



FINANCE, STAFFING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting on Thursday 17 March 2016

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 N Leivas-Mistry	Vice-Principal Quality
	Mr H Ravat	Vice-Principal Resources
	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
F/16/11	<p>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence: There were no apologies for absence. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
F/16/12	<p>Item 2 – Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items: There were no declarations of interest in agenda items. (See however item 6.3.)</p>	
F/16/13	<p>Item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising: The minutes of the meeting on 16 January 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Turner. There were no matters arising.</p>	
F/16/14	<p>Item 4 – Estates Issues: <i>4.1 Estates Matters</i> Hamid Ravat presented an oral report on estates matters. In view of the continuing uncertainty about the acreage required at the Blackbird Road site to be reserved for leisure / sports facilities, all parties had agreed that a revised contract was required with an overage provision covering possible later development within a period of 21 years in excess of the 20 acres now assumed by the developer. This provision would apply as a restrictive covenant if Barratts were later to sell the land. The College's responsibilities for the maintenance of the site would continue until the sale had been completed. Although completion was due before the end of 2016, there was provision to put back the date by up to a year if complications arose, as in fact they had.</p>	

Hamid Ravat reported that steps were in hand to extend the area of the hard-standing at the rear of the College that served as a fire evacuation area. This was because access and the surrounding area had become treacherous in wet weather.

Hamid Ravat advised the Committee that a feasibility study had been commissioned into the installation of a mezzanine floor above the canteen. The consultants were seeking input from Arups regarding load bearing issues. Acoustic tiles would be needed to deaden sound rising from the canteen. In answer to questions he said that the additional study space created would equate to about five classrooms, thereby increasing the College's capacity by about 100 students. Hamid Ravat believed that the College's recent history and local demography made it likely that additional capacity would be required over the next few years. He did not believe that a decision to academise, if taken, would affect student demand. Harshad Solanki noted that there was significant housing development locally, and that this was likely to boost demand for places. A further report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

HR

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. A total of 35 incidents (including 10 accidents on site) had been reported to date. There were no underlying causes for concern.

The meeting received the health & safety statistics.

F/16/15 Item 5 – Finance Issues:

5.1 Learner Numbers and Funding 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented a report on learner numbers and funding. This was based upon the RO6 (second ILR) return. The number of students had reduced by one and was 56 ahead of target. Programme funding had slightly increased.

The meeting received the learner numbers and funding report.

5.2 Operating Results 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented the operating results to February 2016. The reported deficit was £23K less than budgeted. (The deficit was occasioned by the funding profile.) Income had been £23K above budget because of higher receipts for High Needs Students. Pay expenditure was £27K below budget; however teaching staff had as yet received no increase and a rise in National Insurance contributions was due from April 2016. Non-pay expenditure to date was £13K over budget: an over-spend of £101K on supply staff (mainly caused by over-

recruitment of students) had been largely mitigated by favourable variances, notably on premises utilities (the result of a mild winter and a more favourable tariff).

Hamid Ravat repeated his previous estimate that the likely outturn for 2015/2016 would be a surplus of around £150K rather than the budgeted surplus of £200K.

The balance sheet remained stable. The cash position stood at over £2.5 million. After the usual seasonal dip this was expected to reach around £2.8 million at the year end.

Hamid Ravat reported that all financial KPIs were in line with targets or better. He advised John Turner that the national teachers' pay award, if approved by the Board, would be paid to teaching staff at the end of April 2016.

The meeting received the operating results.

5.3 Course Sizes and Learner Programme Efficiencies - Update

James Bagley presented an update on a previous paper on course sizes and learner programme efficiencies. The number of courses falling below the optimum size had been reduced by 105, thereby generating an increase in future funding of nearly £92K. He thanked all the members of staff who had been involved in this achievement. John Turner added his own congratulations and asked that all staff should be informed of the impact that these efforts had had. James Bagley also advised the meeting that consultations had just begun on a new timetable structure.

The meeting received the update on course sizes and programme efficiencies.

5.4 Funding Outlook 2016/2017

Hamid Ravat presented details of learner numbers and funding for 2016/2017. Figures for the Education Funding Agency had been confirmed, but those for the Skills Funding Agency were provisional. Learner numbers were very close to the current student roll. Whilst the target for programme funding had therefore increased, after adjustments (including the removal of most of the remaining formula protection) total funding was set to reduce by 1.35%, even though the learner number target had increased by 3.6%. It was likely that the budget for 2016/2017 would show a small deficit.

