

**Minute of the Business, Resources and Infrastructure
Committee Meeting
Held via Video Conference Using Zoom
On Tuesday 9 March 2021**



Present: Steven Wallace (Chair)
Willie Mackie (Vice Chair)
Beth Clelland
Scott Cooley
Steven Fegan
Lauren Howieson
Mary McClung
Fiona McQueen
Mike Stewart
Carol Turnbull (Principal)

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Board Secretary)
Yvonne Melvin (Board Administrative Officer)
Michael Breen (Vice Principal – Finance)
Anne Campbell (Vice Principal – Curriculum)
Jane McKie (Vice Principal – People)
James Thomson (Director of Finance, Student Funding and Estates)
David Davidson (Director of HR and Organisational Development)
Gavin Murray (Director of Curriculum)
Sara Turkington (Equality and Inclusion Advisor) – *Item 11 Only*
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 Committee members Janette Moore and Sathish Srinivasan.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 17 November 2020 (Paper 1) (P)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Willie Mackie **Seconded:** Mary McClung

Action Tracker (Paper 1a) (P)

Action 16 - The Committee agreed this remain In Progress. A further update is expected at the next meeting in June 2021.

4 Matters Arising

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

5 2020-21 Management Accounts (position as at 31 January 2021) (Paper 2) (P)

M Breen introduced the item, advising that a presentation would accompany the Paper to provide the Committee with a high-level overview of the 2020-21 Management Accounts as at 31 January 2021.

J Thomson provided the presentation (contained in Admincontrol) and took the Committee through the year to date variances against the year to date approved budget. The impact from the Covid-19 operational restrictions on the principal variances was discussed in detail and the Committee was re-assured by the projection that forecast reductions in commercial income would be offset by corresponding savings made in these areas and underspends in other expenditure areas. J Thomson concluded that the College was currently projected to exceed its budgeted position, but added the caveat that further COVID-19 operational restrictions could impact adversely on the final position.

Discussion followed during which a number of questions of clarification were asked, and satisfactory responses received. In response to one query, M Breen advised members that the position of other colleges in the sector was varied depending on a number of factors and that the projected position of Ayrshire College was positive in comparison to some.

The Committee noted the position presented in unprecedented and challenging times and approved the 2020-21 Management Accounts as at 31 January 2021. The Committee also commended the College, and in particular the Finance Team, for its continued financial acuity during this period.

6 SFC Indicative Funding 2021-22 Revenue & Capital (Verbal) (R)

M Breen provided the Committee with a verbal update, advising that, whilst no formal announcement of the SFC Offer of Grant for 2021-22 had been received to date, the outline draft budget for the college sector had been announced by the Scottish Government. The informal indications at this stage suggested that the SFC settlement looked fairly positive for the sector, with an inflationary uplift indicated. The overall capital position appeared tight for the sector, however there was no indication on the possible capital allocation for the College. At present, these indications were based on budget predictions, until such time as the draft Scottish budget received the approval of the Scottish Parliament.

It was agreed that an update would be circulated to members when the Offer of Grant had been published, with a draft College Budget for 2021-22 provided to the Committee as its meeting in June 2021. The Committee noted that a draft SFC budget for the college sector was expected to be submitted to the SFC Board by 12 March 2021.

The Committee thanked M Breen for the update and looked forward to further information being circulated in due course. The Committee also looked forward to receiving the draft 2021-22 College Budget for consideration at its scheduled June 2021 meeting.

Action: M Breen to circulate an update to members on receipt of the SFC Offer of Grant.

7 2020-21 Cashflow Projections (position as at 25 February 2021) (Paper 3) (R)

J Thomson introduced Paper 3 as presented. The Committee noted the projected trading cashflow balance as at 25 February 2021 and that trading cashflow remained positive in the period and in line with expectations.

The Committee noted Paper 3 and the positive position in the period.

8 2020-21 SFC Capital Expenditure (position as at 25 February 2021) (Paper 4) (R)

J Thomson took the Committee through Paper 4, highlighting Table 2 and the progress made against the project budgets agreed by the Board of Management on 18 June 2020.

The Committee noted the projected budget underspend in relation to the North Ayrshire Future Skills Hub as set out in Table 2. J Thomson advised that the College had discussed with SFC the carry forward of these unspent funds into the next financial year and stated that although positive a further update would be provided when the outcome of those discussions was known.

The Committee noted the capital expenditure against approved capital budgets as at 25 February 2021.

9 National Bargaining Update (Verbal) (R)

C Turnbull provided a verbal update. The Committee was advised that a 2% pay award for Lecturing and Support Staff had been proposed. It was noted that the proposed pay award had been agreed with EIS-FELA, but that discussions with the support staff trade unions remained ongoing.

C Turnbull noted that, in response to a national dispute regarding the role of a Lecturer, EIS-FELA membership had been balloted and had voted for industrial action. It was noted that the strike action could potentially result in disruption to learning and teaching for students for 15 days over the coming months. C Turnbull added that the College was working with union representatives at a local level to mitigate any further disruption to student learning.

The Committee noted the verbal update, and also noted with disappointment the decision by some members of EIS-FELA to approve strike action at this most difficult and challenging time for learners. The Committee looked forward to receiving further updates, as they become available, on the progress being made in resolving this dispute.

10 Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019-21, Including Presentation (Papers 5 & 6) (R)

D Davidson introduced the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019-21, advising that the report sets out the steps taken by the College to mainstream equality and also covers the final two years of the current Equality Outcomes, as published in 2017. The Committee noted that, for the College to meet the General Duty and Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), a new set of equality outcomes would require to be published every 4

years, with an interim report on progress every 2 years. D Davidson also advised members that additional scrutiny required the report be submitted to SFC once approved.

