

Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body 3.00pm Wednesday 9 December 2020 via ZOOM
Minutes FINAL approved 24 March 2021

Governing Body Members: Frank Bryan (Chair); Catherine Burns; Kate Burns; Kay Collins; Wendy Langham; Jim McCall; John McGrillen; Kathleen O'Hare; Sam Snodden; Maureen Walkingshaw; Brian Wilson; Kacper Gromek; Janis Leaden; 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 (DC); Gillian Magee, Director of People, Policy and Planning (DPPP).

In attendance: Paul Docherty, Student Liaison Officer

Clerk to the Governing Body: Gerry Crossan

GB13 20/21

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 Declan Crummey. The Chair offered the Governing Body's condolences to Declan and his family on the recent bereavement of his mother.

Welcome: The Chair welcomed Kacper Gromek, Student Governor, Janis Leaden Staff Governor (Teaching) and Paul Docherty, Student Liaison Officer, to the meeting.

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 the meeting (9 December 2020).

GB14 20/21

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2020 – DRAFT (PROPOSED FINAL)

The Governing Body **approved** the Draft (Proposed Final) minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2020 unamended.

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Agenda item	Detail
GB15 20/21 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 23 September 2020	<p>Access NI – governors are requested to complete assessment forms – Clerk will reissue email request. All other matters addressed under agenda items below.</p> <p>Governing Body noted matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 23 September 2020.</p>
GB16 20/21 Governance Information and Guidance	<p>(a) Revision to OBA Reporting Requirement: DfE Reporting Timetable 2020/21 – DfE have advised (10 Nov 20) that TEO are moving towards real-time assessment of progress based on the latest OBA performance data. Where possible OBA performance data will be taken from published data, and if this is not available, updates will be commissioned directly from the Colleges. This process may be impacted by the agreement of a new Programme for Government. No dates are available at present;</p> <p>(b) Whistleblowing (DfE / NIAO) is closed;</p> <p>(c) Register of Interest Disclosures December 2020 – members to complete and return to Clerk by 20 December 2020 – Clerk will issue a reminder on 16 December 2020.</p> <p>Governing Body noted the governance information provided.</p>
GB17 20/21 Chair’s Business	<p>(a) The Governing Body welcomed the DfE Appointment of Staff Governor Janis Leaden (Teaching) and Student Governor Kacper Gromek in November 2020;</p> <p>(b) DfE Update: The Chair advised on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE action on safe resumption of services; • NI Skills Policy consultation scheduled for January 2021 with target issue in July 2021; • Examinations delivery in 2020/21 remains a significant challenge and corporate risk going forward. <p>The P&CE advised on the actions being taken by the Principals’ Group in discussions with DfE and CCEA on potential modifications to assessment requirements for 2020/21. DC advised on the current discussions on changes to assessments in vocational qualifications and the potential impact of university admissions policies on the provision of HE in the College.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEA Council advised the Minister on a course of action in relation to examinations; • the relative responsibilities of the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy; and • NI Colleges may need to confirm a sector-wide policy position on these issues in order to engage with DE and DfE. <p>The P&CE advised that the Principals’ Group is working on the options for FE Colleges obtaining awarding body status and inform CCEA engagement on the issue.</p> <p>The Chair advised that Governing Body Chairs are to meet with DfE senior management early in the new year in order to communicate the governance issues, corporate risk and service delivery impacts that Colleges are facing.</p>

