



**MidKent College**

**GOVERNING BODY**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 3 March 2022 at 1700hrs via Zoom.

**Present:**

Miss A Currie	Chair
Mr M Cook	GB Chair
Mr S Cook	Principal/CEO
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
Peter Marsh	Consultants for Estates item only
Mrs J Thompson	Item 9 only

**Observers:**

Mr N Baveystock

**1 Declarations of Interest**

Members' interests are numbered and referenced on the Declaration of Interest log dated **23 February 2022**. The register is kept and available from the Clerk.

**2 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Mr D Gagie.

**3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2022, Paper GBF&GP21/1082 and confidential minutes, were accepted as a true record and digitally signed by the Chair.

#### 4 Matters Arising and Outstanding Matters Report

Members discussed Paper GBF&GP21/1083, the Outstanding Matters Report.

- No 1. Carbon Footprint plan - External Company Hillside have been engaged. The Climate Charter cannot be signed until the carbon plan and a plan to get to net zero are completed - **Ongoing**
- No 2. Estates Strategy Framework – on agenda – **Ongoing**.
- No 3. Equal Pay Audit – included in item 9 – **Complete**.
- No 4. Draft Management Accounts to the end of September 2021 – still to be discussed – **Ongoing**.
- No 5. Pay Award 2021/22 – agreed at Governing Body – **Complete**.
- No 6. Deep Dive - Investment Strategy – on agenda – **Ongoing**.
- No 7. Policies for Approval – recommended to Governing Body – **Complete**.

Members asked for progress regarding the loan agreement with the subsidiary and were informed that Mazars have been asked to advise.

**Action: M Peat**

#### 5 Draft Management Accounts to the end of January 2022

Martin Peat introduced paper GBF&GP21/1084, the MKC draft management accounts and the MKCTS draft management accounts to the end of January 2022 and highlighted the key items.

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

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

#### 6 Estates Strategy – Paper GBF&GP21/1085

Martin Peat introduced the item and presented Peter Marsh Consultants appointed to assist the College in creating a new Estates Strategy, who joined the meeting to present their findings.

Peter Marsh Consultants had worked with the College over the last two months, collating significant data by speaking to managers and having access to all sites.

Members received a presentation from Peter Marsh, noting the space utilisation advice and options available. They agreed not to pursue additional properties but make the current campuses more efficient. Members also discussed possible future growth and requirements for the current space.

Members felt more work was required before they could decide on the options and asked the consultants to speak to the MKC Training Services and report next steps at the May meeting.

**Action: P Marsh**

The work will continue to finalise the strategy and final report.

Members thanked M Peat for the paper and Peter Marsh Consultants for their attendance.

## 7 Investment Strategy – Paper GBF&GP21/1086

Martin Peat introduced the item and members were asked to consider the way forward.

*This item was minuted as confidential* due to the nature of the content.

It was agreed a Task & Finish Group would be formed to take this forward and report back at the next meeting.

Members thanked M Peat for the information.

*Nick Baveystock left the meeting.*

## 8 Policy for approval: paper GBF&GP21/1087

Group Financial Regulations and Procedures 2022/23 – Last year the Financial Regulations were revised to take on the Group rather than College only regulations. The regulations have been reviewed by Finance and by the Commercial Director of the subsidiary. The Treasury Policy has been included in these regulations. The amendments proposed are shown in tracked changes to the document and the main changes are:

- Clarification on job titles and responsibilities
- Proposal to change the upper limits for purchasing approval in MKCTS, on page 21 of the regulations as agreed with the Chair of the Board to be more in line with the College limits and also to improve efficiency of approval with no loss of controls
- Changed from Barclaycard to Lloyds MasterCard and this is reflected in the regulations

Members **approved** the policy for publication with the following minor amendments:

- ‘Principal’ be changed to ‘CEO’ throughout the policy to reflect the Group.
- External Auditors can access Group records from the Medway campus.

Members also noted that the Treasury section may need to be amended in the future line with the Investment Strategy.

