

West Lothian College

24 November 2022

Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of 8 September 2022

Present: Moira Niven (Chair)
Sue Stahly
Tony Sharkey (Shadow member)
Karine Bourdarias (Student President)

In Attendance: Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services)
The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement
Hazel Brady (Faculty Director, Business, Creative and Enterprise)
Blair Stewart (Student President)
Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)

1 Committee Administration

The question of the committee being quorate was raised at the start of the meeting.

Action 1: Board Secretary and Governance Advisor to take advice and review committee membership as required.

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of academic year 2022-23, noting that Karine Bourdarias (Student President) was present and Blair Stewart (Student President) was in attendance. The Chair also welcomed Graham Clark (Special Projects Director) and Diane Mitchell (Faculty Director, Construction and the Built Environment and Workforce Development) and thanked them for their presentation on the Eco House Project.

Apologies were noted from Alex Linkston (Chair of the Board of Governors), Jackie Galbraith (Principal), Frank Gribben and Derek O'Sullivan.

1.1.1 Presentation: Eco House Project

A presentation on the ECO House Project was given to the Committee by Graham Clark (Special Projects Director) and Diane Mitchell (Faculty

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Director, Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment and Workforce Development).

The committee heard from Graham Clark (Special Projects Director) how the project build has been progressed with West Lothian Council planning department and work carried out to date to prepare the site. The build will consist of a passive house and a shell house which will be used for practical, interactive teaching practice. This will future proof the project, enabling students in future academic years to use the house to develop modern building and technological skills and making best use of project funding.

Diane Mitchell (Faculty Director Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment and Workforce Development) discussed the challenges in building a motivated team with new technology skills to work on the project. Staff are being given time to engage in appropriate continuing professional development to update practical and teaching skills.

The committee found the presentation exciting and engaging and thanked both Directors for the presentation.

1.2 **Declarations of Conflicts of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 **Minutes of Meeting of 16 June 2022**

The minutes of the 16 June 2022 meeting were approved as correct.

1.4 **Matters Arising**

The Committee noted that Action 1: Presentation on ECO house was included in this meeting agenda and was duly completed. All other actions have been completed.

2 **Matters for Approval**

Paper 3: Infrastructure budget allocation

Paper 4: Recommend Financial Forecast Return to Board of Governors

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2.1 Infrastructure Report

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services introduced Paper 3 and discussed the huge amount of work carried out to date to update college digital and physical infrastructures. The committee noted this work and asked the Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to convey the committee's appreciation and thanks to the Estates and Digital Infrastructure teams.

Action 2: The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to formally thank Estates and Digital Infrastructure teams on behalf of the committee for their hard work and commitment to completing these projects to deadline.

The paper also laid out plans to upgrade the Faculties of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment in summer 2023 and Business, Creative and Enterprise in the period November 2022 - January 2023. The Faculty Director, Business, Creative and Enterprise discussed planned works and how plans are already being adapted due to changes in the beauty industry and the resultant loss of demand for traditional beauty courses.

The committee was informed that the budget allocated to both projects was, at this stage, an estimate only. The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services will update the committee on costs and seek further approval if required.

The committee was content to approve the budget requests as estimates and on the basis that further costs updates will be brought to future meetings.

Action 3: The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to bring cost updates to future meetings.

3. Matters for Recommendation for Board Approval

Financial Forecast Return (FFR) 2021-22 to 2026-27 to be recommended to the Board of Governors on 20 September 2022.

3.1 Financial Forecast Return

Jennifer McLaren, Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services discussed Paper 4: Financial Forecast Return 2021-22 to 2026-27. An additional paper updating the staff costs section was presented.

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services informed the committee that the paper sets out a possible scenario, not an actual planned course of action. The committee was asked to note the Executive

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Leadership Team and College Leadership Team are working currently on scenario planning.

The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement discussed inclusion of income from the Children's Hearing Service contract and asked the committee to note this contract will be re-tendered in September 2023.

The Committee asked what the timeline for reporting scenarios to Scottish Funding Council would be. Jennifer McLaren, Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services emphasized forecasts are based on Scottish Funding Council assumptions and are **not** an agreed budget forecast. The Committee asked whether there is a national review of colleges generally. The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services confirmed there is work going on behind the scenes to review the funding model and delivery options.

The committee was content to approve the Financial Forecast Review to be taken to the Board meeting on 20 September 2022.

Action 4: Audit Committee to take the Financial Forecast Return to the Board meeting of 20 September 2022 for approval.

4. Matters for Attention

4.1 Financial Management

4.1 (i) June 2022 Management Accounts

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts and discussed the planned deficit that had been agreed with the Scottish Funding Council. The committee was informed the rationale for this is due to additional investment. The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services informed the committee that funding from the Young Persons Guarantee has still to be received.

The committee noted Paper 5.

4.1 (ii) Credit Update 2021-22

The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement presented Paper 6 and drew the committee's attention to predictions the college will exceed the credit target in 2022-23. The committee was also informed about the forthcoming Scottish Funding Council final audit on 30 September 2022.

The committee noted this paper.

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4.2 Business Development Report

The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement presented Paper 7: Business Development Report. The Committee asked if it was appropriate for Skills Development Scotland to change the targets mid-contract. The committee was informed that the old contract had ended and was rolled over into the new contract.

The Chair asked if the committee was content with the presentation of this report and whether the information was sufficient.

The committee noted the paper and agreed the format and sufficiency of information was good.

4.3 HR and People Development Report

The Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 8 and highlighted the equalities data report included at Appendix 2.

The Committee praised the Staff Conference and the levels of engagement from staff on the day.

In light of the post pandemic situation and the cost of living crisis, the Committee requested that staff turnover be tracked quarterly in the HR and People Development Report and that staff absence rates are compared to pre-pandemic rates. It was agreed that the Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services would take this back to HR for consideration.

Action 5: The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to request amendment to HR reporting to include staff turnover rates and pre-pandemic absence year 2018-19.

The committee was pleased to note the 100% General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registration rate and asked that thanks be passed to Derek O'Sullivan (Head of HR and People Development), Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment) and Faculty Directors for the work that has achieved this. The committee also passed on good wishes for Derek O'Sullivan's speedy recovery.

Action 6: The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to pass on committee thanks as noted.

4.4 College Employers Scotland Update

This item was not covered due to apologies from Alex Linkston.

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5. Matters for Information

5.1 Student Funds Update 2021-22

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 9. The committee was informed that the majority of student funds had been spent and that a paper showing 2022-23 spend will be presented to the next meeting of Learning and Teaching Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Action 7: The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to prepare and present the paper to the November meetings of both committees.

The committee noted the paper.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

None

7. Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

The committee agreed that the meeting went very well and acknowledged attendance by the two newly-elected Student Association Presidents.

The matter of sufficiency of committee members has been raised and noted for action.

The Chair checked that both Student Association Presidents felt comfortable with the information presented and the Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services offered one-to-one sessions to support understanding of financial matters.

The committee agreed the meeting had gone well and the level of detail presented in papers was very good.

The committee was offered an opportunity to view newly refurbished accommodation in rooms IT1 and IT2 of the Faculty of Business, Creative and Enterprise.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Thursday 24 November 2022 at 10.30am.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Board Secretary and

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Governance Advisor was aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed
Chair, Finance and General Purposes Committee

Date