

## MINUTES

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Minutes of the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2 March 2021 at 9.30am via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** Jim Trail OBE (Chair), Sarah Ferguson, Hugh Hall, Joseph Harney

**Apologies:** Patrick Carnie, Gordon Mole

**In Attendance:** Susan Dunsmuir, Colin Quinn, Sue Reekie, Marianne Philp, David C Watt

### 1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked the Chair of the Board for attending. He advised that, as two of the non executive Committee members had sent their apologies for the meeting in advance, he had invited the Chair of the Board to be in attendance at the meeting to ensure a non executive presence at the meeting.

### 2 Minutes of the

**2.1 Previous Meeting: 19 November 2020**

**2.2 Joint Audit and Risk / Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee:  
19 November 2020**

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

### 3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

### 4 Digital Services Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. It was noted that all projects within the table that had been circulated were highlighted as green and on target. The Digital Services Team had been heavily involved in additional work as a result of remote working and delivery. Significant progress had been made on the Digital Strategy, in particular to support agile working and future proofing the business. Key priorities moving forward were the projects on Library RFID Conversion and Wireless replacement which had recently been restarted. Confirmation was given that a series of training opportunities were being rolled out to staff, and that these would continue as our reliance on technology develops and grows.

It was noted that the recent Government announcement allowed for 5% of students to return to College and staff were working hard to allow for as many students as possible to return to the building where this would be beneficial to them. It was anticipated that restrictions would be gradually eased allowing more students to return, and staff were constantly scenario planning for for this as additional guidance became available.



# Fife College

## **Decisions:**

- To update the Major IS Projects table to include the expenditure for MyFife in the business report to the Board of Governors.
- To circulate more detailed information on what the funding from Fujitsu/Intel would cover.

**Responsibility:** Sue Reekie

**Deadline:** 17 March 2021

## **5 Estates Update**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. An update was given on each of the projects in turn.

There was a discussion about the options relating to the Rosyth Campus lease and the timing of concluding negotiations relating to dilapidations and it was noted that discussions with the landlords were ongoing. Members would be kept updated in this regard at future meetings. It was noted that the previous cost benefits of leaving the building had significantly reduced due to the requirement to remain in the building for two years due to College operational needs, including supporting Woodmill High School after the fire and the fact equipment could not be moved from the Rosyth Campus before the contract break due to the pandemic.

The backlog maintenance funding was currently being spent on various projects which would make a significant difference to the estate condition and was in accordance with the overall Estates Strategy. Some additional funding had also been found within the College to replace the windows at the Kirkcaldy campus.

Work on a Full Business Case for a revamp of the Glenrothes campus was underway so that the college could appropriately respond to any funding that may become available to support this.

### **6.1 Dunfermline New Campus Project Board (DNCPB) Update**

Links to all of the meetings held to date were included for information. It was highlighted that the project overall remains on target, and that significant work had been undertaken on the Design Concept. A presentation would be made on 17 March 2021 prior to the Board of Governors for members to benefit from a full update on progress. The Design Concept would also be used thereafter to update staff and students on plans.

A meeting with the Deputy First Minister had been arranged for 17 March 2021 and an update would be provided on this in due course.

It was noted that a briefing session had been held with 22 elected members where the main areas of interest noted were transportation plans, the impact on housing and safeguarding duties.

It was noted from the minutes of the Project Board meetings that significant progress is now being made and commendations were given to all staff and professional advisors involved.



# Fife College

## 6 Financial Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that as at 31 January 2021, the College was £338k ahead of the year to date F1 position. The Chief Financial Officer was working with budget holders to gain as much insight as possible into the position regarding income and spend and scenario planning for the year-end position was underway. The year-end position was very much dependent upon when restrictions are eased. It was noted that credit income would be paid in full provided the 25% cut off date had passed. However commercial income and any planned income that could not start due to restrictions was potentially at risk.

The year end projection was outlined, as detailed on page 24 of the Boardpack and the various income and expenditure assumptions were explained. A modest operating surplus would be targeted.

Some staff vacancies had not been filled and the Executive Team would review these in order to identify when positions were likely to be filled. There was also unspent provision for the support staff pay settlement which would be backdated once agreed.

It was noted that provision had been made for some additional staff time for product development to support the new types of courses that required to be developed. New posts had also been introduced within the College structure (eg in the Digital Services and Digital Learning teams) to give further capacity in digital enhancement and to support leading the way in areas of research, development and innovation.

## 7 Commercial Activity Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that commercial activity was ahead of target and the overall forecasted outturn for the year was 2.8% over the F1 target. The target set had been cautious and pre-Covid there would have been additional income from conferencing and other commercial training.

The highlights and challenges as detailed on page 25 of the Boardpack were noted.

Committee members commended the Business Development Team on maintaining the right levels of contact with businesses over the Covid-19 period, offering support and opportunities where relevant, and maintaining positive relationships.

It was noted that the Government had provided several support packages for businesses but it could be difficult to manage these due to imposed timescales and the strict rules sometimes applied. Indications were that support would continue into next academic year which would be helpful to support businesses and give the College opportunities.

## 8 Procurement Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The detail of the Procurement Project requiring approval was outlined.

Members were reminded that additional information on the details of spend with SMEs had been requested at the last meeting, and this information was now provided within the report.



# Fife College

There was a discussion about the percentage of spend within Fife compared with the rest of Scotland. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that further analysis was being undertaken on this, however the College was required to abide by procurement guidance on awarding contracts.

**Decision:** To approve the Procurement Project as detailed on page 31 of the report.

**Responsibility:** Chief Financial Officer

**Deadline:** July 2021

## 9 AOCB

It was noted that an update on the budget allocations had been circulated to all Board members by email. No further update had been received on this as yet. As soon as clarification was received, further details would be circulated to Board members.

## 10 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 8 June 2021 at 9.30am