

**Record of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Strategy event held 1:00 Wednesday 24 June 2026  
Titanic Quarter Boardroom and via MS Teams**

**Governing Body Members:** Jacqui Dixon (Chair); Seamus McGoran; Michele Corkey; Tom Hesketh; Lauren McAteer; Janis Leaden; Michael McKernan; Sheena McKinney; Bill Montgomery; Yvonne Murphy; Michael Mearns; Maurice Keady; William Buckley; and Sinead Sharpe.

**Management:** Aidan Sloane, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

**In attendance:** Secretary to the Governing Body: Jim Woods and K Mallon (HR) for GB102 25-26

**GB90 25-26**

Janis Scallan FE Director, DfE, joined Governors on a tour of the building. At 2:30, Janis addressed members of the Governing Body and fielded questions posed by the Chairs of their respective Committees.

Janis Scallan provided background information on her career to date, outlining the pivotal role that FE had played in her career progression. She advised that colleges must share their success stories to enable FE to be foremost and central in the DfE skills and employability agenda.

In response to questions regarding the inadequacy of the contingency budget and the resulting cash funding gap, she appreciated the pressures facing the colleges and advised that part of the solution must lie with exploring other sources of funding, such as the Shared Ireland Fund.

In response to a question on how DfE might assist the College with initiatives and developments that might assist Belfast Met in continuing to deliver good relations to deliver learning, Janis welcomed her involvement in the leadership development in terms of delivery and would welcome an opportunity to participate.

A question posed on the 14-19 cohort of learners in the context of educational reform led to comparisons between vocational offers with Secondary Education and the provision offered by FE. The discussion also involved the 16-18-year-old bill.

The Chair thanked Janis for time and contribution.

**Janis Scallan left the meeting at 3:35**

## Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body

| Minute        | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| GB91<br>25-26 | <p><b>Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture</b></p> <p><b>Quorum:</b> The meeting was established as quorate under the terms of Section 7 of the Standing Orders for the Governing Body (6 members, of which 3 must be appointed under Part II Paragraph 5a of the Instrument of Government).</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Were recorded on behalf of Damian Duffy (Principal and Chief Executive (PCE) Rose Byrne. Fiona Dempsey; Siobhan Lyons, and Paula Graham, who would normally be in attendance.</p> <p><b>Welcome:</b> The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the discussion with Janis Scallon.</p> <p><b>Conflicts of Interest:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Gifts and Hospitality:</b> All participants were reminded that they must report the accepting / rejecting of Gifts and Hospitality in line with the Financial Management Policy for Belfast Met. None were recorded.</p> <p><b>AOB:</b> None notified.</p> <p><b>Leadership Culture:</b> Chair noted our commitment to the Governing Body Leadership Culture<br/><i>Creative and Courageous Conversation in an 'atmosphere' OR 'culture' of challenge and respect in line with our Code of Conduct</i></p> |
| GB92<br>25-26 | <p><b>Minutes of the previous meetings</b></p> <p><b>The Governing Body approved the draft minutes of the last Governing Body meetings held:</b></p> <p>(i) GB73 25-26 Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 31 March 2026 following a change to amend a sentence at the bottom of page 3 so that it read 64% also to correct the spelling of Keady.</p> <p>(ii) GB79 25-26 Minutes of the Closed Governing Body meeting held 31 March 2026,</p> <p>(iii) GB89 25-26 Record of the Governing Body Strategy Event held 29 April 2026.</p> <p><b>The minutes were duly signed.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| GB93<br>25-26 | <p><b>Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2025 and minutes for the Strategy event held 4 February 2026</b></p> <p>GB64 25-26 Met Life had been circulated to Board Members</p> <p>GB64 25-26 Pathways to Work Briefing circulated to GB Members</p> <p>GB64- 25-26 Copy of Accountability Minutes had been Circulated to Members</p> <p>GB68 25-26 Updated on the ERP was the focus of the meeting on 29 April 2026.</p> <p>GB70 25-26 The dates will be populated on Outlook diaries and Decision Time.</p> <p>GB70 25-26 Approved minutes of the committees were published on the website</p> <p><b>The Governing Body noted the progress with matters arising</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| Minute                | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>GB94<br/>25-26</b> | <p><b>Governance Information and Guidance</b></p> <p>The following communication had been circulated to members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Deputy Secretary for the Skills and Education Group, by way of introduction</li> <li>(ii) The Chair agreed to forward the minutes of the accountability meeting for members' information</li> <li>(iii) Communication in relation to FE Fit for the Future- Curriculum Strand – Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and College Participants- for members' info</li> </ul> <p><b>The Governing Body noted the Governance Guidance and Information relevant to the work of the Governing Body, which has been provided by the Secretariat.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>GB95<br/>25-26</b> | <p><b>Notification of change to the internal control environment</b></p> <p>The Terms of Reference for both ARAC and the Resources Committee have been updated to reflect changes recorded in the Articles of Government. The bulk of changes which came into effect 31 March 2026 relate to the change in accounting year.</p> <p><b>The Governing Body approved the TOR for ARAC and Resources Committees.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>GB96<br/>25-26</b> | <p><b>Chair's Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Fit for the Future programme – as already discussed</li> <li>(ii) CEF – last meeting 1 June 2026 – convenor reappointed for another year</li> <li>(iii) Touchpoint meeting with the Director of FE, which was very positive from a Governance point of view</li> <li>(iv) DfE Partnership meeting 18 June – no agreed budget so operating with a contingency of 94% of the 2025/26 baseline</li> <li>(v) The recruitment of Governors will be scheduled for August and September</li> <li>(vi) Assessment of Governors will be scheduling August – September</li> <li>(vii) Continues involvement in Well-being piece next meeting, 30 June</li> <li>(viii) FE Excellence award, thanks to Tom for attending. Janis Scallon highlighted the part FE colleges play in Economic and social progress<br/>2 staff members were awarded and 8 students</li> </ul> <p>The Governing Body noted the update provided by the Chair.</p> |

