



SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Financial and General Purposes Committee of the Governing Body (the "Committee")

held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 17:30, in Meeting Room D Floor, Lisburn Campus

1. Chairs Business

a) Attendance and apologies

Present: Mr Alan McCrum, Mr Derek Wilson, Mrs Deborah O'Hare, Mr Ken Webb (Principal & Chief Executive), Ms. Majella Corrigan Items 2-4C Only, Mr. John Nugent (Chair of the Governing Body), Dr Danny McConnell

In attendance: Mr Paul Smyth (Chief Human Resources Officer) 'CHRO', Mr Tommy Martin (Chief Finance Officer) 'CFO', Mrs Claire Williamson (Secretary to the Governing Body)

Apologies: None

In the Chair: Mr McCrum

b) Declarations of Conflict of Interests

The following conflict were declared:

- Ms Corrigan declared she is employed by CCMS whose sponsor department is DENI. She is a current member of the Governing Body of Stranmillis College.
- Mrs O'Hare advised she is employed by The Board of Governors of the Wallace High School (a NDPB) as Principal. The sponsor department for funding and development work and other applications is DENI supported by or delegated to the EA as appropriate. Is also current member of the College Advisory Group (Education) CAFRE DAERA CAFRE offers level 2 to level 6 + qualifications.

- The CFO declared his daughter is employed as a lecturer at the College.

No action was taken in relation to any of the declared conflicts.

c) Minutes of the F&GP meeting held on 30th January 2024

Previously issued to all Members.

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 30th January were reviewed, members agreed they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting. The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Derek Wilson and seconded by Deboarh O'Hare.

d) F&GP Action Points from meeting held on 30th January 2024.

Members noted the actions from the previous meeting were completed or addressed on the agenda.

2) Correspondence:

Previously issued to all Members.

a) SERC Final Budget 2023/24 and College Development Plan Approval

Correspondence previously issued to all Members.

Members were asked to note the enclosed correspondence that confirmed the final resource allocation for the College of 46.7m.

3) Financial Items for Information

Papers previously issued to all Members.

a) Management Accounts

The CFO addressed the committee and referenced the paper in 003A.1, he began by advising the set of management accounts was up to 28th February and the most recent forecast had been completed after this paper was issued. Members noted that up to the year to date the accounts are £230k below the original budget and at the time of the accounts were published the College was on target.

In a verbal update the CFO confirmed that the end of March deadline was tomorrow, and he was confident that the College will meet the £46.7m target.

In response to a question from the Chair the CFO explained that there is a target of March 2026 to move to one year end, this is still a live discussion as there needs to be clarification of the governance reporting. NIAO have advised that when the year ends move it needs to be clear to the reader that the financial statements and the retention, achievement and success refer to different periods. The Principal added that it is detrimental to the College workload to continue reporting on two year ends and an amendment is required to the 1997 Order to stop the double workload urgently.

b) 24/25 Budget Update

The CFO advised that as there was no budget allocation confirmed for 24/25 by the Department he is unable to present a budget for review as there is no allocation to build an operational budget against. He added that as there is currently a significant amount of work going on internally as the College moves through the restructuring process. Therefore, all budget holders have been asked to revert to mission critical spend only which is operationally quite challenging.

c) NDPB Budgeting and Forecasting Submission

Members noted the recent submission in paper 003C, the CFO highlighted this reflects the management accounts.

d) Finance Operational Report

The CFO asked members to note the written report at 003D and highlighted that debt and supplier payment days were both on positive trends.

e) Estates & Capital Expenditure Report

The CFO outlined the executive summary of the papers at 003E, the CFO advised that in a recent discussion with the Department on utilisation he had highlighted the success of the Newcastle creche and discussed how the service could be rolled out elsewhere in the sector.

Action: The Principal agreed to write to the DfE Minister to invite him to the Newcastle Creche to view the excellent facilities on offer for students

f) Sector Insurance

The CFO referred to the paper at 003F and advised members to note consideration of the new insurance methodology and confirm support in principle for this approach. Members were content with this approach.

4) Staffing Items for Information:

Papers previously issued to all Members.

a) HR Priorities 2022/2023 plan and status updates/HR Key Metrics Report

The CHRO talked to the written report in 004A and advised that there had not been any significant changes to the priorities since the committee last reviewed them.

b) Employee Relations Update

The CHRO asked members to note the written report in 004B, he gave a brief overview of the number of live cases, how they are progressing and confirmed that there are no specific trends across the complaints to cause him any concern.

c) Case Management 6 Month Review

The CHRO provided a presentation to members highlighting analysis of the cases over the last 6 months. In discussion after the following points were highlighted:

- In response to a question from the GB Chair around the HR team resource and continuing to drive the number of cases down the CHRO advised that external facilitators work on the cases so the internal staff numbers in HR is never an issue in completing the cases on time.
- The GB Chair highlighted that with RtS, the GB have given the Department an assurance that posts will not be re-recruited and enquired if a post project review could be undertaken.
- The Principal advised that we are at least a year away from the objectives in terms of savings but could provide a report what was done up until end of June.

Action: A report on RtS will be conducted at an appropriate time and will review the implementation of the scheme, will be process driven and the methodology the College utilized in the scheme.

At this juncture Ms. Corrigan left the meeting.

5) Applications and Enrolments

Paper previously issued to all Members.

The committee noted the written report in 005, which provided an update on the College applications and enrolment figures, the Principal highlighted that FE applications had increased by 95 and HE by 28%. He advised that the Director of C&IS is working across the schools to plan for a high

number of applications turning into enrolments in terms of capacity, facilities and staffing. He added this increase reinforces the College decision to retain academic staff in Reform to Save scheme.

6) Policies for review

Papers previously issued to all Members.

Members noted the policy had been reviewed and as there were no proposed substantive changes, all policies were for noting.

7) Any other Business

No other Business was discussed.

8) Confidential

A separate note was taken for this item.

With no other business being discussed the meeting concluded at 7.45pm