



For the future you want

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 17 MAY 2022

15:00 via Microsoft Teams

Present: Rose Dodgson; Lesley Drummond; Janyce Holmes; Alex Killick; Ann Landels (Chair); Fiona Riddoch; Jeanette Stevenson

In attendance: Jon Buglass; Sue Clyne; Audrey Cumberford; Sarah-Louise Nandadasa; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

1.2 The Chair welcomed Janyce Holmes, Non-Executive Board Member, to her first meeting of the Policy & Resource Committee as a member following her appointment as Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee on 1 March 2022.

1.3 The Committee NOTED that Lindsay Towns, Director of Finance, had left the College on 29 April 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr Towns for his service to the College as a member of the senior management team.

1.4 The Chair welcomed Sarah-Louise Nandadasa, Financial Accountant, to the meeting as an attendee. The Committee NOTED that Ms Nandadasa would be temporarily acting up until a new Director of Finance and Estates was appointed.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 No declarations of interest were noted.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 22 February 2022 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 MATTERS ARISING REPORT

- 4.1.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

5. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 5.1 The Committee NOTED an update from the Principal on developments at the College since its last meeting on 22 February 2022.
- 5.2 The Committee NOTED that EIS-FELA members had begun a programme of discontinuous strike action over the months of April and May 2022. The Principal informed the Committee that, in accordance with the ballot, that industrial action short of a strike would take two forms: (i) Not undertaking any goodwill activities beyond existing duties; and (ii) a resulting boycott, which meant lecturing staff would not share any assessment or exam results with the College or other organisations.
- 5.3 The Committee NOTED the efforts of the College to reduce the impact of the industrial action on students, with campuses remaining open for student to use facilities. The Principal advised the Committee that an internal Industrial Action Contingency Group had been convened, chaired by the Vice Principal Corporate Development, and would meet regularly to ensure all reasonable measures were taken to prevent any disruption to students and staff.
- 5.4 The Committee NOTED that UNISON had held a ballot for industrial action relating to rates of pay and associate terms and conditions for 2021/22. The Principal informed the Committee since that the ballot turnout had failed to reach the 50% threshold UNISON could not proceed with industrial action.
- 5.5. The Committee DISCUSSED the efforts of the College to minimise the impact of industrial action, and the action short of strike, undertaken by EIS-FELA. The Principal advised the Committee that engagement with both EIS-FELA and UNISON remained ongoing through the College Employers Scotland.
- 5.6 The Committee NOTED that a draft Voluntary Severance Scheme Business Case, setting out the College's response to delivering saving required over a three-year period (to 2024/25) and the required intervention from the SFC, was considered and approved by the Remuneration Committee by correspondence on 9 May 2022. The Principal informed the Committee that a meeting would be held with the SFC on 18 May 2022 to discuss the Business Case and its implementation.
- 5.7 The Committee DISCUSSED the following in relation to the proposed VS Scheme and the financial picture across the college sector:
 - (i) The likelihood that similar VS schemes would be implemented across the college sector.
 - (ii) The continued development of learning and teaching delivery models.
 - (iii) The movement to greater use of project-based assessment approaches to reduce the burden placed on lecturing staff and, importantly, ensure students are assessed holistically with an emphasis on work relevance.

- 5.8 The Committee welcomed the VS Business Case, as approved by the Remuneration Committee, and NOTED that (if approved by the SFC) the launch of the VS Scheme would be communicated to the Board in due course.
- 5.9 The Committee NOTED that the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report, presented to the Board on 22 March 2022, had outlined many areas of positive improvement - specifically within services to support learning and aspects of the delivery of curriculum, learning, teaching, and assessment. The Chair reminded the Committee that the College received an overall 'satisfactory', out of two possible outcomes.
- 5.10 The Committee NOTED that in response to its performance in Full-Time FE the College had received an unsatisfactory narrative, which included actions aimed at improving KPIs. The Principal advised the Committee that, following a reflection period, the College had produced an action plan which would be reviewed by the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee on 20 May 2022.

6. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & CREDITS DASHBOARD

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of the performance of the College against its 2021/22 activity targets. The Vice Principal Education & Skills reminded the Committee that the SFC had set the College a total activity target of 192,349 for the academic year.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that, as of 17 May 2022, the College had accumulated 189,559 core credits. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that even though the 2021/22 core activity target had been achieved for the sixth year running, performance against additional funding targets, including ESF and Foundation Apprenticeships credits, remained challenging.
- 6.3 The Committee NOTED that whilst Early Withdrawal had remained at a similar level over the past three years, the key KPIs remained Further Withdrawal and Completed Partial Success. The Vice Principal Education & Skills informed the Committee that the improvements made by the College in recent years would lead to enhanced performance in both these areas going forward.
- 6.4 The Committee NOTED that whilst the number of offers accepted had increased by 13%, there remained several challenges impacting on full-time recruitment. The Vice Principal Education & Skills informed the Committee that issues around full-time recruitment and credits were sector-wide, and that the College continued to work closely with the SFC to mitigate the drop in full-time enrolments to safeguard credit funding and fee income.

