



FINANCE, STAFFING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 17 November 2015

Present:	Mr J Turner (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors
	Mr S Holderness	Governor
	Ms S Munden	Staff Governor
	Ms S Overton-Edwards	Principal
	Mr H Solanki	Parent Governor
In Attendance:	Mr J Bagley	Vice-Principal Curriculum
	Mr H Ravat	Vice-Principal Resources
	Ms F Scott	Finance Manager
	Ms J Walsh	Marketing Officer
	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
F/15/52	<p>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence: An apology for absence was received from Naz Leivas-Mistry. The meeting was declared quorate. John Turner welcomed to the meeting Steve Holderness as a returning member and Fay Scott as an observer. All present briefly introduced themselves.</p>	
F/15/53	<p>Item 2 – Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items: There were no declarations of interest in the items listed on the agenda.</p>	
F/15/54	<p>Item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising: The minutes of the meeting on 15 October 2015 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Turner. There were no matters arising.</p> <p><i>With the agreement of the meeting, John Turner took item 7.1 as the next item of business. Items are however recorded in these minutes in agenda order.</i></p>	
F/15/55	<p>Item 4 – Estates Issues: <i>4.1 Estates Matters</i> Hamid Ravat presented an oral report on the Blackbird Road land. Barratts had hitherto been working on their Planning Application on the assumption that 25 of the 33 acres would</p>	

be classed as developable land. However this formula was under active review. It appeared likely as a result that Barratts would in fact apply for planning consent on the basis of 20 developable acres. This would depress the price paid for the site. In the event that more acres were developed at a later stage, the College would receive a share of the additional land value. However it was unlikely that the receipts from the sale of the land would exceed the amount due to the Education Funding Agency (EFA). It was still unclear when the sale would be completed.

The meeting received the report on estates issues.

4.2 Health & Safety Statistics

Hamid Ravat presented the health & safety statistics for the year to date. The number of reported incidents and accidents was very small. It was too early to draw any conclusions from the statistics.

The meeting received the health & safety statistics.

F/15/56 Item 5 – Finance Issues:

5.1 Learner Numbers and Funding 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented a report on learner numbers and funding. This was very similar to the report considered at the previous meeting. He believed that the student role at the first Individual Learner Report would number about 1,630.

The meeting received the learner numbers and funding report.

5.2 Operating Results 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented the operating results to October 2015. The surplus was currently £105K ahead of budget because expenditure had been lower than budget. Pay expenditure was £49K below budget, in part because provision had been made for an annual pay award (not yet agreed) and a rise in National Insurance contributions due later in the year. Steve Holderness asked what was the expected impact of the implementation of the living wage. Hamid Ravat said that all College employees were paid at above this rate. However providers of contracted services would be affected in future years. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that some colleges were unlikely to be able to afford to implement any national award. It was possible that any award might be phased to take account of this difficulty.

Hamid Ravat reported that non-pay expenditure to date was £45K under budget: an over-spend of £29K on supply staff (partly caused by over-recruitment of students) had been more than offset by favourable variances, notably on administration and examinations. The latter were however seasonal in nature and would be eliminated during the course

of the year.

The cash position stood at £3.2 million. This was set to decline to £2.5 million by the end of March 2016, as a result of the profile of receipts from the EFA, before rising to about £3.1 million at the year-end. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the cash position of colleges would receive particular attention during the Area Reviews. Hamid Ravat reported that all financial KPIs were healthy. He described the College as being in a sound financial position thus far.

The meeting received the operating results.

5.3 Performance of Midshire's Catering Contract

Hamid Ravat presented a review of the catering service during 2014/2015, the second year of the current contract. Midshire had reduced their annual loss from £17K to £6K. The increased value of free meals had had a positive impact. Steve Holderness said that the gross profit margin achieved by Midshire was unsustainably low, and he questioned their approach to managing this. He was however pleased to learn of the increasing emphasis placed on 'grab and go' meals, as these enabled levels of waste and risk to be reduced. Hamid Ravat said that the College was reasonably satisfied and that the service provided had improved.

The meeting received the report on the catering service.

