

Minutes of the 71st meeting of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland Thursday 5 March 2020 – Chimney Corner Hotel, Newtownabbey

Present: Brendan Morgan (Chair), Raymond Beggs (RB), Martin Cromie (MC), Ciara Duffy (CD, Dr Graham Gault (GG), Dr Martin Hagan (MH), Fiona Kane (FK), John Kelly (JK), Shaunagh Lambe (SL), Emma Loughridge (EL), Lisa Magennis (LM), Siobhan McElhinney (SMcE), Sonia McGowan (SMcG), Shirley McKenna (SMcK) Julian Morgan (JM), Maria Mullally (MM), Catriona Mullan (CM), Paul O'Doherty (PO'D) Cliodhna Scott-Wills (CSW), Keith Smith (KS), Maria Thomasson (MT), John Unsworth (JU), Mary-Lou Winchborne (MLW).

In attendance: Sam Gallaher (CEO), Gerry Devlin (SEO), Majella Matthews (F&CM), Sima Gondhia (SG), Elizabeth Lorimer. Alison Chambers (AC) DE, Alan Boyd (AB) DE.

Apologies: Aine Andrews, Dr David Joseph Baxter, Geri Cameron, Catherine McBride, Susan Parlour, Gordon White, John Wilkinson.

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

The Chair advised that SEO had an announcement to make. Members were advised of plans to establish an Accreditation Sub-Committee for the purposes of BEd accreditation, that the Sub-Committee needs to have six or seven members and two Council members had already volunteered. An email will be circulated post meeting seeking further volunteers. The requirement is two member teachers who have post-primary experience, two member teachers with primary experience and a further two having experience with special or additional needs children.

SEO & All

Action

The apologies were noted as detailed above.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair advised he had issued a form to Members prior to the meeting and asked Members if there were any declarations of interest. No one declared any interests.

3. Minutes from last Council meeting (02.10.2019)

The CEO advised there was an attempt to close off all business at the previous meeting of 2nd October. A meeting was arranged to close off the minutes, but it was not quorate and was cancelled. The previous Chair has signed off the remaining minutes, but the minutes of 2nd October remain outstanding.

The CEO advised that a Confidential "In Committee" Minute was circulated to Members yesterday and the Chair advised these would be collected from Members after today's meeting. Council Members proceeded to review these minutes and discussed how they should be signed off. It was agreed by Council that a vote be taken from the Members who were in attendance at the meeting of 2nd October.



Proposed PO'D Seconded SMcE

Action

4. Matters Arising

Page 11 – 19 'red' files

Members enquired it this matter had been addressed. Members were advised that discussion had taken place with DSO and legal opinion was being sought with the expectation that work would be undertaken in March.

The need dispose of these files as soon as possible was stressed. The CEO advised that DSO had allocated a member of staff to review them in detail.

CEO

Page 14 - Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee

Members enquired if a conclusion had been reached on the business case for the repair of the registration system. It was confirmed that the Business Case had been submitted and approval notified at the end of February so work could now commence.

Members enquired if a Project Manager (PM) had been appointed. The CEO advised a PM for the larger replacement system project was being procured. A further Business Case has been drafted in this regard. Concern was expressed that Members had been told this needed to be done by October 2019 and now it was being extended to March 2020.

The CEO advised the requirement for a new business case for the procurement of a PM (for the new systems project) had emerged in February and a case had been prepared. Work on a revised business case for the system procurement was progressing and discussion with BCS (the consultancy arm of Department of Finance) to undertake this work was ongoing, though BCS cannot begin work until at least April. Subject to the outcome of discussion with BCS procuring support from the open market may be necessary. Securing the PM resource would work through in March. The CEO concluded that there were three objectives to complete – 1) upgrade project to get underway; 2) secure PM; and 3) secure expertise to prepare a new Business Case.

Page 8 – Commercial Insurance

Members enquired_as to the current position regarding Commercial Insurance. The CEO advised that GTCNI do not carry Commercial Insurance as DE/DoF confirmed GTCNI risks are covered.

Page 12 – Election update

Members advised an election update was due to come to next PRRC but he had not seen this mentioned in the minutes. The CEO advised that had been an oversight and a report would be prepared.

CEO & GD

5. Chair's Business and Correspondence



The Chair referred to an issue which arose at the last Council meeting where it was thought Council should acknowledge to the Board of Governors of Schools that Members are thanked for giving their time to Council. The Chair proposed to write to the Chair of the Board of Governors in this regard. Members stated preference for the letter to come from the Council and the Chair noted this.

