



## MidKent College

### GOVERNING BODY

#### FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 1700hrs in the Boardroom at the Medway Campus or via Zoom due to Covid-19.

#### **Present:**

Miss A Currie	Chair
Mr M Blanning	
Mr M Cook	GB Chair
Mr S Cook	Principal/CEO
Mr N Davies	Co-opted Member (some tech difficulties during the meeting)
Mr D Gagie	Observer
Mr C Reeves	Chair for items 1 – 4 inclusive
Prof E Sallis	Observers
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
	Ms S Mott	Item 5 only
	Mr M Peat	Executive Director of Finance & Estates
	Ms J Thompson	Item 5 only

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

The following member's interests are numbered and referenced on the Declaration of Interest log dated 7 January 2021; Mr M Blanning (1); Mr M Cook (3); Mr S Cook (4); Miss C Currie (5); Mr N Davies (6); Mr D Gagie (7) Mr C Reeves (11) Mr E Sallis (14) and Mrs N Swain (16).

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

Apologies were received from Ms A Orhiere.

**3 Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 November 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020, Paper GBF&GP20/1037 and confidential minutes GBF&GP20/1037a were accepted as a true record and electronically signed by the Chair.

**4 Matters Arising and Outstanding Matters Report**

There were no matters arising.

Members discussed Paper GBF&GP20/1038, the Outstanding Matters Report.

No 1. Capital Projects – Feasibility Study – there are no major capital works other than those covered by the Capital Grant. **Complete** until projects commence.

No 2. Estate MLPS - Ongoing, however there is a Climate Road Map which was issued at the AOC conference, this will be part of discussions with the Board. **Ongoing**.

No 3. Utilisation of College Reserves Update - Chair suggested that this is included in the Estates Strategy to be written and presented in May 2021. **Ongoing**

No 4. Financial Regulations & Procedures – on agenda item 7. **Complete**.

No 5. HR Annual Report - management spine salary scale – discussed under item 5. **Complete**.

No 6. Pay Award 2020/21 – approved Governing Body – **Complete**.

No 7. Draft Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2021/22  
Draft Apprenticeship Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2021/22  
Treasury Policy 2021/22  
Procurement Policy 2021/22  
All approved at Governing Body – **Complete**

No 8. HR Update including MLPs – Julia Thompson will attend for item 5 – **Complete**.

No 9. Mandatory training – data included in item 5 – **Complete**.

No 10. AOB – agenda review – **Complete**.

*Chris Reeves handed over to the new Chair Alison Currie.*

## 5 HR Six Month Interim Report (inc MLPs) - Paper No GBF&GP20/1039

Julia Thompson, Interim Head of HR, joined the meeting to present the mid-year position for the monitoring of activities associated with the performance of the workforce at the College. She highlighted that the data reviewed in this paper included the College's resourcing levels, turnover, performance management and absence statistics based on workforce information as at the 31st January 2021.

The key indicators noted:

- Turnover rate = 11.71% (16.94% lower than this time last year) – it is noted that the low rate could be due to the Covid effect as staff are not moving jobs. Members asked for more recent comparative data with regard to turnover. J Thompson assured members that compared to local colleges, MKC is in a more positive position re turnover and in a similar position re absence. To give further assurance she agreed to source wider data from outside the area and report back at the next meeting.

**Action: J Thompson**

- Absence rate of 6.23 days per person (0.85 days lower than this time last year) – working at home due to Covid has improved this data. Members discussed some of the categories for absence and mitigation. They recognised the risk of absence data rising as staff are expected to return to College.
- Establishment costs – 445.06 FTE (14.6 FTE higher than same time last year) - difficult to fill posts are being covered by short term contracts to ensure stability for students.
- Wellbeing & Mental Health – engagement with a work place Health Coach is being established to support staff returning to College with 1:1 meetings and hub sessions. Members welcomed this excellent addition to the support staff receive and asked if a more flexible approach to home working has been considered.

J Thompson assured members that the work force now have more options and space utilisation is also being considered. If more staff are working at home and hot-desking when in College then more space can be utilised for teaching. The College is mindful however, of the positive impact of working along-side colleagues and the need for some areas to have a physical presence.

Members asked if trends will be tracked by the Coach and how the impact will be measured. J Thompson informed members that reasons for absence are recorded and tracked and include mental health issues. Impact of the Health Coach will be measured by the number of contacts made and outcomes but this initiative has not commenced yet.

- Recruitment – all vacancies are reviewed by the Establishment Panel weekly and if they are no longer required, they are removed from the budget after a robust review process.

- Exit interviews – whilst working from home there has been a low return. Once back in College it is expected that face to face meetings can gain more meaningful data. Making contact with the leaving member of staff after 3-6 months is also being pursued to gain further information. It was recognised that certain managers require support in this area and further detail is needed to capture data that can be usefully analysed and actioned.
- Mandatory training – the completion data has improved with steps planned to follow up any that are outstanding with consequences. Members congratulated the team on making these improvements.
- PDRs – an extension on the completion deadline has been agreed with clear consequences for non-compliance. Current position = 82% completion. Members asked if there is a correlation between areas who are not compliant and student attainment and J Thompson agreed to follow this up.  
**Action: J Thompson**
- Pension Scheme – members noted the low uptake and were informed that staff members can opt-out of the scheme and do so for a variety of reasons. It was agreed that awareness of the benefits of the scheme need to be raised.

The Chair thanked J Thompson for her attendance and members **accepted** the report.

