



**FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
CONFIRMED MINUTES**

Date: 15 March 2023

Venue: New Boardroom City Campus

Clerk to the Corporation
Granville Road
Sheffield, S2 2RL
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Present: Stephan Hollingshead (Chair)
Holly Anderson, staff governor
Peter Brooks, governor (via Zoom videoconference disrupted 08.45-08.50)
Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive and Principal and governor
David MacDougall, governor (from 08.45)
John Mothersole, Chair of Governors

In attendance: Matt Ainsworth, member of Estates Working Group for first item (08.30 - 09.05)
Andrew Hartley, Executive Director Commercial and Operations
Martin Harrison, Executive Director Finance
Alison Shillito, Governance Advisor and Clerk to the Governing Body
Paul Simpson, Executive Director People
Beth Smith, Executive Assistant (note taker)

Action
by whom **by when**

23/1/1 Welcome, introduction and apologies

1.1 The Chair of FEGP welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from student governors Amaan Saqlain and Chris Vallance. The Chair asked the Clerk to clarify if the Chair of TLQSE intended to take up the offer of an ex-officio role on the committee.

ACTION: confirm ex-officio membership Clerk 31/3/23

1.2 The Chair welcomed Matt Ainsworth to the meeting. Matt was attending as a member of the Estates Working Group to contribute to the discussion of the Estates Strategic Developments item. The chair agreed to adjust the agenda order to take that item first. The meeting was quorate.

23/1/2 Declaration of interest

2.1 The committee noted the following standing interests.

- John Mothersole amplified the declaration that his son works for Turner & Townsend who are retained by the college to advise on capital developments. The committee agreed that no action was required in respect of this declaration.

- Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive and Principal (CEP) as a director of college subsidiary companies would not be eligible to vote in any resolution concerning the companies.
- Holly Anderson, staff governor, as a member of college staff would be subject to the People policies. Under Instrument 11(4)(b) it was noted that as long as Holly did not seek to represent the interests of any other person or body and acted in the best interests of the college then she was permitted to take part in discussions and voting on staffing policies.

23/1/3 Commercial & Business Development update: Estates Strategy update

3.1 The Executive Director Commercial and Operations (EDCO) introduced a strictly confidential report which included progress on planning for new and upgraded facilities and other developments to implement the approved Estates Strategy. This report had been developed in consultation with the Estates Strategy Working Group, whose members had been invited to the committee to contribute to the discussion. Some of the discussion is recorded in a separate confidential minute for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

3.7 International development

The committee supported the proposal that the college should apply for a Tier 4 student sponsor licence to support recruitment of overseas students to courses that are longer than 12 months in duration.

23/1/4 Minutes of the last meeting

4.1 The committee confirmed the minutes of the meetings on 23 November 2022 including those of the FEGP meeting and the minutes of the joint meeting with ARAC.

23/1/5 Matters Arising & Action Record

5.1 The committee considered progress on ongoing actions not otherwise included on the agenda as follows.

5.2 The committee received the Action Record, agreed that it included the matters arising from the last meeting and approved removal of the completed actions.

23/1/6 People Report 2022-23

6.1 The Executive Director of People (EDP) introduced the report, which provided an in-year update for the second quarter of 2022-23 on the implementation of the People policies and performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The EDP gave an update on pay negotiations with recognised trade unions since the report had been written.

6.2 The committee received the report and commented as follows.

Pulse survey, staff were reporting variations in the frequency of team meetings and one-to-one meetings. Members asked if the college set expectations for these meetings. The EDP said that the curriculum improvement strategy included weekly team meetings for curriculum staff. There was no set frequency for Professional Services team meetings. Regarding one-to-one meetings, the changes to curriculum management

structures were intended to ensure managers had a manageable number of reports to maintain a regular schedule of one-to-one meetings but vacancies had meant that this had not yet been achieved in all areas. As a result of the pulse survey, the Executive Leadership Team would be setting expectations more clearly.

Survey response rate the EDP said that the profile of survey respondents corresponded to that of the overall staff population and at around 25% gave confidence in the findings. Members commented that the percentage of respondents who identified as disabled or as having a long-term health condition seemed high at over 17%. The EDP said that this was a self-defining category covering all health and mental health issues and reflected rates in other self-reporting.

