

GOVERNING BODY OF THE BELFAST METROPOLITAN COLLEGE


**Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 6 March 2019
at 4.30pm in the Board Room, Titanic Quarter Campus, Belfast**

Governors: Frank Bryan (Chair), Catherine Burns, Kate Burns, Kay Collins, Declan Crummey, Seamus Dawson, Gavin Doran, Wendy Gillies, Conor Herbert, Kathleen O'Hare, Sam Snodden, Maureen Walkingshaw, Brian Wilson

Officers: Damian Duffy, Director of Development (DD), Jonathan Heggarty, Director of Curriculum and Learner Success (DCLS), Lisa McCartney, Centre Manager for Strategic Planning (CMSP), Louise Horner, Policy and Insights Manager (PIM)

Acting Clerk to the Governing Body: Gerry Crossan

GB1 18/19	<p>Apologies received from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim McCall, Governor • John McGrillen, Governor • Marie-Thérèse McGivern (P&CE) • Elaine Hartin, Director of Corporate Services (DCO) • Gillian Magee, Director of People, Policy and Planning (DPPP) <p>Quorum: The meeting was quorate under the terms of Paragraph 3.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Standing Orders dated August 2015.</p> <p>Conflicts of Interest: No conflicts of interest were reported.</p> <p>AOB: No items of AOB had been received.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Lisa McCartney and Louise Horner as well as the Acting Clerk to GB, Gerry Crossan.</p>	Clerk
GB2 18/19	<p>Minutes of the Governing Body of 6 December 2018.</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the minutes as presented.</p>	Chair
GB3 18/19	<p>Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles and Instrument of Government – DfE have signed off and placed in the public domain. • Governor Assessments – Chair thanked Governors for engagement. <p>The Governing Body noted the Matters Arising.</p>	Chair
GB4 18/19	<p>Chair's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charitable Status: NI Charities Commission has indicated to DfE that it would not grant Charitable Status to FE Colleges. • CEF: Chair updated the Governing Body on current negotiations, and financial constraints. • Safeguarding ETI Inspection: The Governing Body noted that initial feedback was positive and commended K O'Hare and the many staff for engaging with ETI. 	Chair



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE Visit: DfE FE Director will attend the next GB meeting on 30 Apr. 2019. • Annual Accountability Meeting: DfE's Permanent Secretary was very satisfied with the performance of Belfast Met. The Governing Body thanked the Executive Team and staff for all their efforts, which have enabled the discussions with DfE to focus on the future of FE. • CQE (HydeBank & School Principals' Breakfast): Chair commended CQE colleagues on success of visit to Hydebank Wood College and the Belfast Post-Primary Principals event. Management advised that the support of Governors, in particular K O'Hare, was critical in the College engaging with post-primary schools on range of HND and other qualifications. School Principals want to see progression and recognised that not everyone wants to, or needs to, go to university. Level 5 qualifications provide pathways to employment. Excellent feedback from Principals, plus college students spoke very well. • Supported Learning Celebration: The Chair advised of the success of this event with great atmosphere, showcasing fantastic work with students and their families. The Governing Body asked management to relay the Governing Body's appreciation of the work to staff who organised the event. <p>The Governing Body noted the success of the Futures Event in the e3 Campus which had been organised by students.</p> <p>The Governing Body sought further information on how Belfast Met works with Invest NI communications management on the contribution of FE to creating employment in Northern Ireland. Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) advised that Belfast Met regularly raise the issue with Invest NI in the light of the prominence given to the work of NI universities in Invest NI communications; (b) provided two examples where Belfast Met programmes had been critical to successful employment creation projects led by Invest NI, Century and Sure Skills, noting that Belfast Met had been a key delivery partner in 90% of successful FDI projects in the past 5 years; (c) advised that there was a low level of awareness of the role that Belfast Met plays in supporting Foreign Direct Investment. <p>The Governing Body noted the report and discussion.</p>	
<p>GB5 18/19</p>	<p>Principal & Chief Executive's Report</p> <p>Management reported that performance against KPIs are on track and noted the success of the Open Days which were supported by all College Staff and attracted over 4,000 student visitors.</p> <p>Management advised on a potential business opportunity involving significant job creation in Belfast. B Wilson noted the potential impact of communicating success in this programme to Belfast Post-Primary Principals. DCLS advised on the success of the Supported Learning Celebration.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the report.</p>	



