

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF MANAGEMENT held via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 06 October 2020**

- PRESENT:** Sarah Burton, Robyn Kennedy, Innis Montgomery, Chris O'Neil, John Wilson, Kelly Mackenzie, Ruth McFadyen, Vivienne Mackie, Gillian Galloway, Samantha Cribb, Andy Gray, Sally Blyth, Donald MacKenzie, Fiona Neilson
- CHAIR:** Sarah Burton
- APOLOGIES:** Leanne MacKenzie, Tina Stones, Director of Curriculum and Director of Research and Innovation
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Depute Principal Planning and Student Experience  
Depute Principal Academic Development  
Director of Finance  
Director of External Relations  
Director of Student Experience  
Board Secretary
- OBSERVING:** Ron Hill, External Effectiveness Facilitator

The Chair welcomed Ron Hill to the meeting and advised the Board of Management that Ron was observing this meeting as part of our External Effectiveness Review.

**Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were noted.

**1. MINUTES**

**a) Meeting of the Board of Management – 20 February 2020**

The minutes of the Board of Management Meeting held on 20 February 2020 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

**b) Meeting of the Board of Management – 30 June 2020**

The minutes of the Board of Management Meeting held on 30 June 2020 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

**2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

- GDPR – The Board Secretary confirmed that all Board Members had undertaken the GDPR training. It was **AGREED** that this action could be removed from the list.
- Committee Representation – It was noted that this will be looked at in February 2021 following the completion of the External Effectiveness Review.

## ITEM 01

- Sports Pitch – this matter will be discussed further within the Agenda.
- OSCR – it was noted that the OSCR return will be completed in March 2021.

### 3. ESTATES LEGACY – CONFIDENTIAL

The Board Secretary provided background to the Board of Management following the review of the Terms of Reference for both the Longman Disposal and New Campus Project Boards and the subsequent agreement of both of these Committees to the establishment of a new Estates Legacy Project Board and the dissolution of the existing Committees. .

The Board of Management **AGREED** to the dissolution of the New Campus Project Board and Longman Disposal Project Board and **AGREED** the establishment of the Estates Legacy Project Board.

The Board of Management considered the Terms of Reference for the Estates Legacy Project Board and **AGREED** that these be adopted.

### 4. POLICIES FOR DECISION

- **Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure**
- **Special Leave Policy**
- **Staff Recruitment Policy**

The Board of Management noted that the above policies had been reviewed by the SMT, JCC, our Scrutiny Panel and had been recommended for approval by the HR Committee. The Board of Management **APPROVED** each policy.

### 5. SPORTS PITCH

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised the Board of Management that it was agreed at the 30 April 2020 Board of Management Meeting that we would postpone any decision with regards the Sports Pitch until October 2020.

A lengthy discussion ensued which focused on:

- Our improved financial position, the investment from Sports Scotland, the risk of losing secured funded if we do not progress with the pitch and the risk that we are no longer at the heart of any development.
- The importance to students of an outdoor space especially during Covid-19 as well as the importance of the pitch for the local community.
- Procurement - with the Board of Management noting that prior to Covid-19 we were almost ready to begin procurement and a brief had been designed.
- Phase 2 of the project – with the Board of Management noting the broader scope for clubs etc. within phase 2 of the project and that a full business case for funding the second phase would be sought.

- Consideration with regards equality and diversity in relation to phase 2 of the project.

The Board of Management **AGREED** the £250K allocation from the ALF for the sports pitch.

### 6. EVALUATIONS UPDATES

The Board Secretary took the Committee through the outcomes of the Committee Evaluations which were carried out offline during June-August 2020.

The Board of Management considered possible training requirements and it was **AGREED** that all Board Members would identify within their yearly evaluation review if they felt that they required any additional training.

*Andy Gray joined the meeting.*

### 7. ADMIN CONTROL

The Board Secretary advised the Board of Management on the move to AdminControl a digital document sharing and interaction platform. The Committee welcomed the move. The Board Secretary advised that further invitations will be sent to those who have yet to register for AdminControl and that 1-1 training sessions can be set up for those who would benefit from them.

### 8. FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE – CONFIDENTIAL

The Principal took the Board of Management through his confidential report.

The Board of Management discussed the impact of both the FRP and Covid-19 on students and their experience. The Board of Management noted that the Early Student Experience Survey has now been circulated.

The Board of Management was advised by the Principal that the FRP process has gone well with a high level of scrutiny being applied by both ourselves, HISA and the unions. Applicants to the VSS have been given an opportunity to take early retirement or use the alternatives to redundancy to reduce their hours – a flexibility which staff have understood and embraced.

The Board of Management noted that whilst progress has been better than expected there was still the need to ensure that we do not conclude the FRP too quickly and noted that caution was still required especially given Covid-19 and Brexit.

The Board of Management gave their thanks to the SMT for their work during both the FRP and Covid-19.

## 9. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

### Covid-19

The Board of Management discussed Covid-19 and the impact of the proposed tier system by the Scottish Government.

### ELCC

A confidential discussion took place with regards the ELCC.