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Agenda item	Detail
	<p>CCEA Chief Executive and Director and senior staff have been invited to the next CQE meeting in March 2020, which will be open to all Governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) Governor Assessments 2019/20 & GB Performance Review (closed). (d) FE Sectoral Corporate Plan process is likely to begin before the summer 2021 and be aligned with the NI Skills Strategy – see GB18b 20/21 below for ongoing College action; (e) A new NI Skills policy once approved will likely lead to how well the current FE delivery model meets those needs with potential research into new ways of working; and, (f) Governor Recruitment – Chair thanked Wendy Gillies and John McGrillen on agreeing to an extension and advised that DfE are implementing a sector wide governor recruitment process in early 2021; and, (g) DfE have paused the work on Partnership for the time-being. <p>The Governing Body noted the action taken and information provided by the Chair.</p>
<p>GB18 20/21 BMC Strategic Action Plan</p>	<p>The Chair advised that the important work undertaken by the Governing Body and Executive Team would be critical in informing the College’s input to the various engagement processes discussed at GB17 20/21 above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strategy Workshop Outcomes - Priority focus for 2020/21: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Brave Leadership & Meaningful Dialogue; ii) Simpler Governance - performance dashboards (under development): finance, enrolments, achievement, staffing and non-core business; iii) Engaging in the right spirit (culture) and mutual accountability. <p>The Chair advised that these values and priorities would be explicitly reviewed at all Governing Body and Committee meetings throughout this current academic year. The Governing Body noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential joint actions to further improve effective governance scrutiny, challenge and support for Management would be explored in the coming weeks; • any potential actions should prioritise adding value and improving the quality of engagement relating to governance processes, mindful of any impact on Management workload; • governance bodies and Management have worked hard to ensure continuity and open communication throughout this challenging period; • all proposals around maintaining communications and mutual understanding would be considered; • the impact on staff capacity and energy of delivering a high volume of sectoral projects, meeting demanding service delivery targets and supporting strategic engagement with DfE during this unprecedented period. <p>The Chair welcomed this discussion as evidence of “engaging in the right spirit” and “engaging in meaningful dialogue”, and thanked Governing Body and Management colleagues on their leadership and honesty in working through these issues.</p>

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Agenda item	Detail
	<p>The Chair noted the on-going developing action on “Simpler Governance”, as presented through the emerging structure and content of reporting dashboards.</p> <p>P&CE advised on the work to date of Management in developing focussed reporting which reflects the four key pillars of the College and is readily accessible to all Governing Body colleagues. The Governing Body noted the emerging reporting structure and advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the emerging dashboard should be sufficiently detailed to support scrutiny, challenge and support at governance meetings; • flexible enough to reflect the changing business priorities, risks and issues facing the College and support an agile governance framework; • the opportunity for detailed scrutiny and challenge would continue at Committee level; and • there will be further consultation at governance meetings over the coming months. <p>b) Strategic Action Plan 2020/21 – Proposed Governance Pathway:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Update on development of content and delivery plan to GB meeting 2.00pm Thursday 11 February 2021 – G Wilkinson will be invited to this meeting; ii) Emerging Draft to GB meeting 26 May 2021; and, iii) Synthesised draft to GB meeting 23 June 2021 for formal approval. <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by and the action to be taken by Management in relation to the Strategic Planning process.</p>
<p>GB19 20/21 Report of the Principal & Chief Executive as at December 2020</p>	<p>The P&CE thanked Management colleagues for their input into the P&CE report. The Governing Body welcomed the P&CE Report, providing the following feedback:</p> <p>(a) noted the information on the evolving strategic and economic environment – Governing Body aims to support Management in supporting this and driving this key agenda item;</p> <p>(b) welcomed the focus and information on the City Deal;</p> <p>(c) advised that it might be helpful to have further information on the cross sectoral work which is a major element of Management’s workload and leadership.</p> <p>P&CE advised on the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repositioning of Learner Success Team within the DPPP directorate; • the early strategic effort to balance curriculum and vocational offerings over time; and, • Director of Corporate Services acting as the Digital Champion and also leading the development of a sustainability agenda for the College. <p>The Governing Body noted the information and the action taken by Management.</p> <p>Paul Docherty left the meeting at this point.</p>
<p>GB20A 20/21</p>	<p>(a) HR16 20/21: Meeting held on 1 December 2020 – Chair’s Report;</p>

