

**Minute of the Business, Resources and Infrastructure
Committee Meeting
Held via Video Conference Using Zoom
On Tuesday 2 June 2020**



Present: Steven Wallace (Chair)
Willie Mackie (Vice Chair)
Fiona Blain
Scott Cooley
Christopher Hall
Jack McCrindle
Fiona McQueen
Hazel Murphy
Mike Stewart
Carol Turnbull (Principal)
Alan Walker

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Board Secretary)
Yvonne Melvin (Executive Assistant)
Michael Breen (Vice Principal – Finance)
Anne Campbell (Vice Principal – Curriculum)
Jane McKie (Vice Principal – People)
James Thomson (Director of Finance and Student Funding)
David Davidson (Director of HR & OD)
Liz Walker (Head of Financial Services)
Nuala Boyle (Head of Business Growth) – *Item 16 Only*

1 Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Board Member Mary McClung.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10 March 2020 (Paper 1) (P)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Hazel Murphy

Seconded: Mike Stewart

Action Tracker (Paper 1a) (P)

Action 4 - The Committee noted that this would be covered in the main agenda.

Action 9 - The Committee agreed this would remain marked as In Progress.

Action 15 - The Committee agreed this be marked as Completed.

Action 16 - The Committee agreed this would remain marked as In Progress.

Action 19 - The Committee agreed this be marked as Completed.

Action 20 - The Committee agreed this be marked as Completed.

Action 21 - The Committee agreed this be marked as Completed.

Action 22 - The Committee noted that this would be covered in the main agenda.

Action 23 - The Committee noted that this would be covered in the main agenda.

Action 24 - The Committee noted that this would be covered in the main agenda.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered in the main agenda.

5 2020-21 Budgets for the academic year ending 31 July 2021 (Paper 2)

M Breen introduced Paper 2 as written and provided some further background information. The Committee noted and agreed that in the current situation of unprecedented uncertainty, it was appropriate to provide a 'business as usual' baseline budget in the first instance, to be updated at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, in September 2020, when more detailed information was available. It was also noted that the provision of a baseline budget at this time was an important indicator of the financial sustainability of the College given the two-year financial sustainability plan agreed with SFC.

J Thomson provided a presentation on the Colleges proposed 2020-21 baseline budget position, as set out in Paper 2. The relationship of the budget presented to the previously agreed Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) was emphasised. As part of the presentation, J Thomson and M Breen took the Committee through the key areas of Paper 2 and its appendices in detail, covering the approach taken to completing the budget and its context. The budget strategy was discussed at length, during which a number of questions were asked in relation to the potential impact of the pandemic on the College and the college sector. The Committee noted that a significant amount of detail still required national clarification.

The Committee agreed that the baseline budget be commended to the Board at its meeting on 16 June 2020, with an updated budget based on the further information available for 2020-21 being presented to the Committee at its meeting in September 2020. M Breen concluded by advising members that the current focus for the College was preparing the campuses for student and staff returning from the current lockdown position. Any further information consequent on the return would be included in the updated budget presented in September 2020.

The Committee thanked M Breen, J Thomson and the Finance Team for the work undertaken in producing Paper 2. The Committee approved the baseline budget as a correct representation of the Colleges position, outwith Covid-19, in line with the agreed Financial Sustainability Plan and commended it to the Board of Management. The Committee looked forward to receiving the updated budget based on the further information available in September 2020.

6 2019-20 Management Accounts to April 2020 (Paper 3) (P)

J Thomson introduced Paper 3, outlining the variances within the budget headings and advising that due to COVID19 the traditional Management Accounts format had been revised to provide more emphasis/clarity on key budget areas and financial projections going forward to July 2020. A number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received. In response to a question, J Thomson provided an update on the College's campus facilities, confirming that essential checks and maintenance had continued on all campuses during lockdown in line Government Guidelines.

The Committee approved the 2019-20 Management Accounts to April 2020 and noted the position to date.

7 2020-21 SFC Funded Capital and Revenue Expenditure Programme (Paper 4) (P)

M Breen introduced Paper 4 and noted that, whilst the capital allocation had increased on AY 2019-20, the amount provided was still significantly lower than allocations pre 2018-19 and this would continue to impact the College capital expenditure proposals. The Committee was advised that the College proposed to utilise £300,000 of its revenue maintenance grant for capital spend and that this would be used towards funding the North Ayrshire Future Skills Hub. It was noted that the utilisation of these funds was still to be agreed by SFC. The remaining capital allocation would be used towards staff and student ICT provision in preparation for the new AY2020-21 delivery model and towards alterations to the campuses in line with COVID-19 requirements.

The Committee was pleased to note that the College's NPD partner had provided a financial donation to the College to support the purchasing of laptops for students.

In response to a query regarding funding sources for digital poverty, C Turnbull advised that this was currently being discussed at a national level and had been raised as an issue at the Scottish Government's recent Education & Skills Committee meeting.