The Board of Management noted that we expect to incur a loss of £11k by keeping the ELCC open until December 2020. This will increase if we extend the provision. A lengthy discussion ensued with the Board of Management advising that a decision was required in order to remove the uncertainty for both staff and customers.

The Board of Management advised that whilst they were not adverse to the extension of the ELCC until Easter 2020 that they could not do this without sight of the expected costs that will be incurred due to this extension. It was **AGREED** that an estimate of additional costs will be provided to the Chairs Committee meeting being held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

### Curriculum Review

The Board of Management noted that the UHI and Partnership wide review process has begun for HE.

### Strategic Development

The Principal advised the Board of Management that our strategy is due for review. It had been hoped that we could define our strategy subsequent to the EO strategy however the timing of these two workstreams did not allow this given that our current strategy expires at the end of 2020.

The review of the strategy is being led by the SMT with consultation between staff, Board of Management and stakeholders.

It was **AGREED** that a timescale for the Board of Management to review the strategy would be agreed at the Chairs Committee.

### Research and Knowledge Transfer

The Principal highlighted to the Board of Management the tremendous work within Research and Knowledge Transfer with 14.2 FTE compared to 1.2 FTE 7 years ago.

### Staff Morale

The Principal advised the Board of Management that we have set up a Wellbeing Group who meet fortnightly. A concern which the Wellbeing

Group is looking to address is the mental health and wellbeing of staff and it has been agreed that there will be two digital detox days held on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The Board of Management welcomed these detox days and shared their concerns for staff wellbeing.

The Board of Management enquired about the Employee Assistance Programme and noted that promotion of this programme to staff is crucial.

### **10. COVID-19 REPORT**

The Depute Principal – Academic Development advised that in addition to his report there is the possibility of a circuit breaker being activated and we await Government updates.

The Board of Management were advised that we had a student test positive for Covid-19 on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Five students who were present in this student's class along with two members of staff were alerted and a deep clean took place. The Board of Management noted that this was an isolated case and a debriefing session took place and lessons have been learned and we now have a much more robust plan for dealing with any other outbreaks.

The Board of Management commended the SMT for their response and handling of this matter.

### **11. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

The Board of Management noted the Internal Audit recommendation regarding reporting and managing risk and welcomed the actions which the Health and Safety Manager is implementing to combat this.

The Board of Management discussed the SHE software noting that we have extended this licence temporarily but that a solution is required through the Partnership. Whilst the Partnership Council rejected the suggested software the Health and Safety Practitioner's Group, a group which the Health and Safety Manager is a member of, have recommended that the suggested software be brought back to the Partnership Council for further discussion.

### **12. REPORT ON OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION RATES 2019-20**

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience took the Board of Management through the outcomes for 2019-20. The Board of Management acknowledged that performance indicators had been impacted by Covid-19 and that the 5% decrease in FT FE was not indicative of performance and that there was no indication of any significant decreases within any area. The Board of Management noted that on the whole the outcomes remain high and that this will be further discussed and explored at the LT&R Committee.

## 13. STUDENT ACTIVITY 2019/20 & STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2020/21

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience took the Board of Management through his report. The Board of Management noted that the total credit outturn, pending the FES return is 28,368 and that the shortfall is largely due to Covid-19. FT HE is significantly below target. However HE activity for this year has increased and appears to be well ahead of target.

The Board commended this anecdotal evidence and noted that the SMT were finalising how to delve into this evidence further to gain supplementary information.

The Board of Management noted that we are expected to receive all our income for HE this year even if we are over target assuming that we retain all current students.

The Board of Management noted that students are adapting to the new online way of learning with PDAs and PATs ensuring continued engagement with students. As previously noted the Early Student Experience Survey has been sent out and IT equipment is being made available for any students experiencing digital poverty.

It was highlighted to the Board of Management the potential impact online learning may have on exams but that the SMT continue to liaise with SQA regarding this.

## 14. RISK REGISTER ANNUAL REVIEW

The Director of Finance advised that the Risk Register is due to be reviewed and provided a confidential verbal update with regards where updates are required.

## 15. DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF BOARD COMMITTEES (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Board of Management noted the following draft minutes of meetings:

- a) Audit Committee – 2 June 2020
- b) HR Committee – 4 June 2020
- c) LT&R Committee – 9 June 2020
- d) F&GP Committee – 11 June 2020
- e) Chairs Committee – 25 June 2020
- f) Longman Disposal Committee – 25 June 2020
- g) New Campus Committee – 25 June 2020
- h) F&GP Committee – 30 June 2020
- i) Longman Disposal Committee – 28 July 2020
- j) New Campus Committee – 28 July 2020
- k) Chairs Committee – 30 July 2020
- l) Chairs Committee – 10 September 2020

## ITEM 01

The Chair of the Board of Management highlighted that she was working with the Board Secretary to ensure that all minutes from meetings are available for inclusion with Board papers.

*The Director of Student Experience left the meeting.*

### **16. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN**

The Board of Management were advised that the LT&R Committee were content with the proposed changes to the Corporate Parenting Plan. The Board of Management commended the Director of Student Experience for her work on the updated plan.

### **17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Date of Next Meeting: 1 December 2020 at 4.30 p.m.

Signed by the Chair:

*Sarah Burton*

Date: 01.12.20