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Borders College

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Meeting at 13:30 on Thursday 24 September 2020

MS Teams

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
54/20	F&GP Annual Report - Final changes and additions to be made for November meeting.	VP Finance & Corporate Services & Board Secretary	Scott Moncrieff report not yet received – due 09/11
55/20	Draft Strategic Report and Financial Statements 2019/20 – Additions to be made.	VP Finance & Corporate Services	Complete
58/20	Arrangements for Board and Committee meetings to be reviewed with a priority focus on face to face meetings for 2021.	VP Finance & Corporate Services	Will review by end November
59/20	SHARC – external view on financial viability of new owners to be sought. Catering Contract – possible contract extension to be discussed with Campus Management Committee and brought to November F&GP Meeting.	VP Finance & Corporate Services VP Finance & Corporate Services	Received – no concerns although very new company with little history CMC agreed approach on 09/10/2020
60/20	The National Cyber Security Centre toolkit for Boards to be circulated to the Committee for review.	J McBeath / L Sulo	Complete. Looking to use risk workshops to discuss.
65/20	F&GP November Meeting – earlier start time to be clarified following discussion with members.	L Sulo	Complete

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Minutes

ITEM	MINUTE
Present	Elaine Acaster (Chair) Angela Cox (Principal) Jess McBeath Liz Parkes David Peace
In Attendance	Hazel Robertson (Vice Principal – Finance & Corporate Services) Ingrid Earp (Regional Board Secretary) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)
48/20	<u>Chair's Welcome</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
49/20	<u>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</u> No declarations were received.
50/20	<u>Register of Members Interest</u> Members were reminded to advise the Board Secretary of any changes to their registers.
51/20	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> All members were present.
52/20	<u>Minutes of Meetings held on 23 July 2020 – Paper A</u> The previous minute was approved as an accurate record.
53/20	<u>Matters Arising</u> There were no matters arising.

<p>54/20</p>	<p><u>Draft Annual Report of the F&GP Committee to the Regional Board 2019-20 – Paper B</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the draft report with the following points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to treasury management would be removed. • Self-evaluation section would be completed for the next Committee meeting. <p>A final draft would be discussed at the November 2020 meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS & BOARD SECRETARY</p>
<p>55/20</p>	<p><u>Draft Strategic Report and Financial Statements 2019/20 – Paper C</u></p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services provided an overview of the paper which provided an extract of the draft annual accounts. A complete version would be discussed at the next F&GP Committee prior to final approval by the Regional Board in December 2020.</p> <p>A substantive review of the Annual Report had been carried out last year and was well received, therefore, the format had been retained for 2019/20.</p> <p>Overall, the report provided a very positive view of the College with a continued growth in credit targets and MAs and successful completion rates.</p> <p>Statements from the Chair and Principal would be provided at a later date. The financial position had ended with a smaller deficit than forecasted and a strong cash position.</p> <p>A planning meeting with external audit had recently been held with an earlier field-work start date agreed. The accounting treatment of impairment of Melrose Road and restructuring costs had been agreed for the 2019/20 year.</p> <p>The going concern statement had been reviewed in light of guidance from Audit Scotland and the auditors, which had meant a positive change for the year.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the value of consistent briefings which had kept members well-informed and reassured. This would be captured through the revisiting of the strategic priorities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p> <p>Other points raised for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability initiatives of wider college to be included; • Key risks – more detail on how risks were managed. Cross referencing of risk sections; • Great Place to Work Survey - Issues with meeting the expectations of customers whilst working remotely; • Wider Leadership Team activities with supporting home working; • Work of core and sub COVID-19 IMTs. <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p>

	Any further comments should be sent to VP Finance & Corporate Services.
56/20	<p><u>Business Review 2020/2021 – Paper D</u></p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services provided an overview of the paper with the following key points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings through maintenance funds and other contracts had been achieved early; • Cash days remained strong; • Assuming savings targets would be met, there were no cash concerns; • Aged debts position was slightly better than last year and were a combination of trade and student debt; • Management accounts would follow at the end of September; • Payment performance had improved. <p>The Principal advised that there had been no impact on HE for the new academic year, however, retention was a concern. Discussions were underway with SFC regarding the allocation of further credits and further funding opportunities would also be discussed with SOSE.</p> <p>Following detailed questions, the Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
57/20	<p><u>Cyber Security Update</u></p> <p>This item was discussed under item 60/20.</p>
58/20	<p><u>COVID-19 Audit Scotland Advice for Risk & Audit Committees – Paper E</u></p> <p>The report provided members with a self-assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on audit and risk based on guidance from Audit Scotland.</p> <p>The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities of Wider Leadership Team could be added as source of assurance; • Financial controls – approval signatures had been made possible electronically; • Flexibility of Board attending additional meetings over the summer period had been very good with a high attendance at virtual meetings; • Connectivity issues – digital connectivity due to rural areas has had an impact; • Learning for Leading visits – this is currently being reviewed and will be discussed with Regional Board; • Physical presence – for Board Members who do have connectivity issues, on site access was being considered; • Transport – engagement with bus operators continued but this was a significant issue due to the rurality of the region; • The current way of working had increased the availability of stakeholders.

