GTC-20-74-P18

**(PRRC/Min/20/16)**

**Minutes of the 16th Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee**

**Tuesday 22nd September 2020 via WebEx**

**Present:** Julian Morgan, Chair (JM), Lisa Magennis, Vice-Chair (LM), Dr Martin Hagan, Siobhan McElhinney, Brendan Morgan, Maria Mullally, Maria Thomasson, Mary Lou Winchborne, Raymond Beggs (observer with speaking rights).

**Apologies**: Gordon White, Fiona Kane

**In Attendance:** Sam Gallaher (CEO), Gerry Devlin (SEO), Alan Boyd (DE), Elizabeth Lorimer, Notetaker (EL).

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| 1. **Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**   As the Chair was delayed in joining the meeting because of technical issues, the Committee agreed that the Vice-Chair should conduct the meeting until the Chair was able to join.  The Vice-Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.  The CEO advised that EL was in attendance to take the minutes and apologies were received from Graham White and Fiona Kane   1. **Declarations of Interest**   There were no declarations of interest.  The CEO informed members that he noticed that Raymond Beggs was in attendance and queried in what capacity. He was informed that it was that of observer with speaking rights, as previously agreed with the Chair. It was requested that the Chair send confirmation that this arrangement was agreed prior to the meeting.   1. **Minutes of previous meeting (Mins/20/15)**   The Vice-Chair asked members if they were content with the minutes of the 15th June 2020.  MT advised that she had raised an apology for the last meeting which was not noted in the minutes and asked that this be recorded. (SEO confirmation that this has been corrected)  Further issues raised were as follows:  Page 2, second paragraph – “At Section 7, MLW advised she had gone back to the SEO with amendment regarding **the entitlement** of past members’ involvement on the Leadership Competencies Advisory Group”. BM asked that the words in bold be added.  Page 2, fourth paragraph, last sentence – typographical error: **“s”** to be added to read “should”. BM asked that this be corrected.  Page 3, last paragraph – BM requested that **‘anything like that’** be added/amended  Page 4, third paragraph, last sentence – should read **“Vice-Chair”**, not “Chair”.  Page 6, second paragraph, second sentence – “LM **asked if** it is not our remit to make recommendations…”. SMcE asked that “added that” be replaced with “asked if”.  Page 6, seventh paragraph – should read **“June”**, not “October”. SMcE asked that this be amended.  Page 7, under “AOB” – “AC said **she** felt that DE…”. BM asked that “he” be changed to “she”.  The SEO undertook to correct previous minutes as advised and they were proposed and seconded as follows:  **Proposed:** Mary-Lou Winchborne  **Seconded:** Siobhan McElhinney  *At this point, RB advised that the Chair had confirmed that he was granted speaking rights at this meeting, but until confirmation of this authorisation was received by Committee, he would remain as an observer only.*   1. **Matters Arising**   The SEO advised that no matters arising had been received for discussion outside of set agenda items.  BM referred to “Matters Arising” on previous minutes where it was stated regarding two resolutions at ARAC, “The CEO had been asked to bring these to the other Committees”. BM asked if it had been agreed that the CEO was asked to bring to allthe other Committees. The CEO advised that he had shared them with the committees as requested by ARAC.   1. **Accreditation of ITE programmes** ((PRRC/20/16/01)   The SEO referred to the paper circulated and in particular to the final bullet points detailed which gave the views of Council Members who were also members of Sub-Committees. In light of this, Ciara Duffy and Geri Cameron had to withdraw from the programme. The SEO extended thanks to these Members for the time they had devoted to this programme and the enormous amount of work undertaken.  The SEO advised that B.Ed., programmes for St Mary’s and Stranmillis had been recommended for accreditation for the next four years and this would be brought to Council for ratification.  The Vice-Chair asked if PRRC were required to propose and second this proposal before being taken to Council.  The SEO advised that approval at PRRC was required and it was proposed and seconded as below:  **Proposed:** Brendan Morgan  **Seconded:** Mary-Lou Winchborne   1. **Registration update** (PRRC/20/16/02)   The SEO provided a brief overview of the paper circulated. Activity was as expected and the main points of note were:   * The Registration Team were busy over the summer period with ongoing work regarding the Registration process. * Registration Fees were detailed for 2020 to 2021. * NI Graduate Registrations data file – important to note that the Registration Team had done a significant amount of work over this period and thanks were conveyed to Claire, Janet, Sarah Hawthorne, Sarah Kruger, Cara Bailie and Rosie. * DAS Programme now completed with DE. * Repayments/refunds up to date for temporary teachers and for the voluntary Grammar sector. * Invoices for 4011 registrations needed to be issued and had been delayed to allow teachers to settle into new school environments in the face of the extraordinary precedent of the pandemic. * NI Graduates registration process now completed successfully for 2021. * Progress continues to be made on the approval for qualifications for UK and overseas applications. * C2K data file transfer completed which enabled students to retain access until permanent work was secured.   Committee noted update without further discussion.  *The Vice-Chair interjected at this point to advise that confirmation had been received from the Chair that RB had been granted speaking rights prior to the meeting. The CEO asked that this be duly recorded.*   1. **Regulation update** (PRRC/20/16/03)   The CEO referred to paper circulated which covered the up-to-date position regarding Regulation, caseloads and communications with NISRA and asked if Committee had any questions.  BM referred to discussion at the previous meeting where the CEO had undertaken to speak to Eugene O’Loan regarding ‘red’ files and asked what the outcome of that discussion had been.  The CEO advised he had discussed the matter with the legal advisor who had agreed to respond to a Memorandum of Instruction before the next Council meeting which would identify a legal resource to carry out the process so that it could be closed off. The CEO advised he would follow up on this.  The CEO added that a further Memorandum of Instruction related to undertaking a screening exercise associated with 38 cases. A case review and recommendation were needed on each of these which would come to the CEO for a decision on continue to investigation stage or to be closed. There was a question of timing for some of these cases, the earliest being dated 2014 within that tranche, and with some only recently being completed.  There were 58 cases, some of which were regarding the employer process and with 38 cases at the screening stage. It was thought prudent at this point in time to have legal guidance on these cases because it was the first time a significant number like this had been undertaken. The DSO is to revert regarding the Memorandum of Instruction and to help arrange the logistics of carrying out the process which was all to be considered.  ‘Red’ file cases were regarding correspondence and not necessarily deemed as referrals.  BM referred to the cases from 2014 and asked how Council could manage these when authority to do so was only received by Council in 2015.  The CEO advised there was only one case with this date and would check this point for accuracy and advise Committee accordingly.  EA had returned a draft Data Sharing Agreement in respect of NISTR to GTCNI in August. This was being reviewed for sign-off by end of September if possible.  The CEO pointed out that it was important to stress that the direction of travel and how things were likely to progress regarding regulation from DE needed to be noted with as much clarity as possible because it could take two years before the issue was resolved. Consideration needed to be given on how new referrals, communications, cases pending, etc. are to be handled in the interim. At present we continue to implement our procedures as far as is possible.  MLW advised that Members of PRRC on the previous Council had emphasised the need for a paper trail in communication with DE, which was raised as a priority. MLW asked if there was ongoing correspondence with DE to assure Council of progress and guidance for the period in between, and what happened if no guidance was provided.  The CEO concurred with these concerns and advised that the matter is on the agenda of every monthly meeting with DE. It perhaps was now timely for a further letter be issued to DE in this regard. The CEO advised he was due to meet DE on 24 September, but did not expect to hear of much progress. Noting that it would also be prudent to seek legal advice on whether there was a risk of cases being “timed out” the CEO advised he would write again to DE and check what the legal advice was on timelines.  BM commented that both he and the CEO had emphasised the need for progress. DE had advised they had been unable to secure a DSO to resource to progress the matter of legislation, an issue which had been raised in March 2020, and this was a reason for delay.  The CEO added that the DSO Adviser to DE had left the organisation earlier in the year and DE were having difficulty in securing a new Adviser. The CEO advised he had spoken to DSO to request an update on timescales and the matter had been raised at the last MOM meeting with the answer being that changes to Special Educational Needs legislation was taking priority. The CEO advised that Council should follow the process as far as possible, check legal opinion regarding implications/impact of the time lag, assess the position and write to DE accordingly.  MLW advised the CEO that his endeavours were appreciated and undoubted; but, that this was a major priority and every pressure should be brought to bear to resolve this issue.  SMcE agreed with the CEO and BM and commented that it would be next year before new legislation would be brought to the NI Assembly for approval and it was extremely frustrating that there had been no progress for such an important issue.  BM advised that the previous Council had set up Appeal/Hearing Panels and a Regulatory Framework, and a significant amount of work had been undertaken. However, due to these delays, those Panels now needed to be reconstituted.  The CEO advised that these Panel members had been kept informed about the situation but should now be thanked and advised they had been formally stood down.  *The Chair joined the meeting at 4.45pm and the Vice-Chair returned the meeting to the Chair at this point.*  The CEO advised Council were dealing with a number of Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) associated with regulation that gave cause for concern and it was thought there were possible linkages between FOIs and the letter received from NICCY (response letter to NICCY was circulated to Committee for information). The CEO advised this issue was currently being dealt with.  There were no further comments from Committee.   