

Final Agreed

STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GOVERNING BODY MEETING ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 3PM IN ROOM SR1, MAIN BUILDING

- Governing Body:** Mr E Jardine (Chair), Professor J Heggarty, Dr A Brown, Dr M Bennett, Dr L Boyce, Mr P Weil, Mr A Diver, Mr M Cupples, Mr S Snodden, Mrs P Leitch, Mr D Feely
- In Attendance:** Ms K Robinson (Secretary to the Governing Body, Mr R De Largy (Director of Corporate Services and Development – Item 4, Ms J O’Boyle (Head of Finance – Items 4
- Apologies:** Ms M Corrigan, Ms U Nic Eoin, Mrs W Fee, Mrs H Miller, Mrs K Scott, Mr R Drennan
- Any Other Business:** Visiting Professors Report

AGENDA

GB/3/23/1.1

INTRODUCTIONS

3/23/1.1.1

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Academic Year.

3/23/1.1.2

Members noted that the Chair would be informing those attending to assume that members have read the Papers and therefore it is only necessary to provide a high level summary.

3/23/1.1.3

Members noted that the Director of Corporate Services and Development and the Head of Finance would be joining the meeting for Item 4.

GB/3/23/1.2

APOLOGIES

3/23/1.2.1

The apologies from Ms M Corrigan, Ms U Nic Eoin, Mrs W Fee, Mrs H Miller, Mrs K Scott and Mr R Drennan were noted.

GB/3/23/1.3

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3/23/1.3.1

No conflicts of interest were declared.

GB/3/23/1.4

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3/23/1.4.1

A report from the two Visiting Professors would be taken under Item 15.

GB/3/23/2

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 27 JUNE 2023, ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING

3/23/2.1

The Minutes of the previous meeting on 27 June 2023 were agreed and duly signed by the Chair.

3/23/2.2

There were no outstanding Action Points, which is a good position to be in at the commencement of the new Academic Year.

Matters Arising

3/23/2.3

Members noted that the College's comments on the draft Partnership Agreement (2/23/3.4.1) have been sent to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for consideration. Comments from the Chair and Chairs of the four Committees were incorporated in the College's submission.

GB/3/23/3.1

OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

3/23/3.1.1

Members noted the detail in the paper provided by the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the business that was discussed at the Committee meeting on 6 September 2023.

3/23/3.1.2

Members noted for example:

- That the College is still awaiting the Grant funding letter and information about the expected level of Capital Grant funding from DfE for 2023-24. With regard to the latter, Members further noted that it remains unclear whether funding will be available for the Sports Pitches Project.

- That the Committee had considered an updated Corporate Scheme of Delegation.
- That an update had been provided on the Henry Garrett Building, including the receipt of a further proposal for bringing the building back into use.
- The difficulties that continue to exist in recruiting staff for the Hospitality, Accommodation and Conferencing services (HACS) business.
- That the Committee had noted a number of minor updates to the Fire Safety Policy.

3/23/3.1.3

In response to a question from a member regarding the current RAAC (concrete) issues in buildings, members noted that to the best of the Principal's knowledge, this was not a problem in the College's Estate.

GB 3/23/3.2

UPDATED ESTATES STRATEGY

3/23/3.2.1

The Governing Body approved the updated Estates Strategy 2021 – 2024 on the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Members also noted that that management is proposing to develop a new 10-year Strategy.

GB/3/23/3.3

ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

3/23/3.3.1

The Governing Body adopted the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 13 June 2023.

GB/3/23/4

JUNE 2023 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND ASSOCIATED COMMENTARY

3/23/4.1

The Director of Corporate Services and Development and the Head of Finance were welcomed to the meeting.

3/23/4.2

The Head of Finance introduced the June 2023 Management Accounts, the overall commentary around which was noted.

3/23/4.3

Members noted in particular, that since the report was written, a large number of late invoices for repairs and maintenance had been received, which has reduced the latest draft year- end operational surplus quoted in the paper

from £404k to £360k. This figure may be further reduced if further invoices are received. Members further noted that the operational surplus is before any adjustments for further year-end accruals. The NILGOSC annual actuarial valuation will also have an impact as detailed in the paper.

3/23/4.4

There was a general discussion regarding the nature of the repairs and maintenance contract. Members noted that the receipt of late invoices from the current contractor has been reported to DfE. DfE has agreed that the College can produce a Business Case to extricate it from the current provider which delivers on behalf of CPD Property Services Division.

3/23/4.5

Members noted that capital funding availability is very limited for 2023-24, with most of the DfE allocation required to fund the 'tails' of Stranmillis capital projects which the College was not able to complete by the DfE 31 March 2023 deadline. Members noted that the College is to provide DfE with a further update regarding the College's requirement to fund 'tails' for projects that we were not able to complete by 31 March 2023 before the 2023-24 capital letter can be issued. This is now expected to be received around the end of September 2023 and will allow the College to submit capital grant claims.

4/23/4.6

Members further noted that DfE has indicated that additional capital funding may become available in November / December 2023 monitoring rounds. However, this limits what could be delivered in the short period between being advised of funding availability and the DfE 31 March 2024 deadline for spending any funds awarded. The College is identifying options for what can be achieved and this may be limited to off the shelf solutions e.g. equipment which is more straightforward to procure or which has short lead in times.

3/23/4.7

Members noted that the College had received funding to install LED lighting in Halls accommodation. It is hoped that the work will be completed by Christmas 2023.

3/23/4.8

Members noted that the external audit of the Financial Statements for the year to 31 July 2023 is scheduled to commence on 9 October 2023.

3/23/4.9

The Governing Body congratulated the Finance Team for their good management of the College's Budget.