7. FINANCE REPORT

7.1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO MARCH 2022

- 7.1.1 The Committee NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to March 2022.
- 7.1.2 The Committee NOTED that adverse income and expenditure movements had been partially offset by an increase in other grants, including extra managing agents income related to the achievement of

a number of retrospective milestones in 2020/21. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that although management agents rebate through SDS was welcome, it would only amount to a one-off payment.

- 7.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the current position of the catering contract with Gather & Gather, and the subsidy paid by the College for the skeleton catering service provided. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that a tender for a new catering provider would commence in the upcoming academic year.

7.2 INDICATIVE COLLEGE BUDGET 2022/23

- 7.2.1 The Committee NOTED an Indicative College Budget 2022/23, and a supporting presentation by the Chief Operating Officer, which outlined the budgeting process, budgeting pressures, additional costs, budget reductions, savings, impact on cash-flow, risks and mitigations, and sensitivity analysis.

- 7.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the Indicative College Budget 2022/23 and welcomed the opportunity to endorse a breakeven budget despite the significant challenges faced by the college sector. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that a savings target of £3.62m would need to be achieved to enable the College to operate at a breakeven adjusted operating position and would require the SFC's approval of the VS Scheme Business Case.

- 7.2.3 The Committee NOTED the indicative ECSA contribution outlined within the College Budget. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that he would meet with the ECSA Director shortly to discuss the 2022/23 funding allocation for the Students' Association.

- 7.2.4 The Committee AGREED that the Indicative College Budget would be presented to the Board on 14 June 2022 for consideration.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED a Human Resources Report which included updates on employee relations, HR operations and organisational development.

- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that a virtual all staff Working Well Conference would be held on 29 June 2022. The Director of HR & OD advised the Committee that a range of workshops on the theme of wellness and personal sustainability would be held on the day, along with a celebration of the College's membership of the Black Leadership Group.

- 8.3 The Committee NOTED that 70% of phase 1 eligible lecturers had registered for membership of the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS), with the remain 30% having until 30 June 2022 to complete the process. The Director of HR & OD informed the Committee that it was a contractual requirement for eligible lecturers to be full members of the GTCS.

- 8.4 The Committee NOTED that during Quarter 3 there had been a significant increase in the completion figures for all mandatory training modules. The

Committee welcomed the progress outlined since the last Quarter, when completion rates had been highlighted as a concern.

9. ESTATES & DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

9.1 EDINBURGH COLLEGE TOTAL FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT 2022/23 TO 2026/27

- 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED a recent tender exercise undertaken by the College for the renewal of its Total Facilities Management Contract (TFM) contract for a 5-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27. The Chief Operating Officer highlighted the tender process, and tender details of the preferred supplier ISS Mediclean Ltd.
- 9.1.2 The Committee NOTED the TFM contact was a large annual cost charged against the College Budget and it was essential to manage this through a tender process within the College's Procurement Strategy. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that the rigorous tender process had ensured that a competitive price has been obtained for the next 5-7 years of the TFM contract.
- 9.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the TFM contract and sought clarification on the payment of a real Living Wage to sub-contractors. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that ISS Mediclean Ltd., under its own Living Wage Policy, had committed to only working with sub-contractors who could demonstrate that they pay, or will pay, the Living Wage.

10. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2021/22

10.1 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2021/22

- 10.1.1 The Committee NOTED that at the end of each academic year the Committee is required to review its annual activity. The Committee Chair advised the Committee that the same evaluation form, which asked members to consider the committee's operation and its performance monitoring and strategic roles, would be completed by all committees of the Board.
- 10.1.2 The Committee AGREED that its operation was compliant with its terms of reference, as outlined in 'Part 1' of the evaluation form.
- 10.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED its performance over the academic year and AGREED that members' feedback should be relayed directly to the Chair and the Clerk to the Board, prior to a finalised version of the report being recirculated to the Committee (outwith the meeting cycle) for approval.

10.2 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD 2021/22

- 10.2.1 The Committee NOTED that it had been asked by the Board to present an annual report to the Board on 14 June 2022. The Chair advised the

Committee that the report would highlight key matters of business considered by the Committee and future areas of development.

- 10.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED and AGREED that a draft version of the annual report should be circulated to members for further comment prior to its presentation to the Board by the Committee Chair

11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

11.1 DEPARTURE OF A BOARD MEMBERS

- 11.1.1 The Committee NOTED that the tenure of the Interim Vice Chair, Fiona Riddoch, as a Non-Executive Board Member would end on 30 June 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee, thanked Ms Riddoch for her significant contribution to the Committee over two separate periods of service.
- 11.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the tenure of the Student Board, Rose Dodgson would end on 30 June 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee, thanked Ms Dodgson for her significant contribution to the Committee as its first student member.

12. FOR INFORMATION

12.1 SFC REPORT: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN SCOTLAND

- 12.1.1 The Committee NOTED a report, published by the SFC, which outlined an aggregate picture of the financial health of Scottish institutions based on a review of their latest financial forecast returns.

12.2 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2022/23

- 12.2.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the 2022/23 academic year.

13. CLOSED ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- 13.1 Items of business were considered by the Board as part of a closed session. Closed items were recorded under a separate minute (Closed Minutes 13 /17.05.26 refers).

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 14.1 The next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will take place on 1 September 2022.

Meeting closed at 16:45