

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12 December 2011 at the Newtownabbey Campus.

Present Mrs K Collins, (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands (Director),  
Mr S Davidson, Dr D Lennox, Mr P McCudden.

In Attendance Mrs C Moore and Mr J Hunter.

### **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **24.1 Apologies**

An apology was received from Mr A Watt.

#### **24.2 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **24.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 8 November 2011, were approved.

#### **24.4 Matters Arising**

##### **24.4 Catering Services (minute 23.10)**

The Committee noted that the Catering review had recommended that the College should market test the feasibility of outsourcing the provision of catering services at four of its campuses, Farm Lodge, Newtownabbey, Coleraine and Magherafelt. It was further noted that the draft tender document had been circulated for consultation to the Trade Unions and no response had been received; it was hoped to seek expressions of interest from all of the current suppliers of catering services to the FE Sector in the early January. Responses would be evaluated and a proposal on the future of catering services within NRC would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. The Director of Finance advised that it was not intended to have a mixed provision of catering provision as at present.

#### **24.5 Chairperson's Communication**

There were no Chairperson's communications.

#### **23.7 Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to report.

#### **23.8 Monthly Management Accounts**

The Director of Finance presented the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 31 October 2011. The Accounts indicate that the College has an historic cost deficit of £256k, which is £135k more than budget. It was noted that income was £80k lower than budget, which was in the main due to training income being £108k behind budget. This is matched by an underspend in trainee payments; it is anticipated that the net training budget may be up to £330k less than budget at the end of the year as a result of lower than anticipated trainee numbers. A review of the first quarter is currently being carried out with budget holders to ascertain if any correction action is required. The projected outturn for the year remains as a deficit of £1.2m.

The Bank Balance as at 31 October 2011 was £ 3.3 million.

#### **24.8 Single Action Procurement**

The Director of Finance reminded the Committee that the Governing Body (23 November 2011) had agreed that Single Action Procurements should be approved as follows:

- a) Value of £0 and £5,000 to be approved by Director on a monthly basis;
- b) Value of £5,001 and £50,000 to be approved by Budget Holder, Director of Finance and Director on an individual basis, with accompanying evidence of reason for Single Action Procurements from Budget Holder;
- c) Value over £50k to be approved by Director of Finance and Director and Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee; and
- d) Details of all Single Tender Procurements approved by above process are to be presented to each Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

The Committee received a paper detailing Single Action Procurement since the commencement of the financial year 2011/2012. The Committee noted details of:

- a) Single Action Procurements, in excess of £5,000, approved by the Director and Director of Finance;
- b) Single Action Procurements (< £5,000) for August 2011, September 2011 and October 2011 providing reasons for single tender purchase, approved by the Director;
- c) Suppliers, who are exceptions to the NRC's Procurement Guidelines; these suppliers are either the only supplier of the goods/services or there are qualitative reasons for engaging with such suppliers. It was noted that this list would be reviewed annually by the Committee.

During discussion it was noted that it was not necessary to have sole suppliers approved by DEL. It was also noted that all Single Action Procurements over £5,000 had to be reported to DEL on an annual basis.

**The Committee agreed that:**

- a) The Single Action Procurement List for goods/services less than £5,000, and the Single Action Procurement List for goods/services in excess of £5,000 but less than £50,000 be approved for the period 1 August 2011 to 31 October 2011.**
- b) The List of Suppliers that are exceptions to the NRC Guidelines should be approved and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.**

#### **24.9 Estates**

The Committee received an update regarding the following estate issues:

- a) Outline Business Case. It was noted that a schedule of accommodation, being prepared by Estate and Curriculum teams, was due on 31 January 2012. The Director of Finance advised that consultants are to be engaged by January 2012. It was also noted that it would be necessary to establish a Project Board. It was suggested and **the Committee agreed that Mr P McCudden should be nominated as the NRC Governing Body representative on the Project Board.** The Director explained that the Southern Regional College would also have a Governor on the Project Board and that the Chair of the Board would alternate between the Directors of both Colleges.
- b) Larne Adult Education Centre. The Director advised that an e-mail had been received indicating that the Economic Appraisal had received Ministerial approval.

c) Antrim Campus. It was noted that the disposal process, in line with public sector guidelines had started.

d) Portrush. The Director advised that the 'Campus' consisted of one unused house. It was noted that there had been some difficulty relating to joint ownership of the property and that NRC had requested NEELB to provide a 'good copy' of the deeds; the College's request has been referred to the Board's solicitors.

e) Station Road, Newtownabbey. There is no progress to report.

f) Maintenance Matters. It was noted that a bid for capital funds and a business case for a building conditions survey have been submitted to DEL.

In response to a query it was noted that NRC did not own the Felden site.

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that an Estates update would be presented to each future meeting of the Committee.

#### **24.10 Any Other Notified Business**

There was no other notified business.

#### **24.11 Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 31 January 2012 at the Ballymena Campus commencing at 5.30 pm.