

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 at 9.30am
Via MS Teams

Present: Malcolm Burns (independent) MB
 Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
 Jon Furber (independent, associate) JF (*items 1 – 7.5 inclusive*)
 Elizabeth Harrison (independent, chair) EH
 David Pearson (independent) DP (*items 1- 7.5 inclusive*)
 Angela Potter (independent) AP (*all items except 7.1 and 7.2*)
 Liz Watts (staff) LW

In attendance: Graeme Lavery, VP finance and resources GL
 Peter Greenall, AP and dean of higher education PG
 Matthew Gower, VP curriculum and quality, MG
 Trudie McGuinness, AP performance and progress
 Paul Spearritt, AP stem
 Louise Woodman, director of people and culture, LWoodman
 Joanne Jones, head of hr, JJ
 Stephen Harrey, Santander SH (*item 7.1 and 7.2 only*)
 Jackie Schillinger, company secretary, JS

PART A (unless stated)

Item	Content
1.	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Gary Crowe, Andrew Fletcher and Paul Weston.
1.2	The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
2.1	Angela Potter declared an interest in 7.1 and 7.2 and withdrew from the meeting for this item.
3.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
3.1	Part A of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were received and confirmed as a correct record. The rolling action log was reviewed for assurance.
3.2	<u>Confidential Part B</u> minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were received and approved as a correct record.
4.	HUMAN RESOURCES
4.1	Deep dive staff wellbeing and support: LWoodman presented an overview of the support the college has provided during the pandemic and ongoing to support staff wellbeing and opened the agenda item for discussion. The key areas covered in discussion were: 4.1.1 DP thanked LWoodman for the helpful suite of documents, providing good assurance that the college is moving in a positive direction. He noted that, increasingly in this climate, it will be important to manage the risk of potential claims and to promote a culture of wellbeing as a two-way process with the individual taking responsibility for their own wellbeing as well. Discussion followed on the use of generic and individualised risk assessments and the support and HR intervention in place and ongoing if wellbeing concerns are raised. LWoodman and JJ explained

how the process works and gave assurance that it is a comprehensive process and that HR picks up any risks highlighted and these are kept live and followed up by HR. LWoodman also noted that the change in the occupational health provider has had a positive impact as the provider is proactive at having conversations with individuals on their responsibility for their wellbeing as well as support the college can put in place. DP welcomed this assurance and highlighted the need to use the risk assessment process rigorously and consistently throughout the management chain to manage potential risk and to consider using the general prompt during personal review - how is your wellbeing - so that this can be documented and followed up if necessary. LWoodman noted that the current review of the personal development review (PDR) process is considering this, and the prompt can be built into the process.

4.1.2 JF welcomed the caveat on hybrid working that made it clear that ensuring adequate staffing to support students on site is the central consideration and LWoodman and MC provided assurance on the message to staff on flexible working to ensure that the student experience remains central to these decisions.

4.1.3 LW welcomed the paper and considered it provided good assurance as it provided all the initiative in one place and she wondered if an annual wellbeing benchmarking exercise could be developed. LWoodman noted that this could be good to do at the right time, once more development work has been completed with managers and she noted that the staff voice body and other groups such as the menopause group and the student groups are playing a key role in raising awareness and developing the culture. LW noted that from her point of view the wellbeing team have been brilliant and always been accessible to her team when needed and also the menopause group has been very effective in raising awareness. The meeting welcomed this staff perspective as providing good assurance. GL also noted that Landex are intending to develop some benchmarking across colleges, which will be useful.

4.1.4 EH asked for a view on the progress of culture change towards the two-way process of staff wellbeing and LWoodman provided her view that there has been a lot of progress in raising awareness but that the next stage is to ensure that the response is effective and this requires further management development, which is ongoing. She noted progress is already being seen here and gave an example of where culture change has been seen and the supportive response has helped to keep staff in work.

4.2 HR Update Report: LW provided the HR update report for information and assurance. The key points raised in the reporting were:

4.2.1 COVID-19 – support of staff returning to the workplace, CMT are utilising flexibility with their team around working arrangements and the college is gradually seeing more confidence and attendance on site. COVID measures remain in place and regular communications around the need to remain vigilant and twice weekly testing.

4.2.2 Update on iTrent – project plan in place and work underway with the team to review, rebuild, user acceptance test, review, and introduce. Capacity within the team is stretched, but benefits of improvements are starting to be seen.

4.2.3 Health surveillance – scoping piece of work carried out by Occupational Health to introduce key health surveillance activities for staff as both a legal duty and a wellbeing safeguard.

4.2.4 Update against 20/21 HR and People Plan objectives

4.2.5 Key statistical data - Numbers of exit interviews are starting to increase with the introduction of a new shortened electronic format. As we approach the end of year and start to emerge from the COVID restrictions we are starting to see turnover begin to rise, but still low compared with non-COVID periods. Continued impact of COVID on sickness absence, plus reduction in long term absence due to the case management work being undertaken.