| Minute                 | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <b>GB97<br/>25-26</b>  | <p><b>Principal and Chief Executive's Report</b></p> <p>P&amp;CE had circulated an extensive written report providing details on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Further Education – Fit for the future – the implications</li> <li>(ii) The Defence Growth Deal</li> <li>(iii) The FE Principal's Programme collaborative programme of priorities 2025-26</li> <li>(iv) The College Development Plan, including Equality Impact Assessment</li> <li>(v) Essential Skills: A regional approach</li> <li>(vi) Powered by People: Learning and Development, Industrial relations, Cultural Audit and People impact of Budget uncertainty.</li> <li>(vii) Partner of Choice: Business Skills and Innovation</li> <li>(viii) 2025-26 End of year statements</li> <li>(ix) Contingency Budget 2026-27</li> <li>(x) Data Governance Control Integration and AI readiness</li> <li>(xi) Insights, Analytics and Copilot Enablement</li> <li>(xii) Cybersecurity: Assurance, Protection and Resilience</li> <li>(xiii) ERP SOC Submission and Whole College Transformation</li> <li>(xiv) Sustainability and Climate Reporting, Carbon Performance and Net Zero Pathway</li> </ul> <p><b>The Governing Body noted the Principal and Chief Executive's Report</b></p> |
| <b>GB98<br/>25-26</b>  | <p><b>Finance Update on the Financial Statements for YE 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025</b></p> <p>Having already informed the deliberations of the Committees of the Governing Body in the most recent Governance Programme Cycle.</p> <p><b>The Governing Body <u>noted</u> the financial information provided by and the action taken by Management.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>GB99<br/>25-26</b>  | <p><b>Belfast Metropolitan College Development Plan Update</b></p> <p>These reports were taken as read, having already informed the deliberations of the CQE Committee of the Governing Body in the most recent Governance Programme Cycle.</p> <p><b>The Governing Body <u>noted</u> the information provided and the action taken by Management.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>GB100<br/>25-26</b> | <p><b>Update on Estates Reconfiguration Programme (ERP) and Strategic Outline Case (SOC)</b></p> <p>The Reports provided an update on those presented at the Governing Body Strategy Day. COO took members through a presentation which drew out the salient points. He</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Minute                        | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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|                               | <p>explained that the feedback received at the strategy Day had been used to redraft the SOC, which will be submitted to DfE to get feedback as the first stage of the review.</p> <p>Members discussed engagement with stakeholders and advised that the ERP team should review lessons learned from recent sector campus developments.</p> <p><b>The Governing Body approved SOC being released to DfE.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>GB101<br/>25-26</b></p> | <p><b>Corporate Risk Register</b></p> <p>The reports were taken as read, having already informed the deliberations of the ARAC of the Governing Body in the most recent Governance Programme Cycle. Members noted that three risks have been increased and cyber risk is retained as a black risk</p> <p><b>The Governing Body approved the Risk Register.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>GB102<br/>45-26</b></p> | <p><b>At 4:12 K Mallon joined the meeting to present the next item.</b></p> <p><b>Cultural Audit Results</b></p> <p>K Mallon explained that the Human Resources Committee had considered an extensive presentation delivered by Grant Thornton. An action from the meeting was that a synopsis would be presented to the full Governing Body.</p> <p>The presentation was part of the papers; Kathryn Mallon drew members' attention to some of the salient points. The key steps are to embrace the long levers and engage in the next steps. She went on to explain that the results have been shared with the SLT and Trade Unions. Kathryn also explained that the benchmark can be repeated by the College at a future time.</p> <p>Members welcomed the very positive data driven report and the commitment and engagement by the Executive Team.</p> <p><b>The Governing Body noted the information provided and the action taken by Management.</b></p> |