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Agenda item	Detail
<p>Committee Chair Reports and Minutes:</p> <p>[BMC Trust & SEV Ltd business is considered by exception]</p>	<p>(b) HR17 20/21: HR Committee Meeting 1 September 2020 Minutes FINAL approved 1 December 2020;</p> <p>(c) Annual Safeguarding Report 2019/20 (last considered CQE25a 20/21 2 December 20/HR24a 20/21 1 December 2020)</p> <p>The Chair of the HR Committee advised on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Governing Body joined HR Committee on 1 December 2020; • Committee noted the legal advices provided by Management; • Impact of COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of actions taken by Management to support staff and student wellbeing; • ETI report has commended the College on the standard of safeguarding provision; • Safeguarding training will be made available to all Governing Body members in 2021; and, • No reports of allegations made to staff in 2019/20 which provides high level of assurance. <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>(d) CQE12 20/21: Meeting held on 2 December 2020 – Chair’s Report;</p> <p>(e) CQE13 20/21: CQE Committee Meeting 2 September 2020 Minutes FINAL approved 2 December 2020;</p> <p>The Chair of CQE Committee advised the Governing Body on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Governor attended this CQE meeting; • ETI are not planning inspections; • Additional meeting to sign of WCQIP in January 2021; • Evidence of adverse effect on learners during the current crisis; • College of Sanctuary; • Public service apprenticeships are ready to be delivered in 2021; • Comprehensive briefing on School of Health and Wellbeing; • HE provision in FE is being adversely impacted by DfE policy in relation to MaSN for universities; • Successful bids in City Deal and apprenticeship mentoring programme; • The scale of challenge facing DD and DC were reflected in the CQE agenda; and, • the Committee will reconvene to discuss delivery issues further and to consider the support that governance bodies can give to Management. <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>(f) RC14 20/21: Meeting held on 23 November 2020 – Chair’s Report;</p> <p>(g) RC15 20/21: Resources Committee Meeting 2 September 2020 Minutes FINAL approved 9 November 2020;</p> <p>The Chair of the Resources Committee advised on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting rescheduled due to NIAO delaying their audit work; • Excellent meeting with appropriate level of information provided in the reports;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed the financial statements and recommended approval by Governing Body; • The Resources Committee thanked the DCS and the Finance Team for all the hard work in finalising the accounts and supporting the audit, especially under time constraints imposed by NIAO; • The Committee considered detailed reports on Estate & Facilities Management and IT and paid tribute to the hard work of Management in keeping the College open and staff and students supported during extremely challenging times; • Catering report reviewed and discussed with current contract under negotiations. <p align="center">***</p> <p>(h) AC15 20/21: Meeting held on 24 November 2020 – Chair’s Report (Written);</p> <p>(i) AC16 20/21: Audit & Risk Committee Meeting 16 September 2020 Minutes FINAL approved 10 November 2020; and,</p> <p>(j) Belfast Metropolitan College Audit and Risk Committee: Annual Report to the Governing Body 2019/20 (last considered AC19b 20/21 24 November 2020)</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised on the following key matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the range of assurances that the ARC obtained in considering the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2019/20 including a draft RTTCWG which did not find any issues that require action and a Satisfactory Internal Audit Report for the year; • the finance team were commended for their work in achieving such high levels of assurance and completing high quality draft accounts; • the recommendation to the Governing Body to adopt the Annual Report and Financial Statements; and, • an update to the format and structure of the Risk Register. <p>The Governing Body noted Committee business since the last Governing Body Meeting.</p>
<p>GB20B 20/21 Quarter 1 2020/21 Reporting</p> <p>These reports are taken as read having already informed the deliberations of the sub-committees and reflected in reports under GB20A 20/21.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Q1 20/21 KPI & Risk Management Report (AC26a 20/21 24 Nov 20); (b) Q1 20/21 Corporate Risk Register (AC26b 20/21 24 Nov 20); (c) Q1 20/21 Financial Update and Budget (RC21 20/21 23 Nov 20); (d) Core Curriculum Update (CQE 18a/b 20/21 2 Dec 20); and, (e) Business Development Report (RC22 20/21 23 Nov 20/ CQE22a 20/21 2 Dec 20). <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by and the action taken by Management as set out in the reports.</p>
<p>GB21 20/21 Springvale Educational Village Ltd.</p>	<p>Last considered SEV06 20/21 13 October 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) SEV12 20/21 Meeting 13 October 2020 Minutes DRAFT (PROPOSED FINAL) 27 October 2020 (b) SEV Ltd Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 <p>SEV Ltd Board to advise Governing Body that:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEV will make an estimated loss of £70k in 2020/21 given reduced rental income which is the main source of income for the business; • Management are taking legal and tax advice on an option to dissolve SEV Ltd and move the assets into the College; and, • Aim is for advice to be procured in early 2021 and, depending on the action required to manage the identified risks, for the company to be wound up by the end of the current financial year. <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by and the action being taken by Management.</p>
<p>GB22 20/21 Final Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20</p>	<p>Last considered AC20a 20/21 24 November 20 / RC06 20/21 23 November 2020 / GB08 20/21 23 September 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB22a 20/21 Belfast Metropolitan College Annual Report and Financial Statements 2019/20 Final for Approval; • GB22b 20/21 Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 Briefing; • GB22c 20/21 NIAO Report To Those Charged With Governance – DRAFT; and, • GB22d 20/21 Accounting Officer Letter of Representation Final for Approval <p>The Governing Body noted that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) NIAO unilaterally revised the timetable for the audit of the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20; (b) The College revised the governance timetable 2020/21 to reflect this decision; (c) Resources Committee and ARC Committee were rescheduled from early to late November 2020. <p>RC06 20/21 23 November 2021: “It was agreed that the Annual report and accounts be approved for sign off by the Chair.”</p> <p>AC20a 20/21 24 November 2020: “It was agreed that the Annual Report and accounts be approved for sign off by the Chair subject to receiving the signed subsidiary accounts and NIAO sign off on matters relating to the AON pension valuation.”</p> <p>The DCS confirmed that NIAO had completed their audit and all matters relating to the AON pension valuation were resolved and no amendments were required to the Final Draft Accounts as presented to the GB.</p> <p>The Governing Body gave approval for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2019/20 to be signed and submitted to the NIAO; and, • the use of electronic signatures of the Chair and P&CE/Accounting Officer by Management in actioning the submission.

