

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee (unreserved business) held on 19 August 2019 at the Newtownabbey campus, commencing at 2.05pm.

Present: Ms Y Mallon, Mr K Chambers, Mr H Crossey (Chair), Mrs G McConnell, Mr I Murphy and Prof T Scott.

In Attendance: Mrs M Donnelly, Mr M Higgins, Mr S Lavery, Mr V Taggart and Mr S Watt (18.11)

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

#### **18.1 Apologies**

None.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Donnelly to her first meeting of Committee.

Members agreed to take the HR update as the next item.

#### **18.11 HR Update**

Mr Watt updated Committee on proposed actions to enhance future recruitment of administrative roles along with identification of training needs for staff and on-going issues with the system for staff appraisals. Members noted inefficiencies created by the low level of completed appraisal and the resultant impact for the performance and culture of the College.

#### **Action:**

- SLT to review vacancies to increase number advertised as permanent instead of fixed term or temporary
- HR Manager to revert to SLT who will review appraisal performance by directorate and department with a view to improving timely returns.
- An update on appraisal reviews to be included as a standing item on the agenda.

Mr Taggart joined the meeting at 2.20pm.

Mr Watt noted members' feedback and request for inclusion of trend analysis and sector wide data to be included in future reports.

Members would feed back any further comments at the next meeting.

2.30pm Mr Watt left the meeting.

#### **18.2 Declaration of Interests**

None.

### **18.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 were approved.

Proposed: Mrs McConnell                      Seconded: Mr Chambers

### **18.4 Matters Arising**

All matters arising from the previous meeting included in agenda items.

### **18.5 Chair's Communication**

The Chair referred members to the Permanent Secretary's letter in relation to the College recovery process and baseline budget and noted his deep concern at the unexpected contents of the letter, having previously spoken with the Permanent Secretary on this topic. Members were of the opinion that the College could not continue to depend on annual bids to operate.

**Action:** It was agreed that Mr Crossey should again raise this issue with the Permanent Secretary.

The Chair announced that he would be standing down as Resources Committee Chair at the end of August. Mr Murphy will take on the role of Chair from 1 September.

### **18.6 Correspondence**

Two pieces of correspondence had been received since the last meeting:

- The FE Colleges NI Accounts Direction 2018/19 was noted.
- Copy of letter from DfE to Brian Doran providing an update on the PSD business case. Members noted that a joint response to the letter was being drafted by Brian Doran on behalf of college Audit & Risk Committees and that the Principals' Group was leading on behalf of colleges. The Chair advised that Mr McCluggage, as Chair of NRC Audit & Risk Committee, had requested legal advice to be sought on the ongoing lack of delivery on this issue.

The Chair expressed disappointment at the Department's response and noted that no college representatives had been present at the meeting with CPD.

**Action:** Committee asked for their concern to be recorded at the role being taken by the Department in this issue.

### **18.7 Monthly Budget Return**

Mr Lavery summarised the NDPB return for July 2019 forecast and recent instruction from the Department that the College change its figures to work within the budget allocated by the Department which was still considered at risk by the College.

## **18.8 Budget**

Committee noted the correspondence from the Department in relation to the resubmitted NRC July budget return and the approved resource allocation for 2019-20. Prof Scott summarised the background to the request for reinstatement of the £1.4m funding and Mr Higgins confirmed that this pressure was still flagged on the risk register. Members noted the implications presented by Mr Lavery on the Budget for 2019/20 and that this issue would be highlighted through the Audit & Risk Committee.

It was agreed that further discussion on this topic would be recorded under the minutes of the reserved business meeting.

## **18.9 College Development Plan (CDP) Progress Report 31 July 2019**

Mr Higgins updated Committee on progress against the CDP and noted pressures in relation to financial health, the STS project and Estates provision as a result of PSD issues.

Mr Taggart summarised progress against targets for Report Card 1 noting that the Department had asked that ES enrolments be removed from the figures for this report across the FE Sector.

Committee noted that progress to year end would be reported to GB with Report Card (RC) 1 at amber and RC2 and RC3 at green status.

## **18.10 3-Year Corporate Plan**

Prof Scott advised that an update on appointments would be provided under reserved business and noted that the budget situation would have implications for restructuring, prioritisation and future actions which would be identified as the year progressed.

## **18.12 Shared Services**

Mr Higgins spoke to the STS update paper and highlighted key issues including the appointment of a Project Director from within the sector, work undertaken on UAT and slight improvement to connectivity between colleges and the system.

Whilst the appointment of staff in critical positions was welcomed by the Committee, concern was still noted at the ability to achieve the revised timeline. Members sought assurance that current arrangements could continue until the new systems were in place. Mr Higgins stated that NRC was in the same position as other colleges and that existing systems could continue to operate as long as necessary.

## **18.13 New Build Update**

Committee were advised that planning permission for Coleraine and Ballymena had now been approved, with PQQs out for Coleraine. Prof Scott will meet with the Chief Executive of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and representatives from the Department in September to discuss the revised timetable for Ballymena. Members noted that a September 2022 opening date for Coleraine is still on target.

**18.14 Committee Meeting Dates**

Members noted the draft schedule of meetings for 2019/20 and agreed dates for Resources Committee meetings.

**18.15 Any Other Business**

None.


**18.16 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 14 October 2019 in Farm Lodge.

The meeting concluded at 15.45pm.

Mr I Murphy  \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair)

Date 14/10/2019  
14 October 2019

Mrs K Wallace  \_\_\_\_\_  
(Secretary)