

## **PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 5 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**15:00 via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Alex Killick (Chair); Ian McLaughlan; Gwen Raez; Nora Senior; Bill Troup

**In attendance:** Audrey Cumberland; Ian Deed; Mike Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Ross Laird and Sue Clyne (Director of HR & OD).
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Charlie Whitson, ECSA Vice President Activities, to their first Planning & Resources Committee since joining the Board of Management on 1 July 2024.
- 1.3 The Committee NOTED that Sue Cook, a Non-Executive Board Member and former Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, had stepped down from the Board on 28 June 2024 to become Chair of West Lothian College Board of Management. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ms Cook for her service to the Planning & Resources Committee over the past 18 months.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed Bill Troup, a Non-Executive Board Member and Acting Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, to his first meeting of the Planning & Resources Committee. The Committee NOTED that Mr Troup would attend its meetings on an interim basis until the Board's committee membership arrangements had been reviewed.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 No declarations of interested were noted.

#### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 16 May 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT**

- 4.1 The Committee NOTED that actions arising from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

#### **5. PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

##### **5.1 PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

- 5.1.1 The Committee NOTED an update from the Principal & Chief Executive on preparation for the start of the academic year 2024/25. The Principal, on behalf of the Executive Team, thanked all staff for their tireless efforts to get the College ready for the new session to welcome new and returning students.
- 5.1.2 The Committee NOTED that, following a series of meetings between the College Employers Scotland and EIS-FELA, and the intervention of the Minister for Further and Higher Education, a pay offer for four years to August 2026 was accepted by EIS-FELA Members on 30 August 2024. The Principal advised the Committee that, as stated in previous correspondence, she welcomed the result of the ballot and the end to both the strike action and the programme of Action Short of Strike (ASOS).
- 5.1.3 The Committee also welcomed the end to industrial action and DISCUSSED progress made to process students' results following the ASOS resulting boycott. The Principal advised the Committee that lecturing staff now had until 10 September 2024 to complete resulting.
- 5.1.4 The Committee NOTED that the Chair of the Board had written to Graeme Dey, Minister for Higher and Further Education, on 26 June 2024, highlighting the significant funding issues facing Edinburgh College. The Principal advised the Committee that the Minister had responded offering a meeting, but a date had yet to be confirmed.
- 5.1.5 The Committee NOTED that the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had been re-advertised. The Committee DISCUSSED recent correspondence with the Chair of the SFC, Mike Cantley, and welcomed the potential for more regular strategic meetings between both the SFC and colleges.
- 5.1.6 The Committee DISCUSSED a decision made by the Board of Management on 16 June 2024 to serve notice on its membership of Colleges Scotland. The Principal advised the Committee that the decision had been confirmed in writing to Colleges Scotland, in compliance with its 12-month notice period, however the College continued to remain in discussion with the sector body regarding its future shape.

***Nora Senior joined the meeting***

## 5.2 STRATEGIC PILLARS PROGRESS UPDATE

- 5.2.1 The Committee NOTED an annual progress update from the Chief Operating Officer and the Vice Principal Corporate Development in relation to both the Finance and People Pillar Strategies (2023-26). The Chair advised the Committee that Digital Strategy also sat within the remit of Planning & Resources Committee, however, an update on this Pillar Strategy was provided to the Committee at its last meeting.
- 5.2.2 The Committee NOTED a comparison between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Financial Forecasts outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that the cumulative total of savings required by 2025/26 in the latest financial forecast had reduced by £3.7m compared to the 2022/23 Strategic Plan.
- 5.2.3 The Committee NOTED the strategic financial objectives, as set-out in the Pillar Strategy, and the achievements of the College to date. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that the forecast deficit position of £0.7m (2023/24) had recovered but was hampered by significant additional savings of £2.25m - which needed to be achieved. The Committee NOTED that this had resulted in a starting deficit budget for 2024/25 of £0.48m.
- 5.2.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the potential for further savings in 2024/25, and the need for the Board to retain oversight regarding the size, shape, and position of the College. The Committee NOTED potential areas of income growth and the recent publication of the Scottish Government's Green Industrial Strategy (September 2024), although Members were advised by the Chief Operating Officer that no funding was currently being made available to support any reshaping of the College to support greater engagement with industry.
- 5.2.5 The Committee welcomed the Financial Strategy update provided, and the positive progress made against the Adjusted Operating Position (AOP). The Chair advised the Committee that matters relating to income growth and future financial savings would continue to be monitored closely.
- 5.2.6 The Committee NOTED baseline data for six Key Performance Indicators (KPI) included within the People Strategy 2023-26 (- which corresponded with feedback from the 2024 Staff Survey conducted by Hive HR), and the July 2026 performance targets for each KPI. The Vice Principal Corporate Development informed the Committee that, based on the Staff Survey, a baseline and target 'Employee Net Promoter Score' (eNPS) had also been produced.
- 5.2.7 The Committee DISCUSSED the presentation of KPI data and the eNPS scoring system used by Hive HR. The Committee AGREED that the Vice Principal Corporate Development should review the use of eNPS further with Hive HR and, if appropriate, include the Chair of the Planning & Resources Committee (an experienced HR & OD professional) in any further discussions.
- 5.2.8 The Committee NOTED that almost 100 staff from across the College had volunteered to join Collective Action Planning (CAP) groups at each of the four campuses to support and drive action for transformational culture change. The

Vice Principal Corporate Development informed the Committee that the first round of CAP meetings would take place on 19 September 2024.

