

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 15.10.2025 on Microsoft Teams at 5.00pm.

Present: Mr I Murphy (Chair), Mr M Higgins, Mrs C McGovern, Mrs D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Ms J Taggart

In Attendance: Mr D Blair, Mr C Fairless (45.6), Mr S Lavery; Mrs C Murdoch, Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

#### **45.1 Apologies**

Mrs Brown.

#### **45.2 Declaration of Interests**

None.

#### **45.3 Minutes of Last Meeting**

##### **Document shared in advance: Draft minutes of 09.06.25**

On the proposal of DMI and seconded by CMG, the draft minutes were agreed.

#### **45.4 Matters Arising**

All actions arising from the previous meeting had been completed or were included under agenda items.

In relation to Larne lease, IM reported that the College would be exploring a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) with the Larne Community Wealth Building Partnership, in due course.

In response to questions from members:

- MH explained the current status and use of the Larne campus and the CAT process.
- SL outlined the process and terms of the sector wide Internal Audit contract which had been awarded to Henderson Loggie and outlined the status and process for disposal of the Ballymoney campus.
- IM explained ARAC's powers to influence the IA audit schedule.

#### **45.5 Chair's Communications / Correspondence**

None.

#### **45.6 Staff Survey**

##### **Documents shared in advance: Staff Survey presentation**

CF highlighted key themes arising from the survey, results of which had been shared with SMT and would be shared with staff.

During discussion members commented on the low response rate and CF confirmed that further analysis and breakdown of feedback was being considered. A group had been established to set up an action plan on themes arising and plans to incentivise completion and engage with staff through focus groups was being considered.

MH noted successful uptake of previous short, pulse surveys and plans to re-engage with staff on campus visits, whilst SL also highlighted the rationale for the timing of the survey.

**Action: Analysis would be shared with members prior to next GB later in November.**

CF left the meeting at 5.36pm.

#### **45.7 HR Update**

##### **Documents shared in advance: HR Report**

CM summarised the contents of the report noting headcount in line with projected numbers following VSS scheme conclusion in 2024; excellent response to mandatory training with 100% completion expected by end of December; and low sickness absence rates as a result of working with line managers.

During a period of debate CM provided further information on increase to academic integrity rates; industrial relations training schedule for managers; the work of the Property Working Group (PWG) and sector workgroup (HRWG) on policy review; and proposed internal testing to widen application access for technicians.

CM noted DMI's request for a review of the sector Safeguarding policy and for consideration of increased work around addressing violence against women and girls and mental health issues and would pass comments on to the Student Services Manager. In relation to implementation of an exit process, she anticipated that this would be put place by the end of the academic term.

**Action: CM would pass all comments to the Student Services Manager and report feedback to governors.**

MH welcomed progress made in areas outlined. He explained that the Education Committee would review the Safeguarding policy and any changes would come through GB. He noted progress against the DoH's mental health strategy was reported recently in the media and questioned whether more could be done in this area, with the College's limited resources, to help staff.

CM outlined work being done by the College within Health & Wellbeing and noted that the Equality & Wellbeing Manager was currently developing a talking toolkit to help line managers have initial conversations with staff.

MH thanked CM for her report and asked that managers at a senior level be advised where their visibility might be useful to support interventions.

#### **45.8 CDP**

##### **Documents shared in advance: Final draft CDP 2025/26**

Committee noted that this document had been discussed at GB on 24.09.25 and submitted on 29.09.25.

#### **45.9 New Build Update**

##### **Documents shared in advance: October 2025 Update**

The report was taken as read. SL advised on work with the Department to maximise budget spend to March '26 with proposals to be brought to the New Build Project Board on 22 October.

Members referred to lessons learned from the Coleraine build and noted that learnings were continually being incorporated into the Ballymena project. Lessons learned from both builds would be fed back to the Department for future project builds across NI.

SL highlighted that delivery of both projects on time and on budget had been recognised by the Department and by staff with increased student numbers.

#### **45.10 Financial Update**

##### **Documents shared in advance: Finance Update, Budget Update and Management Accounts July 2025**

Finance Update: DB summarised the position on the July '24 accounts and the March '25 component audit and advised that a meeting with NIAO to establish next steps was to be scheduled. He noted that work on the July '25 accounts had commenced and the College was working with NIAO to establish a time plan.

IM hoped that further progress would be reported at the GB meeting on 3 November.

MH explained that FAIC members had asked for the 3 November meeting to consider accounts as a single item for discussion. He advised the purpose of a meeting with NIAO in the coming week would be to address discrepancies in recent communication and to seek written updates. He gave a brief overview of the July '24 accounts position and potential outcome. Results of discussions would be reported to the next GB meeting.

Budget paper: – DB reported on budget allocations and pressures and highlighted increased focus on monthly reporting.

SL advised that a budget letter had been received shortly before the meeting, with detailed allocations for ESG, finance staffing costs and WorldSkills funding.

MH explained the internal reallocation basis which had been used to provide the funding.

IM welcomed the extra money which had been made available to facilitate the running of the College.

Management Accounts: SL noted that the accounts system could not be brought up to date as the July '24 and March '25 accounts had not been signed off. He outlined complexities and problems resulting from having to operate off an extended Trial Balance, the system agreed with the Department and auditors, with figures given as at 31.07.2025.

CMG queried the position on interim accounts and DB clarified that this had been agreed at sector level to ensure agreement of inter-company balances.

SL noted that key assurances around interim accounts which had been given to the Department were prior to the meeting with NIAO, and the importance of having a tri-partite meeting with the Department and auditors to clarify the accounts positions, identify any additional audit work which might be required and agree plans and staffing impact over the next 6 months.


**45.11 Any Other Business**

None.

**45.12 Date of Next Meeting**

22 January 2026 at 5.00pm.

The meeting ended at 6.22pm.

Mr I Murphy, Chair 

Date 22.01.26

Mrs K Wallace, Secretary 