

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 6 June 2022 in Farm Lodge commencing at 5.00pm.

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

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Ms K Craig, Mr S Lavery, Ms C Murdoch (30.1-30.6), Mr K Nelson, Ms J Small

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

30.1 Apologies/Welcome

The Chair welcomed Mr Nelson to the meeting and congratulated Ms Craig on her appointment as Head of Finance, Risk and Governance.

There were no apologies

30.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

30.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Ms Mallon Seconded: Mr Higgins

30.4 Matters Arising

Consideration of the Net Zero strategy had been picked up at the recent governors' strategy event and the New Build Project Board meeting. DfE had indicated that a funding bid for relevant changes to the new buildings in line with the strategy, could be considered. Members noted that the College was an exemplar for using new technologies, including in the older campuses.

30.5 Chair's Communication/ Correspondence

- Committee heard a verbal update on the FE Sector and DfE collaboration event on 20 May, which the Chair had attended in his position of GB Vice Chair. He reported a very successful day and a good working relationship with the Department.

Mr Nelson concurred and referred to excellent engagement with the Department at a senior level, with the event reflecting very well on the Newtownabbey campus.

- Members noted information from the Department on initial spend allocation for 2022/23 for minor works and capital works. Mr Lavery advised that an updated bid would be submitted to the Department by 8 June.

30.6 HR Update

Ms Murdoch presented the HR report to 30 April and highlighted key topics including:

- Development of a draft Sector Hybrid Working Framework. Committee considered and debated the merits of the hybrid working arrangements along with the proposed implementation of the framework. Members noted that, in seeking to make working conditions as flexible as possible, implementation would be monitored against the needs of the College and business requirements.
- Ongoing recruitment activity for academic roles. Ms Murdoch reported that the final draft of the cross-sector recruitment strategy would be ready later in the week, although difficulties with recruitment were ongoing. She advised that the College will work with agencies if application numbers for positions remain low and seek to engage with Department on alternatives to comply with teaching qualification requirements. Mrs Brown outlined the implications of recruitment within difficult to fill curriculum posts.
- Health and wellbeing activities and absence management. An increase in sickness absence was noted, particularly the impact from long term absence associated with non-stress related matters. Ms Murdoch outlined training for managers which would take place in August and noted that benchmarking information would be available in September/October. Ms Murdoch outlined health and wellbeing activities during March/April and a low uptake of health checks offered to staff, was noted.

Action: A target would be set for staff uptake of health checks going forward.

5.55pm Ms Murdoch left the meeting.

30.7 New Build Update

Mr Laverty presented the report of the Capital Project Steering Group at 18 May 2022. Members noted that Coleraine was on target to open in early 2024 with Ballymena set to issue the Construction Notice at the end June 2022.

Committee heard that facilities were being provided during the Ballymena building process using a hybrid system in association with local providers, where available, especially in relation to sports. Also that engagement with local residents was ongoing, with alternative parking being made available for students during the process.

The Chair was content to report on operations, including recycling of old unused concrete, following a tour of the Ballymena site. He congratulated the team on the job being carried out.

Members noted that the Department were very content with progress at the recent Capital Steering Meeting. Also, that the Coleraine building was one of 3 finalists for an international NEC Contract Innovation Award.

30.8 Budget Update

Ms Craig presented the budget update and reported that the College had operated to the revised Departmental budget for 2021/22 year. She explained variance to budget for the College accounts at the 9-month mark due to a timing issue.

Members noted that 2022/23 budget had not been received to date, with financial projections having been supplied for May and June as per Department guidance.

Mr Laverty outlined a bid submitted in relation to cost-of-living and energy costs for the 2022/23 year and highlighted that all colleges are in the same position.

30.9 Any Other Business

- **CDP:** The Principal advised the probable need for an additional resources meeting to look at the budget when available, likely to be August/September time. Members noted that the CDP will be based on the budget.
- **Cyber Security:** Mr Lavery summarised outcomes from a report on cyber security which had been considered by the Audit & Risk Committee and which would come to the 22 June GB meeting. The Chair of Audit & Risk had asked that Resources be informed in advance of the GB meeting.


Action: The report on cyber security would be circulated to Resources Committee members.

- **Annual CDP:** Ms Small advised that the Department had now suggested that the interim format for the CDP be used for the current year, with an expected submission date of September 2022. The Department would continue to work on the format for the coming year. An update would be brought to the June meeting of the Governing Body, following a meeting with the Department on 10 June.
- **Working From Home Guidance:** The Principal read confirmation just received from the Executive Office, advising that previous guidance was no longer appropriate and encouraging a hybrid working approach. Members noted that this was consistent with the College's position advised earlier.

30.10 Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed. It was noted that all future meetings would commence at 4.00pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.38pm.

Mr I Murphy 

Date 10 October 2022

(Chair)

Mrs K Wallace 

(Secretary)