- 5.2.9 The Committee welcomed the update on the People Strategy provided and AGREED that it would welcome regular updates on progress against the July 2026 performance targets.

## **6. FINANCE REPORT**

### **6.1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO JULY 2024**

6.1.1 The Committee NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to July 2024.

6.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the outlined AOP against the College Budget and, more generally, the sector wide monitoring of performance against AOPs by the SFC. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that whilst the SFC closely monitored AOPs across the sector, their focus was on college cash positions to ensure institutions immediate viability.

### **6.2 FINANCIAL FORECAST RETURN – JUNE 2024**

6.2.1 The Committee NOTED the Financial Forecast Return (FFR) to June 2024. The Director of Finance & Estate Infrastructure informed the Committee that the Return had been submitted to the SFC on 30 June 2024 on the understanding that it would be formally considered by the Planning & Resources Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

6.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the FFR to June 2024 and AGREED that it was content with both the Return and its prior submission to the SFC.

## **7. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & CREDITS DASHBOARD**

7.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of the performance of the College against its 2023/24 activity targets. The Vice Principal Education & Skills reminded the Committee that the SFC had set the College a total activity target of 164,857 credits for the academic year.

7.2 The Committee NOTED that the positive credits position of the College, as of 20 August 2024, was 162,846. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that, based on unaudited credit activity to date, the College had achieved 98.7% of its credit target and therefore would avoid any financial clawback.

7.3 The Committee NOTED enrolment activity for 2024/25 for both full-time FE and full-time HE courses. The Vice Principal Education & Skills advised the Committee that the academic year was currently in Week 2, and, at present, full-time FE enrolments were up 3%, whilst full-time HE enrolments were down 8%.

- 7.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the enrolment figures provided and NOTED that a further update would be provided to the Board of Management on 26 September 2024.

## **8. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT**

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED the Human Resources Report that included updates on employee relations, HR operations, staff wellbeing, and Organisational Development since its last meeting.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that an all-staff event had been held on 19 August at the Sighthill Campus. The Principal advised the Committee that over 600 staff attended to consider the external and internal challenges faced by the College, celebrate achievements and successes, and look forward to the new academic year.
- 8.3 The Committee NOTED that a new Training Policy for Lecturers had been agreed with EIS-FELA which ended a long running dispute relating to the completion of mandatory training. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that it was hoped that, at a future date, the Policy would be replaced by a CPD Policy for all employees.
- 8.4 The Committee NOTED Quarter 4 staff absence figures and DISCUSSED the follow-up process undertaken by HR & OD with each Faculty and Department. The Committee AGREED that the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of HR & OD should provide assurances on the processes in-place at the next Planning & Resources Committee.

## **9. ESTATES & DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT**

- 9.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on ongoing Estates & Infrastructure matters at the College since June 2024.
- 9.2 The Committee NOTED that the impact of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) on College buildings had been minimal to date, with only small areas being put out of use until remedial work could be completed. The Director of Finance & Infrastructure advised the Committee that although some sections of buildings remained cordoned off, the majority of areas were deemed safe under current Scottish Government guidance.
- 9.3 The Committee NOTED that the College had put in place contingency plans for moving curriculum areas out of RAAC affected areas in case of any future changes in guidance from the Scottish Government. The Director of Finance & Infrastructure informed the Committee that these plans would be in place by December 2024.
- 9.4 The Committee NOTED that a College site at West Shore, where railway line used by Railways and Civils, was occupied over the summer. The Director of Finance & Infrastructure advised the Committee that, following an eviction notice and clearing of the site, it had become apparent that £40k of railway line had been stolen and sold off.

- 9.5 The Committee NOTED that options were currently being assessed to ensure that Railways and Civils courses could continue under the current circumstances. The Director of Finance & Infrastructure advised the Committee that it was likely that a theory-based course would be run in the short to mid-term to retain associated course Credits.

## **10. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT**

- 10.1 The Committee NOTED a quarterly Health & Safety Report outlining activity over Quarter 4 of the academic year 2023/24. The Director of Finance & Infrastructure advised the Committee that there were no RIDDOR Reports made to the Health & Safety Executive during the period.
- 10.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report on 4 September 2024. The Committee AGREED that as part of its Annual Health & Safety Report, which would be presented to the Board of Management on 26 September 2024, the Director of Finance & Infrastructure should include reference to any learnings from the Report and its recommendations.

## **11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

- 11.1 None.

## **12. FOR INFORMATION**

### **12.1 PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 12.1.1 The Committee NOTED its current terms of reference. The Chair advised the Committee that the Board would consider a proposal for a restructure of its committees on 26 September 2024, which would lead to the development of new and/or updated terms of references.

### **12.2 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2024/25**

- 12.2.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the 2024/25 academic year.

## **13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 13.1 The Committee NOTED that the next meeting of the Planning & Resources Committee would take place on 14 November 2024.

***Meeting closed at 17:00***