North West Regional College Governing Body
Resources Committee
Date of Meeting – 4 June 2026
Minutes Approved – 7 October 2026

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIRST MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE, COMMENCING 09:31

PRESENT
Mr F Smyth, Committee Chair
Dr S Fisher
Ms C McGee (from 09:32)
Mr L Murphy, Principal & CE (until 11:32)
Mr P Thompson (until 11:02)

IN ATTENDANCE
Mr P McKeown, Finance Director (until the conclusion of agenda item 31.4)
Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services
Ms S Kelly, Head of HR (from agenda item 31.8)
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES
Mr B O'Neill

31.1 WELCOME
The Committee Chair welcomed all present.

31.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Members were invited to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the business to be considered. No declarations were made. No items of Any Other Business were notified in advance of the meeting.

31.3 DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2026

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS
Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 3 March 2026

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes of the meeting and confirmed that they accurately reflected the discussions and decisions taken.
Proposed by Dr S Fisher
Seconded by Mr P Thompson

Report 1 Matters Arising – Finance
In reviewing matters arising, the Secretary to the Governing Body updated members on actions previously agreed at the March 2026 Committee meeting.

- 30.4 It was noted that a workshop for board members on management accounts, forecasting returns, accounting treatments and reporting formats would be arranged in September/October 2026.
- A report on Estates Cost Comparison requested at the March 2026 Committee meeting, had been provided under Agenda item 31.4, Report 2.2.
- The Education Committee held its meeting at Greystone Campus in June 2026, and Committees and the Governing Body would consider holding further meetings at other campuses during the 2026/27 academic year.

The Committee Chair invited Mr McKeown to present his Management Report.

31.4 FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - Mr P McKeown, Finance Director

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1	Tenders Issued
Report 1.1	College & Sector Contracts Register
Report 2	Estates Update
Report 2.1	Estates Strategy 2021-31 Update
Report 2.2	Estate Cost Comparison
Report 3	Business Support Centre Update
Report 4	Management Accounts for 1 Month to 30 April 2026
Report 5	Draft Financial Statements for 8 Months to 31 March 2026
Report 6	Budget Update 2026/27
Report 7	Investment Policy 2026
Report 8	Prompt Payment – verbal report

Under agenda item 31.4, the Finance Director presented the Finance Management Report and supporting papers previously issued to members. The Committee considered each report in turn.

Report 1 Tenders Issued Report
Report 1.1 College & Sector Contracts Register

The Finance Director drew attention to tenders issued and the College & Sector Contracts Register. Members noted the appointment of specialist NEC contract support in connection with the City and Growth Deal projects.

Members were advised of the amber-rated contract items due to arise within the coming months. The Finance Director confirmed that there were no matters of concern in respect of these contracts. It was also further noted that CPD tenders relating to student vaccinations were not expected to continue at previous levels and any future requirement would be progressed through quotations.

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Report 2 Estates Update
Report 2.1 Estates Strategy 2021-31 Update
Report 2.2 Estate Cost Comparison

The Finance Director advised that, due to the current budgetary position, only essential works of a health and safety, statutory or otherwise critical nature were progressing. Members discussed the importance of avoiding deterioration across the estate through prolonged deferral of maintenance expenditure. The Finance Director confirmed that a prioritised list of projects was in place and that preparatory planning had been undertaken to enable timely progression, subject to available funding and procurement requirements.

The new frameworks for the design team and contractor are progressing, and it is anticipated that successful design consultants will be appointed in December 2026/ January 2027.

The Committee also received an update on the City Deal, Strabane Campus. Design activity was progressing. Engagement with curriculum colleagues and external partners was ongoing. The Western Health Trust had provided a Condition Survey on the Strabane Campus. It was noted that the building to be officially acquired by the Trust was on an "as seen" basis. The Finance Director reported that the College will address any essential health and safety or statutory issues arising.

Report 2.1 Estates Strategy 2021-31 Update

Members noted that following the handover of the PFI Northland Building, the College has assumed full responsibility for the building, associated services and related staffing arrangements. Members sought assurance regarding staffing levels and as with all expenditure estate costs will be kept under review.

Members noted the current status of the capital investment projects and sustainability commitments.

Report 2.2 Estate Cost Comparison

The Finance Director presented the additional benchmarking information requested by the Committee, including a more detailed breakdown of estates-related expenditure. Members welcomed the transparent presentation of the data.

Report 3 Business Support Centre Update

The Committee also considered the updated business support and value-added statistics. While some activity targets had not been achieved in full, this largely reflected the delivery of longer and higher-value interventions, year-end timing differences arising from the revised accounting period and the non-materialisation of one programme within the Assured Skills Academies.

