

CORPORATION BOARD of RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
Minutes of Finance and Resources Committee Meeting 16 March 2016 at 6pm

Members Present: Peter Llewellyn (Chair), Cathy Bird, Robin Ghurbhurun, Daniel Volovsek

In attendance: Clare Thornes (Clerk), Nanda Ratnavel, Alison de Lord

Apologies: Gergana Duff

A	Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Gergana Duff.</p>
2	<p>(i) Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items None.</p> <p>(ii) Requests for discussion of 'Grey box items' (which are For Information Only) Discussion of Item B6 – Fees and Charges – was requested.</p>
3	<p>(i) Approve Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on 21st October 2015</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>(ii) Any matters arising</p> <p>AP.C12 - Noted that the revision of the F&R Committee Terms of Reference is still in progress, and unlikely to be completed until the end of the academic year.</p> <p>AP.C11- RuTC's cloud servers are located in Europe.</p>

B	Finances
1	<p>College Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>NR drew members' attention to Rows V and Z.</p> <p>Row V shows the forecasted year end deficit of £449,000 and Row Z shows the current ratio of -0.08. The negative ratio is due to the operating cash balance being negative at the end of January 2016. The ratio and number of cash days in hand will continue to be negative for the next three months until funds are replenished.</p> <p>The next iteration of the KPI document will only have columns for Budget outturn, the current month and previous month. Governors also requested TOTAL learning numbers (at Row Q), ie</p>

	including adults and special provision.
2	<p>Finance Report</p> <p>Finance Report to 31st January 2016 See Confidential minutes</p>
3	<p>Financial Recovery Plan</p> <p>Please see Confidential Minutes.</p>
4	<p>Bridging Loan <i>(A paper 'Bridging Loan to cover redevelopment costs' was circulated in advance)</i> See Confidential minutes</p>
5	<p>Report on Contract Approvals <i>(A paper 'Contract Approvals' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>There were no comments on the contract approvals, save that the Principal noted that Contracts between £50,000 and £150,000 can be approved by either the Deputy Principal or the Principal.</p> <p>Ratify the interim authorisation of contracts <i>(A paper 'Report on written resolutions and authorisations made by the Finance and Resources Committee Sept 2015-March 2016' was circulated in advance).</i></p> <p>Members RATIFIED the three approvals that were set out in that paper, ie.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Contract with Bisley Contracting Limited (approved 11 November 2015) ii. Contract with Erith Contractors Limited (approved 25 January 2015) iii. Short term borrowing of £750,000 (approved 17 February 2015)
6	<p>Report on Student Fees and Charges <i>(A paper 'Fees and Charges 2016/17' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>Members noted and agreed the proposed fees and charges</p> <p>AGREED: Members agreed to recommend the fees and charges proposed for 2016/17 to the Corporation for approval, and also to delegate authority to the Deputy Principal / Head of Finance to agree any further changes to the fees and charges.</p> <p>Members asked how Apprenticeship charges will be fixed? RG stated that college will not offer discounts on apprenticeships, and will endeavour to keep fees level on the basis of a quality offer. However, competitors are likely to undercut fees, and it could become a cut-throat market.</p> <p>Action: In the future, please can the Fees and Charges paper set out current / predicted students numbers, to provide some context.</p>