**Action: M Peat**

**Update from Standing Items:-****9 HR Update HR MLP Update - GBF&GP21/1088**

Julia Thompson joined the meeting and gave the following update:

MLPS update:

- Average lead time to recruit has increased – this is impacted upon by ongoing roles that are difficult to fill.
- Turnover is impacted by the difficult to fill vacancies which is reflected across the sector.
- Absence average days has increased, however, this is impacted upon by other factors such as Covid.
- Mandatory training for Data Protection has improved since reported, to 93.1%
- Completed inductions and exit interviews are both improved on last year.
- Power BI platform is soon to be launched where live data can be accessed.
- Staff Engagement – after consultation the College will be using focus groups and pulse surveys to drive engagement in termly topics.
- Learning & Development – bespoke training to meet needs and up-skill staff.

Members thanked J Thompson for the update but raised concerns regarding turnover. They were informed of work being carried out with Kent & Medway Chamber of Commerce to see how the organisations can work together. Members noted that Mandatory Training is a requirement of induction so all new staff have completed all the training, although there are some issues with refresher training.

- a) Deep Dive - Recruitment - GBF&GP21/1088a – following a request from the Committee for further information, J Thompson produced this deep dive report to explain the national picture and how MidKent College are approaching recruitment, selection, on boarding and retention. Members noted that KFE and local Universities are considering a shared approach to the sector shortage in certain areas.
- b) Deep Dive – Gender Pay - GBF&GP21/1088b – following a request from the Committee for further information, J Thompson produced this deep dive report which included the following update:
  - Gender Pay gaps are smaller when broken down into subsets according to contract type
  - Formal structured pay scales with clear policy parameters have a positive effect on reducing the pay gap between women and men
  - Further work still needs to be completed to maintain the reduction of the overall College pay gap
- c) Benefits Reward & Recognition Policy - GBF&GP21/1088c – **Approved**
  - Updated reward and recognition policy
  - Now includes benefits offered by the College

- Updated reward structure that will assist with recognising and rewarding achievements/ good work across all levels of the College including management.
- Improved access for an one to submit a nomination for recognition/ reward

Members suggested a letter from the Chair could be available.

**Action: J Thompson**

d) Volunteering Policy - GBF&GP21/1088d – **Approved.**

This policy sets out clear guidance to enable staff to volunteer in the community and the support they can expect from the College.

Employees who do volunteer work can:

- use the skills that they have developed at work to help the community;
- learn new skills including, for example, leadership qualities
- improve their morale, physical health and work-life balance.

e) Menopause Policy - GBF&GP21/1088e – **Approved.**

This is a previously misunderstood or ignored health issue. This policy raises awareness about the menopause and associated symptoms and the impact of the menopause on personal and work life. It also provides guidance to supporting staff going through the menopause and step by step guidance for managers to support staff going through the menopause.

f) Annual Leave Policy - GBF&GP21/1088f – **Approved.**

The proposed policy change increases the annual leave entitlements for Support Staff, detailed at section 5.4. It is proposed that this will be implemented on 1st September 2022.

The changes proposed are intended to:

- promote an effective work/ life balance
- increase the attractiveness of support roles for applicants
- aid staff retention
- promote MidKent College as an employer of choice

Members thanks J Thompson for the comprehensive report and **agreed** the policies for **recommendation** to the Governing Body.

**Action: A Currie**

**10 Progress on sustainability at MKC – Paper GBF&GP21/1089  
Sustainability Policy**

Martin Peat introduced the paper which informed the Committee of the progress on the sustainability agenda, works being undertaken and a number of

initiatives concurrently all taking place. Members noted the various projects and progress to date to meet the sustainability agenda.

The draft sustainability policy was created in collaboration with the project partners and although it provides many sources of information, not all are suited to MidKent College. Therefore, M Peat did not asking for approval but to note the content. A College Sustainability Committee has been set up and will be amending the policy to include specific actions and goals.

Members asked for more detail in a Deep dive at the next meeting.

**Action: M Peat**

Members thanked M Peat for the update and noted positive progress and key links with the Estate and Investment Strategies.

## **11 Risk Register Review**

Martin Peat ensured members that the financial risks are covered in the risk register which are monitored regularly and in the Management Accounts. 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**

M Peat informed members that the ESFA had confirmed the College had met all the conditions of the FE Capital Allocation Grant in accordance with the bid and no further action is required.

The Chair reminded members to complete the ETF Modules relevant to the Committee business.

Draft agenda for 9/5/22 – members agreed the Estates and Investment Strategies should report updates at this meeting.

**Action: M Peat**

## **13 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting has been moved to Monday 9 May 2022 at 5pm on Zoom.

The meeting closed at 19.23.