D Davidson then introduced his colleague, S Turkington, who provided members with a presentation. The Committee noted the following:

- The Report was split into four sections; Our People, Equal Pay, Mainstreaming, and Responding to the future through Equality Outcomes and mainstreaming equality themes
- Each section had areas of focus but the Mainstreaming section was split into 6x areas to enable benchmarking.
- Proposed Equality Outcomes for 2021-2025 had been identified from the findings and as a reflection of the current situation exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

S Turkington took the Committee through the findings in each section in further detail, following which further discussion took place during which a number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses provided.

The Committee thanked S Turkington for the presentation and commended the work in producing the report. The Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019-21 was recommended to the Board at its meeting in March 2021 for final approval.

11 VS Update (Verbal) (R)

J McKie provided a verbal update, reminding members that the Voluntary Severance Scheme had opened to all staff in November 2020 with a closing date in December 2020. The Committee noted that the closing date had subsequently been extended to January 2021 to account for further lockdown measures imposed by the Scottish Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

J McKie further advised that a number of applications had been received and considered by a panel and that a total of 25 applications had been approved. Jane McKie advised that ELT had met to consider the balance of savings achieved to date through the 25 applications approved against the indicative funding gap estimated for next year. After consideration, ELT had decided that the remaining gap would be bridged by other saving measures, rather than a further extension to the VS scheme being offered during AY 2020-21.

The Committee noted that College management had informed those staff whose applications for voluntary severance had been agreed and that the HR Team was processing the necessary paperwork.

The Committee thanked J McKie for the verbal update.

12 HR & Staff Learning and Development Report (Paper 7) (P)

D Davidson introduced Paper 7 as presented, advising that the decrease in reported short-term sickness absence was still in evidence and HR staff continued to work with and support managers and staff.

The Committee noted that the focus in the reporting period had been on the provision of leadership and management development opportunities for staff. The College had utilised the Flexible Workforce Development Fund to support a total of 22 members of staff to achieve the ILM Award in Leadership & Management and CDN Coaching for the Future Programme. D Davidson added that, in direct response to manager feedback, the College's Staff Learning and Development Team had designed, developed and launched the fully online based Growing Leaders Framework to deliver essential skills for managers at all levels. The Committee was further advised that sessions had been delivered in February 2021 with a total of 78 managers in attendance and that future progress was being monitored.

The Committee noted and welcomed the content of Paper 7.

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

J McKie introduced Paper 8 and took the Committee through the report as presented. It was highlighted that the College's overarching Covid-19 risk assessment continued to be monitored by the Return to Campus Operations Steering Group. This essential corporate document was updated by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing manager on an ongoing basis, taking account of all relevant national guidance, as issued. J McKie further highlighted the work undertaken by the HSW team in supporting the Return to Campus Operations Steering Group over the past year in all the work undertaken to re-open and manage the campuses safely and in accordance with the UK and Scottish Government guidelines.

The Committee also noted that the Equality Matters e-Newsletter had received a positive response from staff and agreed that future issues of the e-Newsletter be shared with Board members for information.

The Committee noted and welcomed the content of Paper 8.

Action: Y Melvin to circulate future editions of the Equality Matters e-Newsletter to Board members as provided by S Fegan.

14 2020-21 Student Support Funds (position as at 11 February 2021) (Paper 9) (P)

J Thomson introduced Paper 9, noting the final position of the College as a favourable variance of c£2.1m against the budgeted position. It was noted that there were no significant issues to report in relation to EMA and SAAS funds.

The Committee was also advised of a recent announcement by SAAS of additional HE Discretionary Funding, of which c£0.283m had been awarded to the College. It was noted that the additional funding had to be used by 31 March 2021 and that any unused funds would be returned to SAAS in April 2021. M Breen advised the Committee that SAAS guidance stated that funds were to be prioritised to those students facing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19 and that the Student Funding team was working on proposals for how this additional funding could be effectively utilised within the timescales and guidance issued by SAAS.

The Committee noted Paper 9 and the position of the College as at 11 February 2021. The Committee also noted the additional funding provided by SAAS and looked forward to hearing how those funds had been utilised within the timescale set.

15 Business Growth Update (Paper 10) (R)

M Breen introduced Paper 10 and Nuala Boyle, Head of Business Growth attended for this item to provide an update.

Nuala Boyle took the Committee through Paper 10 as presented. The Committee noted that government constraints imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent lockdowns, had impacted significantly on the College's ability to complete its agreed FWDF training. In response, the Scottish Government had formally extended the 2019-20 FWDF into 2020-21. N Boyle added that the Scottish Government had subsequently announced Phase 2 of the FWDF in December 2020, which included an increase in the College's funding allocation.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Team remained actively engaged with Companies and that applications for the 2020-21 FWDF was good, with a healthy pipeline of potential applicants. It was also noted that good progress was being made in scheduling and delivering virtual training for the 2019-20 FWDF.

N Boyle also updated members on the FWDF SME fund, advising that the Team had been focused on developing Covid-19 relevant training offerings as well as heavily promoting the fund throughout the Ayrshire communities. The Committee was pleased to note that interest had been high and had received a good response.

During the discussion that followed a number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses were received.

The Committee noted the content of Paper 10, commended the work and achievements of the Business Growth Team in challenging circumstances and looked forward to future updates.

16 2020-21 Complaints Report Qtr. 1 (Paper 12) (P)

The Committee noted Paper 12 and its contents.

17 Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 1 June 2021

(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.