

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee**
held on Wednesday 14 December 2022 at 9.00 am
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Ms Deborah Brown
Mrs Maureen Brunt
Mr Seamus McCaffrey, Committee Chair
Ms Celine McCartan, Chief Executive
Mr Michael McGuckin

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs Sharon McGrath, Head of Services
Mrs Elizabeth McNally (Minute Taker)
Mr Sean O'Donnell, Head of Finance

1.0 APOLOGIES: Mrs Fiona McCauley (Secretary to the Governing Body)
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No conflict-of-interest declarations 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 12 October 2022.

4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES:

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 List of Key Strategic Issues.
- Paper 04.02 Management Update on Key Strategic Issues.
- Paper 04.03 Analysis of SWC Data Gathered During Review of FE Delivery Model.

FE Review and Long-Term Financial Planning

An overview of the SWC Tribal Review of FE Sector was presented by Ms McCartan. The first draft, provided by the DfE, comprised of cost analysis for the sector and college from 2016-17 to 2021-22. This data confirmed the trends of rising costs and decreased enrolments. A further update will be issued by DfE following new data analysis and this update will inform potential delivery options

for the sector. College staff have been engaged in the planning process and participated in innovation lab workshops with DfE to consider options in more detail. Mr McGuckin noted that the presentation was highly informative, in particular in regard to the cost comparisons, and reflected on the challenges of analysing financial data in the context of colleges operating in very different urban and rural environments. Mrs McCartan provided information on further ongoing engagements between the DfE and Colleges in connection with the Review of FE Delivery Model and work to ensure effective representation of the College within the sector.

Mrs McCartan appraised the Committee on recent briefings from DfE on the current year budget position and the factors affecting the NI fiscal position for 2023/24. She reported that all indications were that the budget position would be very challenging and that work had commenced on deve.

Funding Opportunities including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

An update on the recently announced Northern Ireland Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was provided by Dr Cush. She advised that the People and Skills strand had a £47m allocation (£40m for the community and voluntary sector and £7m over a three-year period for Skills including Essential Skills) and noted that opportunities are likely to be smaller than previously funded European Social Fund projects. A discussion took place funding of on cross border collaboration opportunities and Mr McCaffrey suggested it may be beneficial to develop more formal strategic linkage with Letterkenny, Dundalk, and other Colleges.

A wider discussion took place on support and funding for student initiatives. In response to a query from Mrs Brunt, Ms McCartan outlined current initiatives in College including student breakfast clubs (voluntary staff), preloved fashion events, and pastoral support and Christmas festivities. College will also be providing winter support packs for students.

Erne Campus Development

Ms McCartan reported that Erne Campus Project Board and FE Capital Steering Project Board meetings took place in November. Work is on-going on the post project evaluation which is scheduled to complete by end of January 2023. Progress was also reported in relation to the disposal of the Fairview site.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT:

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

Paper 05	Management Report
Paper 05.01	SWC Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021-2022
Paper 05.02	Financial Management Report Quarter 1 October 2022-23
Paper 05.03	Report on Fixed Assets and Capital Expenditure 2022
Paper 05.04	NDPB Finance Return
Paper 05.05	Cost-saving Measures 2023-24

Paper 05.06	Payment over 50k
Paper 05.07	Bad Debt Policy
Paper 05.08	Fees and Charges Policy 2023-24
Paper 05.08b	CCTV Policy
Paper 05.09	Estates Report
Paper 05.10	Annual Sustainability Report 2021-22
Paper 05.11	Hardship Fund Report 2021-22
Paper 05.12	Technical Services Report
Paper 05.13	Built environment creative and life sciences
Paper 05.14	Cost per enrolment
Paper 05.15	SWC Budget Update 2022-23 - 08 Dec 2022

Mr O'Donnell referenced the Management Report and associated papers and noted that the audit for the Annual Report and Financial Statements is now complete and will be laid at the NI Assembly on 15th December 2022. He took the committee through the financial management report and advised that for the first quarter of the year, the income and expenditure was in line with the profile. He also reported on how the College invested the minor works funding in 2021/22 and how it was allocated across all the relevant fixed asset categories.

A discussion then took place on cost of living pressures and Ms McCartan outlined a range of new measures developed to support students. These included new bursary expense payments for higher education students on work experience within the College, additional funding for student health and well-being initiatives, clubs and societies and a new fee reduction plan for part time courses commencing in January 2023. Mr McCaffrey welcomed these new support initiatives for students.

The Annual College Sustainability Report for 2021-22 was presented by Mrs McGrath. This included key sustainability highlights from the year, summary of performance and outline of planned initiative for the new year. The report noted a new Estates & Sustainability Officer had been appointed to support sustainability work. Mrs McGrath also informed the committee that the first event in the Enniskillen Workhouse took place on 1st December 2022. The College is working on a temporary license with the Council to cover to the partnership arrangements until the end of March 2023 and then will move to a formal license agreement.

AGREED: that the Bad Debt Policy, Fees and Charges Policy 2023-24, and CCTV Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

6.0 LIST OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

Paper 06	List of Outstanding Actions
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The Committee was made aware of updates to the outstanding actions. The development of impact model for the region is to be paused to align with the outworkings of the review of the FE delivery model. Mr O'Donnell presented current enrolment figures and cost per student data.

7. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS:

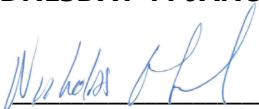
Mr O' Donnell reported that the new sectoral portal, Trainee and Apprenticeship Management System (TAMS), for monitoring performance and making payments to work-based learning students is not operating effectively and this has presented challenges in terms of cash flow as monthly claims for funding cannot be made. He confirmed that additional funding drawdown had been provided by DfE, that this is a sectoral issue and there is a plan of action in development to progress.

8. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING:

No comments were made on the effectiveness of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10:52 am.

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 JANUARY 2023**

CHAIRMAN  **DATE** 11/01/2023

APPENDIX A

Item	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	14/12/2022	4.0	Draft Post Project Evaluation for Erne project to be presented to the committee for review.
2	14/12/2022	5.0	Mr O'Donnell to set up a planning meeting which will help manage budgetary pressures in 2023-24.
3	14/12/2022	5.0	Mrs Brunt identified a number of typos on policies and these to be forwarded to Mr O'Donnell.