

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee (unreserved business) held on 23 October 2017 at the Farm Lodge, Ballymena campus commencing at 4.15pm.

Present: Mr K Chambers (Chair), Mrs G McConnell and Ms Y Mallon

In Attendance: Dr S Brankin, Mr D Hewitt, Mr M Higgins, Mr S Lavery and Mr V Taggart
Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

Mr I Murphy

Mr G Millen, Head of Process and Systems Transformation (observer)

The Chair welcomed Mr Murphy who had been returned as a specialist member of the Committee and introduced Mr Millen who was present in the role of observer.

The Chair had received notice that Mrs McConnell and Ms Mallon would be arriving late to the meeting with the result that the meeting was not quorate. Mrs Mallon arrived at 4.15pm and, at that point, and with the agreement of those present, it was decided to consider the items for noting and leave items for substantive discussion and decision until quorum had been achieved. The Chair proposed to initially consider the following agenda items for noting – 9.12, 9.13, 9.16, 9.6, 9.14 and 9.15.

9.12 STS Project Update

Dr Brankin provided an update on progress of the STS project and highlighted the following key points:

- Suite of documents including the specification for the Learner Management System were submitted to CPD on 4 October 2017.
- Following CPD quality assurance, it is anticipated that tenders will be advertised in OJEU by the end of October 2017. Award of contract is anticipated by the end of January 2018.
- The target is to go-live for enrolments for April 2019 and full go-live in September 2019.
- Following a meeting with relevant DfE representatives, it was confirmed that the new LMS will be used to manage Traineeships and Apprenticeships from September 2019. IT Assist will undertake hosting of the LMS.
- A training course for the evaluation panel, which has a representative from each college, will take place on Tuesday 24 October. Mr Millen is the NRC representative on the panel.
- Workshops covering implementation team composition, skill sets and planning are planned for November 2017.

Dr Brankin also reported that interviews were currently underway for a fixed term Project Manager appointment to work with the College for the duration of the project.

Mr Murphy queried extended student and staff numbers and Dr Brankin agreed to respond in writing.

ACTION: Dr Brankin would respond directly to Mr Murphy on his query in relation to the student and staff numbers.

9.13 New Build/Estates

i. Capital Project Board - SRO presentation

Mr Higgins spoke to his report on the Campus 21 Project Capital Steering Group of May-October 2017. He updated on the timelines advising that learnings from the process had been factored in and confirmed that funding was in place for the design phase of the project. He advised that, in relation to the Project Manager position, an offer had been made and confirmation was awaited.

In response to a query from Mr Murphy, Mr Higgins clarified the implication of decant options on the project and that savings/reductions in the project could be utilised to cover any additional decant budget requirements. He updated on a meeting with Planners and the need to work to agreed timeframes and that it is essential to engage during the pre-planning process to ensure a smooth approval process.

Mr Higgins assured Mr Murphy that all required approvals were in place and that the Department had agreed the Schedule of Accommodation, which would be reviewed on an annual basis.

ii. New Build Project Board Minutes 24 August 2017

The minutes of the August Project Board meeting were taken as read.

In response to members' queries, Mr Higgins confirmed that funding for the new access road is being provided by DfC and a disposal strategy will be developed for surplus College campuses following the consolidation onto 4 campuses.

9.16 DfE Health Check 2016/17 Issue 3

Committee noted the contents of the latest Health Check.

9.6 Chair's Communication

None.

9.14 Staff Survey

Mr Hewitt presented summary details of the online staff survey 2016/17, which had been updated to include year-on-year comparison of results. He reported that SLT roadshows would continue each term with initiatives current and relevant to the host campus.

Committee welcomed the update, noting the changes taking place within the College and the variety of initiatives undertaken to reinforce ownership and accountability of all staff.

Mrs McConnell entered the meeting at 4.30pm which point the Chair declared the meeting quorate (due to a declaration by Prof Scott to be read later).

9.15 Staffing Paper

i. Staffing update October 2017

Mr Hewitt spoke to the report highlighting key points in relation to recruitment and sector collaboration.

ii. Sickness absence 2016/17 year end support

Mr Hewitt reported on the improvement in sickness absence within the College, highlighting the twin track approach of managing/monitoring and health/wellbeing, which had now been adopted.

Ms Mallon commended staff on the variety of initiatives and actions which had been introduced and members concurred with these comments.

With members' agreement, the Chair proposed that Committee move to the main items on the agenda.

9.1 Apologies

Prof T Scott.

9.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

9.3 Terms of Reference

Mr Higgins took members through the draft revised Resources Committee Terms of Reference (TOR). He drew attention to the main change proposed, a reduction in quorum from four members to three members, due to reduced Governor numbers. Mr Higgins read a statement from Prof Scott supporting this change, which would be attached to the minutes of the meeting.

ACTION: The statement from Prof Scott to be attached to the minutes of the meeting (see Appendix 1).

Mr Higgins referred to Committee's power to co-opt support and procure specialist ad-hoc advice from time to time, as detailed in the TOR for the Audit and Risk Committee. It was unanimously agreed that wording contained within the TOR for the Resources Committee should be similar to the Audit & Risk Committee, along with an update to job titles detailed, before submitting to the Governing Body for approval.

ACTION: Draft TOR to be amended to include power to co-opt and update of job titles, before submission to the Governing Body meeting on 16 November 2017.

9.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on June 2017 were approved by the Committee.

Proposer: Ms Mallon Seconder: Mrs McConnell

9.5 Matters Arising

Any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting would be addressed under relevant agenda items.

