

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2022 at 9.30am
Via MS Teams

Present: Malcolm Burns (independent) MB
 Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
 Gary Crowe (independent) GC
 Andrew Fletcher (independent) AF
 Elizabeth Harrison (independent, chair) EH
 Angela Potter (independent) AP
 Liz Watts (staff) LW

In attendance: Graeme Lavery (VP finance and resources) GL
 Louise Woodman (director of people and culture) LWoodman
 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 were received and accepted from David Pearson, Paul Weston and Jon Furber.
1.2	The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
2.1	AP declared an interest in the item of Any Other Business and left the meeting for that item.
3.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
3.1	The Part A Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.
3.2	The Part B Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.
3.3	There were no outstanding actions on the rolling action log and no matters arising not covered on the agenda.
4.	HUMAN RESOURCES
4.1	HR Update Report: LWoodman presented her update report. She highlighted the continuing challenging recruitment and retention environment and its impact on staffing in the college, as well as the actions in place to mitigate this key risk area. Members thanked LWoodman for her comprehensive report and welcomed the drop in turnover reported but acknowledged the high risk level as discussed at the previous meeting and highlighted in the strategic risk register. AP recognised the challenges and asked about the resource available from recruitment agencies. LWoodman confirmed that this was also challenging as she is finding that in some areas agencies do not have candidates to offer and in others, agency recruits are very mobile and sometimes do not stay very long. LW wondered if there is any feedback on why staff do not take up posts. LWoodman considered that it was a combination of factors but that salary levels are a key part. GL and LWoodman referred to the work on the salary review that is a part of the

4.2	<p>college's response to the recruitment challenges. GC welcomed the appointment to the Head of HR post. He queried the resource levels for supporting the well-being of staff and LWoodman explained the resource available. GC also queried how the staff in general understand and support the recruitment challenges and LWoodman noted that some staff are picking up and supporting the need to promote roles differently, but this is still mainly driven by the HR department. In response to EH's query, LWoodman confirmed that she intends to introduce a 'recommend a friend' scheme. She also explained that she intends to promote the flexible opportunities in construction to trade providers in the local area. EH queried how long it would be until the college is over the peak of the challenge with taking on new recruits and embedding them. LWoodman considered that this depends on the different teams, but some would be at least six months until a stable environment is achieved. AF queried whether there is any link between staff churn and management in that area. LWoodman confirmed that there was not a direct link from staff feedback, and two areas of significant churn are Sport, where there is a very competitive recruitment market in the local area and Academy of Land and Environment, where there has been significant change management work with plans in place to move forwards. Members thanked LWoodman for her comprehensive report and the full discussion that followed to enable the committee to understand current risk and mitigation actions.</p> <p>Gender Pay Gap Report: LWoodman presented the Gender Pay Gap Report for consideration and recommended approval to the Board. She explained the aims to improve the gender gap data further and noted the possibility of future ethnicity and disability reporting. Following consideration, the committee welcomed the reporting, showing a positive direction of travel and recommended the report to the Board for approval.</p>
4.3	Confidential Part B item.
5.	STUDENT NUMBERS AND FUNDING REPORTS
5.1	<p>Further Education and Apprenticeships student data report: GL presented the student data report, providing good assurance on the FE delivery income, but with an amber RAG rating on commercial delivery income and Higher Education income. AP queried whether the college interviews students who withdraw from higher education. MC confirmed that this happens, and the chief reasons are mental health and complex needs, and some financial reasons. He added that these are small numbers though and some good progress has been made on higher education withdrawals and retention is high. EH queried the cost of support to keep these students and MC confirmed significant support is needed and the college does everything it can to keep students. He confirmed that the college has had to use some agency staff to support the team, but costs have been kept within overall budget. Members welcomed the report, providing good assurance overall on student numbers and funding.</p>
6.	FINANCIAL MONITORING
6.1	Confidential Part B item.
6.2	Estates Development and Property Group Chair's Report and minutes: MB provided an overview of the recent meeting of the working group for information and assurance.
6.3	Confidential Part B item.
7.	COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REVIEW
7.1	<p>Strategic Risk Register Review: MC presented the risk review and board assurance framework report. Members welcomed the clear reporting and noted the discussion on staffing risk. MC confirmed, following the earlier discussion on staffing that he expected that risk level could be reduced going into September and new academic year. Members welcomed the clear reporting on strategic risk within the committee remit.</p>
8.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<i>AP left the meeting</i>
8.1	<p>Interest rate strategy: GL noted that the college would need to consider its interest rate strategy in the summer term, and he had some initial fact sheet information for the committee to</p>

	consider, which would be sent out with the minutes for information. He noted that the bank would be able to present to the committee following consideration of the information. It was agreed to consider at a Teams meeting, probably in late April, and then to bring the item to the June committee meeting.
9. 9.1	<i>AP returned to the meeting</i> ANY ITEMS TO ESCALATE TO RISK REGISTER/REPORT It was agreed to highlight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff recruitment and retention risk, actions in place and planned and expected timeline for the new academic year before these actions will impact to manage risk level down. • The interest rate strategy discussion and consideration by the Board in July. • The capital project approvals sought and given with further reporting to the Board at its meeting in March. • The gender pay gap report recommended to the Board for approval.
10. 10.1 10.2	DATE OF NEXT MEETING The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 23 June at 9.30am It was agreed that a single item agenda Teams meeting could be held following the current run of meetings. This would be to consider the interest rate strategy, and this could then be reported into the next scheduled committee meeting, with a view to taking a recommendation to the Board meeting in July.

The meeting closed at 11.30am

Approved as a correct record: 23 June 2022.