Action

Chair

Proposed CM PO'D Seconded

6. DE Monthly Oversight meetings – feedback

This item was taken "In Committee" and Officers (except CEO) left the meeting.

7. HR Issues

This item was noted as being "In Committee" therefore the Chief Executive left the meeting at this point.

12. Governence Framework

GTC 20/71/08/1 - 08.3

"In Committee" – Items 6, 7 and 12 are detailed under a separate confidential minute.

The Chief Executive and Officers re-joined the meeting at 12.13pm.

Action

8. Sub-Committee Terms of Reference GTC 20/71/01

The Chair advised that Committee ToRs need to be adopted by Council. There were no suggested amendments and that Committees were comfortable with their ToR.

Members sought clarification regarding the HR Committee, in respect of the terms and remuneration of the Chief Executive. It was highlighted there was usually a Remuneration Sub-Committee which dealt with this

matter and setting objectives. It was suggested that the HR Sub-



Committee would be the most appropriate place to deal with this and matter it was enquired if this was covered under Point 6 of the TOR, Remuneration and Employment matters of the Chief Executive.

Action

The Chair advised that oversight currently fell to the Chair as set out in the governance framework, so that would require amendment.

The CEO advised that initially a set of objectives was agreed for the first six months with the previous Chair (to March 2019). Nothing had been agreed since and it was decided with the previous Chair to defer the matter until the new Council was in place. This issue is now within the HR Committee ToR.

The Chair stated it would be useful if more than one person on the Council provided oversight to ensure there was a fair appraisal.

It was noted that the involvement of the HR Committee was detailed in the proposed Corporate Governance Framework and that the ToR of these Committees should align with that framework.

Members were advised that an action on Council was the introduction of a Performance Management and Appraisal Scheme for staff and that this has been developed and ready for consultation. This scheme would also apply to the Chief Executive.

A Member enquired as to what was recorded in the CEO's Contract of Employment and if a salary cap was in place. They were advised that the CEO salary is on a pay range, not a pay scale and that any increase or progression should be in line with public sector pay policy.

A Member asked if Council could seek clarification from the previous minutes to ensure the Chief Executive was not being disadvantaged. The Chief Executive advised that matters are detailed in the Contract of Employment.

Members approved each of the ToR::

1.	Audit and Risk Assurance	Proposed Seconded	PO'D RB

2. Finance & General Purposes Proposed KS Seconded

3. Policy, Regulation, Registration Proposed LM Seconded JM

4. HR Committee

The Committee Chair advised that the HR Committee TOR should mirror the tenure of the Chair of the Council in respect of Chair and asked if that could be noted in the ToR. The CEO advised that Chairs were elected for 2 years under Standing Orders and that detail would be added to the ToR.



The Chair pointed out that would then make the HR ToR different to all the others and it was agreed to make a common amendment to all TOR.

The Chairman suggested the ToR be adopted, but in future noting that the Chair of the Committee be elected for 2 years in line with the Corporate Governance Framework. It was agreed Sub-Chairs would also have to be reconstituted to 2 years in line with the Chair to rebalance and re-evaluate membership.

CEO & Chair

Proposed JU Seconded CM

9. GTCNI Corporate Plan

GTC 20/71/02

Action

It was emphasised that it was the responsibility of Council to have a Corporate Plan and preparation undertaken with the previous Council. The Plan sets out a strategic direction and framework for the next three years. It shows how GTCNI proposes to move forward in delivering its statutory requirements. Members were asked to consider.

The Chief Executive advised that comments had been received from some members.

Members discussed various aspects of the proposed plan acknowledging the present situation of "special measures" the need to address underlying issues and ensure focus on key statutory functions. Members were advised that most of these matters are reflected in the Plan.

Members indicated a need to reference the plan for the period 2020-2023 and the need to update some of the text.

Members were content as to the strategic objectives and the Plan as a Three Year Strategic Overview. Detail actions would work through in annual Business Plans.

Members adopted the plan in principle with the intention to see a revised document in due course.

CEO

Proposed KS Seconded RB

The Chair proposed that **Item 10 – Staffing Issues** should be discussed later in the agenda and Council agreed.

11. Reports of Committees (Chairs)

(a) Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) (draft minutes/RR/RR action plan/IG report)

The temporary Chair (RB) for the two meetings held delivered a report. ilustrating the extent to which ARAC was assessing risks.



