

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee**  
held on Wednesday 22 February 2023 at 9.00 am  
via Microsoft Teams

---

- PRESENT:** Mrs Deborah Brown  
Mrs Maureen Brunt (*from item 4.0*)  
Mr Seamus McCaffrey, Committee Chair  
Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive  
Mr Michael McGuckin
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body  
Mrs Sharon McGrath, Head of Services  
Mr Pdraig McNamee, Assistant Chief Executive Learner  
Experience (*item 4.0 only*)  
Mr Sean O'Donnell, Head of Finance
- APOLOGIES:** Dr Nicholas O'Shiel

### 1.0 **APOLOGIES**

An apology was tendered on behalf of Dr O'Shiel.

### 2.0 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

### 3.0 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 14 December 2022.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### 4.0 **KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02 Key Strategic Issues Management Update
- Paper 04.03 2023/24 Budget Planning Scenarios.

***Mrs Brunt joined the meeting at this juncture and Mr McNamee joined the meeting for this item.***

#### 4.1 **FE Review and Long Term Financial Planning**

Ms McCartan advised that an open letter to staff from the Interim Permanent Secretary of the Department for the Economy (DfE) providing an update on the Review of the Further Education (FE) Delivery Model has been received and will be circulated in line with a sectoral agreement.

She referenced the anticipated financial challenges in the 2023/24 year, noting that clarity on the budget is unlikely to be available before the end of the current financial year on 31 March 2023, and explained that scenario planning has been undertaken to prepare for anticipated budget cuts.

Dr Cush then presented an analysis of the impact on resourcing of budget cuts of 2%, 5% and 10% as detailed in paper 04.03. She outlined the guiding principles of the budget planning exercise, including the protection of student learning opportunities where possible, as well as the inescapable budget pressures, income projections and planned actions to create efficiencies.

In response to questions and comments following the presentation, members were apprised of the potential for utilization of new income streams to fund adult access courses and provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, the sectoral discussions to be undertaken in relation to the management of any staff reduction requirements, and the adverse impact of any significant increased remote provision on the academic success and mental health of students. Members also commented on the negative impact of the implementation of efficiencies and rationalization of resources on management and staff.

Ms McCartan concluded by highlighting the need to create awareness amongst governors of the uncertainty around the budget allocation for 2023/24 and the scenario planning underway. She noted the need to create a number of small efficiencies to achieve savings due to the limited scope for large scale cost saving initiatives and undertook to update the Committee on any developments at its next meeting.

#### **4.2 Erne Campus Development and Years 1 to 3 Operation**

The meeting was informed that an advanced draft of the Post Project Evaluation of the Erne Campus Development had been prepared with external support and reviewed by DfE in advance of the deadline for submission in March 2023. It was noted that three of the nine objectives had been achieved and that the remaining six are on track to be achieved. Management undertook to share the advanced draft of the Post Project Evaluation with the Committee.

Regarding the Fairview campus, it was reported that sales have been agreed on both the carpark and campus sites with an expectation of completion before 31 March 2023. It was noted that financial forecasts and approval for retention of proceeds are predicated on completion by 31 March 2023. The meeting was apprised of two outstanding queries in relation to the campus site and of the close monitoring of progress in addressing these queries.

The meeting was also informed that the feasibility study undertaken in 2016 for a bridge over the river Erne to connect the Erne Campus to Enniskillen town is currently under review.

#### **4.3 Funding Opportunities including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

It was noted that funding opportunities under New Deal NI had been covered under income projections in item 4.1 and paper 04.03.

#### **4.4 Student Experience**

Ms McCartan reflected on the Hardship Fund monies returned to DfE in recent years due to the difficult to meet criteria for support under this fund and advised that a sectoral business case had been approved to spend unused funding on support initiatives for students including meals and Winter Warmer Kits. Members welcomed

this initiative in supporting students from all backgrounds during the cost of living crisis.

#### **4.5 PFI Contracts**

Ms McCartan advised that a Service Provision Report has been received from BES in advance of the scheduled Annual PFI Contracts Review Meeting. She added that the contracts require an annual meeting with a Liaison Committee comprising the PFI Contracts Manager and another college representative to be agreed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Committee agreed to appoint the Chief Executive and the PFI Contracts Manager to this Liaison Committee and requested that an update on the Annual PFI Contracts Review Meeting be provided to the Committee at its April 2023 meeting.

**AGREED: to appoint the Chief Executive and the PFI Contracts Manager to the Liaison Committee to represent the College at the Annual PFI Contracts meeting with BES.**

Mrs McGrath reported on the value of engagements with the Education Authority on its experience of PFI contracts and noted that further collaborations will take place.

***Mr McNamee withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.***

#### **5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Financial Management Report to 31 January 2023
- Paper 05.02 Debtors & Creditors Report
- Paper 05.03 Finance Return
- Paper 05.04 Report on Payments over £50,000
- Paper 05.05 Estates Report
- Paper 05.06 SWC Capital Allocation Letter 2022-23
- Paper 05.07 Report on Business Cases 2022-23
- Paper 05.08 Financial Performance of the Automotive, Computing & Engineering Faculty.