<p>GB6 18/19</p>	<p>Tribal Value for Money Review – Update to Governing Body</p> <p>Management delivered a presentation on this issue providing some background on the evidence-base and methodology and advised that:</p> <p>(a)Belfast Met is compared to larger FE Colleges in England and Wales;</p> <p>(b) the outcome of the review is positive and reflects the quality of services provided by NI FE Colleges.</p> <p><u>Key issues relating to NI Colleges against England& Wales (E&W) comparators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher costs and less-well funded; • fewer funding models available; • NI Colleges evidence of efficiency – suggesting underfunding of Sector. <p>Management noted the difference in the measurement methodologies for success rates used by NI Colleges and E&W comparators. The impact of, the entry factors, and attrition rates in NI Colleges are <u>not</u> measured like-for-like.</p> <p>Key issues relating to Belfast Metropolitan College against E&W comparators were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BelfastMet is the most effective college in terms of Curriculum Delivery; • Class sizes are higher than NI comparators; • 53 lecturer posts fewer than like-for-like NI College average and 68 lecturer posts fewer than like-for-like E&W College; • Belfast Met lecturers work at 95% availability; • highly experienced staff who require less training and earn more than counterparts in NI Colleges; • smallest management structure of NI Colleges; • Non-teaching costs are higher than comparators. <p>Management advised on the challenge of increasing places offered and decreasing funding and the risks to sustainability and the delivery of the dual mandate of the College inherent in the current DfE funding model</p> <p>The Governing Body commented that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ while the report provides useful pointers, the measurements are not refined enough and do not clarify what actions by Colleges are needed in response to the findings; ○ comparison with bigger E&W Colleges could be useful to support certain aspects of strategic development, but it was not clear what methodology would be used to guide action going forward; ○ measuring NI sector against other parts of the UK as presented had not been successful in other policy areas. <p>The Governing Body noted that no comparison had been made with other post-primary services, nor any comparison with Scottish FE Colleges due to absence of data.</p> <p>Management advised that DfE have asked for a Belfast Met action plan and the</p>	<p>Chair</p>
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	<p>Governing Body noted that the attendance of a DfE official at the next Governing Body meeting on 30 April 2019 which would provide an opportunity for further discussion.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the <u>commercial-in-confidence</u> nature of the report and the discussion.</p> <p>Once the Action Plan is agreed with DfE, it was agreed that the Governing Body Chair together with the Clerk would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) identify the strategic elements of the report that fall within the respective remit of each Committee; (b) delegate the respective Committee Chairs to ensure strategic oversight of significant initiatives. <p>The Governing Body noted the presentation.</p>	
<p>GB7 18/19</p>	<p>FE Corporate Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) College Development Plan 2019/20; (b) DfE FE Resource Planning Assumptions. <p>The Governing Body noted the planning process and the actions arising from it.</p>	
<p>GB8 18/19</p>	<p>Financial Update</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On track to live within NDPB resource position to 31 March 2019, including a request for an approved overspend of c£200k; • Position to statutory year ended 31 July 2019 is estimated to be c£360k ahead of approved resource allocation deficit of £5m; • Overall for 2018/19, income is down but this has been largely offset by one-off windfalls arising from TQ settlement and Whiterock; • Current position is not sustainable going forward into 2019/20. DfE have advised a flat budget for 2019/20 with pay and price pressures to be absorbed. These pressures leave the College with a challenging financial position; • Important that strong financial case is made in upcoming College Development Plan (CDP) process, with key messages being that Belfast Met has increasing deficits and declining Balance sheet position. This has arisen due to the College meeting delivery targets (which were not fully funded in 2018/19). Belfast Met is the only College to have consistently achieved targets over past 4 years. CDP will set out Belfast Met financial position in context of wider sector. In this process, Belfast Met will seek to increase its resource funding allocation, to identify options to secure additional income and, as a last resort, to consider reducing delivery. <p>The Governing Body noted that financial constraints were leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a reduction in places being offered across the curriculum, and a “first 	



