

PRESENT: Deane Braid-Lewis
Roz Liard
Gordon Smith
Tim Thirlwall (Chair)
Helen Walley
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)

ATTENDING: Neil Blackmore (Clerk)
Jo Bland (Director of HR)
Chay Champness (Chief Operating Officer, COO)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive, DCE)

PART A

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None were received.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 June 2012

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3.1 Matters Arising From The Minutes

There were none.

4 RECOMMENDATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Financial Statements and covering report were **RECEIVED**. The COO reported that there were no changes to the headline figures presented at the October board, which was an operating surplus of £1.3 million. The Chair stated that he and the COO had met before the meeting to go through minor amendments. The COO reported that the auditors had required a revaluation of College property, with a £0.5 million increase showing in the Balance Sheet since Board in October. The COO noted that the disaggregation of the Croydon Council Local Government Pension Scheme was a significant figure but did not impact immediately on the cashflow or on any banking covenants. The COO reported that the College would move from a net-liability position to a net-asset position by the end of 2012-3, which was a very positive development. The COO reported that a letter had been received from the SFA confirming unadjusted Financial Health of Good. The Chair congratulated the COO and his team on the most effective draft Financial Statements in his period as a Governor and the wider progress on financial health.

Governors asked for a demonstration of Moodle for their benefit. The Principal confirmed that this would be possible, and that there had been discussions about using Moodle for Governor development.

ACTION: The Principal to facilitate a demonstration of Moodle for Governors.

The Financial Statements were then **RECOMMENDED** to the Governing Body.

5 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO stated that the first two months of the year had started well with positive variances on pay and non-pay costs. The COO outlined that there was an overspend in partnership costs which was favourable as it demonstrated that the partners were delivering above expected profile.. Governors noted significant advances in budgetary processes and the benefits of enrolment being on target. The balance sheet confirmed the movement towards a net current asset position as described at item 4.

6 2012/13 ENROLMENTS UPDATE

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO reported on changes to figures since writing, explaining that a strong position on Learner Responsive 19+, when including partnership, would enable the College to meet its strategy to reduce reliance on partnership activity. On Learner Responsive 16-18, total allocation (noting the structural differences on reports between the College's EBS and ILR data systems) is currently around target. Governors welcomed these much-strengthened enrolment positions but questioned the existence of two data systems. The Executive team explained the historical development of the two systems, which provided different information sets, with the ILR being used for certain SFA reporting. The Executive team further outlined the difficulty in delivering on Employer Responsive 16-18, which was significantly below target. In response to Governors' questions on this, it was stated that this trend appeared to be reflected nationally both in the private and public sector.

7 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The draft Financial Regulations were **RECEIVED**. The COO noted that a significant revision to the Regulations had taken place over the previous year and a half, and this revision was primarily minor amendments. One major amendment was that tender waivers under £20K would be approved by the Principal/COO and reported at F&R, which would increase operational flexibility but maintain Governor oversight. Governors asked about the view of the Internal Audit Service, which was agreeable. Governors asked about the wording of item 2.12 (iv) Accounting Policies/Pensions that it signpost the audited Financial Statements for further details.

The Regulations were **RECOMMENDED** to the Governing Body, subject to the rewording of the item on pensions.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO reported that the Risk Management Group had met the same day and that a report of any changes to risk would go to the Audit Committee on 21 November. Governors asked that the action column should have some sense of time allocated for completion, though this need not be prescriptive but rather give a sense of timeframe. The COO noted that an internal audit recommendation had been to link KPIs to risk, which was now being effected.

9 ANNUAL REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO outlined the report, including improvements to equipment-maintenance contracts. Governors asked that where numbers of staff undergoing training is reported that an indicator of target be given.

Further information was provided on work undertaken on gangs. The Principal noted a recent major event where the College worked with Croydon Police on spot-checking students entering the building for weapon possession. The Principal was pleased to report that no weapons were found. Governors asked whether this result had been communicated to learners and suggested that it should as it was a positive message on the learners' sense of community and on their safety at the College. The Principal also reported on a police RAG rating for significant gang membership as reporting no concerns re the College.

Governors asked about the historic position of the College with Legionella H&S checks and the COO agreed to check on the current status. Governors agreed that this was an improved Health & Safety Report which should be used as a model for future updates.

ACTION: The COO to check on the current status of Legionella H&S checks.

ACTION: The Executive to consider ways to communicate to learners very positive outcomes on gangs- and weapons-monitoring at the College.

10 POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

10.1 Freedom Of Information Policy

The draft policy was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked whether a FOI annual report was produced and asked that a short report be made annually, where appropriate. The policy was **APPROVED**.

ACTION: The COO to consider if FOI request reporting is required.

10.2 Redundancy And Redeployment Procedure

The draft procedure was **RECEIVED**. The Director of HR noted that there had been no change in law and changes were small and for clarity. Trade unions had had due consultation and the Director outlined some of their comments.

The policy was **RECOMMENDED** for approval to the Governing Body.

11 STAFF ATTITUDE SURVEY

It was noted that this item will come to the March 2013 meeting.

ACTION: Staff Attitude Survey to come to March 2013 meeting.

12 PAY AWARD UPDATE

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Director of HR stated that the AoC had additionally briefed that the increase on the pay bill would be 0.72% if implemented as recommended. It was proposed that a further update would come to the March 2013 meeting which would allow time for financial and quality performance to be assessed. Governors agreed this arrangement but asked about how the College remained competitive as an employer. The Principal agreed that this was an issue and the College was mindful of it. Governors further counselled that at some stage there would be a catch-up of salaries and the College had to anticipate sudden increases in pay demands and expectations in the coming years.

13 UCC TUITION FEES FOR 2013/14

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked about international fees. The DCE stated that it would be some time before the College would make a submission to UKBA but that international fees were included for completeness. However, international recruitment was unlikely for September 2013. Governors agreed that given the competitiveness of the fees that the removal of the £500 bursary was appropriate. Governors asked about FE fees as a perceptual barrier to entry. The DCE outlined widening-participation structures on Access students and the benchmarks on repayment of loans, and reported a general sector impression that fees were not as significant a barrier as might have been expected.

Approval of fees is delegated to the F&R Committee. The UCC Tuition Fees were **APPROVED**.

14 DCE'S REPORT ON PARTNERSHIP

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE noted the report to LQC will be more detailed for student outcomes, because of schedules for submission of ILR data. The DCE outlined the position on partnerships and future planned reduction of partnership delivery. The DCE noted that the College has strengthened its controls on partnership, even where issues have remained. Governors agreed, stating that the report instilled confidence in robust controls of partnership provision. The DCE reported that the project management of Helena Clarkova and Heather Armstrong had been particularly strong. It was **RESOLVED** to thank Helena Clarkova and Heather Armstrong on behalf of the Governing Body for their work in managing the partnerships.

15 DATES FOR NEXT YEAR

The dates were noted.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING

The COO reported that formal approval had been received from the SFA that the Notice To Improve had been lifted.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 20 March 2013 at 4.30pm