1. **Registration Projects update** (PRRC/20/26/04)   The SEO referred to the paper circulated which outlined the current project work being undertaken. The main activities highlighted were:   * Database Registration upgrade and User Acceptance testing ongoing. Thanks were extended to Janet and Claire for their expertise regarding identifying glitches and helping with penetration testing which was due to happen this week. * Business Objects which sat with the database regarding analysis and interrogation. There had been problems with procurement which GTC Scotland (Tom Madden) had helped to secure a short-term fix for. * Project Manager (PM) – currently out to tender to decide who would be responsible for managing the new Registration Database project and it was hoped to have a PM in place by next meeting. * BCS were preparing a Business Case which was c.80% completed. Eight options had now been reduced to four options which were to be costed and the preferred option to be identified and submitted to DE for approval. * All projects otherwise were progressing at pace.   The CEO advised that the Market Testing exercise had been completed which would inform the Business Case. Two options were currently being considered:   1. Go to the open market for a cloud-based solution, or 2. Enter into a possible commercial arrangement with GTC Scotland to use their system or a variant of.   When questioned about costs, the CEO advised that overall indications on price would appear to be in line with internal estimates and the provision held in Reserves assuming a circa 5yr contract. A discussion was needed with GTC Scotland to consider the option which potentially would obviate the need for tender and could shorten timescales.  The Chair advised it had been noted how much work had been completed and asked that, on behalf of this Committee, the CEO/SEO convey gratitude to Janet and Claire. Also, to the SEO and the rest of the Registration Team for the work they had undertaken over the Summer.   1. **Competences and the academic year ahead** (PRRC/20/16/05)   The SEO referred to the paper which was circulated for information. The SEO advised that DE had established an Initial teacher Education Working Group to consider any implications relating to potential disruptions to academic year ahead in light of the Covid crisis. The SEO advised he had been asked to write a paper regarding coverage of the competences in light of any disruption.  The Committee commented that this paper was very impressive and helpful and thanked the SEO for preparing it.  MH raised the points as summarised below and emphasised that further discussions would be necessary.   * What time should be spent in school? * What was understood about the tradition of teaching and learning which had changed in the last six months? * The profession needed to broaden its thinking of the role of a teacher and the nature of teaching. * The notion of teaching as a career as opposed to teachers leaving the profession at the initial stage. * Induction phase for recently graduated teachers and competence framework.   MH added that Universities/Colleges working with schools was key to success but this was very challenging at this time.  AB asked that it be recorded, on behalf of DE, their appreciation to the SEO for this paper. He noted that a ‘Plan B’ was in place in the event of a further lockdown.  AB advised that DE were being asked to consider the implications of the UK Internal Market Bill and were in contact with GTC Scotland in this regard, but AB asked if Committee at some stage could consider GTCNI position regarding this Bill.   1. **Business Plan 2020/21**   The CEO gave a verbal update and advised that developing the Business Plan was problematic due to the current circumstances. The CEO outlined the parts of the Plan which were relevant to PRRC Committee.   * Business Plan currently being drafted to go to Council. It will detail the need to maintain involvement with Learning Leaders when that group reconvened, and this would be the prime and sole area of focus within the policy, promoting professionalism area in the current year. * Overall the Plan would be predominately internally focused looking with aim to maintain the Registration function and other statutory requirements and supporting Learning Leaders and responding to BREXIT developments.   BM advised there was also a review being carried out by the Department of Finance of all ALBs. AB added that this had come from the “New Decade, New Approach” initiative and baseline data had been given to the Department of Finance, but no further information had been received. That being said, AB presumed that more information would be requested within the next month.   1. **Pramerica Spirit of Community Awards** (For information)   The SEO circulated a brochure for information only. An awards ceremony was held by Zoom on 15th September and 20 students were selected for the final. All winners received €500 as well as €500 for their chosen charity. The winning student from St Louise’s also received €1000 plus €1000 for charity. However, the trip to USA was cancelled due to the pandemic. The final award panel agreed that this student should be the All-Ireland winner and BM had been a member of the final judging panel.  The Chair conveyed congratulations to St Louise’s.   1. **Date of next meeting**   Committee agreed that the next meeting, to be held on Monday, 9th November 2020 would commence at 3.45pm.  The Chair thanked Committee for their participation and especially to the SEO for his ongoing work.  With no further comments, the Chair closed the meeting at 5.20pm.  Signed …………………………………….. Dated ……………………………. | **Action**  Chair  SEO  Corrections made  CEO  CEO  CEO  All |