



MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 11 November 2021 at 1700hrs via Zoom.

Present:

Miss A Currie	Chair
Mr M Blanning	
Mr M Cook	GB Chair
Mr S Cook	Principal/CEO
Mr D Gagie	
Ms A Orhiere	

In attendance:	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

All members' interests are numbered and referenced on the Declaration of Interest log dated 28 September 2021. The register is kept by the Clerk.

2 Apologies for Absence

None were received.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021, Paper GBF&GP21/1070, were accepted as a true record and electronically signed by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising and Outstanding Matters Report

Members discussed Paper GBF&GP21/1071, the Outstanding Matters Report.

- No 1. Carbon Footprint plan - External Company Hillside have been engaged and are collating data. The Charter cannot be signed until the carbon footprint has been established. **Ongoing.**
- No 2. Estates Strategy Framework – BF next meeting – **Ongoing.**
- No 3. HR Annual Report 2020/21 - Members asked for further details on progress with staff recruitment and turnover. **Complete**
- No 4. Equal Pay Audit - further information possibly in the form of a Deep Dive at next meeting. **Ongoing.**
- No 5. All policies were approved at Governing Body for publication – **Complete.**
- No 6. AOB – request for key financial matrix to be pulled out of the management accounts with more detail available to highlight issues or trends. **Complete.**
- No 7. Management Accounts - Maintenance costs have improved and members asked for details of the repairs that took place under the grant. Details of the Capital spend were discussed and Governors were assured the College were compliant with the grant conditions. **Complete.**
- No 8. Management Accounts - future narrative for the management accounts are linked to the operational plans to stress the relevance. **Complete.**
- No 9. Management Accounts - Members were keen to understand further the reason for the MKCTS loan and gift aid. They welcomed a future discussion and asked M Peat present a solution. **Ongoing.**

5 Draft Management Accounts to the end of September 2021 - GBF&GP21/1072

Martin Peat introduced paper GBF&GP21/1072a, the MKC draft management accounts and the MKCTS draft management accounts to the end of September 2021.

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

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

6 Pay Award 2021/22 – Paper GBF&GP21/1073

Simon Cook, Principal, introduce the Pay Award paper and reminded members of the background and outline proposals for 2021/22.

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

Members thanked S Cook for the paper.

7 Digital Operational Plan (formerly the ICT Strategy) – Paper GBF&GP21/1074

Paul Hogben, Director of ICT and Angie Tithecott, Director of MIS, joined the meeting to present the operational plan which was formerly the ICT Strategy and they reported on progress against each of the four goals within the Plan with a presentation.

1. Student use of Digital Learning Technologies embedded across MidKent College – collaborative working with curriculum areas to see how the services can be improved. A pilot scheme is being conducted to trail other platforms to ensure the rights resources are in place. Analysis due in February 2022.
2. Greater Business Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Through Technology – looking at day to day practices with the HR Team to reduce paperwork and other efficiencies that can then be rolled out across the College.
3. MidKent College Staff have Levels of Digital Proficiency – establishing a base line to identify skills through a robust digital capacity tool. This can then inform the development of CPD priorities. Digital Champions are being sought to assist with this.
4. Full Digitisation of the Student Journey – digital monitoring is built into the Study Programmes. Technology is used to support students and develop their digital skills.

Governors thanked P Hogben and A Tithecott for the presentation and looked forward to an update in the future. They noted that the pilots schemes helped reduce costs to ensure the College gains a good understanding to inform the best used of money.

8 Deep Dive – Investment Strategy – Paper GBF&GP21/1075

Simon Cook reminded members that this paper had been presented to Governing Body on 4 November 2021 which gauged the appetite of the Board re investment. The Governing Body had asked Exec to confirm some points before moving forward:

1. Clarity on the entitlement to spend the cash.
2. What reserves are required?
3. Depreciation charge – what is it?
4. Appetite for debt

Executive have discussed these and felt that Governors needed to be better informed about money already invested such as ESports and T Levels as these directly impact students. Members were informed of other opportunities for income also being explored through bids.

Governors felt investment is also needed in the four aligning elements of the Strategic Pillars: environment; enterprise; digital and community and asked that these are considered before updating at the next Governing Body.

