

**Belfast Metropolitan College Human Resources Committee held 3.00pm Wednesday 10 March 2026 in TQ Board Room and via MS Teams**

**Committee Members:** Lauren McAteer (Chair); Damian Duffy, Michele Corkey, Sheena McKinney, Seamus McGoran, Sinead Sharpe, and Rose Byrne.

**Management:** Paula Graham, Director of People and Culture (DPC); Stephanie McCormack, Head of Human Resources (HHR), and Kathryn Mallon, Culture and Engagement Lead (HR).

**External:** Neil Hughes, Grant Thornton

**Secretary to the Governing Body:** Jim Woods

**HR30  
25-26**

**Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture**

**Quorum:** The meeting was quorate under the terms of Section 6.2 of the Terms of Reference for the Human Resource Committee (approved 11 December 2024 GB31 24-25) (2 Governors).

**Apologies:** William Buckley

**Welcome:** Kathryn Mallon who is in attendance from HR.

**Conflicts of Interest:**

There were no perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest under the terms of Section 8.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders.

**AOB:** There were no notified items of any other business.

**Leadership Culture was reiterated as:** *Creative and Courageous Conversation in an 'atmosphere' OR 'culture' of challenge and respect in line with our Code of Conduct.*

Agenda Item	
<b>HR31</b> <b>25-26</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2025</b></p> <p>The Committee considered and approved minutes of the previous meeting held 12 November 2025.</p>
<b>HR32</b> <b>25-26</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2025</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising that were not covered by the agenda.</p>
<b>HR33</b> <b>25-26</b>	<p><b>Governance Guidance and Information</b></p> <p>There have been no updates reported.</p>
<b>HR34</b> <b>25-26</b>	<p><b>Notification of change to the internal control environment under Section 12d of Governing Body Standing Orders 11 December 2024</b></p> <p>No changes were recorded.</p>
<b>HR35</b> <b>25-26</b>	<p><b>Chair's Business</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed and congratulated Damian Duffy, who is attending his first meeting of the Human Resources committee following his appointment as Principal and Chief Executive.</p> <p>The Chair advised members that Mr Neil Hughes, Grant Thornton would be joining the meeting for item number</p>
<b>HR36</b> <b>25-26</b>	<p><b>Powered by People Strategy update - Progress against the operating plan</b></p> <p>DPC introduced the item, taking the Committee through the presentation in detail. The key points included:</p> <p><b>Executive Leadership:</b> Following the appointment of Damian Duffy as Principal and Chief Executive, we are currently awaiting approval from DFE to progress with the appointment of Director of Curriculum and Director of Development and Partnerships roles (currently filled on an interim basis). All those acting up in positions aligned to this recruitment will be extended by a further six months to allow time for the recruitment process to complete.</p> <p>K Mallon, as the People and Cultural Lead, was asked to take members through slides on Culture and related themes.</p> <p><b>People and Culture Team:</b> Following HRC approval of a new operating model for the People and Culture function in our November meeting, we have completed phase one of our roadmap and are nearing completion of phase two. Progress is on track as per the agreed roadmap.</p> <p><b>Cultural Audit and Baseline:</b> We are partnering with experts in cultural change, Grant Thornton to conduct a full organisational cultural audit to take a fresh honest look at our cultural health and ensure action is directed in the right place. Grant Thornton will attend our meeting to provide an overview of this work, along with Kathryn Mallon, Culture and Engagement Lead, who is leading this project.</p>

