

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 9 MARCH 2021 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

PRESENT:

Mrs Teresa Campbell (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran
Mr Tom Redmond
Mr Kieran Swail
Mrs Judith Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Terry McGonigal, Director of Finance and Planning
Ms Joanne McGuigan, Assistant Director of Finance
Mr Brendan McGuigan, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.34.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

A02. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

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

A03. MINUTES OF MEETING 19 JANUARY 2021

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 January 2021. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on proposal from Mr Redmond and seconded by Mrs Thompson.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

None.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

A06. SRC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (inc Working Capital report)

Ms McGuigan presented the Management Accounts and advised on the key points. She informed that income is currently behind as the DfE grant has been drawn down based on estimated income. Members were advised that this will balance out.

Ms McGuigan informed that earmarked funds are adverse due to HLA income yet to be invoiced and advised that invoices have gone out in the last month. She informed on a similar variance in relation to the School Partnership Programmes.

Mr Doran provided an update on the impact due to the lack of provision delivered on site. He informed on challenges relating to lower level apprenticeships and advised that certain skills curriculum, such as construction are planned to be brought back on site on a phased delivery in the weeks ahead.

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Mr Doran informed Members of the sector Training Managers' working group who are working collaboratively to address issues within DfE operating requirements and advised on problems that have arisen where apprentices are restricted to working for more than eight weeks in Southern Ireland.

Mr McGonigal referred to the unfortunate circumstance limiting the apprentices' ability to work, and remarked on the differential of commuting to work whilst obtaining qualification. Members were advised that retrospective penalties could be applied for such apprentices.

Mr Doran reported that management are concerned about the amount of DfE compliance audits taking place, given consideration of the minimal errors being identified and the substantial College resource required to support the audits.

He advised that the College has an internal audit regime that should be sufficient to provide assurance to DfE as NDPBs on the operation of such contracts.

Ms McGuigan informed that income from tuition is down as an impact of C-19 and informed on the number of students eligible for financial aid.

Ms McGuigan confirmed that pay administration is favourable overall due to a number of vacant posts, advised that funds are being invested elsewhere and informed on a committed spend for IT.

Mr McGonigal informed that additional resources are being allocated to support learning and confirmed that all spending is subject to strict procurement rules.

He informed Members of the accounting reform many years back introducing a three year budget and advised that the treasury has since moved back to cash accounting. Mr McGonigal reminded Members that the College is now classified as a non-departmental public body and advised on the consequence this has had on charitable status and restrictions on financial management.

Ms McGuigan referred the Committee to the summary of expenditure by budget holder, the analysis of aged debtors, cash balances, aged creditors and prompt payment report.

Members noted the credit card expenditure summary and the PTL tracker report.

A07. PROVISIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATION

Mr McGonigal informed that an indicative budget allocation is expected to be announced towards the end of the month.

Mr Doran informed on recent communication deferring submission of the College Development Plan until September to reflect the current Covid situation. He advised that final Ministerial budget approval is expected in October. He stated that this was the same approach as for the current year.

Mr Doran confirmed that due to the uncertainties around Covid-19, the Permanent Secretary has given approval to delay commissioning the development of the new three year FE Sector Corporate Plan.

A08. GOVERNING BODY BUDGET 2020-2021

Ms McGuigan presented the Governing Body budget report, advising that pay administration is broadly in line and informing of a substantial underspend in regard to non-pay administration.

A09. DfE FINANCIAL RETURNS

Mr McGonigal referred Members to the DfE Financial Returns advising on 62% spend on DEL resource grant and 83% DEL capital spend.

He informed on accruals to be made and minor work projects.

Members noted the report.

A10. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

None to report.

A11. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

Mr McGonigal informed on 5 new complaints received by the College and advised that 3 formal complaints and 1 informal complaint remain open.

He advised that considering the difficult circumstances of the last year, the cumulative data is comparable.

Mr McGonigal informed on 1 new subject access request and 1 new FOI request and advised that the applications are connected.

Members noted that there have been no new whistleblowing disclosures and were informed on the completion rates on mandatory training.

A12. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Data Protection GDPR**

Mr Doran referred Members to minor recommended amendments to terminology.

- **Bring Your Own Device**

Mr Doran referred Members to the tabled policy. He advised on the use of EduROAM and the clarification on responsibilities for use of shared and personal devices.

Both policies were approved on proposal from Mr Redmond and seconded by Mr Swail.

A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Doran and Mr McGonigal informed that approval has been received on all three Covid-19 student financial assistance schemes and advised that the College will begin issuing payments as soon as students provide bank details.

A14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 1 June 2021 at 17.30 via teleconference.

The meeting concluded at 18.36.

CHAIR

DATE