Members also asked for consideration of investing in MKCTS to work in partnership with the College. They are also keen to encourage investment proposals from departments to benefit student learning. They were informed that such proposals will be dealt with through the business planning process.

All agreed that any investment must benefit Students. Governors thanked S Cook for the update and looked forward to a further update and discussion at the December Governing Body meeting.

Action: S Cook

9 Policies for approval:

- Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2022/23 - GBF&GP21/1076 - Main changes are:
 - Revised payment options for instalments to meet compliance with consumer credit and also to give an option for loan students to ensure enrolment can take place prior to agreement of the loan.
 - The Government contribution table has been updated in accordance to their guidance.Members **approved** the policy for recommendation to the Governing Body.

- Apprenticeship Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2022/23 - GBF&GP21/1077 - Following a review there are no material changes from the previous year required or recommended. Members **approved** the policy for **recommendation** to the Governing Body.

- Treasury Policy 2022/23 - GBF&GP21/1078 - main changes are:
 - The financial grading of the approved banks has been updated.
 - A proposal to increase the length of investment from 18 to 24 months is being suggested to be able to access increased investment rates.
 - Updates to the management information have been made to ensure relevant information is supplied.

Members felt further debate and clarity is needed before this policy can be approved. They asked that M Peat works with the External Auditors to ensure Government policy and credit ratings are followed. This policy was **not approved** and will be brought back to the Committee for further scrutiny.

Action: M Peat

- Procurement Policy 2022/23 - GBF&GP21/1079 - main changes are:
 - Due to Brexit, compliance to the EU regulations have been deleted or updated as required.
 - A new section of sustainability has been included to define the policy for the climate action roadmap and the Colleges intention to move to more sustainable procurement.

Members **approved** the policy for **recommendation** to the Governing Body.

- Apprenticeship Policy - GBF&GP21/1080 – this new Policy has been written to:
 - Provide guidance to managers on appointing Apprentices consistently and paying them fairly.
 - To encourage managers to consider an Apprenticeship where appropriate for staff appointments.
 - To ensure a fair wage (NMW) is paid and MKC sets an example to other employers with regards to appointment of apprentices.
 - To offer Apprenticeships with security of long term employment through removing the fixed term contract for these roles and offering opportunity to move into permanent positions on completion.
 - To look for opportunities to use apprenticeships to train existing staff and draw down on the Levy

Members **approved** the policy for recommendation to the Governing Body.

Members **recommend** the **approved** policies the Governing Body on 16 December 2021.

Action: A Currie

Update from Standing Items:-

10 HR Update: Focus on Wellbeing – Paper GBF&GP21/1081

Chris Hare presented the paper on behalf of Julia Thompson. Members had requested and agreed that each update should focus on a specific aspect of HR and at this meeting Wellbeing was the main topic of the report. He reported that additional benefits and support introduced to support wellbeing – based around the following headings:

- Good Work
- Social Relations
- Lifestyle changes
- Family
- Communication

C Hare highlighted the following key points:

- Difficult to fill posts are affecting time to employ statistics.
- 'Covid effect' on turnover in first 12 months as labour market is fluid in some areas. This has also affected absence and wellbeing and there is a focus on the additional benefits above to support all staff.
- Turnover overall is positive as voluntary is down and non-voluntary is up as staffing issues are being addressed.
- Changes to the PDR approach have been positive. Regular pulse surveys will monitor to ensure individuals are still meeting with their managers.
- Reviewed HR MLPs
- HR team have received the Gold Healthy Workforce award from Medway Council and have improved from Bronze in three years.

Members congratulated the HR Team and thanked C Hare for the update.

11 Risk Register Review

Martin Peat ensured members that the financial risks are covered in the risk register and are monitored regularly. The full Risk Register is available to Governors on Board Intelligence. The commentary to the accounts highlighted any areas of risk directly related to the forecast and potential impact on future funding.

12 Any Other Business

The agenda for the meeting on 3 March 2022 was agreed.

ESFA Dashboard noted for information.

As this was his last Committee meeting, members thanked Michael Blanning for his service to the Committee and huge value to the Governing Body.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The Joint meeting of GR&A and F&GP Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 5pm on Zoom.

The next F&GP Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday 3 March 2022 at 5pm on Zoom.

The meeting closed at 19.25.