Agenda Item	
	<p><b>Policy Review and Modernisation:</b> A new sectoral workgroup is up and running to deal with policy modernisation in partnership with regional TU reps. Work has started on the review of the disciplinary policy. Other policies in scope this year are grievance and maternity, paternity and adoptive leave. Whilst work is progressing at a sectoral level, we are proceeding with the review and modernisation of other local policies, including working from home, recruitment policy, job evaluation and part-time lecturer recruitment.</p> <p><b>Learning and Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Our new L&amp;D programme (Excel at the Met) has been running since October across five key pillars that were developed based on staff feedback and emerging business needs. An investment of £100, 000 was committed to this programme and we are on track to fully maximise the available spend.</li> <li>○ Our annual staff conference took place on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb. The conference is a continuation of our L&amp;D strategy and offers over 68 sessions, all linked to our five L&amp;D pillars, as well as a range of ancillary services. This year’s conference saw a 23% increase in attendance from last year, with over 500 staff attending. Feedback to date has been excellent.</li> </ul> <p>Belfast Met is leading the development and roll-out of a new sectoral leadership program. The new LEAD programme (Lead, Educate, Accelerate, Deliver) is targeted at senior leaders to support the development of leadership talent amongst our network of colleges, support succession planning and skills development across the sector. The programme will launch in April 2026.</p> <p>Members of the Committee sought clarity on several issues and were assured that there is evidence supporting a change in culture.</p> <p>The Committee note the update provided by management.</p>
<p><b>HR37 25-26</b></p>	<p><b>Cultural audit and employee survey</b></p> <p>Neil Hughes of Grant Thornton joined the meeting for this item, taking members through slides which had been circulated with the papers. He took members through his background, Grant Thornton's approach to a Cultural Audit and its fit to Belfast Met.</p> <p>He explained that the Cultural Audit is explicitly aligned to the Powered by People strategy and is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a clear baseline of organisational cultural health</li> <li>● Assess alignment between the current culture and the behaviours required to deliver the College’s strategic objectives</li> <li>● Provide independent assurance to Senior Leaders and Governors on workforce culture, leadership effectiveness and employee experience</li> <li>● Inform a prioritised, evidence-based action roadmap to support sustainable cultural improvement over the next 12–36 months</li> </ul> <p>A key output of the work will be the development of a Composite Cultural Maturity Index (CMI), enabling Belfast Met to track progress over time and avoid culture being treated as a one-off exercise. This supports the College’s ambition to embed culture as an actively managed and measured organisational capability, rather than a standalone engagement activity.</p> <p>The presentation to HRC focuses on:</p>

**Belfast Metropolitan Human Resources Committee**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The case for culture and why it matters now for Belfast Met</li> <li>• How culture will be measured and assessed</li> <li>• The independent methodology and deliverables</li> <li>• How insights will translate into practical, actionable change</li> </ul> <p>The Committee noted the approach being taken to the Cultural Audit, its scope, method and intended outcomes.</p>
<b>HR38 25-26</b>	<p><b>Quarterly Metrics report, headlines and analysis</b></p> <p>The Quarterly Metrics were taken as read; there were no questions raised by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted the update on Quarterly Metrics</p>
<b>HR39 25-26</b>	<p><b>FE Sector HR Working Group Update</b></p> <p>The FE Sector HR Working Group Update, which had been circulated as part of the papers.</p> <p>The Committee noted the update</p>
<b>HR40 25-26</b>	<p><b>Any other Notified Business</b></p>
<b>HR41 25-26</b>	<p><b>Meeting feedback</b></p> <p>The Committee confirmed with the Chair that the conduct of this governance meeting provided evidence of the Governing Body’s commitments as set out at HR30 25-26 above.</p>
<b>HR42 25-26</b>	<p><b>Date of next meetings for the Governance Programme 2025-26:</b></p> <p>10 March 2026</p>

*The open session of the meeting ended at 16:35 pm.*

<b>Governing Body Attendance Report and Governing Body Member Assessment 2025-26</b>	
<b>Participation at HR14 25-26 Human Resources Committee 10 March 2026.</b>	
<b>In-person at TQ Boardroom</b>	<b>via MS Teams</b>
Lauren McAteer	Michele Corkey
Sheena McKinney	Rose Byrne
	Sinead Sharpe
	Damian Duffy
	Seamus McGoran

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date 9 June 2026

Lauren McAteer

Chair of Human Resources