

REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Report from Finance and General Purposes Committee	Purpose: For Approval <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Prepared by: Elaine Acaster	Date: 9 June 2020	
Purpose: To provide the Regional Board with a summary of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 4 June.		
Linked to Strategic Goal 3: Provide a high quality College experience.		
Executive Summary: A verbal update of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of 4 June will be provided. Approved minutes of the meeting held on 19 March are attached for information.		
Recommendation: To note the content.		
Previous Committee Approvals: n/a		
For publication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For publication with redactions <input type="checkbox"/>	Not for publication <input type="checkbox"/>

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Borders College

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Meeting at 17:30 on Thursday 19 March 2020

Location: Board Room, Scottish Borders Campus

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
64/19	BFET applications – check on governance structure to be carried forward.	VP Finance & Corporate Services	There is nothing within Board documents which sets out requirements for consideration of items to refer to BFET. Could either be added to decisions reserved for the Board or to the F&GP committee remit
08/20	Newtown St Boswells works – copy of plans to be sent to members.	VP Finance & Corporate Services	Completed
09/20	Gender Based Violence Prevention & Support Policy – front cover date to be updated and web link to policy between Student Portal and College website to be added.	Head of HR / Principal	In progress
14/20	ISLT Update – online applications pilot to be tested with students.	VP Finance & Corporate Services	Completed
19/20	COVID-19 – regular updates to be provided to Regional Board.	Principal	Completed
20/20	May F&GP Meeting – date to be reviewed and members advised accordingly.	Board Secretary	Completed

Borders College

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Meeting at 17:30 on Thursday 19 March 2020

Location: Board Room, Scottish Borders Campus, Galashiels

Minutes

ITEM	MINUTE
Present	Elaine Acaster (Chair) Angela Cox (Principal) Jess McBeath (by telephone) Liz Parkes (by telephone) David Peace David Elder (Student Member)
In Attendance	Hazel Robertson (Vice Principal – Finance & Corporate Services by telephone) Ingrid Earp (Regional Board Secretary) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)
01/20	<u>Chair's Welcome</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for their attendance, both remotely and in person, given the current situation with COVID-19.
02/20	<u>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</u> No declarations were highlighted.
03/20	<u>Register of Members Interest</u> D Elder advised that he was no longer an SBHA Board Member.
04/20	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> All members were present.
05/20	<u>Minutes of Meetings held on 21 November 2019</u> The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.
06/20	<u>Matters Arising</u>
59/19	This action had been completed.
64/19	BFET applications – the governance structure check would be carried forward. ACTION: VP F&CS

	All other outstanding actions had been completed.
07/20	<p><u>Fee Policy – Paper B</u></p> <p>VP Finance and Corporate Services provided an overview of the paper. The Fee Policy had been updated following SFC guidance that the sector was operating inconsistently in regards to early student withdrawal charges. A reduced fee based on proportion of course and length of attendance would now apply.</p> <p>The Student Member raised that there could be negative impacts on disabled students. The policy amendment would allow discretion for personal circumstances to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>The Committee noted the comments.</p>
08/20	<p><u>Newtown St Boswells Works – Paper C</u></p> <p>The paper sought approval from the Committee for the replacement of three porta-cabins at Newtown St Boswells campus with a new modular building at a cost of no more than £250,000.</p> <p>The porta-cabins were no longer fit for purpose and had significant structural problems. The new accommodation would provide more flexibility and a better student experience with additional classroom space. The works would be funded by two years worth of backlog maintenance funding. A copy of the plan of works would be sent to the Committee for information.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p> <p>Following detailed questions the Committee approved the paper.</p>
09/20	<p><u>Gender Based Violence Prevention & Support Policy & Procedure – Paper D</u></p> <p>Members were advised that the new Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy and Procedure covers both staff and students equally and supersedes the College's Employee Domestic Abuse Policy which was only applicable to staff. The policy has been developed in line with SFC guidance and is also linked to the College's Outcome Agreement.</p> <p>The front cover and footer dates would require to be updated and a link from the Student Portal to the document on the College website would also be arranged.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Head of HR / Principal</p> <p>The Committee approved the paper.</p>
10/20	<p><u>Draft Workforce Strategy – Paper E</u></p> <p>The Principal provided an overview of the Workforce Strategy paper, which had been prepared in order to support the College's Strategic ambition. A workforce plan will also be implemented to support the strategy.</p>