### **Gender Pay Report – Paper GBF&GP20/1039a**

Sarah Mott, HR Corporate Business Partner, joined the meeting to present this report which outlined, completed actions, actions in progress and future work to be undertaken in respect of the pay scales and grades used for staff working at MidKent College. She informed members of the background work and the statutory requirement to report this information since 2017.

She highlighted the following actions that have been implemented:

- Combining of grades A-C in 2019.
- Move to a 10 point scale in 2020 which impacted salaries.
- Combined Grade changes completed on 1 February 2021 with an increase in the lowest pay grade to above the real living wage.
- Grade D changes completed on 1 February 2021.
- Supervisory roles on the Combined Grade have been reviewed and recommendations for change proposed and implemented.
- Lecturers Pay Spine updated to remove redundant points on the pay scale.

Members also noted the following actions which are being progressed:

- Proposal to shorten Grades E, F & G submitted to the Establishment Panel on 23 February 2021.
- Proposal to address Curriculum Manager & Head of Department pay issue presented to the Establishment Panel on 22 January 2021. Members noted the equal pay audit highlighted historical differentials between male and female

curriculum managers as an un-intended consequence of the changes to the pay scales.

- Management Pay Spine to be reviewed in 2021. Members noted this was a large project which will have a financial impact on the College and individuals pay. Members noted the possible risks of disparities within this scale but agreed this work must be carried out and look forward to future reporting.

Members were informed that the Gender Pay report has been published ahead of the deadline and included the optional extra information. These include an action plan, flexible working for all staff including males, extra support following leave and a commitment to unconscious bias training.

Members congratulated the team on the work carried out and how the changes in the pay scales has enabled the College to have an effective pay policy that will assist in recruiting and retaining the right staff.

Members noted the actions taking to encourage applications in the hard to recruit areas and were assured the correct pay is being offered in these areas.

Members thanks J Thompson and S Mott for attending the meeting and **accepted** the reports. [They left the meeting.](#)

Members noted that having guest presenters assists with further understanding and welcomed more in the future.

## 6 **Draft Management Accounts to the end of January 2021**

Martin Peat introduced the papers showing the full year financial forecast for the Group, College and Subsidiary, GBF&GP20/1040, the MKC draft management accounts and GBF&GP20/1040a the MKCTS draft management accounts to the end of January 2021.

[This item was minuted as confidential.](#)

## 7 **Policy for approval: Paper No GBF&GP20/14041 - Group Financial Regulations and Procedures 2021/22**

Martin Peat introduced the policy reminding members that a previous version had be presented but amended since to include the subsidiary and therefore become a Group Policy.

The revised policy has been reviewed and commented upon by the MD and Commercial Director of MKCTS and their comments included in this document. This version now includes an additional Section 10 regarding Fixed Assets Procedure, presented at pages 41 and 42 for approval.

Members requested that it is made clear throughout the document the Principal is responsible for the Group.

Members **approved** the policy for recommendation to the Governing Body and subsequent publication with the above amendment.

**Action: M Peat**

**Update from Standing Items:-**

**8 Carbon Footprint plan (MLP Estates)**

Martin Peat informed members that the College is engaging with a company to measure the current footprint and make recommendations regarding areas to focus improvement. This will be completed by 31 July 2021 and proposals brought back to the Committee and Governing Body.

**Action: M Peat**

M Peat informed members that until the measurements and recommended targets are set, the Estates MLPs are meaningless and therefore not reported at this time.

Members noted that discussions had taken place at the Strategic Away Day around Climate change and the Road Map with the level of ambition to be agreed recognising the starting point. A joint approach with the curriculum leads and Student Voice is important to drive this initiative. It was agreed the College would consider signing up to the Climate Charter.

**Action: Clerk re Charter**

S Cook informed members that further content and options for investment will be included in a report to the Governing Body at the March 2021 meeting where key related issues can be discussed.

**Action: M Cook at GB**

**9 Risk Register Review**

Members reviewed the eight risks relevant to the Committee remit and agreed they had all been sufficiently covered during the meeting by the Committee papers. No amendments to the register were required.

Members noted that although the full risk register will continue to be available to all Governors on Board Intelligence, the R&A Committee are recommending to the Governing Body that they focus on monitoring the key strategic risk going forward and the Committee must be mindful of this.

## 10 Any Other Business

Members discussed the agenda for 12 May 2021 was agreed some amendments:

- Estates Strategy will be format only as some detail will not be available until later in the year. The full Strategy will be brought forward to a future meeting. (MP)
- HR item will not include the Staff Survey as the timing has changed. It will include IIP and IID information. Item title to be reviewed. (CH)
- Business planning slides to be included to note the headlines (CH/MP)
- Kick start initiative update (CH/Programme Manager)
- Budget update - timeline was clarified:
  - MKCTS draft to MKCTS Board 21/5/21
  - Group draft budget to F&GP 23/6/21 (to nightlight any issues at this meeting)
  - Recommendation to Governing Body 2/7/21

The amended agenda and timings will be addressed outside the meeting.

**Action: Chair/Clerk**

Other any other business:

Members noted certain discussions are available for participation and asked the Exec to consider completion.

**Action: S Cook**

This highlighted that Governors were not aware of some of the initiatives with which the College are involved such as the Kick Start and they welcomed more information. An update on the Kick Start initiative will be added to the agenda (note above).

The Chair thanked the observers and D Gagie expressed his interest in joining the Committee. This recommendation will be made to the Governing Body by the S&G Committee.

M Peat offered 1:1 opportunities to members to go through the draft budget before the next meeting. Members to contact M Peat direct.

The Chair thanked C Reeves for his contributions to the Committee as it was his last meeting.

## 11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 5pm via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 19:00.