

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2023 AT 17.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, BANBRIDGE CAMPUS.**

**PRESENT:**

Mrs Tracy Strachan (Chair)  
Mr Raymond Sloan (Interim Chief Executive)  
Mr Sean Fitzsimons  
Mr Nick Harkness  
Mrs Monica Kelly  
Mr Gary McMurray  
Mr Kieran Swail

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Dr Thomas Moore, Governing Body Chair  
Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning  
Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Interim Director of Client Services  
Ms Joanne McGuigan, Assistant Director of Finance  
Mr Gary Young, Head of Estates  
Mr Paul Donaghy, Health, Safety and Environmental Systems Manager  
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice  
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.32.

Mr Strachan welcomed all parties to the meeting and extended as special welcome to new Members, Mrs Kelly and Mr Fitzsimons and the Boardroom Apprentice 2023-2024, Mrs Lavery.

**A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**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.

Mrs Kelly informed of her new appointment at the University of Ulster and advised that she will update the Register of Interests accordingly.

**A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 6 JUNE 2023**

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of 6 June 2023 were reviewed for accuracy, and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Swail and seconded by Mr Harkness.

**A06. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

Mrs Hughes advised that Mr Donaghy will lead on the presentation on health and safety matters and Mr Young will present on estates maintenance plans.

Mr Donaghy referred the Committee to the Annual Health and Safety Report 2022-2023 and advised that the Health and Safety Committee met four times over the course of the year. He informed Members of the College's statutory requirements and advised that overall performance has increased from 90% to 100% across all of the compliance indicators on the HASMaP standard and that SRC is the first F&HE College in Northern Ireland to achieve the standard.

**ACTION  
By whom**

Mr Donaghy remarked that all staff should be congratulated on the achievement.

Members were informed that the College has invested heavily in planned preventative maintenance and minor works and were advised that investment in LED lighting reduces the risk of fire and aids photosensitivity.

Mr Donaghy informed on fire activations taking place across campuses over the period and provided a summary of accident and incidents logged across faculties and three-year benchmarking trends.

Mr Donaghy advised on actions and improvement objectives for 2023-2024.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mr Donaghy advised that first aiders across the Newry East and West campuses provide cover as required and further informed that the 118 issues in process have been prioritised as low risk. Mr Young clarified that third parties have been commissioned in a number of areas to conduct surveys and confirmed that intrusive reports will be requested if necessary.

In response to a query from Dr Moore enquiring about the large spend on remedial actions, Mr Young advised on outsourced contracts for fixed wire testing. Mrs Hughes committed to providing further information on issues raised in health and safety audits in future year reports.

Mrs Hughes

Mr Donaghy advised that first aid rooms are utilised for multipurpose and are redesignated as 'Wellbeing Rooms'.

In response to a query from Mr Harkness, Mr Donaghy advised that the College is considering the most appropriate route for external accreditation.

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

Mr Young provided an overview on planned estates works and major capital projects being progressed on the Craigavon and Newry estates.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mr Young advised that several planned projects have been deferred and informed that the Estates team came within 2% of budget.

He advised on strategies to reduce the carbon footprint, informing on plans to install LED lighting in Lurgan and Portadown and advised that they would be supported by the Invest to Save programme. Mr Harkness questioned the appropriateness of investing in the legacy estates and the potential for revenue savings. Mrs Hughes agreed to consider the comments and conduct a review of the information relating to these two schemes which will include a cost benefit analysis.

Mrs Hughes

In response to a query from Mr Fitzsimons, Mr Sloan advised that the College is agreeing a way forward with the sponsor Department to identify and conduct safety checks on reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete.

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

The Health and Safety policy and policy statement were approved on proposal from Mr Fitzsimons and seconded by Mr McMurray.

Mrs Hughes, Mr Young and Mr Donaghy left the meeting at 18.13.

**A04. MATTERS ARISING**

None to report.

**A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

None to report.

**A08. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Mrs Strachan referred Members to the Finance and General Purposes Committee Annual Report 2022-2023 and conclusion that the Committee continues to maintain a strong working relationship with the Executive Team, while offering constructive challenge, where appropriate, to ensure the best interests of Southern Regional College are achieved.

Mrs Strachan signed the report as an accurate account.

**A09. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members agreed that the Executive Team and Committee Chairs Group review the Terms of Reference to ensure that they remain appropriate.

Members were reminded that Governors are required to complete mandatory training and of the recent risk appetite workshop.

Miss Armstrong advised that the Department are planning on running Effective Governance training and audit and risk training.

The Committee recommended that a management response be included in the Committee Annual Reports going forward and requested that Governors provide a narrative to support any statements in their self-assessment questionnaires at year end.

**A10. POLICY APPROVAL**

- **Password policy**

Mrs Campbell referred Members to an update applied to appendix one to reflect the password requirements of NCSC guidance.

- **Fees Schedule 2023-2024**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to recommended changes to the Fees Schedule – Hire of College Facilities. 2023-2024.

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

**A11. ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

- **Draft Annual Report and Financial Accounts**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Comparison. She informed on an increase in income and reminded Members of the prior year reversal of historic impairment for the Armagh and Banbridge estates and technical accounting reference.

	Executive Team / Committee Chairs
	Miss Armstrong

Ms McGuigan informed that income from educational contracts has reduced due to the ending of Training for Success programmes. She advised on an increase in tuition fees and other grant income, in operating income primarily due to increased catering provision in Armagh, and interest receivable.

Ms McGuigan informed on a reduction in staff costs and increase in depreciation.

Members noted the report and Statement of Financial Position comparison referencing tangible fixed assets and pension asset.

#### **A12. INDICATIVE BUDGET AUGUST 2023 – JULY 2024**

Ms McGuigan presented the indicative budget report and referred the Committee to the resource budget format. She advised that the proposed budget is set to achieve monetary balance over the two financial years and operate within available resources within the DfE monitoring round framework.

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the FRS17 pension cost reduction and cost saving reductions achieved through vacancy control and consolidation of delivery.

Mrs Campbell cautioned that the cost savings cannot be replicated in future years.

The Committee noted the report.

#### **A13. SRC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Ms McGuigan presented the SRC Management Accounts and advised that assumptions on pay awards had significantly changed and are offset by vacancies and pension reduction.

Member noted that planned student trips did not materialise and income from the Kilkeel estate disposal was more than originally anticipated.

#### **A14. GOVERNING BODY BUDGET REPORT**

The Committee noted an overall overspend of 2% in the Governing Body budget largely attributed to Governing Body training expenses.

#### **A15. DfE FORECAST RETURNS**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the DfE Forecast Return and breakdown of expenditure to date relating to income, staff costs and no pay costs with prior year comparison.

#### **A16. BANK MANDATE**

Members approved recommended changes to the bank mandate reflective of personnel change.

Ms McGuigan was thanked for her transparent, detailed and reassuring presentation of reports.

#### **A17. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS**

None to report.

#### **A18. REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2023-2024**

The Committee conducted its annual review of the Register of Interests.

**A19. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT**

Review of the Complaints and Compliments Annual Report was deferred to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

**A20. CIRCULARS**

- FE Grants 2023 2024 FE 06/23
- Hardship Fund 2023 2024 FE 07/23

Mrs Campbell referred Members to the revised circulars.

Mr McMurray advised that he has taken over stewardship of the Hardship Governor role and has engaged with Mrs Hughes and Mrs McKeown on the administration and monitoring of the fund.

**A21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None to report.

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

The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 23 January 2024 via TEAMS.

The meeting concluded at 19.07.

signature redacted

\_\_\_\_\_ 19th March 2024  
DATE

