

## West Lothian College

29 June 2021

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### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minute of Meeting of the Board Governors held on **Tuesday 9 March 2021** at 4.30pm via Zoom

Present: Alex Linkston (Chair)  
Sue Cook (Vice Chair)  
Jackie Galbraith (Principal & Chief Executive)  
Simon Ashpool  
Tom Bates  
Kirsti Clark  
Jinty Dobson  
Frank Gribben  
Lynne Hollis  
Iain McIntosh  
Jeremy Miles  
Colin Miller  
Moirra Niven  
Julia Simpson  
Neil Sinclair

In attendance: David Eardly (Internal Auditor)  
Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement)  
Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)  
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services and Acting Board Secretary)  
Sandra Callan (Executive Secretary and Minute Taker)

#### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to the new board member, Jeremy Miles and David Eardly (internal auditor). Apologies were noted from Elaine Cook, Richard Lockhart and Sue Stahly.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no other declarations of interest.

#### **3 Minute of Meeting of 8 December 2020**

The Minute of the meeting of the Board of Governors of 8 December 2020 was approved as a correct record.

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### **4 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 8 December 2020**

All actions from the minute of meeting of 8 December 2020 were noted as duly completed.

Regarding Action 3 it was confirmed that the risk register would be a standing agenda item at the Board of Governors meetings.

### **5 Student Association Report**

Members noted the report from the student association. An update was given on the new Microsoft Teams channel that had been launched for students and thanks were extended to all who helped in setting up the channel.

The student association continued to work in partnership with the Larder and the school clothing bank.

A volunteer from the ambassador team was currently going forward for his gold Duke of Edinburgh award and will put forward his volunteering experience with the student association in support of achieving it.

Regarding the SPARKLE report, a short discussion took place regarding a comparison exercise with last year's feedback as the board would be interested in noting where improvements had been made. The student association was confident that all areas had improved.

### **6 Chief Executive's Report**

The Principal acknowledged that it had been a hard few months and a lot of effort had been put in to keep people positive and engaged. The college now had a small number of students back on campus.

The staff conference has had really good engagement and despite all the challenges the college is facing, people are continuing to invest time in building for the future and discussions with partners and stakeholders were still taking place.

The board was informed that students returning to college were coping well and all the safety procedures put in place by the college helped to settle anxiety levels. It was noted that there was a good level of support in place for both staff and students.

It was confirmed that the college was being very careful about the number of student groups being allowed back on campus and there was no expectation of these significantly increasing before the summer break.

Members noted the Chief Executive Report.

## **7 Regional Chair's Feedback**

Work was continuing with the Scottish Funding Council review. Review groups had been set up by the chairs group and the Chair was leading on a group looking at the vision.

The Chair updated the members on the recruitment of the board secretary and the change to the title of the post to Board Secretary and Governance Advisor and asked the board to approve this new title. Interviews for the post were ongoing and the board would be requested to approve the recommendation made for this appointment.

The board approved the change of title to Board Secretary and Governance Advisor.

## **8 External Validation of Board Effectiveness Self-Assessment Presentation**

The internal auditor delivered a presentation on findings from undertaking the board effectiveness review. This set out the key conclusions and recommendations which will be contained in the report. It was noted that the findings had been very positive.

A short discussion on conflict and disagreement took place and it was acknowledged that challenge was a positive thing at executive level and could lead to improved governance procedures being put in place.

The board thanked the internal auditor and will receive the report in due course.

## **9 Lessons Learnt – Working through the Pandemic**

The Principal delivered the above presentation which would be circulated to the board as their input to this exercise would be valued. This exercise was being undertaken with the vice principals and would also be shared with a wider group of staff. The presentation shared some reflections and lessons learnt over the past twelve months from the first lockdown and focussed on staff experience and looking at what has worked and not worked.

The Principal also felt that it would be beneficial for the board to conduct a similar exercise to see what lessons they had learnt during this challenging time and it was suggested that maybe the board should have sight of more internal information in order to contribute more to the college.

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The board felt that, as a college, the achievements and positive outcomes that had been made during the last twelve months was down to the positive leadership from the Principal, senior colleagues and the positive response from college staff.

The Principal acknowledged the support from all staff at the college.

It was also noted that early withdrawal and student retention had improved since last year.

