

West Lothian College

22 November 2018

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minute of Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on **Friday 31 August 2018 at 9.30am** in the Doyle Training Room, in the College.

Present: Morag McKelvie (Chair)
Jackie Galbraith
Richard Lockhart
Moirá Niven
Claire Probert

In attendance: Jennifer McLaren – Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services
George Hotchkiss – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning
Derek O’Sullivan – Senior HR Business Partner (item 18.33)
Karine McNair – Secretary to the Board

18.27 Welcome/Apologies

The Chair welcomed Jackie Galbraith to her first meeting in the capacity of Principal.

Apologies were received from Alex Linkston, Frank Gribben and Simon Earp due to the change of date of the meeting.

It was also noted that Angela Bell had resigned as the Support Staff Board Member and an election was currently underway to select a new Support Staff Board Member. The Chair expressed her thanks to Angela for her contribution to the Committee and the Board.

18.28 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18.29 Minute of Meeting of 14 June 2018

The Minute of the meeting of 14 June 2018 was approved as a correct record.

West Lothian College22 November 2018

18.30 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 14 June 2018

Regarding Action 1, Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services confirmed that a message had been conveyed to Unison that the College were reviewing the absence policy and a similar message would be given to the EIS. It has been confirmed that absence policies are not included in National Bargaining and therefore since the College needs a more robust and fair policy, the Senior Team will proceed with a review and update of the absence policy.

The Committee queried the long date of April 2019 and Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services noted that this was the date the OHS contract ceased which is the reason April 2019 was used as the end date for the absence policy review. It was noted that a policy would be prepared well in advance of this date but it was thought best to launch any new policies only when a new OH contractor had been identified to ensure harmonisation of the College's policies with any new OH system.

Regarding Action 2, Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services confirmed that a letter had been received from the Scottish Funding Council which stated that they recognised West Lothian College had been disadvantaged with the allocation of capital funding but there would be no change to the allocation. The Principal confirmed that a meeting was arranged with the Chief Executive of the Scottish Funding Council next week and the capital funding allocation would be one of the topics to be discussed. The Committee concluded that it was positive that the Scottish Funding Council were consistently reminded of the College's need for capital funding and agreed with the Senior Team's approach of having projects readily identified for funding should any become available.

Regarding Action 8, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning confirmed that the next year's KPI target had been set before the current year's KPI actual figures had been finalised. Once finalised, the current year had performed better than expected so the future KPI targets turned out to be based on lower expectations than reality. The College is currently working on having more timely and accurate internal data so instances such as this should be avoided in the future.

The Committee noted all other actions as duly completed.

West Lothian College

22 November 2018

18.31 Financial Progress

(i) Financial Forecast Return (FFR)

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services presented the FFR stating that the SFC guidance was becoming more prescriptive in an attempt to have more comparable data across the sector. The College had followed the SFC guidance in the most part however, the College had included a growth in credits where the guidance was to assume no change until 2022-23 where a 3.2% decrease in credits should be assumed. The decrease reflected the end of the European Social Fund (“ESF”) money. However, the College has a growth strategy over and above any decrease in funding from the ESF. Following a visit from the SFC this week, it was indicated that if the Outcome Manager had agreed an overall growth for the College then the FFR may include additional credits however there was no guarantee that the SFC would accept that as the final position.

The Committee agreed that the FFR should reflect the correct position for the individual College regardless of the sector guidance. West Lothian College has a growing young population and a justification for increasing credits and College activity which should be reflected in the FFR.

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services confirmed that the 3% efficiency mentioned on page 2 of the FFR commentary related to an assumed 3% saving for all public sector bodies and applied to all costs.

It was noted that one of the factors for the good performance of the College was the strong commercial activities and the Committee noted the good work of the commercial team. In particular, it was announced that the Children’s Hearing Scotland contract for the next 3 years had been awarded to the College with the contract to be signed in the coming weeks. The Committee approved acceptance of the contract award and noted the immense team effort of everyone including Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise and Head of Commercial & Marketing in delivering an outstanding result for the College.

The FFR was recommended for approval by the Board.

Action 1: Board Secretary

(ii) June 2018 Management Accounts

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services presented the June 2018 Management Accounts and commented that the results showed a good year. Worth noting was the £180k of investment spend which had been allocated to 3 projects against a budgeted £78k due to the strong commercial activity of the College. The additional income had allowed a conversion of a teaching room to a 'Collaboration Teaching Space', a refurbishment of the staff room and the creation of a NHS Simulation Hub.

The Committee were interested in visiting all three areas at their next meeting.

