

PRESENT: Tim Thirlwall (Chair)
Gordon Smith
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Helen Walley

ATTENDING: Neil Blackmore (Clerk)
Jo Bland (Director of HR)
Sinéad Borland (Head of Finance, observing)
Chay Champness (Chief Operating Officer, COO)
Jason Pemberton-Billing (Dean of UCC, item 4 only)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive, DCE)

PART A

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from R Liard.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 November 2012

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3.1 Matters Arising

The decision of the Committee by email of 12 February 2013 to increase the Learning Curve contract by up to £425k in two tranches was noted. This required Committee approval as the total contract value is over £500k in the year.

The Chair also outlined confirmation from the Director of Operations, via the Clerk, that re item 9, there had been no instances of Legionella during the period. Re item 10.1, the COO reported that there was no compulsion to report on FOI and confirmed that he monitored that appropriate timescales were being observed.

4 REPORT ON IMPACT OF PART-TIME HE FEES

The report, which had previously been requested by Governors, was **RECEIVED**. The Dean of UCC additionally reported that PT HE applications are nationally down ~40%. Governors agreed that market conditions for PT HE recruitment had become very challenging nationally. The Dean further outlined the various impacts on the College's provision as well as marketing and other activities to address this. The validation of the LLB was discussed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the HE fees for 2013-4 should remain unchanged.

5 TUITION FEES 2013-4

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Clerk had made the full Tuition Fees Policy available to Governors electronically in advance. The COO and the DCE outlined the policy and market background to the introduction of FE loans and noted the uncertainty about the full impact of the loans on September starts.

It was **RESOLVED** to set level 3 and 4 fees for 24+ learners to the maximum funding available on the Learning Aim Reference Application and also to approve the minor amendments to the Fees Policy.

6 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors queried that at Pay Expenditure, that support staff costs were adverse. The COO outlined the underlying reasons for this, including one-off agency expenses and planned additional pay expenditure in HR earlier in the year. The COO outlined changes to the redundancy provisions for this year. There was a discussion about likely changes to printing need with the increasing use of Moodle and electronic resources. Whilst noting the headline stability of the financial position, the COO stated that the College needs to continue to ensure it has robust financial planning in a challenging and uncertain period.

Governors queried the falling away of the initially positive enrolment, having originally had reassurance that enrolment had been strong in September. The DCE stated this arose as a high level of early enrollers had/were subsequently withdrawn. However, early enrolment still showed a high conversion rate and also engenders smoother administration of enrolment, but he stated that this type of withdrawal pattern is likely to recur. Governors requested that managers factor this differential into their planning.

The COO outlined discussion on various items of planning with LB Croydon as well as providing an oral update on the wider property development of central Croydon and the immediate College area. Governors asked for a breakdown of the fully utilised £500k capital expenditure budget and reassurance of the testing for big-ticket items, which the COO was able to give immediately at the meeting.

There was a discussion about going out to market with Barclay Road. It was **RESOLVED** that Barclay Road would be marketed at a cost of circa £16k.

7 BUDGET PREPARATION 2013/4

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors noted plans to grow international HE income. They stated that past efforts in this regard had performed poorly and asked for reassurance about any new ventures. Managers stated that they would use a more conservative agent-led business model, which was established as delivering income. Governors asked that this business model be presented to them when the position is clearer.

There was a discussion about the surrender of the New Addington site. Governors noted the site's successful provision and particular atmosphere. Managers agreed that the different delivery approach at New Addington was very successful and it would be challenging to replicate that success. The DCE stated that this provision could be housed within the College undercroft within a new multi-skills facility. He also outlined possible impacts on different cohorts currently using the New Addington site. Governors expressed concern about the impact on the New Addington area. Managers stated that these had been considered.

Governors asked about the costs of pension auto-enrolment and the impact of increased employer contributions to the Croydon Local Government Pension Scheme. The COO

outlined the range of likely outcomes. Governors advised that possible increases might be larger than the mooted 1-1.5%. The Chair asked if the upcoming review of the employer contribution to the LGPS would affect 2013-4. The COO advised that clarification was being sought from the Borough. The Chair stated that this planning was fine for 2013-4 but asked to see more investigation of these issues in the Three-Year Forecast.

8 ANNUAL REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND BANKING

The report was **RECEIVED**. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the increase in borrowing of £2.2 million, a repayment term of 31 July 2038 for the £8 million revolving-credit loan and authority to increase the limit of 12-month term deposits from £1.0 million to £1.2 million.

9 ANNUAL REPORT ON PROCUREMENT AND VFM

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked about whether further space utilisation analyses were required. The COO stated that the consolidation down to one site had achieved a great deal of what was possible and the position was now more one of review/audit. The COO stated that VFM of space utilisation was demonstrated by the closure of off-site facilities without direct loss of provision.

10 STAFF SURVEY FEEDBACK

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Director of HR further stated that the Ofsted inspection had engendered a spirit of teamworking, which had to be capitalised upon. Governors discussed the response rate (23%). Managers responded that electronic surveying generally had lower turnouts but that the College would consider creative ways to promote engagement. The Director of HR noted that the College had a number of routes for staff engagement in addition to the staff survey, including direct access ('Coffee and Conversations') to the Principal, etc.

11 POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

The following policies were **RECEIVED**: Whistleblowing; Code of Conduct; Sickness. The Director of HR outlined the headline changes and the trade union responses to the same, where received. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the policies.

12 DCE'S REPORT ON PARTNERSHIP

The report was **RECEIVED**. It was noted that this report is also received at LQC. Governors asked if there was a possibility of additional clawback arising from audits of the EIF-UKBA project. The DCE said that there was but that the College project management had been significantly strengthened. Managers noted that partnership had provided a valuable buffer but that this would reduce very significantly in the coming years.

13 RISK MAP

The report was **RECEIVED**.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING

ACTION: The Annual Report on Staffing Profile might be removed from the Schedule of Business for the Committee, pending a staff strategy paper to be received at the June Committee (if practicable for that date) and to then decide if that paper, if suitable, should be annual or periodic.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 19 June 2013 at 4.30pm