Lack of clarity as to why GTCNI is in "Special Measures" was cited. The Committee had discussed the circulation of minutes and agreed to defer the election of Chair/Vice-Chair until their next meeting. The main points highlighted were:

Action

- The Committee desire to review policies.
- Increase in pension liability in 18/19 and impact on reserves.
- ARAC requiring assurance that other Committees are focusing on those corporate risks within their remit.
- Concern over progress of procurement of new registration.
- The presentation of the report has been improved.
- Review of CRR and subsequent action plan to address risk.
- Number of risks progressing to 'red' status
- Concern over DE report on review of Information Governance
 & Management in GTCNI tabled at the meeting.

Main items discussed at the second meeting were:

- GTCNI Workplace Survey and HR Action Plan.
- Information Management Review issues of risk for the organisation that need addressing.
- Action Plan the Chief Executive was asked about the plan for the IT Register for teachers and Committee felt there needed to be a plan in place to address these issues.
- Risk Register concern expressed over the level of risk and the suggestion that Council needs to hold a risk management workshop to assess the whole risk and agree priorities.

Members were informed that the HR Action Plan was adopted by the previous Council in October 2019. The paper had been omitted accidentally from the papers circulated to the HR Committee but had been referenced and touched on. CEO apologised indicating It would be a substantive item for discussion at the next HR Committee meeting.

Some members voiced concern over this omission. JU said that the revised Action Plan had been referenced and they were assured it was there and being dealt with. JU advised that it is appropriate that this should be dealt with by the HR Committee and Council can request that the HR Committee consider it.

It was highlighted that members of the HR Committee had been presented with a lot to come up to speed with especially at a first meeting and recognised the job of work to be done. That Council had a duty of care to all staff and any lack of capacity in taking things forward needed to be addressed.

The Chief Executive advised that the HR action plan was a key item of work for the HR Committee.

It was asked that individual Committees take cognisance of the Risk Register and use it as a method of communication for

GTCNI Council 05 March 2020 Page 6 of 11



Council members and Committees to look at the Risk Register in terms of areas within their remit.

It was agreed the Corporate Risk Register be a standing item on the agenda of all Committees. CEO

Proposed RB Seconded SMcE

The Council broke for lunch at 1.30pm and the meeting resumed at 2.00pm

(b) Finance & General Purposes Meeting (draft minutes/Finance report/capital projects update/accommodation report)
GTC 20/71/05.1-05.4

The Chair (KS) provided a report highlighting the following points:

- A projected end year financial position within the 1% DE tolerance limit on agreed budget
- Projected £80k HR related expenditure due to emerging issues, grievances and Industrial Tribunal cases.
- New website developed with capital budget of £30k
- Registration system repair projects with cost £187K over two years with capital element being taken from reserves in coming months.
- Business Case submitted for registration system repair; DE approval now granted.
- New replacement registration project progressing in terms of, project management procurement, procurement of consultancy support for business case and consideration of market testing exercise.
- Consideration of alternative accommodation. The current lease in Albany House due to expire 31st March.2020. Extension being considered to allow time for consideration of alternative options identified. Development of Business Case has been proposed..

Members considered the paper on accommodation and were informed that as GTCNI is an NDPB our accommodation arrangements fall within the bounds of Government estate and therefore the Council does not have total freedom to decide where it locates its offices. Any change will require DoF approval.

That GTCNI had been identified as one of the organisations for relocation to James House within the Gasworks site in Belfast. This is a relocation involving some 15 public organisations and will be characterised by "Agile" working. GTCNI had explored this option and expressed reservations. At present GTCNI is not part of this project.



An option to relocate to an HEI campus has also emerged that would appear to offer GTCNI a significant reduction in annual running costs, provide totally self-contained accommodation including the ability to hold Council meetings and fits with the sectorial remit of GTCNI.

Action

It is intended to renew the lease in Albany House for a period of 12-24 months to allow for the consideration of options and possible relocation. Present indications were that a relocation could be accommodated within the current reserves provision of £150k.

Members were asked to consider approval to progress the matter to business case stage so an objective assessment of options could be undertaken.

Members raised a number of points both positive and of concern, stressing the importance of engaging with the staff in any process, considering parking and transport as well as the accommodation.

Members were content to proceed with the development of a business case for possible relocation of offices and it was agreed that a small working group be established. It was also agreed that the Chair of the F&GP Committee (KS) be a member of this working group with the option to co-opt other Council members as deemed necessary.

The CEO will liaise with KS in this regard.

CEO & KS

(FK left the meeting at 2.34pm)

(c) Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee (draft minutes/regulation update)

The Chair of Council provided the update on this meeting, summarised as follows:

- There was a small turnout at the meeting and it was agreed to defer the appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair until the next meeting.
- Committee considered that draft minutes should be issued as soon after the meeting as possible and be reviewed by members before going to Council.
- Committee had agreed the ToR
- Corporate Plan was considered by the Committee.
- The regulation caseload is being monitored but as GTCNI is not regulating there is the risk that this increases. Assessment of risks being undertaken. Discussion with DE regarding the way forward ongoing but proving frustrating. DSO resource identified to undertake review of "red" flies.—
- Update given on Learning Leaders.



