



## FINANCE, STAFFING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

### Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 15 November 2016

**Present:**

Mr J Turner ( <i>Chair</i> )	Chair of Governors
Mr S Holderness	Governor
Ms S Overton-Edwards	Principal
Ms S Munden	Staff 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/16/51	<p><b>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence:</b> An apology for absence was received from Harshad Solanki. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
F/16/52	<p><b>Item 2 – Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items:</b> There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p>	
F/16/53	<p><b>Item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:</b> The minutes of the meeting on 25 October 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Turner. The meeting then reviewed the actions set out in the minutes. Suzanne Overton-Edwards reported that she had agreed with John Turner that she would roll forward the action plan produced in response to the staff survey conducted in 2015, as this was still relevant. Reference to this plan would also be included in the Post-Inspection Action Plan. Robert Mansfield confirmed that the accommodation strategy had been placed on the agenda. James Bagley said that the roll numbers for competitor colleges would be entered into the marketing plan before the Committee met again in the new year. Hamid Ravat reported that he had asked the IT department to develop costed options for holding data back-ups offsite.</p>	<p><b>SOE</b></p> <p><b>JB</b></p> <p><b>HR</b></p>
F/16/54	<p><b>Item 4 – Estates Issues:</b> <i>4.1 Estates Matters</i> Hamid Ravat reported that there had been no significant developments pertaining to the College’s estate since the</p>	

previous meeting. He then outlined the possible steps after the Planning Committee had considered the application for the Blackbird Road site. If all went well a final purchase price might be agreed by Easter 2017.

***The meeting received the report on estates issues.***

*4.2 Accommodation Strategy*

Hamid Ravat began an oral presentation with a request to define the Committee's requirement in relation to the accommodation strategy, before the possible involvement of external consultants. For information he presented in summary the last accommodation strategy produced by the College, in 2001, The strategy had been set out in a lengthy and detailed document involving very substantial input from staff. His understanding was that the Committee was currently seeking a high-level study of the options for expanding capacity on the present site covering such matters as an outline of the development(s), the additional capacity created, operational implications, services considerations, and outline costs and timescales. John Turner confirmed this description of the requirement.

Hamid Ravat then reminded the meeting of the context created by the Area-Based Review, in that the study would need to sit comfortably with the discussions already in train with other colleges. Moreover the College would now be subject to close scrutiny by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), which had discretionary powers to curb the growth of the College. He urged that any effort should be proportionate to the College's circumstances. If the decision was taken to involve external consultants, he believed that Fusion would be a very appropriate choice, given the firm's previous involvement with the College's relocation. External consultants would naturally make demands on the time of key staff. There was no provision in the budget for a study of this kind.

John Turner said that action was needed now as the College was already overcrowded and that he considered that Fusion would be an eminently suitable choice as consultants. Hamid Ravat said that since the relocation the standard number of guided learning hours (GLHs) per student had been reduced from 700 to 600. The College had been built to accommodate 1,500 students with programmes of 700 GLHs. John Turner said that at the very least the College was now full to capacity. If the College was to grow, it needed to increase its capacity. He believed that as a next step all that was needed was a report identifying how the College could most readily add 10 to 12 classrooms, with an indication of cost. He accepted that any development would be subject to EFA

consent. A further loan was unlikely to be required given the level of the College's reserves, which were earning virtually no return. The work should be done as soon as possible. It was agreed that for future meetings, in the interests of clarity, this item should be retitled in the agenda as 'Future Accommodation'.

**The Committee received the oral report and requested that a study as described above should be undertaken without delay.**

#### *4.3 Health & Safety Statistics*

Hamid Ravat presented the health & safety statistics to 4 November 2016.

**The meeting received the health & safety statistics.**

### **F/16/55 Item 5 – Finance Issues:**

#### *5.1 Learner Numbers and Funding 2016/2017*

Hamid Ravat presented an updated report on learner numbers. There had been a small decline in the number of students since the previous report. The next report would include funding values.

**The meeting received the learner numbers and funding report.**

#### *5.2 Operating Results 2016/2017*

Hamid Ravat presented the operating results to October 2016. In the first three months the College had generated a surplus of £387K, very close to budget. Income had been £12K above budget, there being no significant variances. Pay expenditure had been £35K above budget, primarily because of an adverse variance of £50K for teaching staff pay. The variance arose partly because the College had recruited additional staff to cope with the higher number of students. Hamid Ravat asked the meeting to note that, although the budget included a provision for a modest national pay award, no such award had yet been agreed or paid. Non-pay expenditure had been £22K below budget. The main reasons related to seasonal factors and the late receipt of an invoice.

**The meeting received the operating results.**

#### *5.3 Review of Catering Contract 2015/2016*

Hamid Ravat presented a short review of the catering service in 2015/2016, the third year of the contract with Midshire Catering. He was pleased to report that Midshire had achieved a small profit, and that turnover and gross margin had improved. Staff costs had risen as a result of the introduction of the national living wage. Midshire had been encouraged by the continuing improvement in results and

remained keen to serve the College. John Turner asked that the congratulations and good wishes of the Committee should be conveyed to Midshire.