	The Committee approved the paper.
11/20	<p><u>Employee Engagement Survey 2019 – F</u></p> <p>The paper updated the Committee on the actions which had been taken as a result of the Employee Engagement Survey which was carried out during a period of restructuring.</p> <p>The Principal advised that feedback on communications from the trade unions had been positive. During the events of this week with the COVID-19 situation, she had been particularly proud of all staff who had worked together in challenging circumstances. Regular contact had been maintained with trade union representatives regarding the closure of buildings with no issues raised.</p> <p>A number of employee engagement products to ensure measurement had been discussed with a proposal considered by SLT, however, current events may have an impact on this budget.</p> <p>The committee noted the contents of the paper and recognised the effort made by staff and students to cope with challenging circumstances.</p>
12/20	<p><u>Business Review – Paper G</u></p> <p>VP Finance & Corporate Services provided an overview of the paper which had been prepared prior to COVID-19 which would inevitably have an impact on the end of year outcome. The income position was currently being re-assessed, with SFC having provided assurances on grant funding, and scenario analysis would be completed. Data on liabilities was being gathered as a range of costs would require to be paid regardless of the buildings being closed.</p> <p>Cashflow remained in a favourable position at this current time and projections were in line with expectations, however, the longer term forecast was unpredictable due to the probable impact of COVID19. Student travel payments would be stopped given the closure of buildings. There was a need for the College to continue to support small local businesses through prompt payment of liabilities, and this would be communicated to SFC.</p> <p>There would be an additional focus applied to debt recovery however, the overall debt position had improved.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the Business Review and the COVID19 circumstances which had occurred since the report was written.</p>
13/20	<p><u>Estates Strategy Implementation Update – Paper H</u></p> <p>The VP Finance and Corporate Services updated the Committee on specific projects in regards to the implementation of the College's Estates Strategy.</p> <p>Key points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melrose Road – Sale of Thorniedean House and workshops was nearing completion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHARC – contract of energy system had been taken over and was now fully operational again. • Carbon Management Plan – the closure of buildings due to COVID-19 would mean a reduction in several carbon footprint aspects. • Long-term strategic estates – COVID-19 may provide opportunities to accelerate campus changes. • Health & Safety – Stringent cleaning arrangements were in place for COVID-19 which forms part of the Incident Management Team's emergency arrangements. Practical class work had been stopped following concerns regarding the sharing of tools. The Student Member commended staff for their work through this challenging time. <p>Following detailed questions members noted the contents of the report.</p>
14/20	<p><u>ISLT Strategy Implementation Update - Paper I</u></p> <p>The VP Finance and Corporate Services updated the Committee on progress with the implementation of the ISLT strategy.</p> <p>Key points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first year of the development programme had been fully achieved. • The purchasing of additional staff laptops and loan laptops for students had been brought forward with all laptops issued. • SOSEP funding to implement digital equipment had been over achieved with more rooms equipped than originally planned. • The online enrolment project had been brought forward by a year and was on track to go live in 20/21 academic year. • Implementation of smart assessor was on track for 1 April go live. • Recruitment of e-learning specialists had been completed. • Discussions with a specialist company in relation to a strategic approach to digital transformation were currently underway. <p>The Student Member advised that the roll-out of computers and laptops at Newtown St Boswells had been gratefully received by students. It was also agreed that students would be involved in the testing of the online enrolment project.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p> <p>The committee noted the accelerated delivery of digital projects and supported plans to continue this impetus.</p>
15/20	<p><u>Strategic Risk Register – Paper J</u></p> <p>The register had been updated since the last Regional Board meeting with three risks (3c, 3d and 4c) closed off.</p> <p>The VP Finance and Corporate Services updated members on the work which had been completed following the emergence of COVID-19 over the last ten days. Daily Incident Management Team (IMT) meetings had been held with communication channels regularly updated. Plans were now in place for the move to home working/studying. Student welfare support would be provided through a rota system provided by Student Support and emergency food supplies were being co-ordinated by the Students' Association who would also</p>

	<p>be running virtual events for students. Staff had also received training in MS Office and Teams. Risk 5L would be utilised to bring together any inter-dependencies around COVID-19.</p> <p>Following questions on the work of the Incident Management Team the committee members asked to be updated on significant emerging risks and escalation of current risks.</p>
16/20	<p><u>The Financial Sustainability of Colleges & Universities of Scotland – Paper K</u></p> <p>The report which was published by SFC provides a summary of the financial forecasts for the university and college sectors.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
17/20	<p><u>Equality & Diversity (Standing item)</u></p> <p>This area was discussed under item 09/20, The Gender Based Violence Prevention and Support Policy.</p>
18/20	<p><u>Papers for Publication (standing item)</u></p> <p>Items not for publication included any draft items and paper C – Newtown St Boswells Works.</p>
19/20	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 <p>The Student Member commended the excellent work of the Executive Team and staff throughout this difficult week. Members agreed that regular reporting to the Regional Board would be of high importance. The Board Secretary advised that a Teams area for Board members was currently being considered.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Principal</p>
20/20	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for 17:30 on Thursday 7 May 2020, although this would be reviewed nearer the time and members updated accordingly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Board Secretary</p>

Signed.....

Chair

Signed.....

Board Secretary