

# A

## Borders College

### Finance & General Purposes Committee

Meeting at 17:30 Thursday 23 February 2023

#### MS Teams

#### Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
43/22	Agree a brief summary of Key Performance Indicators for this meeting.	Board Secretary Principal Board Chair May 2023	Not yet complete - VP F&CS and S Wilson continue to work on this.
02/23	Register/Conflict of Interest change request form to be sent to U Mbaezue to note change of employer.	Board Secretary	Completed
07/23	<b>Fee Policy</b> Item 3.1.2– Variations; “no variation to published fee levels may be made without the prior approval of the Vice Principal - Finance and Resources. This to be added into 4.0 – Responsibilities.	VP F&CS	Completed
07/23	<b>Fee Policy</b> Point 3.4.2 states that a refund is to be given at the discretion of the Finance Department –this is to be changed to the Director of Finance and Procurement.	VP F&CS	Completed
10/23	<b><u>Business Growth and Employer Engagement Strategy Update – Paper E</u></b> One of the figures in the variance column has moved so no longer looks like a negative. To be amended.	Executive Director, E & B I	Completed

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#### Minutes

ITEM	MINUTE
<b>Present</b>	Lynn Mirley (Chair) Pete Smith (Principal) Liz Parkes Bernie Quinn Ugonna Mbaezue
<b>In Attendance</b>	Kirsty Robb (Vice Principal – Finance and Corporate Services) Ingrid Earp (Regional Board Secretary) Jane Grant (Executive Director, Enterprise and Business Innovation) Debbie Kerr (Director of People Services) Sara Wilson (Director of Finance and Procurement) Suzie Hartley (Minutes)
<b>01/23</b>	<b>Chair's Welcome</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>02/23</b>	<b>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</b> U Mbaezue informed the committee that he now works for Magnox Ltd but was unsure whether this presented a conflict or not. The Board Secretary will send a form to complete to record a change to the register of interest. <b>ACTION: Board Secretary</b>
<b>03/23</b>	<b>Register of Members' Interest</b> Nothing was noted.
<b>04/23</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> There were no apologies
<b>05/23</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting held 17 Nov 2022</b> Members were happy to agree that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2022 are an accurate record of the meeting.  Updates to actions from the previous meeting were provided as follows;
<b>35/22</b>	Scores from the Great Places to Work survey to be circulated to members. - <i>Complete</i>
<b>38/22</b>	Consideration to be given to how to incorporate net zero planning and adaptation into the Strategic Risk Register. - <i>A new risk has been added to the Risk Register.</i>

43/22	Agree a brief summary of Key Performance Indicators for this meeting - <i>Not yet complete, VP F&amp;CS and Director of Finance and Procurement continue to work on this.</i>
06/23	<b>Matters Arising</b> Nothing was raised.
<b>SECTION A – ITEMS FOR APPROVAL</b>	
07/23	<p><b><u>Fee Policy and Levels (K Robb) – Paper B</u></b>  VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services confirmed that a full review has taken place and the following updates were made;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brexit 2019 guidance had been in place for some time and was deemed no longer necessary and has been removed.</li> <li>- Inclusion of rate and minimum charge administration fee.</li> <li>- Immigration legislation updated.</li> <li>- Job titles updated.</li> </ul> <p>A member asked if there are any international students at the College. It was confirmed that there are not, however the College welcomes applications from international applicants.</p> <p>The Chair queried item 3.1.2 of the Policy – Variations, and the statement; “no variation to published fee levels may be made without the prior approval of the Vice Principal - Finance and Resources. However, item 4.0 - Responsibilities does not refer to this. VP F&amp;CS will add this into the policy.  <b>ACTION: VP F&amp;CS</b></p> <p>Point 3.4.2 in relation to the administration fee for course withdrawal states that a refund is to be given at the discretion of the Finance Department –this is to be changed to the Director of Finance and Procurement.  <b>ACTION: VP F&amp;CS</b></p> <p>It was noted that the college no longer has tier 4 students but does have UK students (non-Scottish) and that this is noted in table 31 of the policy.</p> <p>This policy will go to the JCCP meeting in March.</p> <p>A member asked if the College are content that they will not have any international students in the next 3 years, until the policy is due for updating. VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services informed that the Policy can be reviewed sooner if required.</p> <p>Members were happy to approve the policy, subject to the requested amendments being made.</p>
<b>SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
08/23	<p><b><u>Strategic Risk Register (K Robb) – Paper C</u></b>  The following two risks are assigned to this committee;</p> <p>2a - Long term financial stability  4a - Staffing motivated, engaged and capable</p> <p>The report summarises these risks and the progress made so far in relation to planned activities.</p>