5.4 Sports Facilities Account

Hamid Ravat presented a report on the sports community income and expenditure account for 2014/2015. There had been little change from the previous year. Demand for the facilities was stronger during the week than at weekends. The local market was saturated and income barely covered the costs of the activity. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that probably the only way to increase usage was to have a sports club based on-site. There were however potential drawbacks to this. Steve Holderness said that high quality sports facilities were a necessary adjunct to a successful college. It was noted that the facilities enabled the College to deliver a tangible public benefit.

The meeting received the report on the sports facilities account.

5.5 GEMEG Partnership Financial Analysis

Hamid Ravat presented a report on the financial impact of the GEMEG partnership in 2014/2015. The students recruited had generated a funding value of £169K. He confirmed that the element retained by the College had been sufficient to cover the costs of all the monitoring and control activities undertaken during the year. These activities had been in line

with EFA regulations in respect of partnerships. The partnership had been renewed for the current academic year.

The meeting received the report on the GEMEG partnership.

5.6 Bank Loan Covenants Update

Hamid Ravat presented a report confirming that the College remained compliant with all of its bank loan covenants. He recounted the costly experience of another college that had recently been in breach of its covenants.

The meeting received the report on bank loan covenants.

F/15/57 Item 6 – Human Resources Issues:

6.1 Staffing Update

In the absence of Naz Mistry, Hamid Ravat presented the staffing report. Headcount was slightly above budget and was expected to remain so in the light of student numbers. Action was in hand to fill the five current vacancies. Staff absence for the year to date was continuing to run at below sector average rates.

The meeting received the staffing update.

6.2 Staff Survey Follow-up

Suzanne Overton-Edwards gave an update on progress on the action plan following the staff survey. The second staff bulletin had been published, but there had again been no response to SLT Question Time.

The meeting received this report.

F/15/58 Item 7 – Marketing Issues:

7.1 Marketing Plan 2015/2016

John Turner welcomed Jade Walsh to the meeting. She presented an updated version of the marketing plan, highlighting recent changes. These related in particular to recent press and radio coverage, the very successful Open Day, and further progress on social media and promotional films. She then showed three short films: a film produced by students promoting Performing Arts, 'Behind the Scenes – the Gateway Film' and the Gateway Film itself. The meeting congratulated her on the excellence of these films. She reported that the Open Day had attracted 930 visitors, about twice the number in the previous year. The Committee asked questions about the schools and areas from which prospective students had been drawn. Jade Walsh said that early analysis showed a wide spread. There was a discussion during which it was recognised that travel costs were likely to have an increasing impact on student choices. This issue was likely to be a significant consideration in Area Reviews.

The meeting received the presentation with thanks.

Jade Walsh then left the meeting.

F/15/59 Item 8 – General Issues:

8.1 Public Access and Confidentiality Policy

Robert Mansfield presented the public access and confidentiality policy for review. He did not believe that any change was currently needed.

The Committee commended the public access and confidentiality policy to the Board for ratification.

8.2 Progress against Strategic Targets 2015/2016

Suzanne Overton-Edwards presented a report on progress against the strategic plan targets due for review by the Committee. All matters had in fact been covered by previous agenda items.

The Committee received this report.

8.3 Annual Complaints Report 2014/2015

Suzanne Overton-Edwards presented the annual complaints report for 2014/2015. Several of these related to misbehaviour by young people taken to be college students. In most instances the culprits had never been identified. Steve Holderness expressed his concern that these incidents adversely affected the reputation of the College and asked what was done to discourage misbehaviour by students. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that students received reminders that such incidents reflected badly upon the whole College. James Bagley reported that SLT members sometimes visited the local bus stop and areas near to the College.

The meeting received the annual complaints report.

8.4 Letter from the Education Funding Agency

Hamid Ravat presented a recent letter from the EFA confirming that the College's financial health was still assessed as 'Outstanding'.

The meeting noted the letter.

F/15/60 Item 9 – Date and Time of next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting would be Thursday 3 December 2015 at 5.30 p.m. at the College. This would be a joint meeting with the Audit Committee.

F/15/61 Item 10 – Any Other Business:

There was no other business.