

Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body 3.30pm Wednesday 24 June 2020 CONDUCTED REMOTELY
Minutes FINAL approved 23 September 2020

Committee Members: Frank Bryan (Chair); Catherine Burns; Kate Burns; James Campbell; Kay Collins; Declan Crummey; Wendy Gillies; Jim McCall; John McGrillen; Kathleen O'Hare; Sam Snodden; Maureen Walkingshaw; Brian Wilson; Louise Warde Hunter, Principal and Chief Executive (P&CE).

Management: Damian Duffy, Director of Development, (DD), Elaine Hartin, Director of Corporate Services (DCS); Jonathan Heggarty, Director of Curriculum and Learner Success (DCLS); Gillian Magee, Director of People, Policy and Planning (DPPP).

Clerk to the Governing Body: Gerry Crossan

GB72 19/20

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

Quorum: The meeting was quorate under the terms of Paragraph 3B of the Terms of Reference for the Governing Body dated November 2017 (3 Governors).

Apologies: Apologies received from Seamus Dawson (24 June 2020). The Chair extended the Governing Body's condolences to Seamus and his family.

Welcome: No new participants. The Chair thanked James Campbell for his contribution to governance at the College as Student Governor and wished him every success in the future.

Conflicts of Interest: No **perceived, potential or actual** conflicts of interest under the terms of Paragraph 15.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders dated August 2015 were advised.

AOB: None notified as at date of meeting (24 June 2020).

GB73 19/20

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2020 – DRAFT (PROPOSED FINAL)

The Governing Body **approved** the Draft (Proposed Final) minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2020 with one amendment to attendance.

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Agenda item	Detail
<p>GB74 19/20 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 29 April 2020</p>	<p>Access NI checks: Last considered GB43 19/20 11 December 2019 Annual Safeguarding Report 2018/29</p> <p>The Clerk to reissue the guidance note and attachments dated 23 December 2019 to all Governing Body members following this meeting.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 29 April 2020.</p>
<p>GB75 19/20 Governance Information and Guidance</p>	<p>The Clerk to the Governing Body advised governors on:</p> <p>(a) Skills Focus Programme: Circular FE 02/20 Addendum 1 issued 4 May 2020: Last considered RC40 19/20 26 May 2020 and CQE47 19/20 7 May 2020.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted that DfE have lifted the contribution restriction on employers and are now fully funding business skills programmes in any company where staff have been furloughed.</p> <p>(b) Review of Governance Framework/Governance Manual 2020/21: Committee Terms of Reference: Last considered AC38e 19/20 9 March 2020: Internal Audit Business – Clerk will issue consultation documents on all Committee TORs and structure of Governing Body Agenda/Papers in advance of Chairs meeting to be held in late August 2020 (in advance of first Governance Cycle 20/21);</p> <p>(c) Governor and Executive Team Conflict of Interest Disclosure – last considered GB21a 19/20 27 November 2019: forms for completion, return to Clerk and submission to DfE by 31 July 2020;</p> <p>(d) Governing Body Business Programme 2020/21 - consultation;</p> <p>(e) Development of Governance Manual 2020/21; and,</p> <p>(f) NAO guidance to Audit and Risk Committees during the period of COVID-19 issued 24 June 2020.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided.</p>
<p>GB76 19/20 Chair's Business</p>	<p>The GB Chair advised governors on:</p> <p>(a) Letter: CCEA to Chairs of Governing Bodies 11 May 2020 - Awarding of Grades; P&CE advised that she as Head of Centre has no conflict of interest and delegated arrangements are in place to manage any conflict of interest.</p> <p>(b) Discussion Paper: NEU to Education Providers 13 May 2020 - COVID 19 – “On a return to education in Northern Ireland Discussion Paper- What will “new normal” look like?”/ NEU blog “Changed Economy – Changed Education” received 10 June 20;</p> <p>(c) Letter: DoF to ALB Working Group 7 May 2020 – “Review of relationship between Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies”;</p> <p>(d) FE Sector and Economy Briefing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE Policy Direction and Priorities to Rebuild Economy dated 17 Jun 20; • FE Sector’s submission to NI Assembly Economy Scrutiny Committee; and, • FE Sector’s presentation to NI Assembly Economy Scrutiny Committee.