The Committee agreed that Paper 4 be commended to the Board for approval.

8 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy (Paper 5) (P)

D Davidson introduced Paper 5, advising that the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy had been subject to a full review to take account of the 2019-20 Organisational Review and that all accountabilities were now consistent with the revised organisational structure established as at 1 August 2019.

In response to a query regarding the College support of student health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 crisis, J McKie advised that both staff and representatives from the College's Student Association had continued to provide advice, guidance and support to students during the pandemic lockdown. Staff were able to actively promote access to The Big White Wall, a digital mental health and wellbeing service providing 24/7 online support, with which the College is in contract. The Committee was also advised that recent

contract data reports indicated students had been actively accessing the range of support provided online.

The Committee approved the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy as presented.

9 2020-21 Student Support Funds Allocation (Paper 6) (P)

J Thomson introduced Paper 6 and took the Committee through it as written. The Committee noted that the total allocation of circa £10.6 million included additional student support funding from SFC allocated as part of the 2019-20 in-year redistribution. J Thomson added that the College was able to allocate the total funding into the requisite categories, as set out in Paper 6, and previous years' trends and experience has been used as the basis of the allocations.

The expected position in relation to EMAs was also discussed and the Committee noted the College position in respect of Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) funding. During discussion, the Committee was pleased to learn that SAAS had allowed the College immediate access to circa £30,000 of the HE Discretionary Fund allocation for 2020-21 to provide students with additional financial support during the current lockdown.

The Committee noted and welcomed the content of Paper 6

10 HR and Staff Learning and Development Report (Paper 7) (P)

D Davidson took the Committee through Paper 7 and reminded members that the Paper formed the first part of the new format for the HR and Organisational Development report, which the Committee had agreed at the previous meeting. The Committee was advised that, as expected, the current lockdown had impacted on the content of the paper.

The Committee noted the content of Paper 7 and welcomed the sharp decrease in reported short-term sickness absence for the period as compared to the previous year, and that was now below the key performance indicator for the organisation of between 3 and 4%. It was also confirmed that there had been no confirmed cases of Covid-19 reported by staff. D Davidson advised members that the College wide CPD programme outlined had been launched as of 1 June 2020 and positive feedback had been received from staff.

The Committee noted Paper 7, which it considered informative and well received.

11 Equality and Inclusion & Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report (Paper 8) (P)

J McKie introduced the Equality and Inclusion and Health, Safety and Wellbeing report as the second part of the new format for the HR and Organisational Development report agreed at the previous meeting.

J McKie took the Committee through the report as written, highlighting that staff were being actively encouraged to undertake the online training provided, which included certain mandatory units. It was noted that all appropriate actions had been taken in respect of incidents reported during the period.

J McKie also highlighted the support provided to the community during Covid-19, as outlined in paragraph 1.6, and advised the Committee that the focus for the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team going forward would be to support the SLT in its efforts to re-open campuses safely and in accordance with the UK and Scottish Government guidelines. The Committee was advised that risk assessments had been, and would continue to be developed, as appropriate and required, and would be in place to support campus re-opening.

The Committee further noted the Gender Action Plan and how it fitted with the recently approved Outcome Agreement.

The Committee noted Paper 8, which was considered informative and well presented. The Committee commended J McKie and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team on their response to the current situation and, in particular, the work being undertaken to continue the support provided to students and staff during the period of lockdown.

12 Complaints Report (Second Quarter) (Paper 9) (P)

J McKie introduced Paper 9 and advised that the report covered the period from November 2019 to January 2020. The Committee noted that all actions in respect of customer care had been completed in the period.

The Committee noted Paper 9.

13 2019-20 Student Support Funds Position as at May 2020 (Paper 10) (P)

J Thomson introduced Paper 10 and stated that while there were no significant issues or concerns contained within the report, the College was committed to the provision of as much support as was possible to the student cohort. The Committee noted within the paper that the College projected a surplus of circa £32,000. J Thomson advised that the College intended to utilise this projected surplus to provide additional financial support to students adversely impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown. In response to a question, J Thomson advised that there were no issues to report in relation to EMA and SAAS funds.

The Committee noted Paper 10 and its content.

14 AOB

The Chair recognised that J McCrindle's tenure as Student President would finish at the end of this academic session and, as such, this would be his last attendance as a Business, Resources and Infrastructure Committee member. The Committee warmly thanked J McCrindle for his efforts and valued input to the work of the Committee. Members wished him well in his future endeavours.

15 Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 8 September 2020

(C/P) Confirmed minutes will be published on College Website

(P) – Paper will be published on the College Website

(R) – Paper is reserved, because it contains data or information of a personal nature, which is restricted by legislation, or because it contains commercially sensitive information, and will not be published on the College Website

Reserved Items on the next Page