	<p>Detail was provided around a newly identified risk in relation to the College meeting their Net Zero target by 2045. The Senior Leadership Team have completed their review of the risk and it is included in appendix two for review, prior to inclusion in the Risk Register to be presented to the Regional board on 9 March. It has been provisionally assigned to this Committee pending a final decision by the Board as to where it can be best monitored.</p> <p>The following questions were raised in response to the report;</p> <p>A member queried whether the College are setting targets that they are achieving already and highlighted the significant decarbonisation work taking place currently. VP Finance and Corporate Services agreed that they are already addressing this risk however, they continue to develop this by further reducing carbon on the estate. The template agreed in July 2021 requires updating prior to taking to Board however as there are elements that are now embedded that are still risks.</p> <p>The chair highlighted that the long-term financial stability risk has a very high score, however there are only two budget control treasury actions open in relation to this. It was queried whether this is enough. VP Finance and Corporate Services acknowledged that this is the biggest risk at the moment and that a lot is outwith the Colleges control, for example, this year's pay award has not yet been finalised. A number of scenarios are being considered and further guidance and information is being sought from SFC. It was acknowledged that the risk is too big and needs broken down.</p> <p>A member asked if staff / Senior Leadership have the opportunity to undertake courses. It was confirmed that this is part of every staff members induction and that additional opportunities are also offered. The Cyber Risk rating was also queried. Members heard that a full cyber report goes to the Audit Committee each quarter for review and that this is a fast-moving area which the College continue to actively manage.</p> <p>All members agreed to approve the report.</p>
<p><b>09/23</b></p>	<p><b><u>Business (Finance) Review and Update – Paper D</u></b></p> <p>The Director of Finance and Procurement summarised the main points from the report;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall positive variance in the budget</li> <li>- Budget is currently spread over 12 months – a more appropriate divide is being worked on.</li> <li>- Flexible Workforce Development Fund is less than anticipated which will have an impact.</li> <li>- A full review of all budget areas is being undertaken to inform the mid-year FFR being submitted to the SFC.</li> <li>- There are previously identified savings and capital.</li> <li>- Work is ongoing around the improving of processes in relation to invoices and the weekly payment run.</li> </ul> <p>A member queried the high staffing cost figure and the reason for this and if it is likely to reduce. The Director of Finance and Procurement explained that budgets were split into twelve months, which contributes to the high figure but as mentioned, this is currently being reviewed.</p>

	<p>A member asked for the College's current position with this year's savings. The early indication is for flat cash and an assumption for similar for 22/23. £537k savings were identified last year. Director of Finance and Procurement advised that going forward, the intention is for more transparency and to show the savings expected for the year. Additional funding has been allocated to Further Education and clarity is being sought from SFC around what it can be used for. Flat cash will be allocated to each of the College regions. Further announcements are expected soon in March.</p> <p>Discussion was had around planning next year's board and committee meeting dates and to align this with reporting. The Board Secretary advised that new dates will be circulated by email soon for comment.</p> <p>A member queried why the College is continuing the contract with Baxter Storey when this has been working at a loss. An update on pay awards was also requested. Members were informed that Baxter Storey used to make a surplus, however, reduced footfall since Covid has had a significant impact although this is improving slightly. It is recognised as providing a wider student experience in a cost-effective way and efforts continue to move towards a break-even position. The Director of People Services will update on National Pay Awards later in the meeting.</p> <p>The chair highlighted an issue with the debtor's charts in appendix 3 and suggested presenting them on the same scale so that the comparison is not distorted.</p> <p>VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services informed that the college utilised the whole of the Community Renewal Fund grant, including some additional funds and that discussion is taking place with SBC about continuing some of the courses through the shared prosperity fund.</p> <p>All agreed to note the paper.</p>
<p><b>10/23</b></p>	<p><b><u>Business Growth and Employer Engagement Strategy Update (J Grant) – Paper E</u></b></p> <p>The Executive Director, Enterprise and Business Innovation gave an overview of her report and summarised some of the key areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scottish Government funding cuts have created a £53k cut for the College, impacting the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.</li> <li>- Unable to increase Modern apprenticeship programme capacity due to cuts.</li> <li>- Development continues on the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund proposals.</li> <li>- Young Person's Guarantee Funding (£98k) is confirmed.</li> <li>- The College continues to deliver exceptional quality and volume for its size and discussions are ongoing around the capacity to do more.</li> <li>- Small contract secured with City of Edinburgh Council for Social Care.</li> <li>- Pathfinder project digital skills, rural, digital sole trader programme,</li> <li>- Assisted SOSE with a rescue package in textiles and skills, 13k, opportunity to build.</li> <li>- All come to 80k, always changing and our readiness to react is what we do.</li> <li>- Work with Eildon and other Social Housing Landlords on retrofit programme.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UK Government Levelling Up Shared Prosperity Fund to be confirmed; Retrofit &amp; Green Skills &amp; Multiply proposals in development with Scottish Borders Council &amp; Edinburgh &amp; SE City Region Deal Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) Big Move 7 Net Zero Skills Accelerator.</li> <li>- The College continue to be ready for change.</li> </ul> <p>Members raised the following questions;</p> <p>Concern was raised about the inability to increase Modern Apprenticeship scheme capacity due to budget cuts and how many the college are able to continue to support. Executive Director, E &amp; B I informed that the College will continue to make their case for more funding. Apprenticeships are allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis and the College continue to liaise closely with businesses to determine their workforce planning and training requirements and to build relationships and will report back to SFC if they need to start turning people away. It was highlighted that Modern Apprentice funding goes through SDS and that they are currently under a service review – this will be reported back on at the end of march.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that on the variance column, one of the numbers has moved so it no longer looks like a negative. Executive Director, Enterprise and Business Innovation will correct this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Executive Director, E &amp; B I</b></p>
11/23	<p><b><u>Asset Management Strategy Update and Progress (K Robb) – Paper F</u></b></p> <p>VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services advised that the purpose of the report is to provide an update on the progress of the priority areas approved in the Asset Management Strategy, in December 2020.</p> <p>A lot of work and good progress was recognised in the following key project areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Digital transformation programme</li> <li>- Payroll</li> <li>- Pro-solution</li> <li>- Implementation of Halo – Service management solution</li> <li>- Website refresh</li> <li>- Collaborative work with Newbattle and further opportunities to take forward.</li> <li>- Immersive space almost ready to launch.</li> <li>- Decarbonisation of the campus, work on Newtown, we in touch with SBC regarding a grant.</li> <li>- Delivery of new electric fleet vehicles due in March.</li> <li>- Green Gown and digital award, highlights good progress made.</li> <li>- Minibus fleet – the costs quoted to purchase an electric minibus and lack of charging infrastructure do not make this a viable option. Talks are underway with SBC around potentially sharing the Pingo transport service.</li> </ul> <p>A member commented on the excellent report and suggested including challenging areas in future reports.</p> <p>A question was raised about the Tweedbank site and the estate strategy. It was noted that the College lease the premises at Tweedbank and that this is due to expire in a few years. It is recognised that Tweedbank provides a</p>

