



MINUTES of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 27 April 2023

PRESENT: Kelly MacKenzie, Chris O’Neil, Donald MacKenzie, Stephen Sheridan & Russell Edwards

CHAIR: Donald MacKenzie

ATTENDING: Joint Finance and Audit Director
Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations
Operations and Commercial Manager
Estates and Campus Services Manager
Information Systems Manager
Information Development Manager
Governance Officer

APOLOGIES: Rojan Kumar Subramani

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Joint Finance and Audit Director. The Governance Officer confirmed that this meeting was quorate.

The Committee noted that an additional briefing paper would be tabled following the update on Operations and External Relations. The Committee noted that this paper would provide members with a confidential update in respect of SDS allocations and SFC funding reductions.

Stephen Sheridan declared an interest in SDS allocations.

There were no other declarations of interests, statements of connections or transparency statements noted.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 January 2023

Decision: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 January 2023 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- ALF Monies – the Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations advised the Committee that bids have been submitted to the ALF with additional information in respect of our estate having been requested and provided. The Committee noted that these bids are low level, and no delays are expected.
- Revenue Budgets – the Joint Finance and Audit Director provided the Committee with an explanation of our debt protocol highlighting that:
 - 14 days after an invoice is issued an overdue notice is sent.
 - After 28 days a statement is issued.
 - A final demand is issued after 42 days.
 - A further letter is sent 7 days after a final demand is issued advising that this will be sent for debt collection.
 - After 56 days the invoice is sent for debt collection.

Decision: The Committee **AGREED** that this item could be removed from the list.

- Procurement Strategy – the Committee was advised that this was still outstanding. The Committee raised concerns that this had yet to be finalised and were reassured that the Joint Finance and Audit Director would liaise with the Procurement Team to ensure that this action is followed through.

Action: The Joint Finance and Audit Director will liaise with Procurement over the status of the strategy and will provide the Committee with an update along with additional clarity in respect of the Procurement policy and procedure.

3. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

The Joint Finance and Audit Director spoke to his report and provided the Committee with an update on the Capital spend for 22/23. The Committee was advised that we have fully utilised all grants and noted that some expenditure is still progressing through the purchase order stage and noted that final costs will be provided to the Committee at the June 2023 meeting.

The Committee thanked the Joint Finance and Audit Director for this report.

4. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

The Joint Finance and Audit Director spoke to his report which provided the Committee with an update on the budget monitoring for 2022/23 up to February 2023 and highlighted:

- We are forecasting that we will meet our FE Credit Target.
- HE targets will not be met, despite HE numbers increasing.
- Expected impacts from pay inflation, cost of living, national job evaluation, flat funding, and our expected deficit for this financial year.
- We expect to receive monies from our insurance claim in respect of the cyber incident.

The Principal advised that our current adjusted position includes NPD payments.

The Committee discussed the impact of flat funding and agreed that this would be further discussed as part of the confidential update following the Operations and External Relations Report.

The Committee thanked the Joint Finance and Audit Director for this report.

5. MID YEAR FORECAST RETURN

The Joint Finance and Audit Director spoke to the Mid-Year Forecast Return for 2022/23 which compares the original return dated September 2022 to our current forecast. The Committee noted that the return was based on the figures from the February 2023 Revenue Monitoring and shows not only income and expenditure but also the balance sheet and cash flow.

The Committee noted that it is still unknown if the SFC will impose any claw back in terms of FE and HE for the year 2021/22. The Committee noted that UHI Executive Office have been liaising with the SFC over this but have yet to be advised of the SFC's decision.

The Committee discussed the potential for strike action or actions short of strike as part of the National Pay Bargaining negotiations.

The Committee thanked the Joint Finance and Audit Director for this report.

6. SHARED FINANCE SERVICE

A confidential discussion took place which provided the Committee with an update in respect of the Shared Finance Service (Note of Session: CN-01-042023).

Russell Edwards left the meeting.

7. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The Information Systems Manager joined the meeting.

The Information Systems Manager spoke to her report which provided the Committee with a summary of current student enrolments and withdrawals and highlighted that:

- We have exceeded our credit target for FE 22/23 with enrolments expected to generate around 30,500 credits.
- Our HE credits are still under target, and we are not expected to reach further than 91% in respect of this.
- Our FE FT early withdrawals are 7.2% lower than the previous year and are now back in line with pre-Covid levels.
- HE FT early withdrawals are 5.2% higher than previous years and as a result this will be closely monitored. The Committee noted that this is mirrored both across the partnership and the sector.
- Further withdrawals are tracking as per our projections.
- We have seen our highest FE recruitment since 2019.
- Senior phase applications are being processed and decisions will be issued this week.

