



FINANCE, STAFFING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting on Thursday 26 May 2016

Present:	Mr J Turner (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors
	Mr S Holderness	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/16/21	<p>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence: An apology for absence was received from Shirley Munden. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
F/16/22	<p>Item 2 – Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items: There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p>	
F/16/23	<p>Item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising: The minutes of the meeting on 17 March 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Turner. Under matters arising, Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that she would comment on the success previously reported in improving class sizes in the next Staff Bulletin and would congratulate the staff involved. Hamid Ravat reported that the cost of an additional award of 0.1% to Corporate Services staff would have been about £2K for the year.</p>	
F/16/24	<p>Item 4 – Estates Issues: <i>4.1 Estates Matters</i> Hamid Ravat presented an oral report on estates matters. A Planning Application for the construction of 300 houses on the Blackbird Road site had recently been submitted, and was now out to consultation. A decision was expected in the autumn of the current year. There had been a delay, now resolved, in obtaining the structural data from Arups needed to prepare a proposal for the construction of a mezzanine floor. After the drawings had been reviewed, probably during the second week in June, reference would be made to Building Control. The meeting</p>	

advised that as a minimum, since the approval of the Board would be required for this project, a paper would need to be considered at the meeting on 28 June, perhaps paving the way for Chair's action during the summer vacation. If possible this paper should have received prior consideration by the Committee on 16 June. John Turner advised that staff should ensure that the proposal allowed for the possible later construction of an additional (third) storey.

Hamid Ravat reported that initial consideration had been given to a programme of summer works. This would probably consist largely of minor painting and decorating works.

The meeting received the report on estates issues.

4.2 Room Utilisation Survey 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat reported the findings of a recent survey of room utilisation and the resultant actions planned. The survey had indicated that there was apparent scope to increase the utilisation of some rooms and to accommodate larger classes. The science laboratories had the highest usage. Hamid Ravat assured the meeting that the current usage of the laboratories was fully compliant with health and safety requirements.

Steve Holderness said that the development of more laboratories appeared to be a priority. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the laboratories were currently being used for lessons as well as practical work; there might be scope to move some lessons to other rooms. Hamid Ravat said that there was space where additional laboratories could be created. Steve Holderness asked that a costed plan should be prepared.

Naz Leivas-Mistry said that the shortage of study space highlighted by students arose mainly because not all rooms were equipped with computers and the behaviour of disruptive students had caused teachers to close some rooms when not in use for classes. The mezzanine floor, if approved, should address this need.

Hamid Ravat said that the revised timetable to be introduced in 2016/2017 should help to increase capacity. James Bagley said that the move to a seven-block timetable was designed to sustain a broad curriculum offering and to minimize clashes. The timetable should improve student choice and aid recruitment. Hamid Ravat confirmed that he believed that room refurbishments and the new timetable should enable the College to cope with further modest growth.

The meeting received the room utilisation report.

4.3 Health & Safety Statistics

Hamid Ravat presented the health & safety statistics for the year to date. A total of 60 incidents (including 17 accidents

on site) had been reported to date. It looked likely that both these statistics would by the year end show a small increase on the figures for recent years. There were no underlying causes for concern.

The meeting received the health & safety statistics.

F/16/25 Item 5 – Finance Issues:

5.1 Learner Numbers and Funding 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented a report on learner numbers and funding. This was identical to the report presented to the previous meeting.

The meeting received the learner numbers and funding report.

5.2 Operating Results 2015/2016

Hamid Ravat presented the operating results to April 2016. The reported deficit was £45K greater than budgeted. (The deficit itself was occasioned by the funding profile.) Income had been £28K above budget because of higher receipts for High Needs Students. Pay expenditure was £10K below budget; teaching staff had now received their pay increase and the rise in National Insurance contributions had taken effect. Non-pay expenditure to date was £61K over budget: an over-spend of £149K on supply staff (mainly caused by over-recruitment of students, including higher needs learners, and maternity cover) had been partly mitigated by favourable variances, notably on premises utilities. When questioned about the College's unprecedented spend on supply staff, Hamid Ravat said that it was difficult to recruit staff of the required quality mid-year, and there were substantial penalties associated with the in-year recruitment of agency staff.

