

**THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER**  
**MINUTES OF**  
**THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HELD ON Tuesday 28 June 2022 at 16.30**

Present: Mr Stephen Avery, Mrs Ann Donoghue, Mr Graham Lawrence, Mr Dan Lodge, Mr Paul Mittendorfer, Mr Will Power (via Zoom), Dr David Skipp, Mr Dominic Wakefield

In attendance: Members of SMT - Mr Ian Dumbleton (FD), Mr Steve Martell (DP)

Staff present during relevant items: Mr Ian Carr (Assistant Director of Faculty for Science), Ms Andrea John (VP Pastoral)

Mrs Russha Sellings (Clerk)

In the Chair: Mrs Ann Donoghue

**2466. Chair's Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

The meeting opened as scheduled and the Chair welcomed everyone including those attending to present. Mr Power would join the meeting virtually where he was able and was not present at the start. It was noted for the consent item (Item 5 Student Financial Support report) several members expressed their wish to ask questions.

**2467. Declaration of Interests:** none declared with respect of the agenda items.

*It was agreed from this point that the agenda would be reordered to allow Mr Carr and Ms John to present first. The agenda was also reordered further on to prioritise items.*

**2468. Policy Updates: Sustainability**

*Paper: Sustainability Policy*

Mr Carr spoke to some slides at the meeting and informed members the intent was to meet the needs of the College both now and in the future, building on the work of the Estates Manager over the past few years. The current strategy was based on the AoC Climate Action Roadmap tailored to the vision of the College. Engagement with both staff and students was imperative to the success, and Mr Carr was pleased to share with members the level of investment in sustainability.

The Sustainability Policy replaces the Environment Policy and was considered aspirational. The Chair invited comments from members on the policy. There was a request to include Governing Body under the responsibilities (section 5). **(Action ADoF)**

Members pointed out that an action plan with specific targets and measures would be required if the aims were to be achieved, although it was acknowledged that reaching a carbon neutral position by 2030 would be a challenge for all colleges. Mr Carr believed for some projects it would be more straightforward (e.g., new buildings on the estate) whereas that linked to external suppliers was outside of the College's control.

Members asked about the role of WSCC (West Sussex County Council) and Mr Carr said that communication was largely through HDC (Horsham District Council), who also aimed to be carbon neutral by 2030.

A member who was also on the Estates Masterplan Working Party suggested that engagement of staff and students should be factored into the review of the masterplan and proposed redesigns from the architects.

**Resolved: The F&GP Committee approved the Sustainability Policy subject to amendment.**

Mr Carr was thanked for the useful updates and development of the policy.

[17.00 Mr Carr left the meeting and Mr Power joined the meeting on Zoom]

### **2469. Student Financial Support**

*Paper: Student Financial Support Annual Report 2021-22*

Ms John advised the report covered new requirements and updates had been made to ensure compliance with ESFA guidance on thresholds. There was an underspend on the allocation in this academic year and a proposal was included in the report to increase the minimum household income level to £35,000 and to adjust the percentage of travel contributions across the bands. Ms John did not anticipate the increase should have any impact to future budget due to the underspend, and funding was confirmed as ring fenced and carried forward.

Members asked whether financial support was reaching all those who needed it. Ms John advised the scheme was promoted widely, and students were encouraged to apply, however staff were cognisant of the sensitivities around seeking support especially for FSM (Free School Meal) students. It was not always possible to know how many students were eligible for FSM as this relied on self-disclosure, however it was hoped developments in electronic registration and payment systems for the new café would facilitate discretion if this was a barrier for applying. Members also queried whether completing forms and concerns over GDPR were an issue and Ms John said that contact with parents was made to overcome this.

There was a discussion around travel subsidies, and it was clarified to meet the criteria, only one of the specifications on page 1 need apply. Members queried whether the number of miles was set at an appropriate level. Ms John believed so, furthermore it was not means tested and applied to all students who qualified. Members were also keen to ensure that Worthing bus service continued and suggested the cost be covered elsewhere, especially if there was an underspend.

Members supported the changes to the arrangements for financial support as stipulated in the report.

*A member made an observation about the use of top sheets during this item, and it was agreed to revisit this at the close of the meeting and seek views of all members.*

[17.20 Ms John left the meeting]

**2470. Minutes** of the HR meeting held on 25 May 2022 were approved without amendment.

### **2471. Matters Arising**

08-03-22

Item 10 (Min 2452): Review of Complaints Report - covered under Item 8b on the agenda

25-05-22

Item 8 (Min 2463): Short/medium term risks from inflationary pressures – the Chair confirmed this would be revisited under Item 12 on the agenda

### **2472. Strategy Development inc:**

*Papers: Top sheet, Working Parties update, NGA MAT guide, ONS reclassification letter to colleges, Collyer's Mission, Vision and Values updated draft, Business KPIs, QIP Parts 3&4*

a) Working Party updates

**Part II minute: Criterion h) Information considered commercially sensitive**

b) Future funding

**Part II minute: Criterion h) Information considered commercially sensitive**

c) ONS letter

Borrowing arrangements were also highlighted. An update was anticipated in early Autumn. Should colleges be reclassified, it was likely there would be additional financial reporting requirements.

d) Mission, Vision & Values

There had been a robust consultation process towards a final draft and the Principal was pleased with the alignment to both the skills and academy agenda. Some minor amendments to wording were agreed.