The Principal & CE drew attention to the risk that reduced or delayed funding for programmes that could impact momentum, employer confidence and the College's wider reputation for responsiveness and high performance in business engagement.

Report 4 Management Accounts for 1 Month to 30 April 2026

The Committee considered the management accounts for the shortened accounting period to 30 April 2026. The accounts did not indicate any immediate issues of concern.
The Finance Director referred to the NDPB, Provisional Outturn to 31 March 2026 submitted to the Department (DfE) and noted the College reported an easement position in respect of DEL OTH RES.

Report 5 Draft Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

The Finance Director confirmed that the figures were substantially complete and that he did not anticipate material change before formal approval. Dr S Fisher sought and received assurance on this point from the Finance Director.
The revised reporting and audit timetable arising from the change in year-end was outlined. The completed Accounts will be submitted to the Department (DfE) and NI Audit Office by 26 June 2026. The statutory audit is due to begin in late July/early August 2026, with the Annual Report & Financial Statements progressing to the June and October 2026 Committee and Governing Body meetings for approval.

The Committee Chair indicated that the proposed workshop on finance and governance would be useful in assisting members, particularly those without a financial background, to understand key warning signs, expectations and responsibilities.

Report 6 Budget Update 2026/27

The Principal & CE provided a detailed update on the College's budget position for 2026/27. Members were advised that, in the absence of an agreed NI Executive budget, the College had received a Resource Contingency Allocation equivalent to approximately 94% of prior-year funding. This did not represent a confirmed full-year budget allocation, and no assurance had yet been provided that the balance would subsequently be restored.

The Finance Director reported that the revised projected pressure had significantly increased from the position previously reported at the Governing Body meeting in March 2026 and now represented a pressure of £4.4m for the financial year to 31 March 2027.
The increase in the budget deficit from March 2026 was primarily related to the substantial reduction in grant from a flat cash position to a 6% reduction.
At this stage, the Principal & CE advised he would brief the relevant Trade Unions on the current budget situation.
The Committee noted the significant financial pressure and the ongoing work to identify mitigating actions with a focus on protecting curriculum delivery wherever possible.
The sector was preparing an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to potential curriculum reductions.

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Report 7 Investment Policy 2026

The Committee considered the Investment Policy. There had been no substantive change to the policy, with two amendments noting that the College must not make any investments in traded financial instruments or equity shares without prior written approval from the Department (DfE) (Ref 1.3).

The other amendment was that a report on investments will be presented to the Resources Committee whenever the College has made investments (Ref 4.2).

The Committee approved the Investment Policy 2026 for submission to the Governing Body.

Proposed by Mr F Smyth

Seconded by Dr S Fisher

Report 8 Prompt Payment – verbal report

The prompt payment performance for the 30 days to May 2026 was 93%, and the year-to-date performance was 95%.

The Committee Chair thanked Mr McKeown for his report.

Mr McKeown left the meeting and Ms S Kelly joined the meeting at this juncture.

31.5 CORRESPONDENCE – Finance

There was no correspondence to note.

31.6 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS - Finance

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the review of its Terms of Reference. There had been no substantive amendment to the Terms of Reference other than the move to annual review, in line with the recommendation arising from the external Board Effectiveness Review.

The Committee approved the Terms of Reference for submission to the Governing Body.

Proposed by Mr F Smyth

Seconded by Mr P Thompson

31.7 Matters Arising – Client Services – Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 3 March 2026

- 30.8, Report 3: The FE College Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule were approved at the Governing Body meeting held on 11 March 2026.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Equality Report

The Head of Client Services presented the Equality Report update and advised that work had continued throughout the year through a coordinated programme involving curriculum, support teams, Human Resources, Student Services and sustainability leads. Members noted that the current month's focus included Pride-related activity in partnership with the Rainbow Group.

Particular attention was drawn to the College's first Cultural Day, delivered in conjunction with Health and Wellbeing activity and supported by the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression. The event had involved a broad range of cultural, musical, artistic and food-based activity across College sites and had been positively received by staff and students. The Committee noted that this work had wider significance for the College's culture, profile and recruitment, as well as for staff and student wellbeing.

Members welcomed the initiative and noted proposals for follow-up video and induction materials to support continued awareness and engagement among staff and students.

Work continues relating to the prevention of violence against women and girls. It was noted that the College was playing a leading role across the sector and that engagement with schools and external partners had been particularly positive. Following the White Ribbon training to be delivered at the June 2026 Governing Body meeting, it was **suggested** that consideration be given to appointing a Governor Champion for the ending violence against women and girls agenda.

