

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 16.30

- Present: Barbara Hobday, Graham Lawrence (via Teams), Dan Lodge (Principal), Paul Mittendorfer, Clare Ruaux, Dominic Wakefield
- In attendance: Members of SMT – Ian Dumbleton (FD), Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum) to Item 6 only, Andrea John (VP Curriculum) Item 6b-d only, Steve Martell (DP)
Olivia Blake (HR Director) to Item 6 only, Tom Parkes (Estates Masterplan Manager/EMM for 7c-e only), Russha Sellings (Director of Governance/GD)
- In the Chair: Barbara Hobday

1. Chair's Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked members for accommodating the date change. Teddy Bridges was not present at the meeting. Graham Lawrence joined via Teams. Members were notified and accepted that the meeting would be transcribed through Teams for the purposes of drafting minutes.

The Chair wished to express thanks on behalf of the Committee and the Governing Body to Dom Wakefield who would be stepping down before his current term was due to end this summer. Dom was thanked for his valuable contribution to both this Committee and Estates over 6 years including as a Parent Governor and he would be missed.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared with regards to the agenda items.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 (inc Part II)

The minutes of the previous meeting including Part II were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

The majority of actions and matters arising were covered on the agenda.

- Item 5f - Gender Pay Gap report and the suggestion of benchmarking, once academised this would become a trust level report although the HR Director pointed out that the reporting was retrospective.

5. Resolutions

Papers: Teachers pay award 2024/25 and Support Staff pay award 2024/25

i) Teacher pay award 2024/25 (written resolution)

Resolved: the minutes record the approval of the resolution taken by members since the last meeting to ratify the teacher pay award.

ii) Support Staff pay award 2024/25

The Principal confirmed the Support Staff pay award had been settled more swiftly following Unison agreement. This included a redressing of the lower pay scales.

Resolved: The Committee approved the Support Staff pay award 2024/25.

The Chair commented on the challenges for colleges during periods of industrial action. The Principal believed further strikes or action short of strike action was still possible. Looking ahead, the funding climate in education remained challenging. The Staff Governor had received feedback requesting

transparency on the pay savings arising from strikes. The Principal responded that it was complex position and not normally publicised, however agreed to speak to the College union representatives at the next SMCG meeting. **(Action: Principal)**

6. Strategy Developments

Papers: People Strategy survey results, Adult Ed proposal (confidential), Business KPIs, College SAR-QIP mid year review L&M sections

a) People Strategy: staff survey and flexible working proposals

The extensive work on the strategy was noted. There was a range of constructive feedback in the survey results which had been used to inform action planning. It was agreed helpful to reconfirm some of benefits available to staff following comments, for example the Blue Light card and consider how these are communicated. The Chair added that there were trade union benefits that could be included at no cost. Members heard that the EV car scheme had been paused while the ESFA confirmed the final details. Employee value proposition was discussed including the collaborative approach with Forest as part of the civic impact of the new Trust. The Staff Governor commented that the main interest related to opportunities for flexible working. The VP (Curriculum) provided an update on the proposed trial of 5 days to be used flexibly across the year. There may be variations in each setting. Members emphasised the importance of tracking absence and performance through any trial to establish a correlation. Further updates to follow in the summer term.

Part II minute: Criterion b): Information considered to be commercially sensitive

b) Adult Ed options appraisal

[17.18 – the VP (Pastoral) joined during this item]

c) KPI's (Business)

The DP spoke of the increased admissions following the closing date for applications. The estate remained a clear priority to manage growth. The DP and Admissions team were thanked for their approach which resulted in a strong position.

In terms of financial health, the FD explained further the contextual reasons behind the pay expenditure and the external and internal variables which impacted the target and benchmark. Following discussion, it was agreed to add an explanatory note to the accounts before presentation to the Governing Body. **(Action: FD)**

d) QIP updates (L&M)

The VP (Curriculum) said that the new format followed the inspection framework, however this was expected to change in future. There were no further comments.

[17.35 – the VPs left the meeting]

7. Finance Matters

Papers: Financial forecast for 2024-25 (mid-year budget update)

a) Financial forecast for 2024-25 (mid-year budget update)

The FD drew Members' attention to variances at the mid-point in the year. Funding had been impacted by unforecasted changes from the ESFA to the student allocation number post budget and in addition to changes to the in-year funding methodology meaning only two thirds of expected funding would be received in-year. Gains elsewhere such as grant funding, including from Trustees, and interest had offset this although the FD advised with interest rates dropping, interest received may not be as favourable in future. Lettings had seen gains with some new clients. The operating surplus was up by approximately £44k which was relatively small in variance in respect of the budget total. Looking forwards, budgets would be subject to further funding implications, however members noted the accounts were carefully managed which was positive.

b) Management Accounts to 31 Jan inc Balance Sheet & Cashflow

Referring to the latest accounts the FD reported that income was over budget and payroll was under, however it was expected to fall be broadly in line with budget by year end.

It was agreed to remove any references to the ESFA and refer to the DfE. There were no further comments.

Recommendations: The Governing Body approve the mid-year update to the financial forecast and the latest Management Accounts at their next meeting.

Part II minute: Criterion b): Information considered to be commercially sensitive

c) Capital projects/masterplan programme and cost profile (Estates)

The Estates Masterplan Manager joined during this item to provide an update on the latest position.

d) Additional temporary classrooms

The temporary classrooms highlighted the pressing need to manage growth. In the short term it was proposed the Portakabins be extended and some landscaping be undertaken to create a better experience outside. The Committee agreed costs to extend and expand the arrangements for the next academic year.

Resolved: The Committee approved additional funding for Portakabins of £195k.

e) RAAC budget/contractor approval

Members heard there had been no further progress despite the EMM responding the information request by the DfE. The matter had been escalated and a letter sent to the DfE team signed by the Estates Committee Chair and the Principal. If the project did not complete as originally scheduled a request would be made to the DfE to continue part funding of the Portakabins.

8. Community Update

Papers: SMCG notes x 2

SMCG meetings

i) *SMCG 21-11-24

ii) *SMCG 23-01-25

Noted as a consent items, there were no further comments.

[18.16 – Dominic Wakefield and the Estates Masterplan Manager left the meeting]

9. Policies

Papers: Admissions Policy, Student Fees & Charges,

i) Admissions Policy

The clarifications were reviewed, there were no further comments.

ii) Student Fees/Charges

There were no further comments.

iii) Complaints Policy

There were no further comments.

iv) Appeals Procedure (non-staff)

It was agreed to replace references to the ESFA with the DfE and to clarify the wording in the flow chart.

v) Data Protection

There were no further comments.

vi) Use of Computer Policy
There were no further comments.

vii) Publication Scheme
It was agreed to replace references to the ESFA with the DfE.

viii) Archiving & Retention Policy
There were no further comments.

The policies were reviewed and would be endorsed to the Governing Body, aside from the Archiving & Retention Policy which was approved.

Resolved: The Committee approved the Archiving & Retention Policy.

Recommendations: The Governing Body approve the statutory policies on the agenda subject to agreed amends.

10. AOB

None to record.

11. Meeting Assessment

The meeting was noted as positive overall. The Principal thanked everyone for their support relating to the important capital projects.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee would meet on Tuesday 20 May 2025.

The meeting closed at 18.23

Chair

Date

RRS 23-04-25