

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON 29 APRIL 2025 via TEAMS

PRESENT:

Mrs Tracy Strachan (Chair)
Mrs Lee Campbell (Principal/Chief Executive)
Mr Sean Fitzsimons
Mr Nick Harkness
Mrs Monica Kelly
Mr Gary McMurray

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Thomas Moore, (Governing Body Chair)
Ms Joanne McGuigan, (Interim Director of Finance and Planning)
Mrs Michelle Khan, (Interim Assistant Director of Finance)
Mrs Emma Foster (Acting Secretary to the Governing Body)

The meeting convened at 17:31

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

A02. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interest held in matters to be discussed. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 21 JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 21 January 2025 were reviewed for accuracy as an accurate record and unanimously approved by Mrs Kelly and seconded by Mr Fitzsimons.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted that matters listed as outstanding on the action sheet will be addressed through the course of the meeting.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Nothing to note.

A06. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Art Collection**

Mrs Campbell referred members to the policy outlining the minor changes which included a now annual meeting of the Art Committee chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive alongside the Campus Manager from each campus to discuss students' artwork for purchase for display within the campuses.

- **Document Control**

Mrs Campbell informed members that the Document Control policy has been reviewed and advised that the only amendment to the policy was to update the wording of the CEO's new title to 'Principal and Chief Executive'.

ACTION
By whom

- **Expenses Policy**

Ms McGuigan gave a brief overview of this policy informing the committee that the minor adjustments made were in relation to the college trying to seek an electronic expenses solution with a few options having been reviewed. Prior to the meeting taking place questions had been sent to the Chair and the Secretary by Mrs Kelly and these were answered before the meeting and also shared during the meeting for other members to note. These have also been included below.

Expenses-

Is the electronic claim being sourced by SRC or across all colleges?

Electronic Claims: the sector has explored collaborative procurements with the current Finance and HR system providers and the solutions are expensive. Some colleges have developed an inhouse system, and we are looking to make use of one of the tried and tested College systems for a modest cost.

Fraud-

In relation to the fraud anything GB need to be aware of

In accordance with the Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response plan the current investigation has been reported to Audit & Risk Committee and the Department for the Economy. With DfE support the investigation is progressing. The final outcome of the investigation will be reported to ARC and DfE, together with any lessons learnt.

Off-site accidents – Apprentices

In relation to the increase in off-site accidents (apprentices); have there been any controls / safeguards that have been put in place to try and prevent further increase?

When an apprentice is working at their employer's site, the employer assumes full responsibility for the apprentice's health, safety, and welfare. In these circumstances:

The employer is solely responsible for monitoring health and safety practices.

The employer is required to report and investigate all accidents and incidents in accordance with statutory obligations.

SRC has no authority over, nor responsibility for, the employer's health and safety practices or any remedial actions taken.

The College maintains a formal workflow for recording and investigating any workplace accidents involving apprentices. This process ensures that SRC gathers all necessary information to safeguard the College's interests, particularly in the event of any future legal action initiated by an apprentice against their employer.

Mrs Kelly thanked Ms McGuigan for her swift response to the questions asked.

The three policies were approved on proposal from Mrs Kelly and seconded by Mr Fitzsimons.

A07. Budget Allocation Update 2024-25

Ms McGuigan gave a brief report to the members stating that everything the college budget allocation required for 24/25 had been funded and the finance department are currently closing out 24/25. She also informed members that the college had managed to spend all the finances that had been allocated.

A08. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS REPORT

Members noted the report.

A09. GOVERNING BODY BUDGET REPORT

Mrs Khan gave a detailed report to the members.

Members noted the report and Mrs Khan answered any questions that members raised.

A10. DfE FORECAST RETURNS

Members noted the report.

A11. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

The members noted the report.

A12. SECTOR INSURANCE BUSINESS CASE UPDATE

Members noted the report, and the details provided.

Mr Harkness thanked staff for the document and the way it was presented made it easy to read and understand.

Mrs Strachan thanked Ms McGuigan for her work in compiling this report.

A13. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

Ms McGuigan informed the members that there had been no reportable data breaches. There was a small number of erasure requests and also freedom of information requests. Mrs Campbell assured the members that they do track the upheld and partially upheld complaints, and a lesson learned piece is given to the facilities to identify trends and confirm actions. During 24/25 Complaints had increased as a result of Action Short of Strike. In light of this a document was produced for students of frequently asked questions to give some assurance of the actions the college would be taking in relation to the current Action Short of Strike.

A14. HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTER 2 UPDATE

Mrs Campbell gave a detailed update to the committee also informing them that this report will come regularly to the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings.

Mrs Strachan thanked Mrs Campbell for her update.

A15. INSURANCE CLAIM UPDATE

Mrs Campbell gave an update on this report and informed the members that no new claims have been made during this quarter. Mrs Strachan thanked Mrs Campbell for the update.

A16.CIRCULARS

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the circulars having taken them as read.

- **FE 02/25 Innovate Us Circular 2025-26**
- **FE 03/25 Skills Focus Circular 2025-26**

Members noted the circulars, and the details provided.

A17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms McGuigan informed the members of a recent letter received from the Department of the Economy which included a draft budget update.

Mrs Campbell assured the meeting that more detail will be given to members at the next committee meeting as this letter had only been received by the college the previous day.

Mrs Strachan thanked Ms McGuigan and Mrs Campbell.

A18 REVIEW OF MEETING

Mrs Strachan thanked everyone for their input and attendance at the meeting.

Mrs Campbell asked members if they have any future queries before the meeting takes place could they also be shared with her. Mrs Foster will ensure these are passed onto the Principal/CEO in future.

Mrs Foster

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 10th June at 17.30 in Boardroom Banbridge Campus

The meeting concluded at 18.27.

CH 

DATE 2/ 6/25