



Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 25 March 2019

Present: - Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)
 Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
 Mrs Lynn Forrester-Walker (Co-opted Member)
 Mr Scott Rolfe
 Ms Kay Sandford-Beal

In attendance: - Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
 Mr Tim Williams (Finance Director)
 Ms Kate Howe (Head of Communications)

The meeting was quorate as there were five Members present.

1. Apologies for Absence
 Professor Robin Baker

2. Declaration of Interests
 None declared

3.I Minutes of the Last Meeting
 The Chair signed the minutes of the last meeting held on 26 November 2018 as a true and accurate record.

3.II Matters arising from the Minutes
 The Finance Director would prepare a breakdown of operational costs so that the Committee could scrutinise these as opposed to high level costs in the management accounts. Potential investment and costs to implement the strategy compared to standard business would identify the extent of the costs and benefits of the strategy and any cost issues in the underlying activities. There will be discussion on value for money at a future Board meeting which would require some data. **ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting
- To request additional information to enable Governor to monitor and scrutinise costs further

4. Accommodation report (A confidential minute was recorded]

5. Finance Report

- I. Management Accounts to 31 January 2019 showed a reduction to the forecasted deficit with a year-end improvement of £74K. Risks were discussed including HE tuition fees and transport costs for students who live out of county, the latter of which could potentially increase. There was a question about payroll costs which are positive reflecting delays to some budgeted appointments for curriculum development. A decision had been made to delay appointing an HE Operations Manager so that the Head of HE could

be involved in the selection process. A Governor asked about HE withdrawal rates and if there are any trends. The Head of HE monitors these and that they are presented to AQ&S.

- II. Student applications 2019/20 confirmed that FE applications are on par with last year and in line with the College's strategy. This did not take account of late applications. There was discussion about applications to specific courses. The College is working collaboratively with music services providers in the county providing Saturday workshops for year 9 in conjunction with Encore; HCA staff employed by Encore deliver the workshops with no impact to the budget. The College is liaising with schools regarding progression to creative and applied arts subjects. The demographic dip in Herefordshire will improve for FE in 2021; however, a number of students enrol from Worcestershire and the demographic dip in Worcestershire has now passed..

HE applications, offers and acceptances to date were noted. Compared to the predication of the budget which are marginally less. Demographics of HE also change in 2021.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the management accounts to 31 January 2019 and risk
- To note student applications to date

6. **Marketing update**

Press coverage included printed articles and video interviews for individual courses. These had resulted in an increase in the number of page visits. The Ferrous Festival had regional coverage with Newsquest. The '150mm challenge' in artist blacksmithing had gone viral with 200 exhibits received from blacksmiths in 18 countries which will be exhibited.

The impact will be assessed from targeted marketing for individual courses and students this year. Tools include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google Analytics Benchmarks and evidence of impact will be presented at the next meeting. **ACTION: HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS**

A cost analysis for marketing activity would be provided such as the short course strategy which is being developed and will be presented to Committee. **ACTION: HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS**

A national marketing strategy is being prepared which will link cross-College events at national level and timing to national themes.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the marketing update

7. **Strategy Implementation**

- I. A template for strategy project tracking had been prepared to measure implementation of strategy at a granular level. This had been prepared working in consultation with ESFA to track the introduction of the Digital Futures course. There would be about fifteen tracking templates with comments invited from Governors on the format. It was concluded that only headlines should be reported to the Committee.
- II. First draft 2019/20 College budget and future assumptions [A confidential minute was recorded]

The Committee agreed: -

- To acknowledge the high level of work from staff to prepare the strategy implementation templates agreeing only headlines would be presented to the Committee in future. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

8. Health and Safety Report

The report and been extended to incorporate new tables to improve tracking and analysis of health and safety data and progress towards targets.

The Principal informed Governors that the Estates Manager had resigned which provided an opportunity to restructure the role to separate the health and safety element from estates management. Options are being investigated to provide independent health and safety management, which could be provided externally, and a hands-on estates role. SLT manage estates and facilities at a strategic level. The H&S Lead Governor commented that she joined the Health and Safety Committee remotely which had brought challenges to participate and engage in the meeting.

There was discussion about accidents during the period August 2018 to February 2019, particularly the slip in the café which was stated as 'not work related'. This would be followed up further to ensure the classification of 'work-related' is applied correctly. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the report concluding that the new format added value

9. Any Other Business

No items

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 24 June 2019 commencing at 5.00 pm.

Signed as a true record

Chair Date