

Record of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Strategy event held 9:30 Wednesday 4 February 2026 in the Vienna Suite at the Castlereagh Campus

Governing Body Members: Jacqui Dixon (Chair); Seamus McGoran (Vice Chair); Rose Byrne; Tom Hesketh; Lauren McAteer; Janis Leaden, Michael McKernan; Sheena McKinney; Bill Montgomery; Yvonne Murphy; Michael Mearns; Damian Duffy (Interim Principal and Chief Executive (IPCE))

Management: Aidan Sloane, Chief Operating Officer (COO); Fiona Dempsey, Interim Director of Curriculum and Learner Success (IDCLS); Siobhan Lyons, Interim Director of Development and Partnerships (IDDP), Paula Graham, Director of People and Culture (DPC) and Peter Kane, Head of Estates and Sustainability

In attendance:

Secretary to the Governing Body: Jim Woods

GB44 25-26

Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture

Quorum: The meeting is quorate under the terms of Section 7 of the Standing Orders for the Governing Body V5 approved December 2024 (6 members, of which 3 must be appointed under Part II Paragraph 5a of the Instrument of Government).

Apologies: Michele Corkey; Sinead Sharpe, William Buckley, and Maurice Keady.

Welcome: J Dixon welcomed members to the Strategy Day outlining that in the Skills Matrix, Estates and Sustainability had scored as an area for development. This morning there was a drill down into the whole estate opportunities and issues facing the College.

She introduced Peter Kane the Head of Estate and Sustainability, who will be playing a lead on matters this morning. Peter Kane took members on a short tour of the facilities at the Castlereagh Campus last around 15 minutes.

The Chair outlined the sensitivity of discussions and the need for open discussion and confidentiality to be maintained.

Conflicts of Interest: Participants reported no perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest under the terms of Section 8.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders V5 approved by the Governing Body 11 December 2024.

Creative and Courageous Conversation in an 'atmosphere' OR 'culture' of challenge and respect in line with our Code of Conduct

Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body

Minute	Detail
GB45 25-26	<p>Update on Castlereagh Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and shift to Whole College Estate Reconfiguration Programme (ERP)</p> <p>IPCE introduced the topic, explaining the move from a SOC for Castlereagh to taking a whole College reconfiguration approach. He outlined some of the moves and changes, which are part of the 10-year Estates Strategy have already taken place, such as providing a shared services hub at Springvale. As a result, areas within building one in Millfield had been repurposed, making Millfield the busiest FE Campus in N Ireland in terms of space utilisation. The consolidation had resulted in improved SEN facilities and a dedicated ESOL unit. He also informed members that the College was exploring an opportunity with the City Council to consolidate our Sports curriculum provision at Girdwood where we already had a number of classrooms. In short, the considerable investments to date have resulted in a much better solution for students.</p> <p>In relation to the recent submission to DAERA for the College Climate action plans on sustainability, it had become clear that continuing to try to support the aging infrastructure in Castlereagh as it currently stands would likely result in the College failing to meet its climate action plan commitments.</p> <p>The COO set the context for the session on the Estates Reconfiguration Programme (ERP). Peter Kane took members through a series of presentations, tracking from the SOC for Castlereagh, vital feedback from DfE, through the original long list options appraisals. He explained that the approach to solutions which has been developed was aligned with curriculum need and opportunities moving forward, that the Department has had a very positive role in developing an agreed approach and that the changes will have a transformational impact across all the College estate.</p> <p>Members established that there were other strategic partners other than DfE, such as the City Council ongoing development opportunities with Airbus, Boeing, Thales and QUB to develop a strong focus for the campus on apprenticeships. Members sought clarity and were assured that the curriculum plan has been established which would support the evolving estates proposition and the college is now seeking to develop the relevant estate. Members were advised that safeguarding on the existing Castlereagh site was a challenge.</p>
GB46 25-26	<p>Discussion on Options on the way forward</p> <p>An overview of options was provided to members, including a short video depicting what a redeveloped Castlereagh campus could look like.</p> <p>To get the most out of today's Governance event, those present had been organised into four main groups; each table comprised a member of the directorate and Governors. Each group was tasked with considering the proposed spending objectives and providing feedback to contribute to a revised SOC.</p> <p>The feedback from the group with a curricular focus noted that the upgrade will apply to all the estate, proof that this is part of wider plan is evidenced by the ESOL base. The ending of the PFI pathfinder 25-year phase in Millfield will provide opportunities for expansion. The groundwork being detailed now will ensure that the best decisions are made for the learners. The support of DfE in planning will be vital to future proofing decisions.</p>

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Minute	Detail
	<p>The feedback from the group with an Audit and Resources focus, summed up their input as integration and transformation being delivered through an efficient use of the College estate. The quality of provision is paramount for learners, which is aligned to meeting demand. The focus must be on the five Schools within Belfast Met, being aligned to future plans.</p> <p>The working group with a focus on Human Resources reported that they could see how people were being considered as central to the plan and that the employee experience could also be a central focus. The group suggested making minor tweaks to the objectives to embed people.</p> <p>The group with a strong emphasis on Resources relayed that the College have made a strong commitment to sustainability and that changes in the Estate are central to meeting the targets. The new Estate Strategy will be developed with change in mind. Cognisance of the student voice and student experience should be central in all development.</p> <p>ACTION: Spending Objectives to be revised on back of GB workshop feedback and incorporated into the SOC.</p>
GB47 25-26	<p>Reflections and next steps</p> <p>The Governing Body endorsed the approach and supported the concept of a whole college reconfiguration programme. Recommendations will be presented to the March meeting for approval. Ideally the number of options will be reduced to 4 or 5.</p> <p>A target submission date to DfE is June 2026</p>