9.7 Correspondence

There were 2 items of correspondence:

- i) Capital Allocation 2017/18 – Letter dated 27 September 2017 from DfE confirming the capital funding provision for 2017/18. Mr Higgins outlined the proposal to reallocate funding from major works to minor works.
- ii) Budget Setting and Section 75 – Mr Higgins outlined the requirements for the College..

9.8 Monthly Management Accounts

i) NDPB Monthly Return August 2017

Mr Lavery summarised the NDPB return highlighting that the College is monitored at the Department's end of year at March, whilst the College's academic end of year is July. He explained the difference in figures related to indicative budgets, the pressures and potential underspends along with proactive action to remain within budget tolerances.

Members noted that a meeting between NRC and NIAO would take place on 24 October 2017 to finalise the impact on asset transactions.

ii) Summary Management Accounts

Committee considered the summary accounts presented and noted the expectation that the summary forecast would be within tolerance targets at March 2018. The Committee, was advised that an element of funding is proposed to be returned to the Department in respect of the timeframe for completion repairs to Newtownabbey and that pressures were reported within the depreciation and impairment budget lines.

9.9 2017/18 Budget

Committee noted the revised financial forecast to July 2018 as presented.

9.10 Annual Accounts

Mr Laverty spoke to the report and outlined the revised, more organised and systematic approach to the production of accounts which had resulted in the accounts being completed ahead of deadline. He highlighted key sections of the report for members including financial results and restatement of accounts and confirmed that all changes requested by Auditors had been actioned and implemented. In response to a query from Mr Murphy, Mr Laverty confirmed that all restatements had been dealt with.

Mr Laverty indicated that the annual report and financial statements would go to the Audit & Risk Committee meeting in November and would be recommended to the Governing Body for approval at its meeting on 16 November 2017, before being laid before the Assembly in December.

Mr Murphy referred to the significant improvement in the pension situation and requested clarification on adjustment. Mr Higgins outlined the impact staff departing on VES had on the pension valuations.

Committee were content to adopt the figures presented and asked to be made aware of the outcome of the 'close-out' meeting with NIAO on 24 October 2017.

ACTION: Mr Higgins would communicate the outcome of the meeting with NIAO to Committee.

9.11 KPI Reporting

The Chair reminded Committee of the revision in reporting from 12 to 5 KPIs and Committee considered the report circulated.

Mr Taggart summarised key information relating to KPI 1 - Meeting Enrolment Targets and Achievement of Qualifications, which was broadly on target. Members noted that the College was planning to recruit during January.

Mr Taggart clarified the potential movements between TfS and apprenticeships along with the impact this has on the enrolments targets.

Dr Brankin took members through the report on KPI 3 – Accelerating Business and Community Engagement, which was on target. Committee noted information on the pressures to achieve full spend of funding; the possible delivery of online courses; and interest shown in strategic partnerships. Dr Brankin highlighted the potential to engage with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to develop programmes. He also advised on the arrangements for a digital showcase which would be held in the Ecos conference centre in December.

Dr Brankin reported on KPI 4 – Accelerating Creativity and Innovation, which was on target. He highlighted that all staff would be moved to Office 365 by Christmas and identified the steps in moving all WBL to the online curriculum and portfolio platforms.

Mr Higgins reported on KPI 5 – Achieving Financial Health, which was on target, highlighting that it was intended to customise the level of detail of this report to each Governing Body and Committee meeting over the year.

As the actual income to date in some areas was significantly below target, the Chair asked that the Committee be kept informed in the event that end of year targets were not likely to be achieved.

The Chair thanked the SLT for a very comprehensive report.

9.17 Committee Meeting Dates 2017/18

The Chair referred to his previous request for an extra Resources Committee meeting during 2017/18, in line with Governing Body meetings, given the monitoring responsibilities of the

Committee. After discussion with Prof Scott, he was minded that a meeting in March would not be useful but that a date could instead be used for a training function.

The Chair asked members to consider the date and times of meetings and a number of members indicated the difficulties in making a 4.00pm start. It was noted that, while a change to the days of meetings up until the end of March would not be feasible, from April onwards it would be possible.

Committee agreed on a 5.00pm start to meetings and asked that a poll of days and dates be taken and reported back to the next meeting of Committee.

ACTION: The Secretary would survey members on suitable days and dates for meetings of the Resources Committee from and report back to the January meeting.


9.18 Any Other Business

None.

9.19 Date of Next Meeting

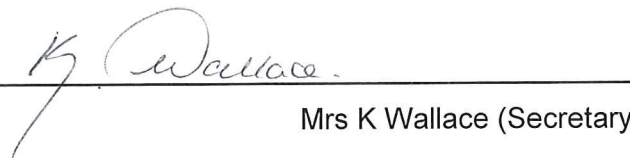
The next meeting date was confirmed as Monday, 15 January 2018 in Newtownabbey campus at 5.00pm.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 6.40pm.



Mr K Chambers (Chair)

Date 15/01/2018
15 January 2018



Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

Appendix 1

From: Terri Scott
Sent: 20 October 2017 22:09
To: Mel Higgins <Mel.Higgins@nrc.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: ToR Resources committee

Mel

Further to our discussion on Wednesday 18th Oct with The Chair of the Resources Committee, I confirm my agreement to update the ToR to reduce quorum from 4 to 3.

Once the current vacancies are filled, the Chair has confirmed that membership and quorum for each committee will be reviewed.

Regards

Terri