	<p>come, first serve" allocation process; (b) underfunding of pay settlements, which rolls over between years and exposes Belfast Met College, as the employer, to financial risk.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted that it is critical that schools communicate the understanding of the allocation process to potential students and their families and appreciated that this was a key message the CQE Principals' Meeting held at Titanic Quarter on 26 February 2019.</p> <p>Management advised that in line with the Process and Timetable for agreeing College Development Plans (CDP) issued under cover of DfE FE Director's letter of 12 February 2019 to all Colleges, Belfast Met will submit the Draft College Development Plan on Friday 22 March 2019. The extensive work required to meet this deadline has been underway since mid-February 2019. DfE will provide Indicative Resource Allocations on Wednesday 13 March 2019 – that is, 6 working days before the submission of the CDP. The Governing Body noted the concerns in relation to the limited time offered to align financial and service delivery targets.</p> <p>It was agreed that these issues will be considered in greater detail at Committee level.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the report.</p>	
<p>GB9 18/19</p>	<p>Task and Finish Group (TFG) Update to Governing Body</p> <p>The Governing Body noted that TFG had developed appropriate and timely questions which lead to a very positive engagement with DfE. Management outlined the proposed deliverables and the potential lead role of Belfast Met in delivering these. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Draft 1 of Communications Strategy; (b) Economic and Social Impact Study (ESSIS); and, (c) Stakeholder Engagement survey. <p>Management reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Belfast Met drafted the research specifications for an Economic and Social Impact Study (ESSIS), and b) a Stakeholder Engagement Survey (SES) – these have been agreed by the project team and DfE is managing the procurement of research services in support of the ESSIS. (b) The final research of models will aim to effectively assess "success" and "achievement" of entrants to Level 1 and Level 2 learning in the light of low levels of retention and the need to assess progress in terms of "engagement" and non-formally accredited "learning and personal development". (c) the evidence base from the ESSIS phase needs to be in place before the Stakeholder Survey can be developed. (d) the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) agreed to take forward the communications strategy via a workshop involving representatives from all NI Colleges. (e) DfE are providing £100k which will be mainstreamed into future budget. 	<p>K Burns L Horner</p>



Management advised that the learning from the Phase 1 Futures Project has enabled us to measure outcomes in a way which recognises more than the qualifications that have been achieved. The Governing Body noted examples of work placements and the potential for employment arising from these.

The Governing Body

- commended the TFG for the excellent work thus far in such a short period of time, showing how Belfast Met can provide leadership for the whole sector;
- noted the high levels of engagement and support being provided by the Belfast Met team to SIB and DfE;
- recognised
 - the importance of the information that will be delivered to the NI FE sector as a whole, particularly in the light of the anticipated future funding pressures;
 - the potential risk to the value of this information if the scope of the research is narrowed in the development of the specifications for procurement of research services.

The Governing Body noted that the various strands of discussion are fundamental in championing the delivery of Belfast Met's dual mandate in an increasingly challenging operating and policy environment.

The Governing Body noted the report.

GB10 18/19

KPI and Risk Management Report

Management advised on Summary of Performance against KPIs and confirmed that:

- (a) none of KPI outturns are below target;
- (b) performance against KPI 10 will be subject to further action;
- (c) position is similar to performance profile in previous years;
- (d) Management are comfortable with progress so far and that they have actions in the pipeline to help the College meet the KPIs for the year.

The Governing Body noted similar outturns from the financial reporting.

Management advised that the Risk Register will be reviewed by ARC on 20 March 2019. No new risks have materialised in this quarter. One change arises re. the status of the Education Business Services (EBS) project supporting student management. This is a sector wide project, and risks around the capability of IT Assist to support the level of connectivity required have crystallised. Belfast Met staff flagged this risk early in the project. The project will now be delayed until 2021. There is currently no project Director.

Management advised on the current Internal Audit recommendations as follows. Priority 1 recommendations – a number of these will be removed following the next ARC. The Governing Body enquired on the status of the management response to the Priority 2 recommendation relating to Estates Management. Management advised that a business case on the issue had



	<p>been to DfE in December 2018 and a response is expected soon.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the report.</p>	
GB11 18/19	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>The Committee Chairs advised that the Committees had met on the following occasions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The Audit and Risk Committee – 15 Nov. 2018 (b) Curriculum, Quality and Engagement –29 Jan. 2019 (c) HR Committee – 21 Jan. 2019 – action is underway in the review of policies and procedures. (d) Resources Committee – 4 Mar. 2019 – see Finance Report above. <p>The Governing Body noted the Committee Reports.</p>	
GB12 18/19	<p>Single Tender Awards (Direct Award Contracts)</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the report.</p>	
GB13 18/19	<p>AOB</p> <p>None.</p>	
GB 14 18/19	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>30 April 2019, 4.30pm Boardroom, Titanic Quarter Campus</p> <p>Meeting finished at 6.25pm</p>	Clerk

Chair of Belfast Metropolitan Governing Body

Frank Bryan

Signature

Frank Bryan

Date

2/5/19



