

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2022 AT 17.30 VIA TEAMS.**

**PRESENT:**

Mrs Tracy Strachan (Chair)  
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)  
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  
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services  
Mr Gary Young, Head of Estates  
Mr Paul Donaghy, Health and Safety Manager  
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.33.

**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 31 MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of 31 May 2022 were reviewed for accuracy, and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Redmond and seconded by Mrs Thompson.

**A04. MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mrs Strachan asked that Members contact the Secretary to confirm their availability to attend the finance training.

**A06. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

Mr Donaghy presented the Annual Health and Safety report advising that internal audits of the Health and Safety Management Profile (HASMAPP) records 98% compliance against the indicators.

He advised that a full review of all substances that fall under Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSSH) was carried out using a survey of all faculties and departments, and further informed that not all chemicals require a full assessment.

**ACTION  
By whom**

Mr Donaghy informed that SRC has a programme of inspections including the testing and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment, emergency lighting, fire detection and warning systems and advised that this is undertaken regularly by caretaking staff and external contractors. He informed on a slight increase in fire activities however explained that it falls well within expected parameters.

Mr Donaghy relayed that there has been a dramatic increase in registered accidents and incidents and caveated that this corresponds to an increase of people onsite and the implementation of a more effective reporting system. He advised on first aiders on campuses and provided detail on training and development.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mr Donaghy advised on regular quality checking of risk assessments. He informed on the development of the PlanOn portal and the supply of defibrillators onsite. He advised that it is anticipated that all SRC defibrillators will be registered with the NI Ambulance Service.

Mrs Strachan thanked Mr Donaghy for his presentation and remarked on good work evidenced.

- **Health and Safety policy**
- **Health & Safety policy statement**

Recommendations to the Health and Safety policy and the Health and Safety policy statement were approved on proposal from Mr Redmond and seconded by Mr McMurray.

Mr Donaghy left the meeting at 17.49.

#### **A07. ESTATES MAINTENANCE PLANS**

Mr Young referred Members to the Estates Maintenance Plans and advised on major capital works delivered and progressed in the 2021-2022 academic year. He advised that the College awaits the decision on the judicial review appeal regarding the Craigavon planned works. Members were informed on estates plans for the Newry campus.

Mr Young advised on planned minor works including the upgrade of LED lighting and progression of 3D digital surveys. He advised on planned projects including the implementation of wireless technology.

Mr Sloan informed that in year priorities are impacted by an ever-decreasing budget and advised on necessary maintenance required in Portadown and Lurgan. He reported on a good working relationship with L M Services.

Members noted the report. Mr Sloan and Mr Young were thanked for their assistance and they left the meeting at 18.02.

#### **A08. POLICY APPROVAL**

- **Debt Management**

Mr Doran referred Members to the Debt Management policy and advised on recommended changes to separate technical processes into a procedural note. He referred the Committee to roles and responsibilities and authorisations required to write off debt.

- **Fees Schedule 2023 2024**

Mr Doran presented the Fees Schedule 2023 2024 and referred Members to recommended changes to fees. Members were advised on the thresholds for setting charges and those in place across the sector.

Mr Doran advised that further changes to the fees schedule and on charges for public sector apprenticeships may be required going forward.

Mr Redmond informed that in his position as responsible Governor, he had attended the Hardship Fund meeting. He reported that the College are providing a good account in the stewardship of funds and have distinguished themselves in their reputation for student support.

Members were informed of the many strands of funding support available to learners.

Both policies were approved on proposal from Mr Swail and seconded by Mr Redmond.

- **Bring Your Own Device**
- **Mobile and Remote Working**

Members were advised on recommendations to both policies to include technical controls. Mrs Campbell informed that the College is working towards cyber security essential accreditation.

Both policies were approved on proposal from Mr McMurray and seconded by Mr Swail.

#### **A09. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022**

Members approved their Committee Annual Report as an accurate record.

#### **A10. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members agreed that their Terms of Reference remain appropriate. These were approved on proposal from Mrs Thompson and seconded by Mr McMurray.