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	<p>(e) DfE Update;</p> <p>(f) CEF Update – Chair advised on ongoing conciliation process between Management Side and TU side;</p> <p>(g) Chair acknowledged outstanding work of Executive Team and all staff of the College during these exceptional circumstances. The regular engagement and communications with staff and students throughout the college was highly commendable.</p> <p>The Governing Body <u>noted</u> the action taken and information provided by the Chair.</p>
<p>GB77 19/20 Committee, SEV Ltd and Belfast Metropolitan College Business</p>	<p>(a) Trust48 19/20: Belfast Metropolitan College Trust Meeting 9 June 2020 DRAFTV2 issued 16 June 2020;</p> <p>Trust Chair advised the Governing Body on following key issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges to delivery and planning arising from COVID-19, although planning is focusing on the impact of poverty on ability to learn; • Activity low over the year but some significant responsive services were provided targeting mental health resilience and digital poverty, including the Breakfast Club which was a success and will run again with the support of Hospitality and Tourism teaching team in 2020/21; • Acknowledged the support provided by College Management and Student Union; • Student Co-ordinator role currently being reviewed in light of on-going work. <p>(b) SEV24 19/20: SEV Ltd Board Meeting 1 May 2020 Minutes DRAFT (PROPOSED FINAL) issued 10 June 2020;</p> <p>The Chair of the SEV Ltd Board advised the Governing Body on the following key issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business income has been drastically reduced and rent-free periods agreed; • Target outcome is break-even for the year; and, • Legal advice has been obtained on future status of SEV Ltd – Management will keep this on the agenda. <p>(c) HR58 19/20: HR Committee Meeting 22 June 2020 Minutes DRAFTV1 issued 22 June 2020;</p> <p>HR Committee Chair advised the Governing Body of key issues including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sickness absence management; • HR Team capability to support solution-focussed dialogue; • Management of employment relations during the COVID-19 response; • Preview of Pulse survey which will be discussed at this meeting. <p>(d) AC60 19/20: Audit & Risk Committee Meeting 15 June 2020 Minutes DRAFTV1;</p> <p>ARC Chair advised the Governing Body of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant risks identified by NIAO in Audit Strategy; • All IA reports were satisfactory and annual assurance level is also satisfactory; • Grant Thornton contract coming to an end and procurement for future supplier underway; and,

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC scrutinise the revised Corporate Risk Register Q3 and recommend this to the Governing Body. <p>(e) Resources Committee meeting 17 June 2020 Minutes DRAFTV1; Acting Resources Committee Chair advised the Governing Body of key issues including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges facing budget development process for 2020/21 and the robust action that Management have taken to align expenditure with income; • Noted initial and most recent allocations from DfE; and, • Challenge of absorbing pay pressure; <p>(f) CQE60 19/20: CQE Committee meeting 17 June 2020 Minutes DRAFTV1. CQE Committee Chair advised the Governing Body on the following key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on staff of managing the arrangements for implementing Awarding Body regulations; • Significant reductions in applications for College against backdrop of strong communications with potential students; • Indemnification of College against the cost of appeals against grades awarded; • Essential Skills qualifications cannot be completed through the assessed grade methodology; • Continued physical constraints will mean teaching and learning will be blended model in 2020/21; and, • Acknowledged leadership of DCLS and the contribution of James Campbell during his tenure as Student Governor. <p>The Governing Body noted Committee, SEV Ltd and Belfast Metropolitan Trust business since the last Governing Body Meeting.</p>
<p>GB78 19/20 Governance Pathway supporting Management Response to COVID-19 Pandemic since April 2020</p>	<p>Governing Body noted the governance pathway supporting with Management response to COVID-19 pandemic since April 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RC49 19/20 26 May 2020 – Minutes DRAFTV2 as at 3 June 2020 ○ GB72 19/20 29 April 2020 – Minutes DRAFT (PROPOSED FINAL) as at 28 May 2020; ○ CQE33 19/20 to CQE38 19/20 29 April 2020 – Minutes Final Approved 7 May 2020; ○ CQE39 19/20 to CQE49 19/20 7 May 2020 – Minutes DRAFTV2 as at 20 May 2020; ○ GB58 19/20 to GB71 19/20 29 April 2020 – Minutes DRAFT (PROPOSED FINAL) as at 28 May 2020; ○ HR29 19/20 to HR41 19/20 27 April 2020- Minutes DRAFTV2 as at 20 May 2020; and, ○ AC41 19/20 9 March 2020 - Chairs03 19/20 6 April 2020 - GB67 19/20 29 April 2020: Q2 Corporate Risk Register as at April 2020.
<p>GB79 19/20 Report of the Principal & Chief Executive as at June 2020</p>	<p>P&CE advised on the following key issues:</p> <p>(a) Key actions have included learning about the business of the College and building relationships with colleagues at all levels, including CAMs, and with all stakeholders, including the Assembly Committee and Minister;</p>

