

MINUTES OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE, COMMENCING 12:00

PRESENT

Mr F Smyth, Committee Chair
Dr S Fisher
Mr P Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr P McKeown, Finance Director (until the conclusion of agenda item 30.8)
Ms S Kelly, Head of HR (from 12:53)
Mrs É Doherty, Secretary to the Governing Body

APOLOGIES

Ms C McGee
Mr B O'Neill
Mr L Murphy, Principal & CE
Ms G Moss, Head of Client Services

30.1 WELCOME

The Committee Chair welcomed all present.

30.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were invited to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. No conflicts were declared. No items of Any Other Business were notified in advance.

30.3 DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2025

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2025

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025 and confirmed that they accurately reflected the discussions and decisions taken and approved the minutes.

PROPOSED, Dr S Fisher

SECONDED, Mr P Thompson

Report 1 Matters Arising – Finance

29.4, Report 1.1 The Committee was reminded of its earlier request for enhanced reporting on the College and FE Sector Contracts Register, including greater visibility of contract expiry timelines and procurement risk. It was confirmed that this item was scheduled for consideration later in the agenda (Ref Agenda item 30.4, Report 1.1).

Reports 1 & 3 Members reiterated the importance of hearing directly from senior managers leading major programmes and agreed that Mr Emmet McLaughlin (Contracts Manager – STS Project) and Dr Fergal Tuffy (Business Support Centre) should be invited to present to a future Governing Body meeting. These meetings will be scheduled into the relevant Board programmes.

Report 2 The Committee noted that, following an Expressions of Interest process, Mr Paul Clancy had been appointed as Sustainability Champion. Members welcomed the appointment.

Report 6 Budget 2025/26
Report 8 Bad debt write-off - £6936
Report 9 Fees & Charges Policy 2026/27

Reports 6, 8 and 9 were approved at the Governing Body meeting held on 19 November 2025.

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

30.4 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 3 Business Support Centre Update
Report 3.1 Business Support Centre – info graphics
Report 4 Management Accounts for 6 Months to 31 January 2026
Report 5 Budget Update 2026/27
Report 6 Prompt Payment – verbal report

Report 1 Tenders Issued Report

Members noted the tender activity report and discussed market competition and the practical challenges of receiving limited bids in some areas. The Committee sought assurance on procurement compliance, internal audit scrutiny, social value (noting its greater use in higher-value procurements) and conflict of interest controls through registers and panel declarations.

Report 1.1 College & Sector Contracts Register

The Committee reviewed the College and FE Sector Contracts Register, noting the enhanced report including contracts due to expire within 9–12 months and the intended approach to renewals/retendering in conjunction with budget holders and CPD processes as required.

The Finance Director referred to the FE Sector Collaborations Report which included the Services Technology and Systems (STS) Project. It was noted that the STS Project is now in steady state with the current contract ending 31 March 2027. Mr L Murphy, Principal & CE chairs the STS Change Management Board and is now SRO for the Learner Management System (LMS) – procurement of a new system.

Report 2 Estates Update

The Committee received an update on Estate matters, including minor work activity and the use of approved frameworks. A positive note was the appointment of an ICT Design Consultant for the City Deal, Strabane Campus.

The OBC is awaiting DfE final approval for the Causeway Coast & Glens, Growth Deal Foodovation and Skills Centre. Causeway Coast & Glens Council are hoping to have the Financial Deal signing for the Growth Deal to take place in the Limavady, Main Street Campus in late April 2026.

The Committee Chair welcomed the profile being given to deal with the signing event and sought confirmation that Board or Committees were scheduled to have some meetings at the Limavady Campus by way of showing their support etc.

Report 3 Business Support Centre Update

Report 3.1 Business Support Centre – info graphics

Members welcomed the emphasis on evidencing impact and the inclusion of an infographic paper signposting case studies and videos.

Report 4 Management Accounts for 6 Months to 31 January 2026

The Finance Director reported that for the year to 31 March 2026 there were no material issues to report. The College are currently reporting a break even position DEL OTH RES to 31 March 2026.

The Aged Debtors Report as at 2 February 2026 was referred to with no issues reported.

Data was shared with the Committee on statistics for the year to July 2025, including Student Full-time Equivalent (FTE) numbers, costs per FTEs and costs for Support departments. This showed a 10% growth in student numbers on the previous year and a reduction in Cost per FTE for the first time in several years. The teaching cost per student full-time equivalent data showed a reduction of 7% from 2024. This mainly relates to the increase in student numbers and the impact of the Voluntary Exit Scheme on staff leaving the College in June 2024.