Action 2: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services pointed out the pension actuarial valuation which had resulted in a positive movement.

The Committee noted that the Management Accounts commentary has presented consistent messages throughout the year and commended the Finance Team for their work and Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services for their leadership.

The Committee agreed to note the papers.

(iii) Income Generation Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented the Income Generation Report pointing out that the Foundation Apprenticeship programme now had increased its enrolments to 94. While this was a robust enrolment, the target for next year is much higher so the College are looking into the offering to ensure the 2019/20 target is realistic. In particular, it was noted that the College needs to focus on courses that are not currently offered at schools and work more in partnership with the schools to deliver Foundation Apprenticeships.

The Committee noted the Employability Fund table and remarked that it was interesting that funding was being taken away from the College sector in favour of Local Authorities and the third sector. The Principal confirmed that this was in line with Scottish Government policy. However, the College will continue to include employability programmes as part of the curriculum and it should be

West Lothian College

22 November 2018

an integral part of the College's offering within existing credit allocations.

The Committee noted the report.

(iv) Financial Regulations

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented the Financial Regulations and the Committee agreed that the red track changes were a useful aid in reviewing the document.

It was commented that the change of 'estates' to 'infrastructure' on page 18 at point 11.1 was a sensible amendment. Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services confirmed that a merged Infrastructure Policy is currently being drafted and will come to this Committee for discussion and approval in due course.

The Committee approved the Financial Regulations.

(v) Pre Audit Credit Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, presented the Pre Audit Credit Report noting that the figures were still subject to SFC auditing. The credits were above target, in part due to summer school courses.

The Committee were reminded that Associate Students and Foundation Apprenticeships were not credit bearing activities.

The Committee were interested to hear that there should be more Associate Student places with Queen Margaret University and Napier University in the coming years. It was noted that the funding arrangements can be quite complicated but essentially the College obtains a percentage of the fee from the university.

The Committee agreed to note the paper.

18.32 College Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2017-2018

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented the KPIs commenting that the Financial KPIs followed the good Management Accounts.

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning commented that there was more work to do for the Non-Financial KPIs but the figures were improving. In

West Lothian College22 November 2018

particular there will be a main focus this year on Higher Education Full Time and a focus on early withdrawals for Further Education Full Time.

The Committee agreed to note the paper.

18.33 Organisational Well-being**(i) Human Resources Management Report**

The Senior HR Business Partner presented the report covering the quarter to end June 2018. It was highlighted that turnover remained static and absence has reduced.

West Lothian Council's HR payroll system is currently being put out for tender and Senior HR Business Partner confirmed that he will be involved in the process because the College has a Shared Service Agreement so that the College are represented in the decision process.

The Committee queried the £100 payment made to staff and Senior HR Business Partner confirmed that the payment was made as a result of a dispute regarding the date the £100 was applicable from. This was taken to the Employment Tribunal who found in favour of the union.

The Committee commented that the format of the HR report was helpful and felt that the cover page was superseded by the rolling action plan on page 1 of the report. The Committee requested that the rolling action plan become the cover page of the report for the next meeting.

Action 3: Senior HR Business Partner

The Committee noted the report.

(ii) Employers Association Update

The Chair of the Board of Governors had provided an email update of the Employers Association which was read on his behalf by the Board Secretary.

It was noted that there had not been a great deal of change over the summer. On the Support Side, the Employers Association were

West Lothian College

22 November 2018

close to agreeing a deal to September 2020 and work continued on agreeing a procedural agreement with the Unions on implementing Job Evaluations.

With regard to the Lecturers, the 3 year deal had been rejected by the Unions and the Unions members were being consulted on an indicative strike ballot.

The Committee thanked the Chair of the Board of Governors for the report

18.34 Complaints Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, presented the Complaints Report and the Committee were concerned to see that complaints had been upheld on some unacceptable staff behaviour. It was commented that staff may find it useful to be reminded of the expected standards of the College. This should be delivered in a positive way since the intention would be to protect staff from complaints arising as the process can be stressful regardless of the result.

The Principal agreed to send a message to all Centre Heads to remind their staff of the acceptable behaviours at the College and the expected standards for all.

Action 4: Principal

The Committee noted the report.

18.35 Any Other Business

No other matters of business were raised.

18.36 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers & Development Plan

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

The Committee agreed that the additional action headers were useful when reviewing the papers and requested that future papers not only have the action in the header but also in a table on the agenda showing

West Lothian College

22 November 2018

“For Information”, “For Discussion” or “For Approval”.

Action 5: Board Secretary

18.37 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 22 November 2018 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