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	<p>(b) Ongoing intensive discussions with DfE including a recent meeting between Permanent Secretary and the FE Principals' Group;</p> <p>(c) The immense support that P&CE has received from Executive Team colleagues;</p> <p>(d) College is in a good position to move forward safely and successfully in 2020/21.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the importance of the consistent and focussed approach that the P&CE and the Executive Team have led over the past number of weeks and months, notably the high level of communications and engagement with stakeholders, including the Governing Body.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the action taken and information provided by the Principal & Chief Executive.</p>
<p>GB80 19/20 Quarter 3 2020/20 Reporting</p>	<p>(a) Q3 KPI & Risk Management Report: Management advised the Governing Body on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of outturn – KPI 5 appraisal and KPI 10 income from non-FLU – these were both affected by COVID-19 responses and Management are taking remedial action; • Development Plan Targets were discussed with Level 2 and Part-Time HE behind target; • Risk Register: 12 out of 18 risks have changed, mainly to increase the risk rating in the light of the COVID-19 response; • Internal Audit: 2 audits completed and all outstanding audit recommendations are Priority 3 and plans are in place to close them all out. • Complaints: mainly around customer-care with no complaints arising from the COVID-19 response. <p>Clerk will issue full Corporate Risk Register with the Governing Body.</p> <p>(b) Q3 Financial Update: Management advised the Governing Body on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall financial position is balanced budget with release of deferred income; • NDPB position is within allocated budget; • Cash limits have been managed within DfE requirements; • KPI targets are broadly being met with remedial actions in place as appropriate. <p>(c) Q3 Curriculum Report (verbal): Management advised the Governing Body on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive work underway and planned for the summer to meet the requirements of Awarding Bodies to ensure that as many students complete their programmes as possible; • Some programmes cannot be completed; and, • Applications are down across all levels with full-time programmes being the most badly affected. However, communications and planning are underway to attract students back into the College and the sector as a whole. <p>The Governing Body noted that recent CCEA report confirms that “GCSE” Level and “A” Level students who are disadvantaged will continue to be disadvantaged by the revised awarding arrangements. Management advised that they were alive to the issue and that they are</p>