GB3/23/5

GOVERNING BODY AND COMMITTEE CORE WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

3/23/5.1 The Governing Body and Committee Core Work Programme for 2023-24 was approved. This will form the basis of Agenda setting during the year and will be added to as new emerging business is identified.

GB/3/23/6 **UPDATED GOVERNING BODY OPERATING FRAMEWORK**

3/23/6.1 The Governing Body approved a number of updates to its Operating Framework, including the Terms of Reference of the Committees.

3/23/6.2 Emerging from the 2023 review of the effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), it was suggested that consideration should be given to inviting the Staff and Student members to ARAC meetings in an observer capacity. Following discussion, the Governing Body agreed that this would not add value to the work of the Committee.

3/23/6.3 Members noted that, at the request of the Chair, the Secretary would be circulating the Register of Members' Interests, as recently updated. The Chair emphasised the importance of declaring all interests. The Chair also emphasised the importance of following the rule that Non-Executive Governing Body Members should respect the demarcation lines between the Governing Body and the Management roles.

GB/3/23/7 **REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

3/23/7.1 The Governing Body approved a number of minor amendments to its Standing Orders.

GB/3/23/8 **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS (CUC) HIGHER EDUCATION CODE OF GOVERNANCE**

3/23/8.1 The Governing Body commended the College on its performance against the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code of Governance for Higher Education Institutions. This is a voluntary Code of Good Practice which the College assesses itself against annually. Members noted that the College is substantially compliant with the five primary elements of the Code, where they apply. All actions identified in previous years have been cleared. The

Governing Body agreed that the result of the 2023 assessment is testament to the attention paid to good governance in the College and the assurance that this provides to DfE as the College's sponsor Department.

GB/3/23/9

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

3/23/9.1

The Principal updated members on:

1. The National Student Survey Summary. The Governing Body noted that the overall satisfaction score for the 2022-2023 year was 78% which was above the score of 76% in the 2021 survey but below the 2022 score of 82%. Bearing in mind the significant changes to the 2022-23 survey and that the results are less easy to compare directly with previous years, the result for 2022-23 is still to be commended. Members noted that the College is to explore what more can be done in the areas of mental wellbeing and the lower scores in terms of student feedback.
2. Full-time Student Recruitment.
3. The Department for the Economy's 10X Delivery Plan for 2023-24. The Plan recognises the vital role that teacher education and the University Colleges play in providing the skills and knowledge needed for economic development.
4. The final Centenary Events – the launch of the Centenary Nature Trail; and the Second Centenary Book launch, due this term - "Stranmillis Stories: 100 Years of Student Reflections" authored by our former Principal Professor Anne Heaslett, MBE. The Governing Body commended all staff who were involved in the full programme of Centenary events.
5. The plans to have a celebration lunch to recognise long-serving staff members.
6. The 2022-23 Budget performance and the 2023-24 Budget.
7. Changes to Personnel in the College.

3/23/9.2 RESERVED BUSINESS

3/23/9.3 The Chair noted that the data on destination of leavers is poor. Members noted that the problem is not easily fixed. The Principal agreed to check the response rates.

3/23/9.4 RESERVED BUSINESS

GB/2/23/10

KPI UPDATE 2022-23

3/23/10.1

The Principal introduced the KPI report. The Governing Body noted the good progress that had been made against Key Performance Indicator targets in the 2022-23 College Business Plan. 94% of targets were either achieved or substantially achieved, 2% are likely to be achieved with some delay and 4% were not achieved. The latter related to the results of the National Students Survey and the average applicants per job vacancy in the College. Congratulations were extended to staff on the performance achieved.

GB/3/23/11

COLLEGE BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24

3/23/11.1

The Governing Body approved the College Business Plan for 2023-24.

GB/3/23/12

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AND REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY, INCLUDING THE GOVERNING BODY'S RISK APPETITE

3/23/12.1

The Corporate Risk Register was discussed. The Governing Body agreed that the residual assessment of Risk 7 – 'Failure to ensure that all personal data is processed securely in line with GDPR requirements, resulting in reprimand or monetary penalty by the Information Commissioner's Office and reputational damage' should be amber (high). The assessment of controls should also be reviewed.

Dr Brown left the meeting at 16:40

3/23/12.2

The Governing Body noted the detail provided in the paper on the review of the Risk Management Policy, including the Governing Body's Risk Appetite.

3/23/12.3

The Committee noted in particular that:

- The Policy had been reviewed against the updated HM Treasury Orange Book (2023).
- The role of the Governing Body, with support from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has been expanded.
- The role of the Principal has been expanded.
- The guidance relating to defining risks and risk analysis and evaluation had been expanded.
- Further guidance has been added on considering what further actions are necessary to manage residual risks, as well as further guidance on risk monitoring.
- Example risk categories and further guidance on sources of assurance have been included.
- In future objectives that are likely to be impacted will be included in full on Risk Registers.

3/23/12.4

The Governing Body approved the updated Operating Framework, including the updated Risk Appetite Statement.

GB/3/23/13

CHAIR'S BUSINESS

3/23/13.1

Members noted the deadline for receipt of applications for the Secretary's post.

3/23/13.2

The Chair requested the Secretary to reissue the schedule of Board and Committee meetings for the Academic Year to assist Members in diary planning.

GB/3/23/14

STUDENT PRESIDENT'S REPORT

3/23/14.1

The Student President presented his report which provided a number of updates on Clubs and Societies activities, the work of the Students' Union and current Students' Union Executive work. The Student President was thanked for his very good report.

GB/3/23/15

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3/23/15.1

RESERVED BUSINESS

Signed signature redacted

_____ Date

29/11/23

Chair of Governing Body