4.2.6 The approach on accessing the right support to develop the EDI strategy in the college was discussed and it was agreed that achieving the right partner to work with was important with assurance received that the college is considering a number of initiatives to ensure it can develop cultural change and not only compliance.

<p>5. 5.1 5.2</p>	<p>STUDENT NUMBERS AND FUNDING REPORTS</p> <p>FE and Apprenticeships student data report: The report was received and provided strong assurance overall with adult sectoral issues discussed and being a focus for development into next year.</p> <p>HE student data report: The report was received and provided good overall assurance on retention and withdrawals at this stage of the year but with less assurance on conversion of applications in an uncertain environment this year. Assurance was sought and received on the close Faculty and Executive team management of this recruitment risk.</p>
<p>6. 6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5</p>	<p>COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REVIEW</p> <p>Overview of risks within committee remit: The strategic risk board assurance report was received for information and assurance.</p> <p>ESFA Financial Health letter and dashboard: the report on the ESFA letter and dashboard was received for information and assurance.</p> <p>Management Accounts: Management Accounts to P10 indicated a surplus at year end, adverse to budget by circa £200k. The cash position and underlying business was noted as remaining strong with good headroom on all bank covenants. JF welcomed the forecast outturn and apprenticeship growth achieved in the circumstances as an excellent achievement. GL noted that apprenticeship income may still be impacted by EPA delay but that the risk is low in terms of any significant impact on outturn at this stage and there are positive signs. JF also welcomed the development of the cashflow reporting and GL confirmed that now with the new CFFR the management accounts will use these tools so they will be in a consistent format from October going forwards. AP echoed JF and received assurance that there would be no clawback on AEB, which she considered an excellent achievement and way above sector performance generally. DP endorsed all that had been said and welcomed the strong financial management and outturn in a very challenging year. GL noted that the college will be moving to a score of 'Good' on the ESFA dashboard and that under the new system currently being piloted the college would be currently 'outstanding' and continuing to be 'outstanding' as this system looks at ability to service debt rather than the existence of debt per se.</p> <p>Part B confidential item.</p> <p>Business Planning Process overview: GL provided an overview of the college business planning process for information and assurance. It was agreed that link visits could benefit from sight of the department business planning documents. The meeting received assurance that managers had found the balanced scorecard approach helpful and valued the process.</p>
<p>7. 7.1 7.2</p>	<p>DRAFT BUDGET FINANCIAL FORECAST</p> <p><i>SH joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>Confidential Part B item.</p> <p>Draft Budget and Forecast and ESFA College Financial Funding Return: GL presented the draft budget paper and commentary. JF confirmed that he supported the budget overall and he requested and received assurance from GL on confidence levels on income and headroom on costs. He also requested and received assurance that the drop in cashflow in August was due to the revolving credit repayment rather than anything else. He confirmed that he welcomed the enhanced reporting which helped with understanding. DP requested and received assurance that the budget has full sign off from the executive team as a whole and each member will own and be accountable for the delivery of the budget. AP agreed that the format and presentation, including the column on risks makes it very easy to understand for governors. GL noted that further developments in relation to draft contribution to central will be coming through in future as this is being worked on currently. EH received assurance that the budget is based on the new finance agreement. She also requested and received assurance on staffing to support growth and the profile of apprenticeship income. Following review of the draft budget report and ESFA CFFR, the committee agreed to recommend the same to the Board for approval.</p>

7.3	RESOLVED: To recommend the Annual Budget for 2021/22 and the ESFA CFFR submission to the Board for approval.
8.	Confidential Part B item
9.	REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE
9.1	The committee reviewed and recommended its Terms of Reference to the Board for approval.
10.	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL
10.1	RESOLVED: FE Tuition fees for 2021-22 are approved.
10.2	RESOLVED: The College Fees Policy is approved.
10.3	RESOLVED: The UCR Branding Project Additional Spend is approved.
11.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
11.1	There was no other business reported to the meeting.
12.	ANY ITEMS TO ESCALATE TO RISK REGISTER/BOARD
12.1	<p>The meeting agreed to report the following items to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Accounts to P10 indicate a surplus at year end, adverse to budget by circa £200k. The cash position and underlying business is strong. • The budget for 2021-22 was reviewed in the meeting and is recommended by the committee for approval. • The planned re-financing proposal was provided for consideration in the meeting and is recommended for approval and will be a key part managing working capital in the near and mid-term as well as supporting any future capital developments as part of the Environment and Estates Strategy. • Recruitment looks very positive again on FE growth for next year, providing a positive overall position. HE recruitment is less certain and the work on re-branding, curriculum development and marketing has been considered in the HE Committee meeting, with all areas showing good progress, especially the curriculum development which will be greatly assisted by the planned UCR Board of Studies. • A deep dive into staff wellbeing was carried out, with a detailed paper and discussion, which provided assurance that the college is managing this area of risk well and supporting staff through the restoration and recovery phase into the next academic year.
13.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Friday 3 December 2021 at 9.30am.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm

Confirmed as a correct record: 3 December 2021