It was agreed the Finance Director would provide a clearer explanatory note/presentation in the future to support non-finance specialists in understanding the relationship between the management accounts presentation and the NDPB forecasting return.

The Committee requested further detail into the Support Cost Comparison in relation to the Estates costs.

It was agreed that a financial briefing would be scheduled for interested governors covering key accounting treatments and reporting formats.

Report 5 Budget Update 2026/27

Members noted the draft position and key uncertainties (including funding assumptions and identified pressures). The Committee noted that approval would be sought once formal notification of the budget will be received from the Department (DfE) and after curriculum planning is finalised (CDP process) for 2026/27.

The Finance Director noted that the savings in relation to the NILGOSC reduction in employers' pension contribution rate from 19% to 15.5% from April 2026 have been included within the 2026/27 budget projections.

Following the Finance Minister's announcement for a temporary halt to the Reval 2026 business rates revaluation process the Finance Director indicated that the estimated additional costs have not been included in the 2026/27 budget projections. It is expected that any additional cost will be matched by an increase in budget from DfE.

Based on the budget projections the College is forecasting a pressure position to 31 March 2027 of £1.9m.

Report 6 Prompt Payment – verbal report

For the 30 days to January 2026 was 94% and the year to date was 96%.

30.5 CORRESPONDENCE – Finance

There was no correspondence to note.

30.6 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS - Finance

The Committee Chair had no further business under finance.

30.7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No additional business was raised.

The Committee Chair thanked Mr McKeown for his report.

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

30.8 Matters Arising – Client Services – Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 4 November 2025

There were no matter arising.

The Committee Chair noted that the Head of Client Services had tendered her apologies due to attendance at a conference. The Client Services papers had been issued in advance for information and approval as applicable.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Equality Report

The Committee noted the Report.

Report 2 Data Protection/Compliance Update

The Committee noted the papers and recorded appreciation for the work involved in preparing and progressing the updates.

Report 3 FE College Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule

The Committee considered the sector-wide retention and disposal schedule, noting that it had been approved by PRONI and the NI Assembly for implementation across the FE sector. Members discussed the practical implications, including the need to confirm whether adoption requires any material change from current College practice.

Subject to confirmation the Committee agreed to recommend approval to the Governing Body. The Governing Body Secretary will seek confirmation from the Data Protection & Information Compliance Officer.

PROPOSED, Mr P Thompson

SECONDED, Dr S Fisher

STAFFING MATTERS

30.9 Matters Arising – Staffing Matters - Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2025 – no matters arising

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

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

Recruitment: members noted the volume of recruitment activity including the TUPE transfer of 48 Grahams staff and the continued use of panels and alternative advertising routes where posts are hard to fill.

Sickness absence: members discussed increased absence levels relative to sector benchmarks, with a particular focus on long-term absence and the reported shift towards personal stress and bereavement as leading causes. The Lost Time Rate Year to Date for all College staff was 5.33% against the FE Sector rate of 4.48%. The long term sickness absence for the College is 3.83% with short term sickness absence at 1.48%. The Committee welcomed the planned focus groups and the emphasis on equipping line managers with practical tools and confidence to maintain supportive contact with employees on long-term sick leave.

Agreed action;

The Committee Chair requested that future reports include a three-year trend analysis and department-level breakdown of sickness absence. The Head of HR agreed.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Staff Development Programme Semester 2, 2025/26

Members noted the Programme launched to all staff in February 2026. The Head of HR provided an overview on the 'Hackathon' event held during inter-semester week to support staff with the issue of the AI/Copilot licence linked to attendance to this event.

The strong completion rates for mandatory training were welcomed. Staff Awards will be held on 5 June 2026. Staff with 25 years of service or more will also be recognised at this event.

The Committee discussed the adoption of AI in both teaching and support areas and **suggested** the Board receive a presentation on the rollout of this through 2026/27.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 2 Executive Summary – Health & Wellbeing Programme Semester 2, 2025/26

Report 2.1 Health & Wellbeing Programme Semester 2, 2025/26

The Head of HR referred to the Reports and highlighted the wellbeing activities to encourage staff to get involved in the various programmes.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 3 Equal Opportunities Policy

Members were content to recommend the Policy to the Governing Body.

PROPOSED, Mr F Smyth

SECONDED, Dr S Fisher

30.11 CORRESPONDENCE – STAFFING

There was no correspondence received.

30.12 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS – STAFFING

The Committee Chair had no additional business under staffing.

30.13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – STAFFING

No other business was raised.

30.14 RESERVED BUSINESS

Taken separately. This part of the meeting ended at 13:42

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 4 June 2026

Signed  _____
Mr F Smyth, Committee Chair

Date 04 June 2026