

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 23 January 2023 on MS Teams, commencing at 4.00pm.

Present: Mr M Higgins, Mr D MacAuley, Ms Y Mallon, Ms D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Mr I Murphy (Chair)

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Ms D Kerr (33.6), Mr S Lavery, Ms C Murdoch (33.7), Ms J Small

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

33.1 Apologies

None. The Chair welcomed Mr MacAuley to his first meeting of Resources Committee.

33.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

33.3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Ms Mallon Seconded: Mr Higgins

33.4 Matters Arising

Committee were advised that information on budget efficiencies would be taken under Reserved Business; analysis of the recruitment profile would be carried forward to a future meeting; the framework for hybrid working had been previously circulated; and that after a poll of members, the March meeting of Committee would be held in Newtownabbey campus.

33.5 Chair's Communications/Correspondence

Members noted correspondence on the 2022-23 budget allocation and the revised capital allocation for the College.

In response to questions, SLT members outlined support in place to assist students with the cost of living. The Chair expressed delight that the initial pilot programme was to be carried forward.

33.6 CDP Progress Report

Ms Kerr spoke to this report. She summarised the current status of the qualifications report card, recruitment targets in which had been mainly met or exceeded with 1 red risk recorded for FT HE in FE. Members noted that enrolment numbers had now stabilised at 185 since the

date of the report. Mr Laverty confirmed that good work was being done to maintain the HE provision.

Mrs Brown expanded on a submission being made to the Open University to achieve partner status, to be lodged by mid-March 2023. She also highlighted opportunities for FE in HE within HLA. The Chair endorsed these approaches.

Ms Small summarised the status on the employers' report card and detailed work being undertaken on recruitment and staff capacity building. She noted the challenge for the College in achieving the target for InnovateUs but anticipated that this would be green in the final CDP for 2022-23. Ms Small outlined a number of other projects being carried out by Business Development alongside this programme and endorsed the Chair's emphasis on evidence for outcome evaluation.

Ms Kerr highlighted that all targets for social inclusion had been exceeded with a range of different programmes available for refugees housed in accommodation. The Principal advised on a Departmental request to assess and address current need, a targeted programme for which was currently under review by the College. The Chair was keen that refugees' skills offering be assessed with a view to developing as part-time lecturers for the College, where possible.

4.32pm Ms Kerr left the meeting.

4.33pm Ms McIlwaine joined the meeting.

33.7 HR Update

The Chair invited Ms Mallon to report on her participation at the staff awards ceremony. She detailed a high level of engagement by staff and encouraged governors to attend this excellent event which demonstrated evidence of the work and achievements of the College staff.

Ms Murdoch took members through her report and highlighted key points including recruitment, training, health and wellbeing activity and sickness absence. During a period of discussion, Ms Murdoch responded to members' questions on delay in completion of appraisals, and the impact and management of long-term sickness.

The Principal endorsed staff training being carried out including the award of Level 7 qualifications for 2 staff. He noted, however, a steady rise in levels of sickness among academic staff and queried the level of proactive support available. Ms Murdoch responded that, whilst there was little the College could do where serious medical conditions had been identified, work with Think People and Action Mental Health to train line managers on supporting staff was ongoing.

Mrs Brown summarised the process in place to cover lecturing commitments for absent academic staff. She also reported on a sectoral initiative to standardise training delivery on L2 traineeships, due to start next week.

The Chair and members congratulated Ms Murdoch on progress made to ensure completion of mandatory training by all staff by end of February 2023. They also noted pre-employment vetting and enhanced security checks carried out when roles were recruited.

In response to a request for sight of the new induction and online staff handbook, Ms McIlwaine heard that these were still in draft for consideration by senior management over the coming weeks.

Mr Lavery thanked Ms Murdoch for her report and for highlighting the Time to Talk Day and 5 Steps to Wellbeing, which offered staff an opportunity to engage and address uncertainty. He advised that training budget issues would be picked up under reserved business.

The Chair voiced appreciation of the work carried out by HR staff and noted the importance of both safeguarding and leadership and management training. He also requested that consideration be given to providing personal budget training for staff going forward.

4.58pm Ms Murdoch left the meeting.

33.8 New Build Update

Mr Lavery drew members' attention to the Project Board report and gave a verbal summary of the current project status, noting that builds are progressing to plan and budget. Committee heard that the College was working with the Department on the budget going forward to completion.

Mr Lavery reported that the Project Team had received a NICS Project Delivery Team Award and highlighted the work of the wider Estates and Encamp team in this achievement.

Mr McKernan welcomed the opportunity the builds gave for leveraging sustainability of provision and Mr Lavery confirmed that the Project Board were working with both the Department and the contractor to obtain enhanced funding and ensure that all possible opportunities were maximised. The Chair assured Committee that this issue was pushed by Mr McCluggage at every Project Board meeting and asked that Mr Lavery pass on Committee's congratulations to the Team on the achievement of the NICS award.

33.9 Finance Update

Committee considered information on the revised budget for DfE 2022/23 year, extra funding received in December 2022 to cover pressures and College management accounts to November 2022.

The Principal noted the work of Mr Lavery and Ms Craig in securing additional funding as per the updated budget position advised by DfE in January. It was highlighted, however, that this funding applied to the 2022/23 budget only and was not baselined.

The Chair congratulated Mr Lavery and the finance team for their work on the College finances.

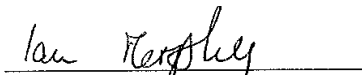
33.10 Any Other Business

None.

33.11 Date of Next Meeting

27 March 2023 in Newtownabbey campus.

The meeting concluded at 5.11pm.

Mr I Murphy 

Date 27 March 2023

(Chair)

Mrs K Wallace 

(Secretary)