The board noted that the presentation would be circulated and also that the board should reflect on their role.

### **Action 1: Principal to circulate the presentation**

#### **10 Board Development Report**

The acting board secretary updated on two additional items:

- in terms of the risk assessment, the risk management workshop would take place on 22 March 1pm – 4pm.
- the college was tendering for its internal audit service and a recommendation would come for approval at the next Audit Committee with the new contract in place from September 2021.

The board approved papers 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

A discussion took place regarding paper 7 and it was agreed that the paragraph regarding the board's decision to remove a board member should be moved as this would occur after the board process has been exhausted.

The acting board secretary agreed to make the above amendment and email the updated paper to the board for their approval.

### **Action 2: Acting Board Secretary**

**Committee Business**

**11 Learning and Teaching Committee**

**(i) Update from Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee from draft minute of 24 February 2021**

Highlights from the meeting were the presentation from the Care, Health and Sport Faculty and the student association report which outlined all the work being undertaken throughout the pandemic.

The meeting provided significant reassurance that the college is performing well.

The members noted the report.

**(ii) Self-Evaluation Report 2019-20**

The members noted the paper.

**(iii) Outcome Agreement 2020-21 (revised)**

The members noted the paper.

**12 Finance and General Purposes Committee**

**(i) Update from Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee from draft minute of 25 February 2021.**

The financial progress (January 2021 management accounts) was very positive and it was noted that the surplus the college would normally have to achieve (£158k) would be invested in the extension of the construction and engineering workshop. Also noted that although the college had seen a reduction in income caused by the pandemic, there were also savings made. Discussions had also taken place around the college's cashflow position and the projected balance expected at 31 July. It had been confirmed that there were no concerns at this stage regarding the year-end balance.

Key Performance Indicators also discussed and noted that the decrease in student withdrawals had been a positive. A revised KPI paper would be coming to the board.

Also noted that the construction and engineering workshop project was going well and expected to be completed by 31 March 2021. The next major project would be the refurbishment of the ground floor of the Street Building.

A five-year estates plan was being worked on.

HR and People Development report demonstrated all the work, staff support and training that was going on in the college. A lot of work had been done on the college's values and behaviours.

A few members of the committee had attended a cyber security session booked through College Development Network. This session had been extremely interesting and the Finance and General Purposes Committee had agreed that a recommendation be made to the board to hold a cyber security session at a future board meeting.

The members noted the update and agreed to the above recommendation. The acting board secretary would enquire about a cyber security session being delivered at a board meeting.

### **Action 3: Acting Board Secretary**

## **13 Audit Committee**

### **(i) Update from the Chair of the Audit Committee from draft minute of 4 March 2021**

A highlight from the meeting was the virtual tour and discussion with the sport and fitness staff and the committee would like this type of discussion to continue with other staff groups.

A presentation from the Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure had also taken place and the Head will now attend all future Audit Committee meetings. The Audit Committee had agreed that a recommendation be made to the board to have a presentation at a future board meeting highlighting the projects currently being undertaken at the college, and in particular, Power Bi.

The very positive cyber security internal audit report had also been discussed at the meeting.

The Chair of the Audit Committee wished to draw attention to the strategic risk register where it had been agreed that each committee would look after their own risks individually. The Audit Committee recommended that the risk register be a standing item at the board as a discussion paper and the board would take

collective responsibility for it. Assurances would be given from the Audit, Learning and Teaching and Finance and General Purposes Committees that they were satisfied with the risk mitigations.

The members noted the update and agreed to the recommendation regarding the risk register. The recommendation regarding a presentation from the Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure team was also agreed.

**Action 4: Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement**

**(ii) Health & Safety Quarterly Report**

The board noted the report.

**(iii) Health & Safety Annual Report**

The board noted the report.

**(iv) Strategic Risk Register and Risk Management Responsibilities**

Discussed earlier and recommendation had been noted.

**14 Update from Nominations Committee**

A meeting had taken place earlier this afternoon and it had been agreed that the Chair of the Board of Governors would meet with new board member outwith this meeting to discuss which committee he would join.

**15 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers, Development Needs**

The Board of Governors was content with the meeting and supporting papers presented.

**16 Date of Next Meeting**

29 June 2021 at 4.30pm via Zoom