

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER 2010 at 11.05 a.m.

Present: Mr G R Baird, Mr C P Clementi, Mr M Hodgson, Dr J Johnston,
Mr A R C Lane, Mr R Pope

Apologies received: Mr C J P Watney

In attendance: Mr I F Dumbleton, Ms N Whitehead

In the Chair: Mr G R Baird

1676. Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interests.

1677. **Minutes (Parts I and II)** of the meeting held on 2nd November were approved.

1678. Matters arising

Part I -Item 1667: A meeting with WSCC officers to discuss possible road safety enhancements and the college's green travel plan had been postponed owing to snow.

Part II- Item 1663: Part II minutes ((Criterion h) Information considered to be commercially sensitive)

1679. Report from the Premises Sub-committee

The Chair reported on the difficulties in signing off the snagging issues in the John Dew building and the work underway to resolve this before the VAT increase. Similarly it was intended to buy equipment for the Home Economics room in a similar time frame. The electricity upgrade to allow for 9/10 cookers and 'hoods' would take place in February at a modest cost. Work was also in hand to improve a number of escape routes from parts of the college.

1680. Management Accounts

Paper: Financial Report for the period from 1 August 2010 to 30th November 2010

The Director of Finance explained that, at the end of November, the college's financial position was solid with favourable variances on income (ahead of forecast by £96k), pay expenditure (ahead by £23k) and non-pay expenditure (ahead by c. £32k) contributing to a surplus of £152k. The current ratio was healthy at 1.43:1 and cash days in hand were 87. At 68.9%, staff costs as a percentage of income were better than the 72.3% forecast although this figure tended to rise as the year progressed and any pay increases were introduced. It was noted that the support staff had accepted their pay offer of 0.75% but two teaching staff unions had rejected this against the background of a 2.3% pay settlement in schools (though 0.2% offer to FE staff). Anticipated 16-18 funding cuts might however force schools into making redundancies to be able to afford the pay award for remaining staff. Key income variances included additional income for the growth in student numbers (£56k to-date) and receipts for Work-based learning, adult education fees, non-EU students and college subscriptions. The college bookshop which had been struggling to break even and was £11k below budget in November had now been closed. Once the funding position for next year was known the college would be in a better position to judge whether to use any surplus to pay off some of the loan for the John Dew building or to retain it as working capital.

1681. **Operating Plan and Planning Day feedback**

Papers: Operational Plan 2011

The Principal introduced the last annual Operating Plan within the current 3-year strategic plan. It was noted that student numbers were well ahead of that targeted at the start of the plan but that without further growth, college funding could be expected to fall. Recent Government policy might present additional challenges to achieving growth if the loss of EMA and increased HE fees impacted on student’s choices.

The position on funding for Adult Education and Work-based learning remained unclear with some rumours suggesting that SFCs might not be subject to minimum contract values and that they would deal with the YPLA rather than direct with the SFA but others suggesting that the rules and reporting lines might be more complex. Further clarification was being sought from Ministers to help inform the best direction for the college. The potential limitations on international students at Level 3 were also noted.

The Principal explained that the tutorial focus was expected to move towards fulfilling the SFBac with a more focussed weekly tutorial slot rather than shorter sessions throughout the week. This, along with further timetable changes, was expected to produce greater capacity particularly in specialist rooms and help maximise funded activity. A slightly longer day was envisaged but with no change in the staff tariff. These changes had been discussed with all staff at Planning Day with a generally positive response.

In discussion it was noted that the recent changes in the balance of Level 2 and 3 courses might be further reviewed in the next year to reflect outcomes on, for example, the future of the EMA. Further details of the action being taken on Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding were set out in dedicated sections within the Quality Improvement Plan. The impact of possible academy status for local schools would take a little while to emerge but could make relationships with these partner schools more complex. Finally work on the next Strategic Plan would start in the New Year with the best funding information available. Governors would be involved in strategic planning days in the early summer with a view to having the plan in place for December.

1682. **Any other business:**

Mr Lane tabled a newspaper article from April 1971 received via a fellow Mercer and Trustee from the mother of the Bishop of Coventry who was an old boy of Collyer’s School. The article concerned the completion of the Duckering building programme and a visit by the then Minister of Education, Margaret Thatcher, to the Collyer’s Founders’ Day Service and Prizegiving.

1683. **Meeting Assessment**

The meeting had been useful in updating members on development issues and the college’s commendable financial health ahead of expected cuts. AoC and AoSEC presentations covering the latest known position on funding issues were circulated. These, the review of Planning Day and the latest Operational Plan were useful in setting the scene ahead of greater clarity on government education policy and development of the next Strategic Plan.

1684. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 1st March at 11.00 a.m.

The meeting ended at 12.20p.m.

Chairman

Date