He 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 £2.6 million. 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.

The meeting received the operating results.

F/16/26 Item 6 – Human Resources Issues:

6.1 Staffing Update

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented the staffing report. Headcount was about 2 FTE above budget. There had been no new members of staff and two leavers. Three teachers were on maternity leave. There were seven vacancies. The College was, in line with experience nationally, finding it harder to fill vacancies, especially for managerial posts. The sickness

absence of teaching staff remained below national comparators. There were no members of staff on long term sickness. John Turner noted that sickness absence had recently increased.

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 2015 staff survey. The main recent actions had been the continuing publication of Staff Bulletins, the negotiation of HR policies and visits by SLT members to improve visibility.

The meeting received this report.

6.3 SFCA Teaching Staff Working Arrangements Survey

Hamid Ravat presented a paper summarising the context and principal relevant findings of the Teaching Staff Working Arrangements Survey conducted by the Sixth Form Colleges Association in October 2015. From this he had concluded that the length of the College's working day was very close to the sector average, the sizes of classes taught were generally slightly below sector averages (significantly so at AS level) and teachers' contact hours were slightly above the sixth form college mean.

The Committee noted these conclusions.

F/16/27 Item 7 – Marketing Issues:

7.1 Marketing Update 2015/2016

James Bagley presented the marketing update. There had been continuing good coverage of College news in *The Leicester Mercury*. However, as a result of very poor experiences in the current year all three local sixth form colleges had decided in 2016/2017 to withdraw their support for the Leicester Mercury Young Achievers Awards and were looking for an alternative project which they could jointly support. There had been continued growth in social media traffic.

Attendance at the second Parents' Evening had improved by 10% but was still at an unacceptably low level. Improved ways of promoting the new prospectus were under consideration. This had led to critical examination of the College website, whose design now seemed outdated. He assured John Turner that a costed proposal would be presented to the Committee if significant change was contemplated.

The meeting received the update.

JB

F/16/28 Item 8 – General Issues:

8.1 Area Based Reviews

Suzanne Overton-Edwards provided an oral update on preparation for the Area Based Review. The principals of the three local sixth form colleges were continuing to meet, with guidance from their Chairs of Governors. Although she and John Turner felt that progress towards reaching a preferred way forward had been slow, at a recent meeting James Kewin (Deputy Chief Executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association) had given positive feedback on the progress so far achieved. A paper agreed by the three Leicester sixth form colleges would be presented to the Board on 2 June 2016. The next steps would entail discussions with a firm of solicitors about possible future structures and their implications. John Turner said that he had been quite surprised at the positive tenor of James Kewin's remarks. It was apparent that in the present funding climate the College would very soon be forced to operate in deficit. This did not appear sustainable and there would probably be a recommendation to enter into some form of combination with the other Leicester sixth form colleges.

The Committee received this report.

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. John Turner said that wording relating to the construction of the mezzanine floor needed to be tempered to make clear that this development would proceed if it received approval from the Board only.

The meeting received this report.

8.3 Treasury Management Policy

Hamid Ravat presented the treasury management policy. This set out the established arrangements for managing surplus funds and securing funds to cover cash deficits.

The Committee commended the treasury management policy to the Board.

8.4 Fees Policy

Hamid Ravat presented the fees policy for 2016/2017. The only change made to the current policy was in respect of learners aged 19 to 23 years who had already attained a full level 3 qualification, whose eligibility for public funding would cease.

The Committee commended the fees policy to the Board.

SOE

RM

RM

8.5 Fraud Policy

Robert Mansfield explained that timetabling issues had made it necessary to bring the fraud policy to the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee rather than to the Audit Committee, as would have been usual. Hamid Ravat then presented the fraud policy.

The Committee commended the fraud policy to the Board.

RM

8.6 Staff Recruitment Policy

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented the staff recruitment policy. Hitherto the College had relied upon the comprehensive guidance provided by the Sixth Form Colleges Association. However following the inception of the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee the College had agreed to establish its own policy.

The Committee commended the staff recruitment policy to the Board.

RM

F/16/29 Item 9 – Date and Time of next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Thursday 16 June 2016 at 5.30 p.m. at the College.

F/16/30 Item 10 – Any Other Business:

There was no other business.