



Ms McGuigan informed of an underspend in direct teaching pay due to strike days and confirmed this has been, in part, offset by part-time lecturer costs. She advised that direct support pay underspend due to vacancies has been re-allocated to contingency for re-distribution.

In response to a query from Mrs Kelly, Ms McGuigan informed that accrual for underspend is being looked at and advised that the mitigation plan is not quantified at this stage. She advised on an overspend on casual staff and informed that catering and cleaning spend is likely to come in on budget.

Mrs Campbell confirmed that the Budget Management Committee review and approve all additional budget allocation requests.

#### **A08. GOVERNING BODY BUDGET REPORT**

Members noted a slight underspend in Governor remuneration for the period ended November 2023, accepting that this may be down to the timings of meetings. Ms McGuigan confirmed an underspend on non-pay and discussed the potential for this budget to be reinstated to pre-Covid levels.

Members agreed that allocations need to be increased in order to balance the budget.

#### **A09. DfE FORECAST RETURNS**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the resource budget pressures and advised that the information was submitted to the Department prior to confirmation of the budget allocation pre-Christmas. She informed that funding from the UK Shared Prosperity and ACVED has been approved but is not yet included in the budget allocation.

Members were advised on actions to ease financial pressure in the 2024/2025 academic year.

Ms McGuigan informed that the College has launched another Educational Eats programme providing students with free breakfast and lunch until March and advised monies not used for the Hardship Fund are being utilised to fund this initiative.

In response to a query from Mrs Strachan, Ms McGuigan advised on improved quality of learning due to the initiative and evidenced by feedback and attendance. She informed Members that more learners are on site and are staying longer. In response to a query from Mrs Kelly, Mr Sloan advised that healthy food options are available.

Ms McGuigan referred the Committee to resource and capital spend to the period ended November 2023 and advised on business cases moving to procurement stage. In response to a query from Mr Harkness, Ms McGuigan advised there are a number of existing procurement frameworks in place which the College can avail of and commented on committed spend on science and audio-visual equipment.

Mr Sloan advised that planned expenditure on LED lighting will be revisited in the new financial year. Ms McGuigan confirmed that the funding for this year has been surrendered and the Department are supportive of receiving an application in 2024/2025.

Mr Murray recommended that management take account of the Committee's views about investing in buildings that are planned for disposal. Ms McGuigan informed that the design work is complete and advised on commitment to pay.

Members were referred to a breakdown of percentage spend of resource budget for income, staff costs and non-pay costs.

## **A10. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS**

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the DAC awarded to facilitate licenses for two members of the Business Support and Innovation Team to deliver accredited programmes.

Members noted the report and were advised that there is no other supplier that can accredit the training.

## **A11. BANK MANDATE**

Ms McGuigan presented the bank mandate proposal for Committee approval to amend signatories for the banking contract, to approve amendment to the ebanking mandate and to approve the corporate credit card holders.

She advised that changes are requirement to the current bank mandate to accommodate a member of staff returning from maternity leave.

The amendments were approved on proposal from Mr Fitzsimons and seconded by Mr Harkness.

Ms McGuigan advised on controls in place and the audit process. In response to a query from Mrs Kelly, discussion took place regarding segregation of duties and seniority of approval. Ms McGuigan committed to reviewing the current controls to satisfy herself there is appropriate segregation and seniority.

Ms McGuigan

## **A12. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT**

- **Policy and Procedure**

Mrs Campbell referred the Committee to recommended changes to the Complaints and Compliments policy in regard to roles and responsibilities. In response to a query from Mr McMurray, she advised that the Corporate Compliance Manager / Data Protection Officer is responsible for ensuring that all complaints are recorded.

The policy was approved on proposal from Mr Harkness and seconded by Mr McMurray.

- **Annual Report 2022/2023**

Mrs Campbell presented the Complaints and Compliments year end analysis report and advised on a total of 44 complaints received in the 2022/2023 academic year. Members noted a decrease on previous years.

Mrs Campbell informed that 17 were formal complaints, 26 informal and 1 comment. She provided detail on complaints categorised as 'upheld' and advised that 'partially upheld' complaints may require the College to put in place remedial action or recommendation for improvement of service provision.

- **Report December 2023**

Mrs Campbell informed that to date 49 complaints have been received in the current academic year. Members noted that the volume of complaints is well in excess of previous academic years.

Mrs Campbell advised that 48 of the complaints have been investigated and closed though 1 formal complaint is in ongoing investigation. She informed that 30 of the closed complaints have been upheld and 14 relate to the negative impact of strike action on course delivery. Members were advised that other complaints relate to facilities and course cancellation.

In response to a query from Mrs Kelly regarding the increase of complaints at the Banbridge campus, Mrs Campbell committed to making enquires on the detail of same.

Mrs Campbell

Members were informed of the investigative procedures for dealing with complaints.

The Committee noted that 13 compliments have been received to date.

Mrs Campbell advised on data protection and information requests. Mrs Kelly recommended that detail on corrective action be included in the report going forward.

Mrs Campbell

**A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None to report.

**A14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 16 April 2024 via TEAMS.

The meeting concluded at 18.38.

  
CHAIR

15th June 2024  
DATE