	<p>poor student experience and it is a top priority to address, however this is on hold until Heriot Watt advise of their future occupancy plans for the main campus.</p> <p>A member asked for an update on how Halo and Canvas is working. Halo was reported as having had a positive start and is expected to be rolled out to all other departments by July. Canvas has now been fully implemented and reports suggest it has been successful and has made a big difference and is very intuitive to use.</p> <p>The Chair questioned, given that the college did not meet the criteria for Cyber Essentials+ accreditation, if investment is needed. VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services explained that this is due to not being able to update all laptops and also that many are using their own devices. Discussion is underway about how to move forward with this, which could mean additional costs. There is no resolution yet. The chair advised that Eildon Housing have recently implemented security on all remote devices and mobiles and suggested they could be contacted for advice.</p>
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**SECTION C – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

<p>12/23</p>	<p><b><u>People Services Update (D Kerr) – Paper G</u></b>  <b><u>Update mid year;</u></b></p> <p>Director of People Services noted the key updates from her report;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Payroll Officer, Sheila White has been appointed and is already proving to be an asset to the department.</li> <li>- Disability recruitment project is progressing well, applications have been received and they hope to attend the annual conference in May. EDI Officer, A Brydon has been nominated.</li> <li>- The College has received a GPTW award for wellbeing and the GPTW survey will be circulated soon for staff to complete.</li> <li>- The Pay, Terms and Conditions situation changes on a daily basis. The college continue to maintain a 2% position. An indicative ballot for strike action has been issued and an official dispute raised. All strikes could potentially happen at the same time.</li> <li>- Job evaluation – not yet complete. The College are keen to progress this and to be able to use the information gathered so far before it becomes outdated.</li> <li>- National Menopause Policy adopted by the College and is ready to be launched 21 March 2023.</li> </ul> <p>A member congratulated the College on their GPTW award and asked if long term absences impact the work of college and student outcomes. Director of People Services reassured that this is monitored monthly and that they work closely with NHS Occupational Health to offer support to return to work. There is no impact on students due to having sufficient and flexible staff who ensure that classes always run.</p> <p>Staff turnover and retirement was questioned and if this presents as an ongoing challenge. It was confirmed that the age profile of College staff is improving and colleagues are asked annually if they have plans to retire and budget and succession planning takes place.</p>
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13/23	<p><b><u>Budget Planning Process (K Robb) – Paper H</u></b>  VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services advised that the process for the 23/24 budget was presented to SLT and the wider college. Key timescales were noted and will be dependent on the indicative Funding Allocation from SFC.</p> <p>A number of course planning meetings across the curriculum have been held with decisions subsequently being made by SLT on curriculum delivery. Exec will get first sight of the indicative budget and are considering a number of scenarios.</p> <p>Alongside this, the Capital Budget setting process is underway and members of the wider leadership team are being invited to pitch their capital bids. Eleven bids have been received so far and the deadline for submission has been extended slightly due to a lapse in communication. Additional steps have been added to the process for more clarity and to allow for scoring. The aim is to formulate a longer-term plan, going forward and Board approval sought on 15 June.</p>
14/23	<p><b><u>Papers for Publication (Standing Item)</u></b>  Nothing was noted.</p>
15/23	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>  The chair thanked all SLT members for the papers for today’s meeting and their hard work.</p> <p>Members acknowledged Liz’s hard work and commitment, in light of her tenure coming to an end.</p>
16/23	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b>  The date of the next meeting is at 16:15 on Wednesday 24 May 2023 in the Board room, Galashiels Campus.</p>

Signed.....

**Chair**

Signed.....

**Board Secretary**