

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS.

PRESENT:

Mrs Tracy Strachan (Chair)
Mr Gary McMurray
Mr Tom Redmond
Mr Kieran Swail
Mrs Judith Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Thomas Moore, Governing Body Chair
Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Ms Joanne McGuigan, Assistant Director of Finance
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.34.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Brian Doran, Mr Nick Harkness and Miss Clodagh Palmer.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interest held in matters to be discussed. No interests were declared.

Mrs Thompson arrived at the meeting at 17.37.

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 17 JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of 17 January 2023 were reviewed for accuracy, and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Swail and seconded by Mr McMurray.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Mrs Campbell informed that third parties are made aware of College policies as part of the standard process of contractual procurement.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None to report.

A06. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Environmental Sustainability**

Mrs Campbell referred Members to recommended amendments to the Environmental Sustainability policy to incorporate UN and Accord sustainability development goals.

- **Bring Your Own Device**

Mrs Campbell advised Members of updates to the Bring Your Own Device policy to reference device management and clarify roles and responsibilities.

**ACTION
By whom**

The two policies were approved on proposal from Mrs Thompson and seconded by Mr Redmond.

A07. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Mrs Campbell advised that there has been no confirmation of resource allocation. She confirmed that the College is cooperating with requests from the sponsor department as part of the FE Delivery Review and informed of internal meetings to progress scenario planning and assess risks.

Members noted the report.

A08. SRC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Ms McGuigan presented the Management Accounts for the period ended 31 January and advised that the College was approximately £633k behind income at that point in time. She reminded Members of the difficulties associated with making claims within the new mandated TAMS system and reported on improved confidence in recent weeks with the process for submitting and receiving claims.

Ms McGuigan informed that HE has under recruited and FE has over recruited.

Members were informed of an underspend due to vacancies and advised on variances against budget lines. In response to a query from Mr Swail, Ms McGuigan informed on staff recruitment challenges particularly impacting IT, finance and engineering and construction and advised on a similar scenario across the sector.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Ms McGuigan advised that budget and actuals are largely expected to come in line.

Mr Redmond enquired whether the vacancies are impacting the delivery of curriculum. Ms McGuigan clarified that the parttime lecturer register has been exhausted and the College are having to rely on the goodwill of permanent staff utilising overtime.

Mrs Campbell advised that there is a requirement to quantify the cost associated with overtime and advised that the approach is under strain and not sustainable.

Mrs Thompson left the meeting at 17.58 and returned at 18.02.

Dr Moore expressed concerns over a loss of quality. Mrs Campbell informed on actions taking place internally and advised that further information will be provided at the Governing Body meeting on 21 March. She reported on considerations for redeployment and the assessment of horizon scanning risks.

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the summary of expenditure by budget holder and income and expenditure per faculty. She informed of an improved position regarding aged debtors and advised on the earlier invoicing on the School Partnership Provision.

She informed that prompt payment for invoices paid within 10 working days of receipt is 85% and 98% are paid within 30 days of receipt.

The Committee noted the report.

A09. GOVERNING BODY BUDGET REPORT

Ms McGuigan presented the Governing Body Budget report for the period ended 31 January 2023 and advised that the budget for Governing Body Members had been increased due heightened activity and informed that this has been offset against other budget lines.

She advised that training has cost more than anticipated.

Members noted the report.

A10. DfE FORECAST RETURNS

Ms McGuigan referred the Committee to the summary analysis of resource and capital expenditure and informed that resource budget spend is at 63%.

Ms McGuigan provided a breakdown on income, staff and non-staff costs and advised that costs for overtime has not been provided for in the report. She informed that expenditure had been delayed to provide more certainty around recouping costs on the TAMS system.

In response to a query from Mrs Thompson, Ms McGuigan clarified that the College does not employ a significant amount of agency staff.

Mr Swail spoke to an emerging pattern across the sector, advising that curriculum delivery is putting pressure on staff. Mrs Campbell advised that clarity is required around the lecturing staff pay uplift. Dr Moore informed on robust discussions taking place within the Chairs Group. He stated that various asks have been made of the sponsor department and advised that no comprehensive response has been made to date.

The Committee noted the report.

Mrs Thompson left the meeting at 18.25.

A11. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

Ms McGuigan referred to the Direct Award Contract managed by NWRC on behalf of the sector for the renewal of access able guides. She advised on the long-term contract to provide sophisticated aids to disabled learners.

Members noted the report.

A12. BUSINESS CASE ADDENDUM EXCEEDING £500k

Ms McGuigan advised on the unusual circumstance of drafting the business case addendum and informed Members on the delegated approval limits outlined in the management statement and financial memorandum and referenced within the College procurement policy.

She provided Members with comprehensive detail on the circumstances that led to the requirement of drafting a business case addendum for the purchase of PC refresh and robotic equipment.

Mrs Thompson returned to the meeting at 18.37.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Ms McGuigan advised on the process for post project evaluation and reporting of such to the Department.

Mrs Campbell clarified the requirements of addendum approval and measures in place to test market value and justify requests.

Mrs Strachan thanked Mrs Campbell and Ms McGuigan for their clarity on the reasonings for the addendum.

A13. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

Mrs Campbell presented the Complaints and Compliments report and advised that all complaints and comments are broken down by process areas in order to identify any emerging trends and justify triggering an intervention.

She provided detail regarding the circumstances concerning a request for erasure and advised on the status of compliance reviews. Mrs Campbell advised on measures adopted to strengthen data protection.

The Committee noted the report.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Campbell advised Members of a hard audit commencing on 31 March and materiality of £5m applied by the NIAO. She advised the Committee on timeline concerns, the objective of the Accounts Direction and commented on the challenge of having two audits running in parallel.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 6 June 2023 via TEAMS.

The meeting concluded at 18.59.

signature redacted

CHAIR

DATE

20th June 2023

Certified as a true copy of minutes approved by Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee at their meeting of 6 June 2023 by the Secretary, Miss Lindsay Armstrong.

signature redacted

DATE

12 June 2023.