

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 31 March 2014 at the Ballymena Campus.

Present Mrs K Collins, (Chairperson), Mr S Davidson, Dr D Lennox, Mr R Jay and Mrs G McConnell

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Mrs C Moore and Mr J Hunter.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

43.1 Apologies

An apology was received from Mr T Neilands.

43.2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

43.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The unreserved minutes of the last meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 March 2014 were approved

43.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

43.5 Correspondence

The Committee received a copy of a request from the Regional Organiser of UNISON to address the Governing Body in advance of any decision to proceed with the outsourcing of Catering Services (see minute 43.16 below).

43.6 Chairperson's Communication

There were no Chairperson's communications.

43.7 Estates Issues

Mrs Crotty, Director of Planning and Customer Services, provided an update for the Committee. She referred to:

- a) Disposal of Antrim Campus. The sale of the land is being progressed by BTW Shiells
- b) Disposal of Lands at Newtownabbey. A new economic appraisal for the appointment of a consultant for the disposal of the lands is being prepared
- c) Disposal of Portrush Campus. There is a possibility that NEELB has ownership of the property. The College has requested a meeting with NEELB to clarify the issue. It was suggested that the Governing Body should write again to the NEELB seeking a resolution to the ownership of the property. NEELB representatives on the Governing Body should also be apprised of the necessity to settle ownership.

43.8 Monthly Management Accounts

The Committee received the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 28 February 2014 indicating that the College has an historic surplus of £1,434k; this is £123k ahead of budget. It was noted that the projected historic surplus to the year end is £2k and the bank balance as at 28 February 2014 was £2.5m.

During discussion the following observations were made:

- a) Telephone expenditure was £33k more than budget. Mrs Moore indicated that a cheaper provider had been procured;
- b) Other Grant Income was £174k behind budget. It was noted that this had been matched by lower expenditure. It was also noted that there had been no decision on the Strategic Investment Fund bid from OFMDFM;
- c) Catering income is £29k behind budget;
- d) Training income is £61k ahead of budget. The year-end outcome for this income is still identified as a high risk area and continues to be monitored closely; and
- e) In response to a query from the Chairperson it was noted that there had been pressure on cash during the months of January and February 2014.

43.9 Corporate KPIs

The Committee received a Progress Report regarding the following Corporate KPIs as at 24 February 2014:

- a) College Operations. All milestones are complete in relation to the Outline Business Case; the Antrim sale is being progressed; ownership of the Portrush property remains unresolved; and a new business case is being prepared for the disposal of land at Newtownabbey.
- b) Finance. Most Finance KPIs are in line with or better than targets. External Grant Funded income is £174k behind budget but this is matched by an underspend in expenditure. There has been an improvement in the % of invoices paid within 30 days.

43.10 Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) Submission

The Committee received a copy of the NDPB Forecast Expenditure Schedule forwarded on a monthly basis to the Department. It was noted that the Return had been reconciled with the Monthly Management Accounts and there was no variation between the Accounts and the NDPB Return for February 2014.

43.11 Report on Financial Monitoring

The Committee received an update regarding progress against the implementation of the recommendations identified as a result of events and process failures in relation to the financial out-turn 2012/2013. Mrs Moore stated that all the recommendations had now been implemented.

She drew attention to the recommendation in relation to budget delegation. She reported that the draft scheme of budget delegation, presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 3 November 2013, had now been implemented. A report on the revised scheme would be forwarded to the next Committee meeting.

43.12 Any Other Notified Business

43.12.1 Capital Expenditure

The Committee received an update on the 2013/2014 capital expenditure programme. It was noted that the College had been awarded a total of £950k initially, which was increased to £1,443k. The College has successfully procured, received and paid for capital equipment to the value of £1,437k; the unused element of the allocation was c£5k. The equipment purchased will have a significant impact on the IT infrastructure of the College and its curriculum development. It was noted that this exercise had placed an additional burden on members of staff in the Finance Department, who had had to prioritise the equipment required and prepare appropriate business cases prior to the procurement process.

43.13 Next Meeting

The Chair reminded Members that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 9 June 2014 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus **commencing at 6.30 pm**. It was noted that the Committee will join Members of the Staffing Committee to discuss items of reserved business.