



## MidKent College

### GOVERNING BODY

#### FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 17 November 2020 at 13.00hrs via Zoom due to Covid-19.

<b>Present:</b>	Mr C Reeves	Chair
	Mr M Blanning	
	Mr M Cook	GB Chair
	Mr S Cook	Principal/CEO
	Ms A Orhiere	
	Mrs N Swain	Co-opted Member

<b>In attendance:</b>	Ms C Burkin	Clerk to the Governing Body
	Mr C Hare	Executive Director of Employers & Corporate Services
	Mr M Peat	Executive Director of Finance & Estates

#### 1 **Declarations of Interest**

The following members interests are numbered and referenced on the Declaration of Interest log dated 23 November 2020. Mr C Reeves (9); Mr M Blanning (2); Mr M Cook (3); Mr S Cook (4); Mrs A Orhiere (8) and Mrs N Swain (14).

#### 2 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Miss A Currie and Mr N Davies, Co-opted Member.

#### 3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020 & Confidential Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020 & Confidential Minutes, Paper GBF&GP20/1025 (a), were accepted as a true record and digitally signed by the Chairman.

#### 4 Matters Arising and Outstanding Matters Report

Members discussed Paper GBF&GP20/1026, the Outstanding Matters Report.

- No 1. Capital Projects – Feasibility Study – under Item 9 and BF for completion when a project commences. **Ongoing.**
- No 2. Estate MLPS - Currently focusing on Covid. Future focus will be to reduce the electricity usage and minimising waste. **Ongoing**
- No 3. Utilisation of College Reserves Update - BF New year following the MKC/MKCTS Strategic agreement. **Ongoing.**
- No 4. Financial Regulations & Procedures BF New Year following the MKC/MKCTS Strategic agreement. **Ongoing.**
- No 5. HR Annual Report - Management spine salary scale. - Members noted that further debate is required on this subject. **Chair to decide on agenda item. Ongoing**
- No 6. ICT Policy 2021/22 – approved – **Complete.**
- No 7. Contracted Out Provision – included in the Management accounts - **Complete and included in item 5.**
- No 8. Management Accounts July 2020 - loan to MKCTS **Noted for Strategic Group discussion.**
- No 9. Management Accounts July 2020 - Adjustments to the pension costs – paper included. **Complete.**

**Action: Chair**

#### 5 Draft Management Accounts to the end of September 2020

Martin Peat introduced paper GBF&GP20/1027, the MKC draft management accounts to the end of September 2020.

Martin Peat introduced paper GBF&GP20/1027a, the MKCTS draft management accounts to the end of September 2020.

*This item was minuted as confidential.*

Members **accepted** the accounts and thanked M Peat.

**6 Pay Award 2020/21 – Paper GBF&GP20/1028**

Simon Cook presented the paper to propose the annual staff pay award for 2020/21 for the College.

The paper provided an introduction to the pay award proposal, a short background for Governors who have previously not been involved in pay award discussions at the College and the proposal for 2020/21.

S Cook explained the paper and members debated the four options. They considered the pay to income ratio and the budgeted amount. Members **agreed** the pay award level for 2020/21 based upon the **recommendation** of 1%.

This will be **recommended** to the Governing Body on 9 December 2020.

**Action: C Reeves**

**7 Annual Review of ICT Strategy and Investment – Paper GBF&GP20/1029**

Paul Hogben joined the meeting to present the two papers. These provided an overview of the progress in Year 3 of the ICT Strategy and an outline of the key investments in the 2020/21 academic year.

P Hogben explained that there has been a focus on teaching and learning from a remote perspective due to the current circumstances. Members noted the good progress to achieve Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation required for funding. P Hogben requested an extension to achieve the objectives in the Strategy due to delays because of the focus on remote learning caused by Covid-19. He explained that the pandemic had impacted the delivery model and utilisation of technologies within the College.

C Hare explained to members that the Strategy had developed well over the last three years under the management of P Hogben and his team. He has been focusing on the infrastructure and is now moving onto the digital strategy.

P Hogben informed members that he has been working with colleagues at MKCTS to bring their infrastructure in line with the College and shared services arrangement is being explored.

Members asked which areas of the Strategy have not been achieved and P Hogben informed Governors that further work is required in developing the team and response times. He realises that the Strategy was a little too ambitious in this area and needs to be more realistic. He noted that the current level of resources will enable the goals to be achieved with a more realistic timeline.

Members noted the successful investment in iPads and that they are being piloted in areas such as Public Services, Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships. They noted the long term plan for Advance Practitioners to provide resources in the classroom and the partnership work with curriculum teams. P Hogben informed members that he is working with curriculum teams

to ensure he understands the needs of the students and work towards industry standards.

