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FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Subject: HR Matters and Furlough	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☒
Prepared by: Debbie Kerr, Head of HR and Development	**Date: 25 February 2021**
Purpose: To update the Committee on the use of the government Job Retention Scheme and other current HR matters	
Linked to Strategic Ambition: We will take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland	

Executive Summary:

JRS

The College has continued to access funding support from the Covid Job Retention Scheme, reducing the number of staff in September through to December due to the careful and planned reopening of the campus. Up until 31st December 2020 the College had received a total of £270,668.96. £78,213.63 of this in this financial year.

In January following the announcement of the current lockdown and the severely restricted access to on campus working the College took the decision to furlough, where possible, staff. All staff who are furloughed during January and February have been furloughed on a flexible basis. This means that all staff are maintaining a level of interaction through very part time working or engagement in other ways, e.g. carrying out different duties for part of their time. This maintains a feeling of being valued for the staff member and has staff on standby and able to step in to work when required.

Currently we have 44 staff members on flexible furlough. These are Instructors, Cleaners, Administrators, Reception Staff, Placement Officers, Facilities Assistants and workshop technicians. Staff complete monthly attendance sheets and the time that they are contracted for but do not worked is claimed back from the Job Retention Scheme.

For January 2021 this was £22,663.83.

EIS Dispute/Ballot

Following a national dispute raised by the EIS FELA the EIS FELA have issued a ballot to its members to invoke strike action. The Management side of the Employers Association, of which I am a member, continues to meet to try to resolve the dispute and the sixth dispute meeting is being arranged for w/c 22nd February, 2021.

The ballot closes at 12 noon on 25 February 2021 and if a mandate for strike is reached then it is expected, unless the dispute can be resolved, that strike action with commence week beginning 15 March 2021.

The dispute is centred around the replacement of lecturer posts with other posts and is directed at two colleges, of which Borders is not one.

Employee Engagement Survey

The Great Places to Work Survey for employee engagement is being launched and will be open for 2 weeks with effect from 22nd February, 2021. Along with the survey results the College will also be making a submission for the GPTW Culture Audit. The results of both of these and any awards will be known later in the year.

Digital Transformation – Skills Gap Analysis

As part of the Digital Transformation project the HR department is supporting and running a Skills Gap Analysis exercise with all staff, focusing initially on Office365 and moving on to skills required for the changes to the MIS and VLE later in the year.

The skills gap analysis will inform staff development activity both on an individual level and across the College.

Staff Wellbeing

The College has made it a priority to support staff wellbeing during this particularly difficult time. In addition to the many initiatives introduced, such as wellbeing days, protected time, no internal meetings on Fridays, flexible working and many social activities the College has also invested in two support modules - Agile and Wellbeing. Agile takes staff through good working practices for working in the office, remotely and from home and ensure a safe and appropriate set up of digital devices. Wellbeing provides staff with advice and support to maintain good mental health. These modules have been rolled out initially through managers and will be sent to all staff over the next few months.

Recommendation: The Committee is appraised of current HR matters and is updated on the use of the CJRS.

Previous Committee Approvals:

For publication ☒	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☐