

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee (unreserved business) held on 27 April 2020 via Skype, commencing at 5.00pm.

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

In Attendance: Ms H Dixon (21.7) Mrs M Donnelly, Mr M Higgins, Mr S Lavery, Mr P O'Neill, Ms J Small and Mr S Watt (21.8)

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

21.1 Apologies

None.

21.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

21.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 were approved.

Proposed: Mr Chambers Seconded: Mr Murphy

21.4 Matters Arising

None.

21.5 Chair's Communication

None

21.6 Correspondence

Three items of correspondence were noted:

- Budget 2020-21 letter to ALBs.
- Tribal Action Plan – members noted the deadline for returns had been extended to the end of June 2020.
- Corporate Governance return suspension –all corporate governance returns had been suspended until further notice due to Covid-19. Members noted that the risk register had been updated to take account of associated risks and was presented to the Audit & Risk Committee on 20 April.

5.08pm Prof Scott and Mr O'Neill joined the meeting.

Prof Scott advised that Principals were meeting on a daily business by skype and engaging with the Department. She noted the ongoing concerns regarding the clarity and timeframe with calculating grades and the impact this would have on inter alia student numbers, for the next academic year.

21.7 Shared Services Update

The LMS update was taken as read. Dr Dixon outlined schedules of training being carried out and confirmed that training was proceeding according to the schedule outlined by Tribal.

ACTION: Dr Dixon to provide breakdown on training numbers and target dates for the next meeting of Resources in May.

5.16pm Mr Chambers joined the meeting. Dr Dixon and Mrs Donnelly left the meeting.

21.8 Staffing Update

Mr Watt spoke to his report noting that work had been completed by Mrs Donnelly on standardising objective templates, with 200 completed forms received to date. He advised that objectives would be reviewed in October, with appraisals due from September to November.

Mr O'Neill referred to extensive work which had been carried out to reformat performance objectives to provide realistic, SMART objectives, which will demonstrate a major improvement to the process.

Reference was made to the possibility of continuing with appraisals throughout the year and Prof Scott noted she was proceeding with appraisals for the SLT.

Mr Watt confirmed that current absenteeism was in line with previous years.

5.24pm Mrs Donnelly rejoined the meeting.

Mr Higgins reported on a communication recently received from the Department, advising the College's draft assurance statement to be submitted by 22 May. He referred to the information to be provided in the statement and noted that providing forecasts for 2020/21 curriculum activity would be a heavily caveated process.

ACTION: Mr Watt to provide detailed information on annual reviews and comparison with the previous year and, where available, increased detail on leavers.

5.36 Mr Watt left the meeting.

21.9 Finance Update

Members noted the management accounts and the Department return to 31 March 2020. Mr Lavery confirmed the College operated to budget and tolerance levels to 31st March 2020 and that the deficit to 31st July was currently on target and in agreement with year-end figures.

Mr Laverty noted that any potential reductions resulting from the current Covid-19 situation would be redirected to cover Covid-19 pressures and to consider for internal College use eg IT acquisitions, to allow students and staff to carry on a blended learning approach.

21.10 Budget Position 2020/21

Mr Laverty took members through the opening indicative resource allocation for 2020/21, which compared to the previous year. He outlined additional allocations by the Department and noted that, as these did not cover all pressures, efficiency plans were being considered in order to align to the budget being provided. Members noted that baseline funding had not been reinstated.

Mr Higgins reported that budget scenarios were being considered along with the Resources and Audit & Risk Committee Chairs and would be presented to the next Resources Committee meeting. These would include strategic options based on the allocation from the Department. Members noted that whilst in-year funding in 2019/20 had been welcomed, the budget uncertainty did not allow the College to plan ahead effectively therefore requirement to identify most appropriate curriculum aligned to existing resource allocations.

Mr Murphy advised on his earlier conversation with the Governing Body Chair when he outlined the pressures on the College and noted the need to use any available reductions from the Covid-19 situation efficiently. Members stated their agreement with this stance.

21.11 COVID-19 Update

Prof Scott presented her report and drew attention to updates, in particular to governance changes relating to control logs and GDPR. In relation to next steps, she highlighted a focus on planning for reopening of the College and noted concern around the number of students who would be able to progress to the second year of courses.

Prof Scott advised that at present it was proposed there would be a phased return to College with staff returning ahead of students once restrictions on self-isolation were reduced. Members' comments on ensuring acquisition of PPE and consideration being given to the use of masks and provision of automatic hand sanitisers, were noted.

Mr Higgins gave a brief summary of developments with the new build project, which had been reported to the Audit & Risk Committee, and members noted that actions going forward would be discussed by the Project Board at the meeting on 28 April.

A further Covid-19 update would be provided at the Governing Body meeting on 29 April, with particular emphasis on next steps.

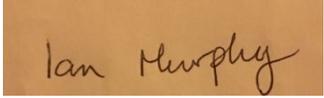
21.12 Any Other Business

None.

21.13 Date of Next Meeting

Date for May meeting to be agreed and circulated to members.

The meeting concluded at 6.07pm.

Mr I Murphy  _____
(Chair)

Date 28 May 2020

Mrs K Wallace  _____
(Secretary)