

Riverside College

Widnes & Runcorn

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 22ND JUNE 2016

Present:	Peter O'Donnell	External (Chair)
	Alan Bennett	External
	Tony McDermott	External
	Mary Murphy	Principal
In Attendance:	Julie Holland	Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources)
	Gordon Holmes	Head of Finance & Estates – minutes 168-191
	Julia Martin	Head of Human Resources – minutes 168-181
	Lesley Venables	Interim Clerk to the Governors

APOLOGIES

168 Apologies for absence were received from Jordan Heatley (Student Governor).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

169 Declarations of interest were received by Peter O'Donnell in relation to minute 190 and Tony McDermott in respect of minutes 190 and 224 to 228.

MINUTES

170 **Resolved -** That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

MATTERS ARISING

171 Governors received a report on progress against the actions identified at previous meetings. It was noted that all of these were either being implemented, had been completed or were featured on the agenda.

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

172 Governors received statistics on key indicators relating to human resources, including staff sickness absence, other absences and staff turnover in the current academic year to date.

173 Initial work had been undertaken on the College's responsibilities under the Gender Pay Reporting requirements. Governors were informed that the first full set of data would be published in April 2018. Further work on the implications of this legislation would be undertaken over the Summer period and a full report provided to the Committee's November meeting.

174 The Committee received information on the College's management and team leader development programme. The second phase for support staff would commence in the new academic year.

175 The Head of Human Resources and the Principal had met groups of staff to follow up any issues highlighted in the regular surveys of employee views. Feedback had been extremely positive and staff had commented that, although they were required to work hard, they felt suitably supported by management and welcomed the regular communication provided on issues such as the Area Based Review.

Julia Martin left the meeting at this point.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

176 The Committee received for information a report on health and safety issues since March 2016.

CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

177 Governors were reminded that the first phase of the capital project at the Cronton Campus had now been completed, with only some minor works outstanding. The second phase involved expenditure of £3m (some of which had been provided by the Local Enterprise Partnership), of which a significant sum had been spent to date.

178 The Deputy Principal reported that the project was currently broadly on target in terms of its timescale. A successful planning application had been submitted for the Cronton Campus development.

179 In terms of the sale of the Runcorn Campus, the Committee was advised that an application for outline planning permission had been submitted to Halton Borough Council and would probably be scheduled for review at its July planning committee meeting. The College had kept all key stakeholders informed of its intentions.

180 The claim for delapidations received from the landlord of the former Astmoor Construction Centre had now been referred to the College solicitors disputes team. An appropriate accrual had been included in the College's accounts to cover any possible liability.

181 Discussions with Halton Borough Council continued over the future use of the CRmz.

182 The College had been successful in two recent bids for funding to support the upgrading of its estate.

183 The Committee asked that the Deputy Principal report to the July Board meeting on areas where grant funding and monies from the College's own resources had been spent on capital works, together with an indication of their impact on learners.

Gordon Holmes left the meeting at this point.

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

184 Governors received an annual report on progress against the targets in the relevant chapters of the 2015/2016 Strategic Plan, which charted progress against the identified actions. It was noted that every target had either been achieved or was on track to be met by the end of the academic year, with the exception of the Adult Skills Budget and HE funding; the Deputy Principal explained that income against both of these elements was received throughout the year and management were confident that both targets would be achieved.

185 All financial targets had been achieved and the College's financial position had been graded as 'outstanding' under the criteria published by the Skills Funding Agency.

186 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) set out the main non-curriculum achievements during the academic year, which would be reported to the Board at its July meeting.

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/2017

187 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) presented the non-curriculum sections of the Strategic Plan for 2016/2017. The full Plan had been circulated to all staff and to other key stakeholders, requesting feedback on the contents and a final draft would be presented for approval to the Board's July meeting.

188 The Committee noted that each strategic objective had been mapped to the Quality-Efficiency-Growth Plan and that monitoring would take place against these elements at future meetings. Reports on progress in 2016/2017 would include the target dashboard and the latest version of the QEG.

189 **Resolved -** That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the relevant sections of the Strategic Plan for 2016/2017

FINANCIAL FORECAST 2016 TO 2020

190 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) presented the Financial Forecast for 2016 to 2020 and the draft budget for 2016/2017, which had been prepared following recent discussions with the Skills Funding Agency. The Forecast had been based on current indicative allocations and, consequently, may be subject to amendment prior to a final version being submitted to the July Board meeting. The draft balance sheet had been compiled in line with the requirements of Financial Reporting Standard 102.

191 The Committee noted that the College's projected financial health and performance indicators for 2016/2017 continued to grade the College as 'good' in terms of financial health.

192 Governors were advised that all Chairs of Corporations had recently received a letter from the Skills Funding Agency, urging them to ensure that their respective Boards challenged sufficiently the assumptions made in the Financial Forecast prior to their approval. This would be raised at the July Board meeting.

193 Resolved - That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the Financial Forecast for 2016 to 2020

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 30TH APRIL 2016

194 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) presented the management accounts to 30th April 2016.

195 **Resolved** - That the management accounts to 30th April 2016 be accepted

POLICIES

196 **Resolved** - That, subject to minor amendments, the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the following policies:

Procurement
Environmental Sustainability
Treasury Management

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2016/2017

197 The Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) presented the revised draft Financial Regulations for 2016/2017. These had been compiled to take account of the latest guidance within the sector, recommendations made by Internal Audit and organisational changes.

198 **Resolved** - That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the Financial Regulations for 2014/2015

PARTNERSHIP PROVISION 2015/2016

199 Governors received for information a report on partnership provision contracts, which had been requested at an earlier Committee meeting.

200 The Principal set out the quality assurance measures in place to ensure that each partner organisation met the requirements of the College and of the Skills Funding Agency. These included an extensive due diligence process prior to the commencement of any new partnership and announced and unannounced visits by College staff.

- 201 **Resolved** -
- 1 That progress and current activity levels in 2015/2016 be noted.
 - 2 That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the list of partnership contracts and any in-year changes for 2015/2016.

- 3 That proposals for partnership provision in 2016/2017 be submitted for approval to the October Board meeting.

COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION 2015/2016

202 The Clerk reported that, as part of the Board's strategy for continuous improvement, an assessment of each committee's performance should be undertaken to identify good practice and any gaps in arrangements.

ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD

203 The Chair summarised the key points that would be reported to the full Board at its meeting on 4th July 2016:

- Progress report received on the Capital Project at Cronton and other property-related matters.
- Monitoring reports on Human Resources and Health & Safety were received, with no particular areas of concern for the Committee.
- Performance against the targets in the Annual Report for 2015/2016 was scrutinised and the relevant chapters of the Strategic Plan for 2016/2017 were recommended to the Board for approval.
- Financial Forecast for 2016 to 2020 and budget for 2016/2017 were recommended for approval by the Board, together with 3 policies, Financial Regulations and some amendments to partnership provision contracts for 2015/2016. The Deputy Principal presented the Financial Plan in the new format required under Financial Reporting Standard 102.
- Management accounts to April 2016 were noted. Future versions of the accounts will be in a revised format.
- For its self-evaluation for 2015/2016 the Committee graded itself as a '1' or 'outstanding'.

RETIREMENT OF GOVERNOR

204 On behalf of the Committee, Alan Bennett thanked Peter O'Donnell for his excellent service and contribution over the past few years.

205 It was noted that Peter had agreed to become a co-opted non-governor member of the Committee from 2016/2017, subject to the Board's approval at its July meeting.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

30th November 2016
8th March 2017
28th June 2017