

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020

Present: Jo Brownlee, Alan Foster, Pat Mould, Bob Overment and Colin Peaks

In attendance: Gary Parkinson (College Business Manager), Vikki Reeve (Clerk), Laura Revill (HR Manager), Ben Wallis (Vice Principal)

35. Apologies for absence (agenda item 1)

Resolved: Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Cross.

36. Declarations of interest (agenda item 2)

Resolved: There were no declarations of interest.

37. Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 November 2019 (agenda item 3)

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38. Matters arising from the minutes/action schedule (agenda item 4)

a) Acceptable Use Policy

Colin Peaks (CAP) presented the Acceptable Use Policy, which had been further updated as a result of Governor feedback at the last meeting. He noted that anyone using personal devices for work purposes should ensure that they have security measures in place, such as password protection, fingerprint recognition, anti-virus software. CAP added that the college's systems are protected by Sandbox, a smaller server that captures any issues thereby protecting the larger server. CAP suggested that the college make regular checks with Governors to ensure that they are protected. It was agreed that Mark Daley (IT Services Manager) will be asked to provide guidance/training to Governors.

Governors queried the fourth bullet on the first page, which says not to use Hotmail accounts for business reasons. They noted that the Clerk and Governors communicate via Hotmail accounts. It was agreed that only college email accounts should be used going forward; the Clerk will inform Governors.

Governors noted an inconsistent message about using college technology for personal use – one points says not at all, another point says it can be used during breaks. CAP will update this to ensure it is consistent.

Governors recommended that the content of the policy is consistent with any guidance given in the Staff Code of Conduct.

The Clerk noted that she has checked which college policies refer to Governors and confirmed there are 15 in total and all of them go through a Committee and/or Corporation.

Recommended: The Acceptable Use Policy be approved, subject to agreed amendments being made.

39. Staffing report (agenda item 5)

It was agreed that minute 39 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

40. Policies (agenda item 6)

It was agreed that minutes 40a should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

LHR presented the HR policies and noted that the Paternity Leave, Parental Leave and Leave of Absence policies are linked.

b) Parental Leave Policy

LHR presented the Parental Leave Policy and noted the changes (highlighted with tracked changes). She noted that it has been updated in line with statutory entitlement, with information taking from gov.uk.

Resolved: The Parental Leave Policy and proposal to include it within the Leave of Absence Policy was approved.

c) Paternity Leave and Pay Guidelines

LHR presented the Paternity Leave and Guidelines and noted the changes (highlighted with tracked changes). She noted that updates are due to statutory changes to the age of eligibility.

Resolved: The Paternity Leave and Pay Guidelines and proposal to include it within the Leave of Absence Policy was approved.

d) Staff Code of Conduct

LHR presented the Staff Code of Conduct Policy and noted the changes (highlighted with tracked changes). She noted that additional guidance is included about not providing their personal contact details to students and not contacting students on matters that don't relate to their studies. CAP added that all college mobiles are itemised and bills audited by the College Business Manager.

Governors asked for clarification on the staff dress code. CAP noted that it is difficult to be prescriptive, but that verbal guidance is given, particularly when staff are out representing the college in schools.

Recommended: The Staff Code of Conduct be approved.

[LHR left the meeting.]

e) *Tuition Fees Policy*

The Clerk noted that the incorrect version of the policy is included within the papers, however, CAP noted the changes recommended:

- That the policy state that students *may* be charged for resit examinations.
- That some specialist courses *may* incur additional courses.

Governors questioned the rationale for possibly charging students for re-sits. CAP noted that the introduction of exams in vocational courses means the number of exam entries, and therefore costs, is going to increase significantly. He added that he would like to try and change the mindset of students that resits are not an option and they should aim to pass first time.

Governors asked if other colleges charge for resits. CAP confirmed that a lot do. GJP added that the bursary may be able to fund resits where students are eligible.

CAP noted that SMT will also be working with staff to ensure students are not entered en masse and, instead, only entered when the student is ready and has the ability to pass. Governors asked who decides when a student is ready. CAP confirmed that the Faculty Heads will coordinate this with teachers.

Governors queried why some courses incur additional costs. CAP noted that courses such as Engineering and Hair & Beauty require uniforms and kits, which the college can't afford to provide for free to all students. He described how, at the moment, students have to share items of personal protective equipment (PPE) for example. CAP added that most other colleges charge students in full for these items and changing the policy allows the college to make a small charge if needed.

Governors asked how the introduction of exams in vocational courses will impact the budget. GJP noted that an additional £30k has been budgeted, though it is difficult to plan, particularly in terms of resits.

Recommended: The updated version of the Tuition Fees Policy, with changes included, be approved.

41. Minutes of Financial Management Group meetings dated 28 January 2020 and 27 February 2020 (agenda item 7) / **42. Management accounts for the period ended 31 January 2020** (agenda item 8) / **43. Snapshot accounts for the period ended 29 February 2020** (agenda item 9)

It was agreed that minutes 41, 42 and 43 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

44. Cumulative budget transfers for the period ended 31 January 2020 (agenda item 10)

It was agreed that minute 44 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

45. Budget planning 2020/21 (agenda item 11)

It was agreed that minute 45 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

46. Funding agreement 2020/21 (agenda item 12)

GJP presented the funding agreement for 2020/21, noting that it was received in college last week. He added that calculations/predictions made early by himself, Karen Ashman and Craig Dodson (MIS Manager) were very close to the final figure. GJP noted that:

- High needs funding is now a new line. The first £10k of funding doesn't need to be applied for. He added that more high needs funding will be available through the local authority.
- Student financial support funding is £266k: £66k for free school meals; £200 for other support. This is an increase on last year by over £40k.
- Industry placements funding is the same as last year.
- The teachers' pension is funded initially for eight months, to the end of the financial year.

Governors referred to the retention factor of 0.937 and checked that this is the college's figure. Gary confirmed this and noted that this year's retention is currently higher so the reduction will be slightly less next year. Governors queried the calculation for retention. GJP said that he will check with the MIS Manager and email details to the Committee. This was agreed.

Resolved: The funding agreement was received.

47. Teaching/support staff salary settlement (agenda item 13)

It was agreed that minute 47 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

Resolved: The teaching/support staff salary settlement update was received.

48. Estates and health and safety (agenda item 14)

It was agreed that minute 48 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

49. Student retention and applications data (agenda item 15)

It was agreed that minute 49 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year.

50. Any other business (agenda item 16)

Resolved: There was no other business.

51. Confidential items (agenda item 17)

It was agreed that minutes 39, 40a, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48 and 49 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders).

52. Date of next meeting (agenda item 18)

Resolved: The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 17 June 2020.

Learner impact

Each decision made at the meeting was considered and it was agreed that the Committee ensures:

- A safe environment for students, staff and community
- The college is fully staffed, with staff managed effectively in terms of absences
- The college is legislatively compliant and has relevant policies in place to support students' learning and wellbeing
- Budgets are being managed effectively and in the best interests of students

