

West Lothian College

24 November 2016

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minute of Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on **Thursday 18 August 2016 at 9.30am** in the Barbour Suite, in the College.

Present: Morag McKelvie (Chair)
Alex Linkston
Frank Gribben
Richard Lockhart
Angela Bell
Mhairi Harrington

In attendance: Joanna Paterson - Secretary to the Board
Jennifer McLaren - Assistant Principal, Curriculum Support & Finance
George Hotchkiss – Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Innovation
Lindsay Seywright – Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Planning
Derek O’Sullivan – Senior HR Business Partner

16.21 Welcome/Apologies

Apologies were received from Frank McGraw.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular new Board and Committee member Richard Lockhart, and Derek O’Sullivan who had joined the College as Senior HR Business Partner.

The Chair advised that there had been a number of changes in membership since the last meeting. Terry Lafferty had resigned from the Board and hence the Committee. Frank McGraw had moved across from the Audit Committee and Richard Lockhart (new Board member) had been appointed to the Committee.

Recruitment was currently underway for a Board member with a senior finance or accountancy background, to serve on this Committee.

16.22 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16.23 Minute of Meeting of 16 June 2016

The Minute of the meeting of 16 June 2016 was approved as a correct record.

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16.24 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 16 June 2016

Members noted paper 2 detailing actions duly completed following the meeting of 16 June 2016.

It was noted that in relation to Action 1, the treatment of the loan, a letter had been sent to the SFC's outgoing Chief Executive, Laurence Howells, but there had not been a positive response. This item would however continue to be kept on the agenda and would be raised again at suitable intervals with the SFC.

It was agreed that the anomaly might be something the external auditors would want to raise in their annual report and that this question should be raised with them.

Action 1: Assistant Principal, Curriculum Support & Finance

In relation to Action 2, it was noted that the Children's Hearing Scotland Training Unit were scheduled to make a presentation to the September Board meeting.

In relation to item 6, it was noted that the external auditors had advised that it was a requirement of the Accounts Direction to disclose the College as a 'paying agent' in relation to student funds. Although this did not reflect what happened in practice it was agreed not to pursue the matter further at this time.

In relation to item 10, developing material from the example of the NEC legacy award to showcase to employers, it was noted that the core information had been compiled. The approach was now being discussed with colleagues in marketing and commercial in terms of how best to pitch an approach, possibly within the context of a broader initiative to engage with local employers.

There were no other matters arising.

16.25 Financial Progress**(i) Pre Audit Credit Report**

Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented the pre audit Credit report as at 11 August 2016.

It was noted that the Credit target had been met with a forecast over-delivery against the revised College target.

The Committee noted that the funding model did not currently make provision to recompense Colleges for delivering above targets in response to regional demand.

Although it was unlikely that this would be done retrospectively it was an issue that should be raised with the SFC in terms of forward planning and budget allocation. It was agreed that the Principal should write to the SFC to raise this issue with them.

Action 2: Principal and Chief Executive

(ii) Management Accounts

Assistant Principal, Curriculum Support & Finance presented the Management Accounts for the eleven month period ended 30 June 2016.

Members noted that the forecast outturn was currently on target and that the narrative was mainly as reported during the year.

It was noted that the salary costs of the national pay negotiations had not yet been met in full by the SFC. The issues with the model that was being used for the allocation of funds had been raised with them by officials.

Members agreed that these were a very positive set of accounts and noted with appreciation the efforts across the College to achieve this position.

(iii) Income Generation Report

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Innovation presented the report for the period, highlighting progress in different areas and planned activity for the year ahead.

It was noted that the Japanese School would shortly be starting to operate in the campus on a Saturday. As well as being positive in its own right, this would also help to open up the campus at the weekends.

Members noted the ongoing work with the NHS and the potential longer-term benefits of partnership working with such a large employer.

16.26 College Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2015-16

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Innovation introduced Paper 6 which showed both financial and non-financial performance indicators for 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Members noted the financial KPIs and benchmarking data.

In relation to the non-financial KPIs, members noted that there were a range of interventions to improve the numbers on early withdrawals including guidance and learning support and increasing levels of engagement through the work of the Student Association and an increased emphasis on sport as a motivator. The Committee noted that continuous improvement in this area was a long-term agenda.

16.27 Organisational Well-being**(i) Employers Association Update**

It had been agreed to include an update on matters associated with the work of the Employers Association at meetings of the Committee.

Alex Linkston as chair of the Management Negotiating Team on the support side provided a verbal update on the most recent meeting.

It was noted that members of UNISON, one of the four unions on the support side, had recently voted in favour of action in relation to the 2015 pay claim. The issues related to the interpretation of 'parity' with the pay deal agreed with lecturing staff.

It was not yet clear what form any industrial action might take or what impact it might have on the College. The management team were looking at ways to minimise potential impact in areas such as fire marshall cover and also to continue to foster communication and good relationships locally.

Colleges Scotland was currently updating guidance with the intention that this would be issued to all staff shortly.

In terms of the longer term agenda, it was noted that there was a good deal of work to be done in relation to the workforce of the future. It was noted that George Hotchkiss was a member of the working group that was taking this forward.

(ii) Human Resources Management Report

The Senior HR Business Partner presented the report covering the period to end June 2016. The Committee noted that the new HR team was now fully in place.

In relation to staff absence figures, it was noted that the average was broadly in line with the average figures from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) for the education sector as a whole. It was agreed that it would be useful to try and get more detailed figures from CIPD both by sector and for Scotland, and also to look for more recent benchmarking data from colleges of a similar size.

Action 3: Senior HR Business Partner

In relation to the Children's Hearing Training Unit restructuring, it was noted that the one individual at risk of redundancy had been redeployed. It was noted that policies would be checked for appropriate cross-referencing to reflect the commitment to redeployment where possible.

Members noted that some employment policies were now within the remit of national pay bargaining including the work on pay and conditions.

In relation to the equalities monitoring return, members repeated their concern that the information was of little value given the large percentage of the workforce that was still undisclosed. It was agreed that there should be a further push in this area perhaps involving the unions as a way of encouraging take-up and that the Equalities Committee should take this forward in the first instance.

Action 4: Senior HR Business Partner**16.28 Quarterly Complaints Report**

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Innovation presented the quarterly complaints report.

It was noted that a number of complaints related to one particular class with a number of associated issues around student selection and class teaching which had now been resolved.

Members agreed to note the report.

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16.29 Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

16.30 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers & Training Needs

The Committee were content with the meeting, the information received and supporting papers presented.

16.31 The next scheduled meeting would take place on 24 November at 9.30am.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Secretary to the Board was aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed
Chair, Finance & General Purposes Committee

Date