Members thanked P Hogben for the update and he left the meeting.

## **8 Digital Strategy**

Chris Hare gave members a verbal update on the current position.

Unfortunately the College has been unable to recruit a suitable Manager to take the Strategy forward and therefore other options are being explored to spread the investment and embed into the organisation. The options are considering how to utilise teaching and learning and how to run the operations of the business more efficiently. The delivery of these is being taken forward by the Executive. Members asked for comparators to other Colleges and were assured that several different approaches are being made from blended learning to complete digital delivery, depending on the cohort of students. Investment in the digital performance of the workforce is being made with support where required.

Members requested an update on the investment in iPads and C Hare reported an interesting exercise recognising multiple cohorts of students in need. The quick response of the College meant the iPads have made a positive impact on the students in receipt of them and the distribution is being piloted in additional areas such as Apprenticeships. Governors were assured that the devices are strictly controlled and managed by ICT. Overall this has been a successful investment.

Members thanked P Hogben and C Hare for the update and looked forward to further discussion.

## **9 Capital Plan 2020/21 – Paper GBF&GP20/1030**

Martin Peat informed the Committee of the forecast position and capital grant for the 2020/21 year.

He explained that the original approved capital budget had been updated for a latest forecast with the total expenditure to be in line with the budget.

The College has received an allocated capital grant of £1.2m which has a number of conditions attached. This included 25% match funding by the College, the fund can only be used on remedial works and a strict deadline of 31 March 2021. He informed members that there is a real risk of not being able to meet this deadline for all of the identified projects.

The College is awaiting some clarification from the ESFA regarding the restrictions as some of the areas of the College which could benefit from the fund, will not be accessible before the deadline.

Members thanked M Peat for the update.

**10 Policies for approval:**

Martin Peat explained that there had been minor tracked changes to the policies which are presented for annual review and approval:

- Draft Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2021/22 - Paper GBF&GP20/1031. Minor changes – **approved**.
- Draft Apprenticeship Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2021/22 – Paper GBF&GP20/1032. Minor changes – **approved**.
- Treasury Policy 2021/22 – Paper GBF&GP20/1033. The financial categories have been updated. Members agreed that a debate is required regarding bank ratings and possible investments. The policy was **approved** until this can be agreed.

**Action: Committee**

- Procurement Policy 2021/22 - Paper GBF&GP20/1034. Minor changes – **approved**. It was noted that local businesses are prioritised in the policy but this needs to be made more explicit in the wording.

**Action: M Peat**

**Update from Standing Items:-**

**11 HR Update including MLPs – GBF&GP20/1035**

Chris Hare introduced the update to members and highlighted the following:

- Turnover is currently 14.26% down from 17.77% when last reported. It was noted that this may be due to the current economic situation.
- Voluntary turnover is 11.75% which has reduced from 14.59% when last reported.
- The average days lost has increased from 6.90 days per person to 7.10.
- Exit interview responses remain above our target of 70% at 82.35%.
- A new interim Head of HE has been appointed and will be invited to the next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

Members thanked C Hare for the update and challenged MLP 1.4 regarding new starters being issued their employment contract within 5 working days of offer. C Hare reported that it has been difficult to stay on target whilst working remotely and the College is moving towards using the software 'DocuSign' to assist with this.

Members also challenged the number of mandatory training overall completion rates which have reduced to a range between 85.90% and 94.74%. They were assured that a review of the GDPR training is being undertaken to strengthen

the content. It was noted that the Committee will monitor this MLP and requested an improvement by the next meeting.

**Action: C Hare**

Members asked how the 'working from home' requests are reviewed and were assured that the Establishment group (EAR) review all requests to ensure a robust a fair process. Members congratulated the College on the 'grow your own' approach the training for staff especially in the hard to recruit areas.

Members thanked C Hare for the update.

## **12 Estates Update – Paper GBF&GP20/1036**

Martin Peat introduced the paper on behalf of the author. The report highlighted the following points:

- Security review - to ensure the relevant qualifications are held.
- Maidstone House – consideration is being made re selling the property.
- Capital Fund - discussed under item 9.
- Covid Responses - The facilities team continue to focus on the response and management of the virus outbreak.

Members thanked M Peat for the update.

## **13 Risk Register Review – verbal**

M Peat assured members that all the F&GP risks had been addressed in the meeting papers.

## **14 Any Other Business**

The Chair noted that the next meeting will be chaired by Alison Currie and therefore he will review the agenda for 3 March 2021 with her outside the meeting.

**Action: C Reeves/ A Currie**

## **15 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 5pm**. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 15.05.