- Leadership competency development, members considered progress to date and the Leadership Lens development.
- Members were provided with an update on BEd Accreditation programme.

Members were advised that the work of the Leadership Competency Advisory Group was almost complete and will be considered at next PRCC, Council and Learning Leaders Oversight meetings. The input and leadership of Dr Hagan in this work was highlighted and the SEO stressed that resource to take the work forward under Learning Leaders would need to be considered by DE.

The Chief Executive informed Members that GTCNI were also represented on the Learning Leadership Oversight Group and engaged in working group for the development of Standards for Teacher Professional Learning. Council would be updated accordingly on this activity.

The Chair thanked Dr Hagan for his input who responded that the development represented a good piece of work but there was resource implications for taking it forward which he hoped would be addressed by DE.

Members were informed by a DE representative that DE appreciated the efforts of everyone on the Working Groups and recognised that Learning Leaders was hampered due to the lack of resource. DE were hoping this could be addressed in the near future.

(EL left the meeting at 2.50pm)

Concern was expressed over the lack of progress in respect of regulation and the potential safeguarding risks to children. A request for this aspect to be clearly identified in the Risk Register (Risk No. 5) was noted. Members recognise the urgent need to address legislation. The Chair pointed out that the present delay was with the DSO assigning resource to DE.

The Chief Executive advised that the Permanent Secretary was aware of GTCNI's views and the sense of frustration and urgency felt and that he was following the matter up with both DE and DSO.

JU expressed his shock and horror on the lack of regulatory powers and asked if Members could convey as a Council that this is of the utmost urgency and is unacceptable.

The CEO advised there was a risks to be managed not all of which are in GTCNI's control. There is a caseload awaiting addressing and communication to individuals in this regard was a concern.

Action



(MH left the meeting at 2.54pm)

<u>Action</u>

Members asked if the Council was waiting for advice from DE on how changes are to be made and the timeline involved. The Chief Executive advised he had written to the Permanent Secretary in this regard.

Members discussed various aspects pertaining to regulation, the apparent lack of progress in addressing legislation, the current regulatory caseload and potential for reputational damage, expressing concern over the present situation

The CEO assured members that the caseload is monitored and effort to progress matters as far as is possible will be taken. The matter is a regular point of discussion with DE at the monthly oversight meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

The Chair advised that there was great alarm in DE and GTCNI of the potential risk to children but we had been informed present delay has been down to the DSO assigning resource.

The Chairman stated that this was an action point for DE.

The Chair and CEO to continue to press DE on this matter.

Chair & CEO

The Chairman advised that Point (d) HR Committee Minutes should be taken "In Committee" along with the HR Action Plan therefore Officers (with the exception of the CEO) left the meeting at 3.13pm.

13. Minutes of Council Meetings

GTC 20/71/09

Acton

Members considered a paper on the preparation of minutes for Council and Committee meetings. Members were reminded that minutes of Council meetings are published on the website and are also circulated, as a matter of courtesy, to GTCNI sister organisations in Scotland, Wales and Rol. The CEO stated that under any revised publication scheme it is likely that all minutes (Council and Committee) will be published or at a least a summary of the minutes.

Members discussed issues pertaining to the minutes, the level of detail and issues over agreeing minutes. Members agreed that:

- The Secretariat is responsible for the preparation of minutes
- An independent notetaker will be engaged for Council and HR Committee meetings.





 For "In Committee" discussion where an officer or designated minute taker in not present, a Member should be appointed to record and prepare a minute for the Chair. Draft minutes were possible should be circulated to Members within 7 working days for comment/amendment. Comments to be received within in a further 7 working days. Council to receive both the draft and approved copies of Committee minutes. Minutes should be as concise and anonymous as possible in a format consistent with Cabinet Office guidance. There should be a brief record of the discussion with note of action and owner. All "In Committee" minutes to be filed separately by PA to CEO. 	Officers			
Proposed CSW Seconder SMcK				
Jeconder Simon				
14. Schedule of Meetings The Chairman asked Council if they were happy to approve the schedule of meetings as tabled. The Council agreed without issue.				
Proposed GG				
Seconded LM				
15. AOB None.				
16. Date of next meeting – Thursday, 18 th June 2020				
	1			

Signed...... Dated