***The meeting received the review.***

#### *5.4 Sports Facilities Account 2015/2015*

Hamid Ravat presented the Sports Community Income & Expenditure Account for 2015/2016. Income had increased year-on-year by 9%, and staff costs by 7%. There had been a small increase in the contribution to College overheads. The Sports Hall had been fully booked, an achievement for which the Community Sports Officer deserved recognition. Use of the MUGA pitch, especially at weekends, remained low. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that there was increasing local over-supply. Hamid Ravat reminded the meeting that the College was obliged under its Community Use Agreement with Leicester City Council to allow community members to use the sports facilities.

***The meeting received this report.***

### **F/16/56 Item 6 – Human Resources Issues:**

#### *6.1 Staffing Update*

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented the staffing report. There had been four leavers, for a variety of positive reasons. Headcount was slightly above budget as extra teaching staff were needed. The number of members of staff on maternity leave had reduced to five. One member of teaching staff was now on long-term sickness absence. All vacancies had been filled. The role of the Progress Coaches had been modified in line with OfSTED's comments. He then presented sickness absence data for the year to date. Aggregate sickness absence was in line with the sixth form colleges' average.

***The meeting received the staffing update.***

#### *6.2 Staff Survey 2016 Action Plan*

Suzanne Overton-Edwards referred the meeting to her earlier comments (see item 3 above) on the staff survey action plan.

***The meeting noted this report.***

### **F/16/57 Item 7 – Marketing Issues:**

#### *7.1 Marketing Plan 2016/2017*

James Bagley presented an oral report on progress against the marketing plan for 2016/2017. The recent Open Day had gone well from start to finish. There had been 1,238 registered visitors, an increase of 30% on the previous year. (The actual number might have been a little higher as there had been some teething troubles with electronic registration.) Press releases had been prepared for the current week on the

OfSTED report and the Area-Based Review. At the Parents' Evening in the following week, the Senior Leadership Team would be available to deal with questions from parents about these issues.

***The meeting received the marketing update.***

**F/16/58 Item 8 – General Issues:**

***8.1 Progress against Strategic Targets 2016/2017***

Suzanne Overton-Edwards provided details of the latest progress against the strategic targets subject to scrutiny by the Committee. These related to staff morale, physical resources and leadership and management.

***The meeting received this report.***

***8.2 List of Policies for Review***

Robert Mansfield advised the Committee that Fiona Singer maintained a comprehensive list of policies for review. As was shown in the paper before the Committee, progress was systematically tracked. John Turner said that he had been disappointed to find that the policies shown on the website were still not the current versions, a matter on which OfSTED had commented unfavourably. The following actions were agreed:

- Suzanne Overton-Edwards would see that the outdated policies displayed on the website were replaced by current versions
- Fiona Singer in future would send to Jade Walsh updated editions of existing policies and any new policies to be displayed on the website
- James Bagley would include in the marketing update a brief report on website updates.

**SOE**

**RM**

**JB**

***The meeting received this report and agreed action regarding the display of certain policies.***

***8.3 Redundancy Policy***

Hamid Ravat presented the redundancy policy. The content of the policy had been the subject of lengthy consultation with the Joint consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC), and both parties were now comfortable with the wording. He then presented the outline and key provisions of the policy. Steve Holderness said that he disliked the inclusion of the criteria for selection; these implied that those made redundant had been guilty of an offence for which they might have been sacked, when the reality often was that a post had simply disappeared. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that it was often necessary to group 'at risk' staff into pools and then to make selections. It was necessary to provide clarity about the criteria for selection. Naz Leivas-Mistry said that the

College had followed the guidance of the Sixth Form Colleges Association.

Steve Holderness then said that he disagreed with the description of alternative employment, as this suggested that redundant employees might be expected to accept posts of lower status or pay. Hamid Ravat referred to wording emphasising the College's commitment to be reasonable. The policy did not preclude interim arrangements with individuals who opted to accept posts of lower size, status or pay. John Turner sought and received assurances that the policy was acceptable to the JCNC and had been scrutinised by the College's legal advisers.

***The Committee commended the policy to the Board for formal ratification.***

RM

**F/16/59 Item 9 – Date and Time of next Meeting:**

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Thursday 1 December at 5.30 p.m. at the College. This would be a joint meeting with the Audit Committee.

**F/16/60 Item 10 – Any Other Business:**

*10.1 Powers of the Education Funding Agency*

Hamid Ravat drew the attention of the Committee to the powers of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in the event of an adverse OfSTED report. The EFA could at its absolute discretion take a range of actions ranging from the issue of a notice to improve to the curtailment of provision, curbing future student recruitment, cancelling or recovering funding and treating the College as in administration.

John Turner advised the meeting that Peter Mucklow, Sixth Form Colleges Commissioner, was to visit the College on 29 November 2016. Following this visit the College would be subject to monthly visits from the EFA, as well as quarterly visits from OfSTED, until the College had achieved a satisfactory inspection outcome.

***The Committee noted this advice.***