The strategy element of the meeting ended at 12:45

Members attendance in person
Jacqui Dixon
Seamus McGoran
Rose Byrne
Tom Hesketh
Janis Leaden
Bill Montgomery
Michael Mearns
Yvonne Murphy
Damian Duffy

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Michael McKernan
Sheena McKinney
Lauren McAteer
Lioni Delgado

DRAFT

Record of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body meeting event held 13:30, Wednesday 4 February 2026 in the Vienna Suite at the Castlereagh Campus.

Governing Body Members: Jacqui Dixon (Chair); Seamus McGoran (Vice Chair); Rose Byrne; Tom Hesketh; Lauren McAteer; Janis Leaden; Lauren McAteer, Michael McKernan; Bill Montgomery; Yvonne Murphy; Michael Mearns; Damian Duffy (Interim Principal and Chief Executive (IPCE)

Management: Aidan Sloane, Chief Operating Officer (COO); Fiona Dempsey, Interim Director of Curriculum and Learner Success (IDCLS); Siobhan Lyons, Interim Director of Development and Partnerships (IDDP), and Paula Graham, Director of People and Culture (DPC).

In attendance:

Secretary to the Governing Body: Jim Woods

GB49 25-26

Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture

Quorum: The meeting is quorate under the terms of Section 7 of the Standing Orders for the Governing Body V5 approved December 2024 (6 members, of which 3 must be appointed under Part II Paragraph 5a of the Instrument of Government).

Apologies: Michele Corkey; Sinead Sharpe, William Buckley, Sheena McKinney and Maurice Keady.

Welcome: J Dixon thanked members and officers for their contribution to the Estates Strategy event this morning. As there are a number of items for consideration there will now be a Governing Body meeting with business as specified on the agenda.

Conflicts of Interest: Participants reported no perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest under the terms of Section 8.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders V5 approved by the Governing Body 11 December 2024.

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Minute	Detail
GB50 25-26	<p>Chair's Business</p> <p>The Chair provided updates on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The tremendous session this morning, which culminated in an agreed consensus on the next steps to be taken regarding the Estate Strategy and revised SOC. ➤ The production of a clean set of accounts. ➤ Ongoing positive engagement with DfE, where there will be personnel changes. ➤ Recent partnership events involving AI, Cybersecurity and Shared Ireland funding. ➤ There will be significant budgetary pressures ahead. ➤ There is an accountability meeting pending. ➤ Also, an in-year touch point meeting with the Chair ➤ The recent ETI inspection, the outcome of which has been exemplary. <p>T Hesketh was asked to report on the incredibly positive inspection outcomes, which, from a cultural point of view, were described as the best provision possible. Best practice for SEN provision is clear within Belfast Met.</p>
GB51 25-26	<p>Quality Improvement Plan</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the College Quality Improvement Plan for 2022-26.</p> <p>IDCLS took members through the papers that had been circulated, beginning with the commissioning letter dated 20 January 2026 and the return date of 23 February 2026. The plan, which is now more closely aligned with the CDP, has both an FE and HE element.</p> <p>Members were taken through the slides in detail, which provided a context and proof of an evidence-based approach. The plan is underpinned by a commitment to performance and continuous improvement. Members were taken through 11 areas for improvement.</p> <p>Governors were assured that the plan would be formally monitored by the Curriculum Engagement Committee.</p> <p>In response to specific questions, members were advised that the Essential Skills action plan was part of sector-wide approach being driven by an all-college working group. In relation to Level 3 progression, tracking learners other than those who return to the college can be challenging.</p>
GB52 25-26	<p>Revised Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>The Revised Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Governing Body.</p> <p>IDCLS took members through a short presentation which summed the salient points. A Sector group, chaired by DfE and attended by representatives of all six colleges revised the Safeguarding Policy. The recommended changes have been adopted, and the Belfast Met policy has been updated. The specific minor changes to the policy were detailed for consideration.</p>

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Minute	Detail
GB53 25-26	<p>Members feedback.</p> <p>Each member was asked to provide feedback on the Estate's strategy and WCIP, a summary of the comments is recorded below.</p> <p>Members welcomed the opportunity to dedicate time to strategy and drill into the details. The focus on improvements currently underway and the future provides for a challenging, but bright picture. There is a sense that the College is focusing on the right core issues to drive success. Members are encouraged that the view of older buildings has moved from a drain on resources to an opportunity.</p>
GB54 25-26	<p>Draft Calendar for 2026-27</p> <p>A draft calendar was issued to members for next year. All proposed changes and comments through the Secretary ahead of the March meeting.</p>

The Meeting ended at 14:45

Members attendance in person
Jacqui Dixon
Seamus McGoran
Rose Byrne
Tom Hesketh
Janis Leaden
Bill Montgomery
Michael Mearns
Yvonne Murphy
Damian Duffy
Michael McKernan
Lauren McAteer
Lioni Delgado