#### **5.1 Financial Accounting**

##### **5.1.1 Financial Management Report to 31 January 2023**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.1 and Paper 05.01*

Mr O'Donnell referenced the Financial Management Report to 31 January 2023 noting the good performance evidenced.

##### **5.1.2 Report on Debtors & Creditors**

*Ref: Management Report Section 1.2 and Paper 05.02*

Mr McGuckin commended the Finance team for the payment of 92% of invoices within 30 days in the six months to 31 January 2023.

## **5.2 Financial Compliance**

### **5.2.1 NDPB Monthly Monitoring**

*Ref: Management Report Section 2.1 and Paper 05.03*

Mr O'Donnell advised that an updated monthly return to 31 January 2023 had now been submitted to DfE which includes forecast expenditure to 31 March 2023 and indicates a within budget financial position for the twelve months to 31 March 2023 assuming completion of the sales of the Fairview campus.

## **5.3 Treasury Management**

### **5.3.1 Treasury Management**

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.1*

It was noted that no cash reserves are currently held in deposit accounts.

### **5.3.2 Payments over £50,000**

*Ref: Management Report Section 3.2 and Paper 05.04*

The report on payments over £50,000 was noted by the Committee.

## **5.4 Estates**

### **5.4.1 Estates Report**

*Ref: Management Report Section 5.1 and Paper 05.05*

Mrs McGrath reported that updated monthly Estates budgetary figures to 31 January 2023 records an outturn of £26,000 adverse to budget. She noted that a close examination of the causes will be undertaken and that the escalation of maintenance works and increased electricity costs have contributed to this position.

She confirmed that the Sustainability Implementation Group has refocused away from the One Planet Living model to map against the UN Sustainable Development Goals; that the implementation phase of the sectoral Computer Aided Facilities Management project has completed and that the training and handover phases will now progress; and that an internal audit of Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery has been undertaken with satisfactory assurance awarded and two medium priority and one low priority recommendations made.

In response to questions and comments from members, the meeting was made aware of the focus placed on reputational damage by the auditors during the internal audit of Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery; was provided details of the significant adverse impact of the issues with the Trainee and Apprentice Management System (TAMS); and was assured that the budget for computer equipment will be expended by 31 March 2023. Ms McCartan undertook to share a recent sectoral update on TAMS with the Committee.

### **5.4.2 Capital Funding 2022/23 and Business Cases 2022/23**

*Ref: Management Report Sections 5.2 & 5.3 and Papers 05.06 & 05.07*

Mr O'Donnell highlighted the additional allocation of £140,000 recently received for minor works and referenced the list of approved business cases in paper 05.07. In the context of constrained resources, Ms McCartan commented on the value of advanced preparation of business cases to enable any additional funding available to be expended on minor works and equipment at pace.

In response to questions from members, Mrs McGrath provided details of a number of items on the list of approved business cases.

#### **5.5 Automotive, Computing & Engineering Faculty Financial Performance Report**

*Ref: Management Report Section 6.0 and Paper 05.08*

Members commented favourably on the information provided in the Automotive, Computing & Engineering Faculty Financial Performance Report.

Members were reminded of their agreement to receive written reports on the financial performance of faculties in lieu of presentations until the February 2023 committee meeting in order to dedicate time to strategic matters. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to continue with this approach.

**AGREED: that written reports on the financial performance of faculties continue to be submitted to the Committee in lieu of scheduled presentations.**

#### **6.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 List of Outstanding Actions

It was noted that the advanced draft of the Post Project Evaluation of the Erne Campus Development would be shared with the Committee.

A revised list of outstanding actions is included as Appendix A.

#### **7.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

Members requested that the Committee's congratulations be extended to students and staff involved in the College's Gaelic Football team following its performance in the Mac Lenin Cup competition.

Ms McCartan commented on the development of sports activities and teams within the College as well as on the value of enhanced relationships with local sporting organisations.

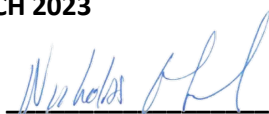
#### **8.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**

Management was commended for the quality of the information provided to the Committee. The effectiveness of the meeting in apprising members of the strategic and operational matters in an efficient manner was noted.

***The meeting concluded at 10:30 am.***

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY  
8 MARCH 2023**

CHAIR



DATE 08/03/2023

## SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Item	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	22/02/2023	4.2	The advanced draft of the Post Project Evaluation of the Erne Campus Development to be circulated to the Committee.
2	22/02/2023	4.5	Report on the Annual PFI Contracts Review Meeting with BES be provided to the Committee at its April 2023 meeting.
3	22/02/2023	5.4.1	Recent sectoral update on TAMS to be shared with the Committee.