Report 2 Data Protection/Compliance Update

The Head of Client Services provided an update on data protection noting that seven subject access requests had been received to date, covering a range of routine matters, with no issues of particular concern identified. Overall information requests appeared to have reduced compared with previous periods.

Five data breaches had been recorded to date and members welcomed the indication that staff were increasingly alert to potential breaches and were reporting incidents promptly. The Committee also noted that a realistic cyber phishing exercise had been undertaken, which had prompted refresher training for relevant staff. Formal complaints had returned to a more typical level following a lower number in the previous year.

The Committee Chair thanked Ms Moss and her team for the significant breadth of work undertaken across staff, students, community engagement and the College's wider profile.

STAFFING MATTERS

Matters Arising – Staffing Matters – Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 3 March 2026

- 30.9 The Head of HR had incorporated within the Management Report (Ref 31.8, item 2.2) a three-year trend analysis and departmental breakdown of sickness absence, as agreed at the March 2026 Committee meeting.
- Report 1 A proposed presentation to the Board on the rollout of artificial intelligence in teaching and support for 2026/27 had been incorporated into the Board's programme of business.
- Report S3 The Equal Opportunities Policy was approved at the Governing Body meeting held on 11 March 2026.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

31.8 HR SERVICES MANAGEMENT REPORT – Ms S Kelly, Head of HR

Report 1 Recruitment Update
Report 2 Staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-27 & Action Plan Update
Report 3 Human Resources Business Plan Update
Report 4 Equality Data Monitoring Review 2025/26
Report 5 Fair Employment Monitoring Return as at 01 January 2026

Report 1 Recruitment Update

The Head of HR advised that the Executive Summary included three-year trend data to assist members in identifying any emerging issues. In relation to resourcing the recruitment and selection process remained broadly consistent and that the 2026/27 resourcing plan was now underway.

The College has reviewed the use of the competency framework for lecturing appointments. Revised criteria for lecturing posts had been developed in consultation with Heads of Faculty and Curriculum Managers and were being applied in the current recruitment round.

Absence Management

Members considered the update on absence management, which remained a key area of focus for the College. Absence continues to present challenges across both academic and support staff. Total absence levels had increased year to date to 5.99%, compared with 4.67% in 2024/25. The FE total sector figure was 4.48% for 2024/25. Focus groups had been held with Line Managers across curriculum and support areas to identify additional support required to manage absence more effectively.

The Committee noted that a three-year review of staff absence was also being undertaken, with specific cases reviewed with relevant Directors. Engagement had taken place with trade unions, and members noted that personal stress remained the main cause of absence, with grief-related absence also identified as an area where further support may be beneficial.

Sector-wide work was underway to review further education policies and procedures, including the Sickness Absence Policy, which was considered dated and limited in supporting effective absence management.

Report 2 Staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-27 & Action Plan Update

Members noted that the College continued to implement its Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–27 and associated Action Plan, with the next academic year's Action Plan to follow. Members also noted that the College was engaging with Inspire, its employee assistance provider, regarding participation in a coaching programme. Ten coaching places would be available during the next academic year for Heads of Faculty, Curriculum Managers and Line Managers.

Report 4 Equality Data Monitoring Review 2025/26

Report 5 Fair Employment Monitoring Return as at 01 January 2026

The Committee noted the annual Equality Monitoring Return submitted to the Equality Commission, including the correction that 77% of staff identified as Roman Catholic, 21% as Protestant and 3% as non-determined.

Members noted that the overall workforce profile had remained broadly stable, but that applications from other parts of Northern Ireland had increased from 11.61% to 16.08%.

The Committee further noted the importance of continuing to broaden the applicant pool, including under-represented communities, while recognising that the majority of applications continued to come from the Derry/Londonderry area, with a significant number also from Donegal.

The Committee noted that the workforce profile had remained broadly stable, with staff comprising 61% female and 39% male, and 72% full-time and 28% part-time.

Learning & Development

Staff engagement in learning and development remained above 80%, with 403 training events coordinated during the year. Mandatory training completion remained above 90%. Members also noted the forthcoming FE Sector Awards and the College Staff Awards, which would recognise staff contribution and long service across the College.

31.9 CORRESPONDENCE – STAFFING

There was no correspondence received.

31.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – STAFFING

No other business was raised.

31.11 SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2026/27

Members noted the schedule.

31.12 RESERVED BUSINESS

Reserved Business was considered separately. This part of the meeting ended at 11:32.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7 October 2026

Signed _____

Mr F Smyth, Committee Chair

Date 7 October 2026

APPROVED