

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 14 April 2021 on Microsoft Teams, commencing at 5.05pm.

Present: Ms Y Mallon, Mrs G McConnell, Mr I Murphy (Chair), Prof T Scott and Mr G Wilkinson

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr B Bryson, Dr H Dixon (Item 25.7), Mr M Higgins, Mr S Laverty, Mr M Lennox (Item 25.11), Mr B McGahan, Ms J Small
Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

25.1 Apologies

No apologies.

The Chair welcomed Mr Bryson, recently appointed Head of Quality and Change Management, who was in attendance as an observer.

25.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

25.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the unreserved and reserved meetings held on 11 January 2021 were approved.

Proposed: Mrs McConnell Seconded: Prof Scott

25.4 Matters Arising

None.

25.5 Chair's Communication

The Chair was content to note the current positive status of finance and HR matters, as would be demonstrated throughout the meeting.

25.6 Correspondence

Two items of correspondence had been received.

- College Development Plan (CDP) 2021/22. Members noted the extended timeline to September 2021 for submission of the CDP, along with details of the focus for skills priorities. Ms Small advised that work on the draft document would commence in May/June.
- CDP Progress Report Commissioning Memo – March 2021

Reference was made to a gap in the timeframe between the end of the 2020/21 CDP and the commencement of the 2021/22 CDP. Members noted that this was a sector wide position for which interim cover would be sought from the Department. This issue would be discussed through NIFON and the Principals' group.

25.7 Shared Services

Dr Dixon took Committee through the update report to 31 March 2021. She outlined works completed and matters to progress, clarified the status of risks and advised that a risk register workshop would be held by the STS Project Board during April.

Committee were reminded of the difficulties involved in the tri-partite LMS scheme, risk status on which had been recorded red by the College since early in the project, and which had resulted in the extension of the implementation deadline to December 2021. Prof Scott highlighted the complexity of the scheme and that a number of concerns previously raised by Committee had not yet been addressed

ACTION: A proposal that the Project Director be invited to present on the full scope of the Project at the June meeting, would be put to the Governing Body on 14 May.

Mr Laverty advised that review of the LMS was included on the audit plan for next year.

Prof Scott put on record her thanks to Ms Small and Dr Dixon for their work on the STS project.

5.30pm Dr Dixon left the meeting.

It was agreed that the Estates Strategy be taken next on the agenda.

25.11 Estates Strategy

Mr Lennox spoke to the report and outlined activity in the final year of the 5-year Strategy. Members received updates on the New Build project, which had received Satisfactory assurance by Internal Audit; Property Maintenance Framework, with handover to new contractors expected on 24 May 2021; and Resource Implications of the New Build detailing projected savings from consolidation of campuses.

Members noted information on a number of associated areas including treatment of depreciation; extensive in-house maintenance carried out by the Estates team; development of the internal business engagement strategy; the legacy arrangement applying to the Larne building; and insurance arrangements.

Mr Lennox reported that the next estates strategy would be a 10-year version, format for which had been received from the Department.

The Chair thanked Mr Lennox for the comprehensive presentation.

6.00pm Mr Lennox left the meeting.

25.8 Budget Update

It was agreed that this update would be taken along with the finance update.

25.9 Finance Update

Mr Laverty presented the NDPB budget position to 31 March 2021 and summarised the College's Management Accounts and financial position to 31 July 2021. He highlighted the revised budget allocation and additional in-year funding and stated that the emergency efficiency plan was on target for 2020/21, and that new Covid bids had been placed for 2021/22

6.20pm Ms Mallon joined the meeting.

Members noted the positive budget position to 31 March 2021 and commended the SLT and Mr Laverty for an excellent job delivering on budget. Pressures to 31 July 2021, especially around WBL income and a lack of baselined budgets for 2021/22 were also noted.

The Chair took on board an explanation of the context in which funding had been received and acknowledged the extensive work carried out by the finance team and new procurement manager to administer the increased capital funding to specifications and within deadline. He expressed appreciation for the additional income provided by the Department.

Mr Higgins advised on the implication for the annual accounts in relation to an increase in the deficit due to reduced WBL income claimed from the Department.

In response to a query on detail of projected revenue streams and associated costs to be delivered through business engagement, Ms Small advised that income targets had been included in the external engagement strategy. A report against income lines would be brought to the Governing Body in due course. Relevant information could be cascaded to Committee.

25.10 HR Update

Committee noted the contents of the HR report to 31 March 2021. Mr Higgins highlighted key areas of the report including the review of support structures underway by SIB; update following industrial action; levels of staff sickness and promotion of health and wellbeing initiatives. Members noted that an extra half-day's leave had been allocated to staff to thank them for their work over the past year during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were informed that a policy on blended working from home was being developed and would be brought to Committee in due course. Also that a policy on teacher assessed grades would be circulated to all members for comment prior to the special Education Committee meeting on 21 April.

25.11 College Development Plan (CDP)

Ms Small updated Committee on the current position with the CDP and the status of the Residual Qualifications, Qualifications, Employers and Social Inclusion Report Cards.

25.12 Review of Standing Orders

Consideration was given to the draft revised Standing Orders which had been updated to reflect recent changes.

Committee were content to present the draft to the Governing Body.

25.14 Any Other Business

None.

25.15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on 23 June 2021.

6.43pm Mr Laverty and Mr Bryson left the meeting.

Mr McGahan provided members with an update on the ongoing Trade Union negotiations.

The meeting concluded at 6.53pm.

Ian Kershley

(Chair)

G. Wallace

(Secretary)