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Agenda item	Detail
GB23 20/21	<p>Review of meeting in line with values of engagement:</p> <p>The Governing Body welcomed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the emerging revisions to the reporting arrangements; • that the meeting demonstrated the values the Governing Body has adopted; • the openness of discussions in the face of the enormous challenges that Management are facing; • that P&CE report was a sound presentation of KPIs, challenges and risks and issues to be celebrated; and, • that the College governance arrangements were moving in a positive and robust direction. <p>Kacper Gromek (new student governor) advised that the meeting was very positive and enjoyable. Janis Leaden (new staff governor) advised that the participation in governance bodies at Committee and Governing Body level was a steep but enjoyable learning curve since her appointment.</p>
GB24 20/21 Any Other Business	<p>Kacper Gromek queried if students would be informed of the deadline for the registration of settled status and the issue was clarified.</p> <p>Chair of BMC Trust advised the Governing Body that they were working with the Student Council to put in place a volunteering framework to deliver student-focussed service and thanked Kacper Gromek for his support and involvement.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Governing Body and Management colleagues for their efforts throughout the year and wished everyone a happy and a restful Christmas.</p>
GB25 20/21 Date of Next Meeting	<p>Governance Programme 20/21 Cycle 3: The next meetings of the Governing Body meeting will be held via ZOOM at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed 2.00pm on Thursday 11 February 2021; and, • 3.00pm on 24 March 2021; <p>Governance Cycle 2021/22: see schedule of dates circulated for 2021/22 academic year.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 5.00pm.</p> <p>Management colleagues, Kacper Gromek and Janis Leaden left the meeting at this point.</p>
GB26 20/21 Closed Session (BIP Governors Only)	Closed Session

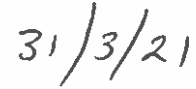
Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body

Chair of Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body

Frank Bryan

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Bryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'F'.

Signature

A handwritten date in black ink that reads "31/3/21". The date is written in a simple, clear font.

Date

