

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS.

PRESENT:

Mrs Tracy Strachan (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran (Chief Executive)
Mr Nick Harkness
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 17.32.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Boardroom Apprentice, 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.

A03. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 14 MARCH 2023

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of 14 March 2023 were reviewed for accuracy, and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Swail and seconded by Mr McMurray.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

None to report.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mrs Strachan noted that it is the last meeting of SRC's Finance & General Purposes Committee for Mr Doran, Mrs Thompson and Mr Redmond. She thanked them for their great support and professionalism over the years and advised that they would be missed.

Mr Redmond arrived at the meeting at 17.35.

A06. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Fees policy and procedure**

Ms McGuigan informed that the 2024-2025 fees policy is being presented for approval to allow for marketing purposes. She advised on a recommended amendment to address fee reduction.

**ACTION
By whom**

- **Fees Schedule**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to a tracking report advising on the proposed increase of fees.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Ms McGuigan advised that the current schedule relates to prices for 24-25 but as a result of the current operating environment the prices aligned to the hire of College facilities for 23-24 will be reviewed in the Autumn term.

Members were informed of the various student finance options including grants, student loans, concessionary aid, FE award and the hardship fund.

In response to a query from Mr Harkness, Mr Doran advised that there is not a common fees policy operating within the sector and advised on some level of discretion for Governing Body agreeing fees. He informed on the need to submit widening participation plans to the sponsor Department.

- **Disposal of Negligible or Low Value Assets & Inventory**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to updates to the policy to define roles and responsibilities.

The three policies were approved without dissent.

A07. SRC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Ms McGuigan presented the Management Accounts for the period ended 30 April 2023 and advised on the financial position. She informed that income is broadly on track and explained the variances in relation to accruals for lecturers pay settlement.

Ms McGuigan informed on commitments to spend and advised on a timing anomaly relating to non-pay administration which will be reversed in coming months.

Members reviewed the summary of expenditure by budget holder. In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Ms McGuigan advised on the Principal / Agent relationship the College has with its catering contract. She informed that services were impacted by Covid and the new buildings, however advised that net payment is broadly in line.

Members noted the report.

A08. GOVERNING BODY BUDGET REPORT

Members noted £561 variance within the Governing Body Budget report for the period ended 30 April 2023 with 24% left to spend.

A09. DfE FORECAST RETURNS

Ms McGuigan presented the DfE Forecast Returns March 2023 provisional out-turn and advised of an approved overspend of £393k. She informed that the Department previously confirmed an approved overspend of £30k, and this position increased to £540k approved overspend in April 2023.

Ms McGuigan advised on assumptions to lecturing pay charges and difficulties accruing the apprenticeship income due to the TAMS system. She informed that the shortfall should be addressed in the period April to July 2023.

Members were advised that some planned student trips did not materialise within the period. Ms McGuigan informed on savings in relation to staff vacancies and referred

Members to the DfE letter dated 16 May 2023 detailing DEL other resource authorised overspend.

Members noted the report.

A10. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

Ms McGuigan referred the Committee to the extension of the direct award to Bird Surveyors Ltd and the sector contract for renewal of access able guides.

The Committee noted the report.

A11. BANKING CONTRACT

Ms McGuigan presented the Banking Mandate for approval and informed on the need to refresh the signing mandate and e-banking because of staff changes within the finance team.

The authorisations were approved on proposal from Mr Harkness and seconded by Mr McMurray.

A12. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

Mrs Campbell referred Members to the Complaints and Compliance report for the period ended 30 April 2023. She advised that a total of 32 complaints and 17 compliments have been received throughout the period.

Mrs Campbell informed on data protection and information requests and advised on inhouse compliance reviews. In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mrs Campbell advised that a formal response to the recommendations within the review of Essential Skills enrolment draft report has now been received and this report can now be finalised.

Members noted the report and were informed that there have been no disclosures of suspected fraud or whistleblowing throughout the period.

A13. LURGAN CAMPUS – EASON BUILDING

Ms McGuigan relayed that the Committee is being asked to provide final ratification on the disposal of an asset to permit the College Executive to liaise with the Department for the Economy in order to progress the insurance settlement of the fire damaged Eason Building at the Lurgan campus.

She informed that the building has been held on the balance sheet as a non-operational value for land and due to the suspected arson and corrective action required, the recommendation is to dispose and demolish the building.

Mr Doran reminded Members of the estates strategy.

Members approved the recommendations relating to the asset management of the Eason Building without dissent.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Strachan wished the departing Governors all the best for future endeavours.

Mr Redmond advised that the eight years of his governing tenure has flown by, and he is proud of all the good work the College has achieved.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 17 October 2023 via TEAMS.

The meeting concluded at 18.37.

signature redacted

17th October 2023
DATE