The meeting received the funding outlook.

SOE

F/16/16 Item 6 – Human Resources Issues:

6.1 Staffing Update

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented the staffing report. Headcount was about 5 FTE above budget and was expected to remain so in the light of student numbers. There had been one new member of staff, who had made a very promising start. Five

teachers were on maternity leave. There were no vacancies. The sickness absence of teaching staff remained below national comparators. Of the two members of corporate staff on long term sickness, one was returning to work and the other was leaving the College.

The meeting received the staffing update.

6.2 Staff Survey Follow-up

Suzanne Overton-Edwards provided an update on actions taken in the wake of the staff survey. These covered the display of photographs of governors and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members in Reception, the latest Staff Bulletin, timely response to internal emails, recent staff briefings, consultation on policies, recognition of success, walkabouts by the SLT, and efforts to encourage participation in SLT Question Time.

John Turner said that he had held recent discussions with Surveylab. The next survey would be conducted in May 2016 and would contain all the previous questions plus a few new ones to assess perceptions of the Action Plan. Feedback would be presented to the Board on 2 June and to staff on 6 June 2016.

The meeting received this report.

6.3 Teachers' Pay Settlement

Hamid Ravat presented a short paper informing the Committee that a national pay settlement for teachers of 1% had been agreed. This was in line with the provision in the College budget.

Shirley Munden at this point declared an interest, as a member of corporate service staff. She asked whether, given that corporate staff had received a pay increase of 0.9%, there was any precedent for differential rises between teaching and corporate services staff at the College. Hamid Ravat summarised the national negotiations that had given rise to the current situation. Steve Holderness urged that pay rises of 1% should be awarded to both corporate and teaching staff on the current year, as he feared that there might otherwise be bad feeling. Harshad Solanki agreed. Hamid Ravat and Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that such action would create a precedent, that the College might later regret, in breaking away from national pay settlements. John Turner asked that the Committee should be advised at its next meeting of the cost of adding 0.1% to the pay award already approved for corporate service staff. The Committee recommended that the Board should approve the national pay award of 1% for teachers.

The Committee commended the national teachers' pay

HR

settlement to the Board for adoption by the College.

F/16/17 Item 7 – Marketing Issues:

7.1 Marketing Update 2015/2016

James Bagley began the marketing update by presenting an analysis of data relating to the Open Day held earlier in the year. This covered how visitors had heard about the event, the schools from which they came and the subjects of interest to them. It was noted that visits to schools by College staff had a major influence. James Bagley, Suzanne Overton-Edwards and Shirley Munden provided recent anecdotal evidence on how much the visits were appreciated by schools and students. John Turner asked that in future schools should be listed in alphabetical order.

James Bagley then reviewed progress against the marketing plan. The College had received mixed, but generally favourable, recent coverage in the *Leicester Mercury*. On other fronts progress was generally in line with the plan.

JB

The meeting received the update.

F/16/18 Item 8 – General Issues:

8.1 Area Based Reviews

Suzanne Overton-Edwards delivered a *PowerPoint* presentation on Area Based Reviews and Academisation. During discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of becoming an academy, Steve Holderness said he had been shocked and frustrated to find that, despite earlier assurances to the contrary, funding for the academy school of which he was a governor was still being routed via the local education authority (LEA) and that the LEA was tampering with the allocations to individual academies. He feared that if the College were to go down the same route, it might encounter similar problems. Hamid Ravat said that written guidance published by the EFA made it clear that there would be no change to the process whereby the College received funding directly from the EFA. Steve Holderness said the school to which he had just referred had he believed received similar assurances. Harshad Solanki urged that care should be taken to avoid “scaring off” future students by premature talk of academisation. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that it was too early to say whether this route was attractive to the College, and that this should be the response if questions were raised about it. Shirley Munden thought that students would be much more interested in the education provided than whether the College was an academy. Steve Holderness also expressed unease about the implications of being in either the private sector, as the College currently was, or the public

sector, as the College would be if it became an academy.
The Committee received the presentation.

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 these targets had been reviewed during previous agenda items.

The Committee received this report.

F/16/19 Item 9 – Date and Time of next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Thursday 26 May 2016 at 5.30 p.m. at the College.

F/16/20 Item 10 – Any Other Business:

There was no other business.