| Minute                 | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <b>GB103<br/>25-26</b> | <u>Reports of the Clerk to the Governing Body and Committee Chairs June 2026:</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>(i)</b>             | <u>The Secretary will provide a short verbal update confirming:</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>(a)</b>             | The rescheduled Board meeting on 4 November to 22 October to facilitate accounts submission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>(b)</b>             | Committees have now approved the minutes presented at the last Board meeting – Governors approved committee minutes to be published on the website and submitted to DfE.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>(c)</b>             | Currency of safeguarding governor training, training expires in October for eight members - an online module is available. It was agreed to use online training resources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>(d)</b>             | Conflict of interest exercise will be refreshed in August / September.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>(ii)</b>            | <u>Minutes of the ARAC</u> - ARAC Chair provided a verbal in addition to the minutes having been circulated. In addition to the accounts which were on today's agenda, a whistleblowing incident had been received and responded to. The Internal Audit Reports for 2025-26 resulted in four as good and two as satisfactory. The only recommendations were priority three.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>(iii)</b>           | <u>Minutes of the CQE meeting</u> – The Chair of CQE outlined the excellent presentation that they had been party to at CQE from Creative and Digital Industries. The CDP report that was on the agenda today had 9 of the 13 targets flagged as green, two of those outstanding related to results. The WCIP was approved. An interim annual safeguarding report provided assurance. The volume of applications to the College for 2026-27 are all up apart from Part-time HE.                               |
| <b>(iv)</b>            | <u>Minutes of the Human Resources Committee</u> - Chair provided a short verbal update explaining that the bulk of the meeting had been dedicated to the outcome of the Cultural Audit exercise. The sector working group's progress had also been considered and a discussion had been held in relation to feedback on the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>(v)</b>             | <u>Minutes of the Resources Committee</u> - Chair provided verbal update in addition to the minutes explaining that for 2025-26 year-end outturn, good forecasting and tight controls had been evidenced. Opportunities when funding had become available had been realised. Health And Safety had received a good rating in an assessment. The IT and Digital team had continued to keep us safe in the face of ever-more complex scams. Risks posed by the contingency budget present significant concerns. |
|                        | The Governing Body                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Minute                 | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>noted</u> the Report of the Clerk/Secretariat to the Governing Body;</li> <li>• <u>noted</u> the Reports of the Committee Chairs to the Governing Body in relation to the current Governance Programme Cycle; and;</li> <li>• <u>adopted</u> the approved Committee minutes from the last Governance Programme Cycle as set out in (b) the Clerk/Secretariat Update.</li> </ul> |
| <b>GB104<br/>25-26</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b><br><br><b>There was no other business.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>GB105<br/>25-26</b> | <b>Leadership culture</b><br><br>Governing Body members reflected on the conduct of the meeting and affirmed that it was in line with the leadership culture.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>GB106<br/>25-26</b> | <b>Time and date of next meeting</b><br><br>The next meetings will be 7 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

***The Meeting ended at 5:00***

| Members attendance in person | Members attendance Via teams |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Jacqui Dixon                 | Michael McKernan             |
| Lauren McAteer               | Yvonne Murphy                |
| Lioni Delgado                | Sheena McKinney              |
| Bill Montgomery              | Maurice Keady                |
| Tom Hesketh                  |                              |
| Janis Leaden                 |                              |
| Michele Corkey               |                              |
| Michael Mearns               |                              |
| Seamus McGoran               |                              |
| William Buckley              |                              |

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| <b>GB107<br/>25-26</b> | <p>Staff Governors and Staff in attendance, except the COO left the meeting.</p> <p>CLOSED SESSION</p> <p><b>Chairs Update</b></p> <p>The Chair reported that she was leading the Senior Staff Pay review and that a company had been appointed to ensure that the review is completed independently. The Trade Unions have been advised of progress. The outcomes will be reported back to Governing Bodies for approval.</p> <p>The recruitment for the two Director appointments is in progress the outcome should be known at the beginning of July.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>GB108<br/>25-26</b> | <p><b>Contingency Budget 2026-27</b></p> <p>Members were taken through a series of slides which augmented the papers already issued and outlined the implications of the contingency budget, which equated to an allocation of 94% of the 2025-26 core grant baseline allocation. The allocation of £49.9m against a baseline of £55.5m represents a cut to core Belfast Met funding equating to 13% cut in real cash terms.</p> <p>COO reported that the SLT had met to consider the budget and what actions needed to be considered to realise the savings. Mitigating actions had the potential to save £2.5m in potential cost-cutting. The savings in themselves will result in a reduction of some 1900 enrolments, against that planned in the CDP. Governing Body members were advised that this creates a £3.1m residual cash deficit position against the requirement for 2026-27.</p> <p>The Governing Body was advised that the £3.1m residual cash deficit poses a material and significant risk to Financial Sustainability, Governance and Accountability, Cashflow Commitments, Enrolment, Workforce Capacity and Statutory Compliance.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the £ 5.6 m funding shortfall, acknowledged the £2.5m target cost control mitigations and noted the £3.1m net deficit for the 2026-27 budget year, acknowledging the severity of the budget cut and the significant adverse impact on the College. Members agreed that the College required further engagement and direction from the Department on this significant governance issue and agreed that the Chair would write to the DfE Minister and the Principal &amp; Chief Executive would write to the Permanent Secretary to outline the grave concern and to seek a meeting to clearly outline the risk and to seek advice on the way forward as the College faces into the £3.1m cash deficit.</p> |