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Mission, Vision and Values subject to amends.**

e) Business KPIs

There was a brief update on the financial KPIs where it was noted financial health remained strong. The DP added that admissions for the next academic year were up around 10% which was very pleasing.

f) Quality Improvement Plan Parts 3&4

The DP informed members of a more strategic approach to the international offering. It was reported there would be a move towards a 2 year business model which was more financially viable and easier to maintain from a staffing perspective. The China school whose 2<sup>nd</sup> year students were taken on from another Sussex college pre-Covid had proved challenging. Covid had significantly impacted Chinese nationals travelling and therefore the demand was low. There was still a small cohort of students from Hong Kong on 2 year courses and Japan and EU markets looked promising.

*Due to overrunning – the Chair did a time check and Item 12 was brought forward on the agenda.*

**2473. Provisional Outturn and 3 yr. Forecast**

*Papers: Budget and forecast, cashflow statement and graphs, balance sheet, capital budget, financial commentary*

a) Budget 2022-23 inc Forecast 2021-22 and 2023-24

In response to a member's comment, the FD would amend the title of the SFA recurrent funding to Adult Ed in the budget. **(Action FD)**

The FD drew members' attention to the legacy income of £175,000 which would increase the surplus forecast and furthermore the cash flow in the short term. There was also likely to be further increments depending on the valuation to be negotiated.

The Chair asked the FD to comment on inflation and how this had been incorporated into the budget forecast. The FD said the biggest impact was around payroll in the next academic year with a 3.5% uplift in pay factored in. Other significant costs were likely for examinations. There were some longer term agreements such as energy contracts which were more favourable for the College, and although gas supply may be vulnerable the impact financially would be lesser.

In response to questions from members, the FD commented on the surplus for 2022/23 which appeared minimal. If necessary, cost savings could be made and there was an expectation that admissions would increase and future growth would offset the budget in the medium term. The Principal offered to share a 10 year view with the Committee that had previously been circulated to the Mercers. **(Action Principal)**

b) Cash Flow Forecast

Additional graphs were provided alongside the cash flow statement. A member commented that by March 2023 the forecast looked concerning. The FD responded that this was based on worst case assumptions and did not take into account the total legacy or Trust contribution. Following robust review and given the pressure on funding, members agreed to refer back to the cash flow on a regular basis.

c) Balance Sheet

No additional comments to note.

d) Capital Budget 2022-23

No additional comments to note.

e) Financial Commentary (*draft subject to final checks*)

Members questioned the rationale behind the increase to 60 cash days from the previous 40. The FD said this equated to 2 months, however this may be subject to change as there were many variables to consider at the present time.

The FD was thanked for preparing the papers. The Committee were not in a position to endorse due to the updates required. The budget and commentary was accepted as draft and would be included on the Summer term agenda for Governing Body approval.

**2474. Financial Health**

*Papers: Management Accounts (May 2022), ESFA dashboard, Financial Regulations*

a) Management Accounts (end May)

The current position for the year was noted as positive.

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Management Accounts (May 2022).**

b) ESFA dashboard

Update deferred to the next meeting.

c) Financial Regulations

Members wished to highlight the delegation levels on page 11 and it was agreed these would be adjusted to reflect SMT responsibilities. (**Action FD**)

**Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Financial Regulations subject to amends.**

[18.30 – Mr Power left the meeting]

**2475. Community Update inc;**

*Papers: SMCG meeting notes, complaints and appeals report*

a) SMCG meeting notes 17-05-22

b) Report on Complaints & Appeals

The minutes and report were received and accepted and there were no further comments.

**2476. Report from the Estates Sub-Committee (ESC):**

*Papers: Estates S-C minutes (combined including confidential), H&S minutes and report*

a) Key projects update

b) Boundary fencing, entrance and pedestrian gate

c) CIF bid outcome and future bids

The Chair of the Estates Sub-Committee provided a brief update since the last meeting. There had been robust challenge on the management of timelines by BAQUS leading to several meetings with senior parties. The contractors had since remedied some delays and there was a notable improvement in service level from BAQUS. Additional resource has been allocated and there was better onsite visibility. The café was now anticipated to be delivered around 3 weeks later than anticipated. The Chair was in receipt of a new report format from BAQUS and would monitor the service on an ongoing basis.

d) Report from the Health & Safety Committee (HSC)

The report and minutes were received and there were no further comments.

**2477. Report from the Remuneration Committee**

It was agreed that owing to the overrunning, the recommendations would be made directly to the Governing Body for approval at the meeting next month.

**2478. AOB**

There were no matters raised.

**2479. Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 16.30

**2480. Committee Annual Assessment including ToR**

*Paper: Committee ToR*

Members agreed to reflect on the use of top sheets and report back to the Clerk. *(Action F&GP members)*

There was feedback that while useful, hearing from guest speakers caused the agenda to overrun and diverted from focus on key items. Members asked SMT to consider the level of operational information provided in the Student Financial Support Report.

It was suggested that the agenda could also be better laid out to support strategic focus.

The meeting ended at 19.00

Chair .....

Date .....

RRS 04-07-22