C	Human Resources
1	<p>Human Resources Development Plan <i>(The 'Human Resources & Organisational Development Plan 2015-16' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The Plan has been developed to map the original version to the College Annual Plan. AdL ran through the six objectives – progress is as expected. In relation to Objective 3, she noted that although the payroll system has been outsourced, the service was so poor that the HR department spent considerable admin time 'managing' it. The new system will save significant resource.</p> <p><i>Q: Will other departments map their annual plans against the College Annual Plan?</i> Not necessarily. The HR plan aligns well with the CAP, as one of the six ambitions is 'Staff'. This isn't so readily obvious for a department such as Marketing.</p>
2	<p>Staff Survey <i>(The 'Mid-Year Staff Survey Report March 2016' was tabled and the Interim Report (October 2015) was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The response rate was 50%, which was better than previous surveys, but with room for improvement. A good response rate would be 65%. It was clear that some departments were not encouraging staff to complete the survey, and AdL will be chasing this. The response level from teachers was poor.</p> <p>AdL expressed disappointment at the response to the statement 'Communications within this organisation are good', as a lot of work has been done on internal communications. However, the response was an improvement on the 2014 response.</p> <p>The response to 'I feel confident about the future of the organisation' was slightly more negative than last year. This is probably a response to the forthcoming area review.</p> <p>The response to the remaining questions was positive compared to previous surveys (particularly 'Staff briefed fully and honestly about major issues'). Page 7 shows that Lecturers are the least happy of all staff.</p> <p>A member noted that the City of Westminster College have improved response rates by applying a 'gateway' to encourage completion of surveys – after logging on, staff cannot get to their email unless they complete the survey.</p>
3	<p>Equality and Diversity <i>(the College 'Equality Statement' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AdL reported that consultant Dereck had delivered E&D Workshops to staff and helped to set up the E&D Working Group. This is Chaired by Robin and includes 8 others. In addition, three equality ambassadors have been appointed, who are being supported to look at specific themes (LGBT, Race and Class/poverty/care). College's approach in E&D is quite progressive.</p> <p>Action: E&D Group to report to Corporation on 6th July on its activities.</p>

D	Health and Safety
1	<p>Health and Safety <i>(The 'Update on Health and Safety' was circulated in advance, and a revised version was tabled at the meeting)</i></p> <p>Some points from the report:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The H&S Committee meets next week; Unison representatives already attend and UCU rep has been invited. • Further OLAS (one-line learning resource) will be added to the existing portfolio, including a Prevent module • Counselling support for staff is being introduced (it currently only exists around redundancy). • 10.1 – the building was evacuated in eight minutes following the unannounced drill. <p><i>Q: In view of the number of unwanted fire alarm activations, have we considered using a two-stage alarm (ie. rings intermittently for 3 minutes, then either turns off or changes to a solid tone).</i></p> <p>As the fire bell system is quite old, this is unlikely to be technically possible</p> <p>Action: Check with ECT</p>

E	IT
1	<p>Report on implementation of the IT Strategy <i>(The 'Information Technology Update' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The new IT Director, Garod Barker, has been analysing the shortfalls of the system (following Migliori's failure to fulfil their project aims); the update paper sets out his proposed actions.</p>

F	Other
1	<p>Any other business</p> <p>PL raised the issue of Benchmarking against other colleges (<i>FE Commissioner Report Recommendation: Adopt Benchmark indicators on performance of college against other colleges on a range of costs/measures</i>). RG suggested that of the other colleges, RuTC probably needs to compare itself to colleges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a turnover of £15-20 million • In Greater London, Manchester and Birmingham • With colleges that appeared in the recent survey where RuTC was the top academic college in London.

	<p>It was noted that 2014/15 data will be published in May 2016.</p> <p>Action: Benchmarking exercise to be carried out and presented to next F&R Committee on 22nd June.</p>
2	<p>Future Finance and Resources Committee Meetings:</p> <p>Wednesday 22 June 2016</p> <p>The meeting finished at 7.55pm</p>

Signed Date:
Cathy Bird, Chair of Governors

Ref	Agenda Item	Task	Responsible
A	B2	Future Finance reports to distinguish between restricted and unrestricted funds, and reinstate the cash graph.	NR
B	B3	Financial Recovery Plan (i) distribute the KPIs to the F&R Committee prior to providing them to the SFA; and (ii) add 'Financial Recovery Plan Monitoring' as a standing agenda item.	(i) NR (ii) CT
C	B3	AdL to circulate 'context' paper to committee members	AdL
D	B6	Fees and Charges Paper – in the future, add current or predicted student numbers, to provide some context	NR/ JM
E	C3	E&D Group to report to the Corporation Meeting on 6 th July on activities / progress to date	AdL > Theresa Bray
F	D1	Check whether the fire alarm system can be changed to a two-stage alarm	RG / ECT
G	F1	Carry out Benchmarking exercise (<i>FE Commissioner Report: Adopt Benchmark indicators on performance of college against other colleges on a range of costs/measures</i>), with data to be published in May, for presentation to F&R in June.	NR