	<p>A discussion took place on future arrangements for Board and Committee meetings with face to face meetings highlighted as a priority, although it was acknowledged that VC arrangements would be in place until at least the end of 2020. Arrangements for meetings would be reviewed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p> <p>External audit had not been asked by Audit Scotland to undertake a review of the self-assessment therefore this would not be part of this year's audit.</p> <p>Feedback would also be sought from the Audit Committee on 1 October 2020.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
<p>59/20</p>	<p><u>Estates Strategy Implementation Update Paper F</u></p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services provided an overview of the report which reported on significant progress on strategic priorities despite the College being on lockdown due to COVID-19 between mid March and mid August 2020.</p> <p>Key points highlighted from the report included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale of Thorniedean House and Academy – anticipating closure of sale in the near future; • Alternative premises for Jedburgh and Edinburgh are being sought; • COVID-19 cost preparations are within the parameters estimated at the start of the year; • Loss on catering services would continue; • Creation of outside space had been positive therefore permanent spaces were being investigated through a study into the best locations; • Replacement portacabins at Newtown campus had been delayed with works due to commence on 12 Oct; • SHARC heating system – a meeting with the new owners had been held and it was anticipated that the system would be operating soon. Members requested that an external view on the financial viability of the new owners be sought; ACTION: VP F&CS • Catering contract – professional advice on this matter had been sought which had indicated that this would be a difficult time to conduct a tender. A one year extension may require to be considered with SFC approval required due to the contract value. This would be discussed with the Campus Management Committee and brought back to the F&GP Committee in November; ACTION: VP F&CS • Sustainability story – documentation and celebration of sustainability work has been ongoing with the new Sustainability Strategy due to be discussed at the October Regional Board. <p>Following detailed questions, the Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
<p>60/20</p>	<p><u>ISLT Strategy Implementation Update</u></p> <p>Members discussed the recent increase in cyber attacks on colleges and universities which was of a continued concern. The National Cyber Security</p>

	<p>Centre had released a toolkit for Boards which would be circulated to the Committee for review.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: JMcB</p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services provided an overview of the report which provided an update on the significant progress which had been made during the COVID-19 lockdown period.</p> <p>The key points highlighted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online induction and enrolment; • Purchase and distribution of student laptops; • Replacement of Apple Macs was accelerated; • SOSEP Learning and Skills Network – digital spokes; • Online delivery for staff and students; • Digital Transformation Project – Phase 1 discovery completed with phase 2 report due in December 2020; • New Digital Learning Forum is being created. <p><i>Jess McBeath left due to another meeting commitment.</i></p> <p>Following detailed questions, the Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
61/20	<p><u>Strategic Risk Register (Paper H)</u></p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services advised that a desktop review of the risks in the context of the College's Strategic Ambition had been completed. A revised Risk Register Policy would be discussed with the Audit Committee on 1 October 2020 and workshop sessions with the Regional Board would be held. This process would then allow for a refresh of the risk register.</p> <p>Points highlighted during discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 2 Matrix – The “Almost certain” probability should correspond to the extreme scoring of 25 (wrong way round on table); • A number of risks which were outlined in the report had been closed as these could be addressed as part of a wider risk; • Revisions to risk register – more descriptive process for risk scoring; • Financial levels to be considered; • There is a need to appreciate the difference between strategic and operational risks. <p>Members agreed that the number of risks identified on the register was too high and that there was a requirement for a focus on what constitutes a strategic risk. Feedback would also be sought from the Audit Committee at the October 2020 meeting.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
62/20	<p><u>Equality & Diversity (Standing item)</u></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>

63/20	<p><u>Papers for Publication (Standing item)</u></p> <p>No draft papers or commercially sensitive papers would be published.</p>
64/20	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>
65/20	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Thursday 19 November. Start time to be confirmed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: LS</p>

Signed.....

Chair

Signed.....

Board Secretary