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	<p>liaising with awarding organisations to ensure that the awarding process is robust and defensible. Management are reviewing the portfolio of awarding organisations in the light of their experience during the Covid-19 response. P&CE advised that the issue of Colleges as awarding bodies was again within the DfE and Minister. Work is ongoing to positively engage with DfE policy development processes.</p> <p>(d) Q3 Business Development Report (verbal): Management advised the Governing Body on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of implementing calculated grades across all offerings including those offered through NIPS; • Update on City Deal and potential interfaces across other economic initiatives being taken by NICS; • Some reprofiling of income into 2020/21 has been delivered; • Programme development and delivery on Assured Skills is continuing and there will be continuing work over July and August to deliver against letters of offer that are already in place; • CJI Inspection identified Hydebank Wood College as a high performing facility; • Apprenticeship programmes have been badly affected across the sector • Strategic Advisory Forum is considering options for apprenticeship programmes, including the gaps in provision for NEETs where the natural transition from Level 2 to Level 3 has been interrupted where the risk of people moving on the Universal Credit is high; • Supporting trainees to finish programmes in 2019/20 will require a range of measures, including staggering delivery for 2019/20 ending and 2020/21 starts; • Funding secured for delivery of short blended IT skills courses up to November 2020 was DfE action to offer funded programmes to businesses; and, • Invest NI are managing the Recovery Fund and are involved in the City Deal – DD is meeting Chair of Invest NI on contribution that Colleges can make which is supportive of the actions being taken by the DfE. <p>Management advised that DfE has put in place support for private training providers, including invoicing, prepayments and a reduction in bureaucracy for a range of programmes. The postponement of <i>'Skills for Life and Work'</i> has created a gap in the pathway which might have been available to people facing redundancy when furlough ends. The Colleges will have a significant role in the provision going forward.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the action taken and the information provided by Management.</p>
<p>GB81 19/20 Re-Opening 2020/21</p>	<p>Next Steps in Delivery</p> <p>P&CE and Executive advised the Governing Body of the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are being informed by intensive discussions across the sector and with DfE; • guiding principles include face-to-face teaching and learning at Level 1 and Level 2; • Level 3 will be blended face-to-face and online; • Oversight and Assurance Group is a multi-stakeholder group planning safe return to work for both FE and private training providers;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the issues with trades is going hand-in-hand with sectors of the economy opening up – for example, construction are operating again now but Hair and Beauty are not; • preparations for the physical environment on the basis of 2 metre distancing are being worked up now in the light of robust risk assessment; • Pulse survey results were discussed at CQE meeting and issued to the Governing Body at this meeting; • Estimated £2m gap for 202/21; • Fee income will be reduced because of reduced class sizes which require same amount of teaching hours; • FCR income will be down because employers will not be engaging with the programmes; • 1-metre distancing will help grow numbers but will involve increased costs of PPE; • DfE has asked for report on potential pressures in 2020/21 and Management are committed to intensive engagement against a backdrop of wider public service pressures; • Business case on provision of IT equipment is back under consideration. <p>The Governing Body discussion noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges to resourcing the College in the light of potential structural reduction in applications and student numbers, however the changes in the teaching and learning models do not lead to an automatic reduction in capability; • government policy on retaining graduates within the learning environment; • NI unemployment likely to rise to 10% over the coming months which will drive demand for skills and innovation programmes to address this – FE is a key partner to support government and economic support bodies across government; • DfE are alive to the situation of all furloughed/unemployed/delayed education people and there is an extensive offering of skills development which are free to keep people close to the labour market; • All detailed planning includes contingency planning for potential surges in COVID-19 later in 2020 – a key measure is “class rotation” and this can be applied flexibly; • All of services under Learner Success is online and this is a key element in marketing communications; • FE may have opportunities to target both “warm storage” graduates and students transitioning from post-primary to HE – the offering of FE must be aligned with DfE as funders and policy lead; • Fully Integrated Marketing Plan in place – including TV marketing for the first time – focussing on HE pathways to students which is value-for-money and supportive of maintaining social relationships; • Department for Education have provided an indemnity for potential costs of appeals to schools who are delivering calculated awards – no such indemnity is in place for FE Colleges providing the same programmes – this is being considered by DfE and current College insurance cover is being examined; • There has been a rise in the number of complaints about non-awarding of Essential Skills. <p>The Governing Body asked the P&CE to communicate to DfE that the Governing Body</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expressed concern about this about risk to College staff and the Governing Body; and, expected that post-primary schools and FE colleges would be treated equitably in the management of this risk. <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by and the action taken by Management.</p>
GB82 19/20 Any Other Business	<p>No other business raised at the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 6.30pm.</p>
GB83 19/20 Date of Next Meeting	<p>The next Governing Body meeting will be held at 1pm on Wednesday 23 September 2020.</p> <p>The Governing Body and Executive Team will hold Strategic Planning workshops in the afternoon of Tuesday 22 September 2020, and morning of Wednesday 23 September 2020, subject to Covid-19 restrictions.</p>
GB84 19/20 Closed session	<p>Student Governor and Staff Governors left the meeting. John McGrillen, Wendy Gillies and Kay Collins left the meeting.</p> <p>The closed session ended at 7.20pm.</p>

Chair of the Governing Body of Belfast Metropolitan College

Frank Bryan



23/9/20

Signature

Date