

West Lothian College

27 February 2020

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minute of Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on **Thursday 21 November at 9.30am** in the Principal's Room in the College.

Present: Moira Niven (Chair)
 Jackie Galbraith (Principal & Chief Executive)
 Frank Gribben
 Alex Linkston
 Richard Lockhart
 Julia Simpson
 Lynne Hollis

In attendance: Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services)
 Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise)
 Derek O'Sullivan – (Senior HR Business Partner) items 19.47 to 19.49 only
 Karine McNair – Secretary to the Board

19.43 Welcome/Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Sue Cook who was joining as an observer from the Audit Committee.

19.44 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19.45 Minutes of Meeting of 5 September 2019

The Minutes of the meeting of 5 September 2019 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

19.46 Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting of 5 September 2019

Action 2 was noted as ongoing and the Principal updated the Committee that all frontline staff will have deaf awareness training and key staff will have British Sign Language training.

The Committee noted all other actions as duly completed.

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19.47 Financial Progress**(i) Annual Report & Financial Statements 2018-19**

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 3 noting that the Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with Accounting Standards and guidance from the SFC. The Committee noted that the deficit was due to the impact of the actuarial revaluation of the pension provisions. The committee was asked to note the adjusted operating surplus position after adjusting for non-cash one-off or distorting items required by the SORP. The summary sheet showed the financial position of the College at the year-end as per the management accounts. The college achieved a reduced surplus compared to budget due to investment in the infrastructure and IT and was able to achieve this due to cost control and a strong commercial performance.

The Committee discussed the complexity of the Financial Statements and expressed concern that they do not clearly show the true financial position of the College. The Committee were concerned that, should outside organisations be looking to work with the College, the Financial Statements would present a misleading picture.

The Committee requested that the Principal provide an overlay 'executive summary' type of document highlighting the College's successes and challenges.

Action 1: Principal

The Principal requested that the Board Members send her 2 or 3 bullet points they would like to see highlighted in the 'executive summary' which she would send to MSPs, staff and the wider stakeholder community.

Action 2: Board Members

The Committee suggested that the 'executive summary' could be used to demonstrate that the College is able to manage resources and is an institution worth investing in given the growing population in the region and growing demand for its services in the community.

The Committee recommended the Financial Statements to the Audit Committee for their review.

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(ii) Reconciliation of Final Outturn for 2018-19 with Forecast at June 2019

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 4 noting that funding for job evaluation would only be allocated by SFC once the exercise was complete.

The Committee queried why some European funding had not been fully utilised. It was explained that due to unforeseen staff illness a trip had not been able to take place. The team involved in European trips had since worked on creating better contingencies to avoid a repeat of a trip cancellation in future.

The Committee noted the paper.

(iii) College Certificate 2018-19

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise, presented paper 5 noting that the final credit claim was 1% above target and therefore there would be no clawback of funding.

The Committee noted the paper.

(iv) Management Accounts

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 6 explaining that the deficit forecast was a worst case scenario and due to staff sick absence.

The Committee discussed the In Year Redistribution Request made by the College for £553k additional student funding largely due to supporting care experienced students. Due to Scottish Government policy, the College are obliged to make the extra payments regardless of whether the additional funding request to SFC is successful. Many Colleges have seen a sharp increase in the number of students identifying as care experienced. If the College does not receive additional SFC funding, the only contingency available to the College is to reduce spending in other areas which could impact the student experience.

The Senior HR Business Partner addressed the long term sickness cases currently being noted in the management accounts. The main reasons for absence are mental health, muscular skeletal and viruses. A number of these cases are curriculum staff where lecturing cover is required to ensure that classes can still be run. Where current staff cannot be redeployed, bank staff need to be

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brought in which increases the cost. The new Your Attendance Matters Policy for staff is in place and the new occupational health provider conducts face-to-face meetings with staff. All long term absences are discussed in detail at Senior Team meetings and health and wellbeing in general is being highlighted in the College.

The Committee suggested that staff could be reminded more frequently of the health and wellbeing benefits offered by the College e.g. free physiotherapy. The Committee also recommended that the College look into the cost and benefit of offering flu vaccinations to all staff through occupational health.

Action 3: Senior HR Business Partner

It was noted that there is a forthcoming managers meeting where the Senior HR Business Partner will highlight the need for managers to work with staff to manage absence.

The Committee noted the paper.

(v) Income Generation Report

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 7 and highlighted that the Part Time and Short Course income was lower due to the inconsistency of information around Individual Training Accounts and large employers accessing Flexible Workforce Development Fund ("FWDF") courses rather than short courses. In response, a College group has been set up to investigate the possibility of offering professional institute courses and targeting smaller employers not included in the FWDF.

The Committee requested that the College group conclusions be reported to the Learning & Teaching Committee.

Action 4: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise

The Foundation Apprenticeship target has been met and there has been some very positive outcomes from discussions with schools and employers. From January, the College will be the preferred provider for the childminding qualifications now required to register as a childminder with the local authority.

The Committee noted the paper.

(vi) Financial Workshop Report

Paper 8, Financial Workshop Report was approved.

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19.48 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2018-19

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 9, which the Committee discussed and felt that the paper could be redesigned to show the KPIs for each Committee's particular responsibilities. A full paper combining all Committee KPI papers would then be brought to the Board. The redesigned paper could also look to benchmark against more similar Colleges e.g. South Lanarkshire. This would be taken forward in 2020.

Action 5: Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services

19.49 Organisational Well-being

(i) Human Resources Report

The Senior HR Business Partner presented the report covering the quarter to 30 September 2019.

A new HR system will go live in March 2020.

Leave of Absence is to be discussed with the management team to ensure consistency. Although the policy is a reserved policy for national bargaining, the Committee advised that the College needs to develop some operational guidance to provide consistency and fairness for the College workforce.

Action 6: Senior HR Business Partner

The Committee noted the report.

(ii) Employers Association Update

The Chair of the Board confirmed that the Employers Association residential last week had been productive with the Fairwork Framework being discussed. The Employers Association are working with the SFC and College sector to introduce good employer guidelines.

The Job Evaluation process is being held up by GDPR claims by some Colleges.

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19.50 Complaints Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise presented paper 10. The Committee noted that there was some improved resolution of complaints with fewer escalation to higher levels.

The Committee noted the paper.

19.51 Any Other Business

No other matters of business were raised.

19.52 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers & Development Plan

The Committee were content with the meeting, the information received and the Development Plan.

The Committee considered that some relevant campus visits could be to the hybrid car in Motor Vehicle (February) and the outdoor classroom (June).

19.53 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 27 February 2020 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