#### **A11. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT Year End Analysis**

Mrs Campbell referred Members to the Annual Complaints Report and advised that key trends are in line with the 2019-2020 academic year. She reported that the highest number of complaints relate to the Newry estate however caveated that the Newry campuses house around 44% of the College's student body therefore the figure does not appear to be overly disproportionate.

Mr Doran advised that complaints are regularly monitored by the senior leadership team and no trends have been identified requiring specific intervention.

Mrs Campbell relayed that the Compliance Officer tracks the various categories of complaints and makes recommendations as required if there is any issue of concern.

Members noted the report.

#### **A12. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**

Mrs Campbell advised on the College's requirement under the FE Order to publish a yearly report on the financial accounts. She referred Members to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and explained that income is down £1.1m on the previous year.

Mrs Campbell advised on movement between income lines and informed that an element of skills training is now being delivered through traineeships.

Mrs Campbell advised that expenditure has been impacted by staff costs and informed on additional spend allotted to the LED light replacement. Members were informed of the inclusion of a reversal of historic impairment for the Armagh and Banbridge campuses.

In response to a query from Mrs Strachan, Mrs Campbell advised that although the College is monitoring electric consumption, any savings from the new LED system will likely to be offset by a rise in utility costs.

Mrs Campbell informed on a deficit on the pension fund and advised on a historic adjustment on holiday overtime payment.

Members noted the report.

### **A13. SRC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS Year End**

Ms McGuigan presented the Management Accounts and advised on an inability to draw down on the DfE main grant. She informed that earmarked funds have been impacted by the deferred capital grant and reversal of prior year impairment. Members were informed that FE and HE have under recruited.

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the summary of financial position and advised on an underspend due to unfilled vacancies offset by an overspend on direct teaching pay.

Ms McGuigan advised on challenges hiring to certain skills areas and difficulties recruiting to temporary posts.

Members were advised of an underspend due to the deferment of student trips and depreciation due to the impact of revaluation of the Armagh and Banbridge campuses.

Ms McGuigan informed on aged debtors and creditors and prompt payments.

The Committee noted the report.

### **A14. DRAFT INDICATIVE BUDGET (Academic Year August 2022 – July 2023)**

Ms McGuigan presented the draft Indicative Budget report and informed on the removal Covid support, cost of living pressures, an increase of HLA payment, a reduction in skills training provision, a decrease in tuition fees and an increase in pay and non-pay costs. She informed that some planned maintenance has been removed from the budget however advised that all statutory health and safety checks will be prioritised.

Members noted the report and were informed that the College is working with the Department to address the pressure arising from increases in utilities.

### **A15. GOVERNING BODY YEAR END REPORT**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the Governing Body year end report and advised that increase in pay administration due to the scheduling of additional meetings has been in part offset by savings in expenses related to travel, office requisites and hospitality.

### **A16. DfE FORECAST RETURNS**

Ms McGuigan referred the Committee to the summary analysis of resource and capital expenditure. She informed on 37% income, 33% staff costs and 20% non-staff costs spend in year to date.

**A17. BANK MANDATE**

Ms McGuigan advised that she was seeking Members' approval to amend the bank mandate to reflect changes in staffing. She informed on the stringent approval process in place to access funds and make payment to staff and suppliers.

Changes to the bank mandate were approved on proposal from Mr Redmond and seconded by Mr Swail.

**A18. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS**

None to report.

**A19. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

The Committee conducted its annual review of the Register of Interest in accordance with their Terms of Reference and requirements of the Instrument of Government.

Mr Doran remarked that it is the responsibility of Governors and the Senior Management Team to advise the Secretary of any amendments as they occur.

**A20. CIRCULARS**

- FE 10/22 Access to English Speakers of other Languages
- FE 05/22 FE Residency and Funding Requirements
- FE07/22 FE Grants

Mrs Campbell referred Members to the Departmental circulars.

**A21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members thanked Ms McGuigan for her comprehensive reports.

**A22. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

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

The meeting concluded at 19.28.

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CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Certified as a true record of minutes approved by Members at their meeting of 17 January 2023 by the Secretary, Miss Lindsay Armstrong.

signature redacted

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE 30 January 2023 .

