

West Lothian College

9 September 2021

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Minute of Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on **Thursday 17 June 2021 at 10am** via zoom

For information: A pre-meeting was held with Committee Members and a representative from the Student Support Department to enable Committee Members to meet the staff team. The Committee thanked the team for providing a very positive and authentic insight into the college.

Present: Moira Niven (Chair)
 Jackie Galbraith (Principal and Chief Executive)
 Lynne Hollis
 Alex Linkston
 Julia Simpson
 Sue Stahly
 Kirsti Clark (SA Vice President)

In attendance Jinty Dobson (SA President)
 Danny Duffy (Head of Finance, Procurement & Student Funding)
 Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services)
 Simon Earp, (Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement)
 Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)
 Derek O'Sullivan (Head of HR and People Development) - agenda
 items 8 (i) and 8 (ii) only
 Iain McIntosh (Observer)
 Fiona Hudson (Guest)
 Lesley Aitkenhead (Board Governance Advisor)

1 **Welcome/Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Paula White joined to present item 8 on the agenda. Frank Gribben did not attend as a result of mix up with invitations.

The Chair welcomed Fiona Hudson as the new Head of Finance, and thanked Danny Duffy for his contribution to the committee and college and wished him success in his new role.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

West Lothian College

9 September 2021

3 Minutes of Meeting of 25 February 2021

The Minute of the meeting of 25 February 2021 was approved as a correct record of the meeting subject to one amendment.

4 Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting of 25 February 2021

The committee noted all actions as duly completed.

5 Financial Progress

(i) January 2021 Annual Budget 2021-22

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 3 and requested the committee recommend approval of the Annual Budget by the Board.

The committee noted the overall positive budget position, given the challenging year and discussed the provision for additional roles that were required to meet the changing needs of the college. The committee acknowledged the need for the additional roles, especially in relation to digital equality and widening access.

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services highlighted the increase in investment in infrastructure, including areas of technology and development of estates (covered in item 7 and 8).

It was noted that the majority of funding is from the basic grant, but additional funding is also available from one-off grants relating to mental health and investment in digital.

The committee recommended the annual budget 2021-22 for approval by the Board and thanked the presenter for the efforts in achieving a positive budget position.

(ii) Funding Allocation 2021-22

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 4 for noting. The committee noted the main change was that foundation apprenticeships are now being delivered through SFC credits instead of Skills Development Scotland.

The committee noted the paper.

West Lothian College

9 September 2021

(iii) Management Accounts April 2021

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 5 for noting and advised that there were no material concerns to highlight. The committee noted the paper and referenced the major projects as a good result for the college.

(iv) Business Development Report

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement advised that Paper 6, Business Development Report was for information. The committee welcomed the information and noted the good progress in developing key initiatives.

(v) Accounting Policies

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 7 for approval. The amendments to the Accounting Policy related to the treatment of assets, including IT equipment and has been updated as the result of advice from the Scottish Funding Council. The amendments are not considered material and can be applied as required. The committee approved the paper.

(vi) Financial Regulations

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 8 for recommendation for approval by the Board. The amendments to the Financial Regulations were a minor point reflecting changes in approach to classification of group assets. The committee was advised that the amendment was approved by Mazars, the college's external auditors and is in line with Financial Regulations.

The committee recommended the proposed changes are approved by the Board.

(vii) Assets Value

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 9 for approval. The committee noted its responsibility in given due consideration to the approach taken for valuation of assets, that are included in the annual accounts.

The committee discussed the approach to depreciation and approved the paper.

West Lothian College

9 September 2021

6 HR and People Development

(i) HR and People Development Report

Head of HR and People Development presented Paper 10 for discussion. The presenter summarised the key messages, including reference to improvements in staff sickness rates compared to previous year. The committee noted the status of the local dispute with EIS-FELA. The committee thanked the presenter for the paper.

(ii) Hybrid Working Group

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 11 for noting. The presenter advised that a new working group has been set up to look at ways of working in a hybrid world, following a staff survey that illustrated a desire from the majority of staff to continue to work remotely for part of the week. This will be the focus for discussion at the August staff conference. The committee noted the proposal and welcomed the proposed approach.

(iii) Equality Mainstreaming Report

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement presented Paper 12 for noting. The paper was presented to the Learning & Teaching Committee for approval, and was presented to this committee in relation to staff equality, diversity and inclusion.

The chair and committee welcomed the paper and commented on the quality of the content and presentation, suggesting formatting changes to the bar charts in the appendices. The committee agreed that the report contained insightful information and were keen to understand how the college would use the findings of the report. It was noted that the report included use of external validation, which was viewed as a positive method of evaluation. The committee noted the report.

(iv) Employer Association Update

The Board Chair provided a verbal update on discussions with the Employer Association. The committee noted the progress that was being made and the next steps in terms of an agreed statement by EIS. The committee noted the distinction between discussions at a local level and national level and the effort that has been made to work collaboratively with the Employers Association in the future. College Scotland plans to complete a lesson learned review, aimed at improving working relationships on a more ongoing basis.

The Board Chair was thanked for the update.

West Lothian College

9 September 2021

7 Infrastructure Update

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented paper 13, which gave an update on the infrastructure plans for 2020-21 for recommendation for approval by the Board. The committee was asked to recommend approval of a revised budget for projects planned for 2021-22, which included expansion of construction and engineering workshop; phase II of main building project and equipment upgrade.

The committee supported the revised budget and recognised the increased value these projects were bringing to the college, including widening access for available courses.

The committee noted that these projects were transformational and were all in line with the college's strategic goals.

The committee recommended for approval by the Board.

8 Five Year Estates Plan

The Head of Estates & Sustainability gave a presentation on the Five-Year Estates Plan.

The committee welcomed the presentation and the insight it provided on the estates plans and impact it will have on the college and its students and environment. The committee discussed possible site visits for Board members to see progress on the work and Board members were asked to arrange a visit with the Board Governance Advisor and Principal. The committee thanked the presenter for a very informative and insightful presentation.

9 Complaints Report

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement presented Paper 14 for noting and highlighted the key points. It was noted that for the period from Feb 21 to 31 May 21 the number of complaints increased to 20, which was an increase of 6, compared to the same period in 2019-20. The increase is in line with trends for this time of year and impacted changes to approach due to COVID.

All complaints were managed in accordance with the complaints procedure and are now resolved, with improvements in place. A legal case continues to be managed. The committee noted the paper.

West Lothian College

9 September 2021

10 Strategic Risk Register

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 15 covering movements in the Strategic Risk Register since the February 2021 Committee for discussion. The presenter highlighted the key improvements to mitigations which has resulted in a reduction 4 of the 12 risks that are oversighted by the committee. The committee noted the control improvements which were consistent with previous papers to the Committee, in terms of Estate Configuration, Financial Control and Pay Awards. The committee noted the paper and movements in the overall risk profile of the college.

11 Procurement Strategy

Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 16 for information. The committee were advised that there had been small changes to the Procurement Strategy to ensure it aligns with Fair Working Practice. The committee thanked the presenter for the update and noted the changes.

12 AOB

The committee noted that the Student Association was nominated for an award for its work on equality. The committee congratulated the Student Association and wished them luck for the award.

13 Review of Meeting, Development and Supporting Papers

The committee agreed that the papers were good quality, especially the Equality Mainstreaming Report, and the presentations from staff were positive and engaging. Committee members were advised of a Staff Celebration Event on Tuesday 22 June, which they were welcome to join.

14 Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the committee was Thursday 9 September 2021 at 10am.

Signed
Chair, Finance and General Purposes Committee

Date