The Principal highlighted the work undertaken by the Marketing Team and others to ensure a good response to our targeted recruitment. The Committee noted that a review of the curriculum forms part of the UHI 2024 Revitalisation Programme and they were provided with a confidential update in respect of this review. The Committee discussed the expected timescales around implementing changes to the curriculum.

The Committee was advised that we are looking to provide Graduate Apprenticeships as part of the curriculum for 2023/24 and a further update on this will be provided in June 2023.

The Committee thanked the Information Systems Manager for this report.

The Information Systems Manager left the meeting.

8. CAMPUS REPORT

The Estates and Campus Services Manager spoke to his report and provided the Committee with a brief overview in respect of:

- Campus capacity, hybrid working and potential flexibilities within the campus.
- Our Carbon Management Plan.
- Increasing electricity tariffs, implications of installing solar panels and changing lighting to LED.
- GTFM contract and project management.
- Waste Management and the commitment being shown by HISA in respect of projects such as Green Week.
- Campus Management Capital Projects highlighting that applications made to the ALF should allow us to make changes to ensure that the campus remains flexible in its use.
- Pool car provision, with the Committee noting that work is being undertaken to reduce the amount of assessors going out to sites.
- Our current leases and potential updates to these.
- Water Risk Assessment in conjunction with Scottish Futures Trust.

The Committee was advised that a Health, Safety and Sustainability Manager has been appointed and the Committee thanked the Estates and Campus Services Manager for the work which he had undertaken to cover the role.

The Estates and Campus Services Manager left the meeting.

Stephen Sheridan left the meeting.

9a. OPERATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS REPORT

The Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations spoke to her report advising that in respect of FWDF income we are expecting a reduction in

funding, which will be discussed as part of the confidential session following this report. The Committee was provided with an explanation in respect of the development of Graduate Apprenticeship Programmes.

The Operations and Commercial Manager provided the Committee with an update in respect of the Consolidated Catering Budget as at 31 March 2023 advising that events activity has been steadily increasing and that we are looking at increased activity for the upcoming Academic Year. The Committee noted the increased use of compostable and consumable items because of increased activity within the Campus and was advised that this will be factored into next year's budget. The Committee discussed the support being provided to students in respect of free breakfast and lunch items.

The Committee reviewed the KPI Matrix, highlighting:

- HE Active Applications
- FE Credits
- Apprenticeships Starts
- FWDF
- HE FTE
- Mental Health and Learning Support. The Committee noted that these are below target but that this stems from the requirement for students to declare their need for support.
- Staff sickness levels.

9b. CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION

A confidential discussion took place which provided the Committee with an update in respect of the recent funding announcements (Note of Session: CN-02-042023).

10. 6 MONTHLY GDPR REPORT

The Information Development Manager joined the meeting.

The Information Development Manager spoke to her report which provided the Committee with an update on operational activity, compliance and the 2022 annual statistics for Subject Access Requests and highlighted:

- The number of data breaches/incidents reported between January and March 2023
- That the majority of Subject Access Requests for 2022 were from third parties and were for the most part requesting employment references for students.
- That compliance auditing will be conducted throughout May in high-risk areas such as HR, Admissions and Funding and Student Records. The Committee noted that compliance auditing of the Finance Service will be postponed until later in the year due to the changes within the department and priorities in respect of procurement.
- The Committee noted that we are entering a period of intense activity in respect of procurement and the governance surrounding this given the work streams which are coming out of the UHI 2024 Revitalisation Programme.

The Committee thanked the Information Development Manager for the work which she is undertaking.

The Information Development Manager left the meeting.

11. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT

The Governance Officer spoke to her report which provided a summary on Freedom of Information Requests for 2022 and highlighted:

- The number of information requests for the year with the Committee noting that this was the highest we have received in several years.
- The way requests are being received.

- The source of requests with the Committee noting that we have seen an increase in requests from Trade Unions and journalists.
- The type of requests and the areas within the College that these relate to.
- Response times.
- Responses and where exemptions have been applied.

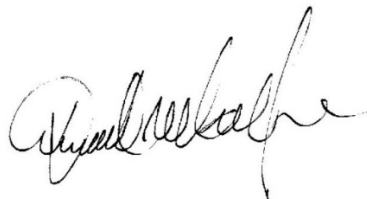
In respect of Environmental Requests the Committee noted that the last environmental request received was in 2016.

The Committee thanked the Governance Officer for this update.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 08 June 2023 at 9.00 a.m.

Signed by the Chair:



Date: 08 June 2023