that the College had been awarded the IIP, 'We Invest in People' standard following assessment in June 2020. The Committee Chair added that this was a great piece of work in the midst of the current circumstances and commended everyone involved in this achievement. The Governing Body Chair and Principal echoed these sentiments. The HR Manger stated that the report will now form the basis of the HR Strategy.

Following on, the Committee Chair reported that a pilot on the appraisal process for support staff will take place with the Estates and HR Departments. The model will focus on the conversations with individual staff and the contribution they make to the College. Absence data was discussed and the Committee suggested that HR explore how to further support staff who have been bereaved.

Section 75 Equality Progress Report April 2019 – March 2020 had been issued to members, discussion took place on the good practice evidenced within the report. **A Governor requested data on numbers who apply/are employed with a disability within the College/Sector.**

The Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 21 September 2020 were taken as read and agreed were an accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to adopt the Draft Minutes.

**PROPOSED;** Mrs R Dougherty

**SECONDED;** Dr N Hand

**Approval was sought for acceptance of the Section 75 Annual Progress Report (April 2019 - March 2020)**

**PROPOSED;** Mrs R Dougherty

**SECONDED;** Mr B Quinn

The Governing Body Chair and Principal & Chief Executive signed off as acceptance of the report.

The Governing Body Chair thanked Mrs Dougherty, Committee Chair, Mr McKeown, Director of Finance & Economic Engagement and Ms Kelly, HR Manager for their reporting and invited Mr L Murphy, Principal to present his report next.

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**81.6 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT/BUSINESS****➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 81.6 Principal's Report

The Principal provided an update on work relating to COVID matters and wished to record his thanks to the three Sub-Committee Chairs on the College's Operational Recovery Groups for their work. The Principal reported that the Department (DfE) had requested the College to complete a mid-year Assurance Statement. As Accounting Officer and in line with other Colleges, he was unable to give his full assurance on the College's COVID expenditure and impact on revenues due to the current uncertainty. This was the agreed Sector response. Members were in agreement with this.

The Principal was pleased to report that the Department had confirmed it will provide financial support for the College to deliver a number of courses as part of the Skills Intervention Programme. He wished to thank Ms Sinead Hawkins, Business Skills Manager for this piece of work. The Department (DfE) have also launched the Apprenticeship Recovery Package which will provide financial support to local businesses to support the apprenticeship system which has been impacted by COVID. The draft College Development Plan (CDP), 2020/21 had been submitted to the Department (DfE). Following a bi-lateral meeting with the Department (DfE) the CDP will be brought to the Education Committee's next meeting. It will be very operational in nature.

In concluding his report the Principal added that a Strategic Outline Business Case has been submitted for the Strabane Canal Basin Project as part of City Deal. Within this Case is a proposal for a new College estate for the Strabane Campus. It was highlighted this proposal is at a very early stage.

The Governing Body Chair added it was a credit to all the staff who prepare and deliver the substantial reports that progress through the Governing Body and wished to thank all concerned for their resilience during these challenging times.

**81.7 GOVERNING BODY CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Governing Body Chair advised Governors that the Annual Governor Assessments 2019/20 were in progress and encouraged their support in completing the exercise.

**81.8 CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence was received.

**81.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Governing Body Chair advised Mrs Taggart, staff Governor (academic) that an agenda item on the Reserved Business meeting will include the outworking on the Sector negotiations on the FE lecturer pay and conditions. Following this meeting he would like to provide an update on the agreed actions with Mrs Taggart. Mrs Taggart welcomed this offer.

The Governing Body Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and requested those not required for the remaining items to leave the room at this juncture.

**81.10 RESERVED BUSINESS**

Recorded separately.

The meeting ended at 1820 and went into private session.

**Date of next meeting:** 11 November 2020

Signed; \_\_\_\_\_ **Governing Body Chair**  
**Mr Gerard Finnegan**

**Date: 11 November 2020**

APPROVED