The committee noted the assurance provided that the college was actively following up the issues in the last engagement survey and acting on the findings to improve communication. Members looked forward to receiving an update on the implementation and impact of actions.

23/1/7 People Policy Reviews

7.1 The EDP presented four updated policies for review and approval by the committee. The rationale for the review was to simplify the language used, make policies more accessible to staff and embed FREDIE+ values. Appeals had previously been referenced in several different policies and the new Appeals Policy brought relevant information together in one policy.

7.2 The committee considered the updated policies and the main issues discussed were as follows.

Appeal Policy – this was a welcome simplification and consolidation of the college’s approach to resolving appeals. There were some minor typographic inconsistencies but otherwise the new policy was significantly clearer.

Grievance Policy – the commissioning manager approach simplified the number of touch points. The emphasis on informal resolution was welcomed. It should be clarified that a commissioning manager could not decide a case that they had already tried to resolve informally. The key to effective implementation of this policy would be to provide managers with conflict resolution training.

Sickness Policy – the committee had previously commented on the staff absence rate and welcomed that the revised policy set out a more proactive approach in supporting people back to work. Members supported the changes to the definition of long-term absence and revised trigger points for action to address absence. Members recommended that references to calendar days or working days be made consistent for clarity.

Disciplinary Policy – as for the Grievance Policy, the committee supported the commissioning manager approach.

7.3 The committee received the reviews, thanked the interim Head of People Experience for their work on the policies and approved the revised Appeal Policy, Grievance Policy, Sickness Policy and Disciplinary Policy subject to the comments made in the meeting.

ACTION Members to send any typographical issues to the Clerk to correct. FEGP 23/3/23

23/1/8 Finance Report

- 8.1 The EDF presented the report on the college's financial position at the end of the second quarter and the main points discussed were as follows.

Impact of ONS reclassification on maturing loan, the college had loans maturing in 2023. The college had made an application to the Department for Education to be permitted to roll the loans forward with the current providers. There were also some changes to the terms of one loan which required DfE approval. Renewing the loans would enable the college to focus cash reserves on capital developments. Should DfE not approve the application, the college could pay off the maturing loan but this would put at risk delivering plans for key capital developments for construction provision and sixth form.

Wider implications of reclassification, members asked if there were any positive impacts from reclassifications such as having the same VAT treatment as academies. The EDF said that no changes had been announced. The Department for Education (DfE) had said it would publish a Colleges Financial Handbook in April 2024. The wider implications of reclassification would take more time to work through although there were already models of different approaches to public sector colleges in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Devolution of adult education budget was also a factor in Sheffield.

Lennartz case, there had been no developments since the last meeting. The case had originally been taken by a group of colleges and it might be useful to establish with other group members if there was scope for further action on the judgment. For the monies received, the committee would need to decide when and how to recognise the amount paid under protective assessment.

Management accounts at period 6 showed there was still some savings to make in order to address the decrease in income and increase in pay costs.

- 8.2 The committee received the report and agreed the following.

ACTIONS

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| a) in future finance updates, include as standard current values of the bank loans | EDF | 28/6/23 |
| b) it would be useful for Governing Body to have a strategic update on the wider impacts of reclassification once the current consultations are completed over the next 3-6 months. | EDF/
CEP | Sept 23 |
| c) report back with recommendations for further action on the monies received under a protective assessment, the amount still subject to dispute and what options the college has for recovery | EDF | 28/6/23 |
| d) Chair and EDF to meet to review management accounts in detail | EDF | 30/4/23 |

23/1/9 Finance policy reviews

- 9.1 The EDF presented a review of the policies. The Financial Regulations had been updated to take account of statutory guidance on Managing Public Money. The other policy reviews were part of the regular cycle of annual or periodic review.

9.2 The committee received the updated policies and recommended approval to Governing Body of

- Financial Regulations 2022-23
- Tuition Fee Policy 2023-24
- Staff Travel & Subsistence Policy
- Governor Expenses Policy

23/1/10 Health & Safety report

10.1 The EDCO introduced the Health and Safety update including progress on completing actions from the 2022 Fire Risk Assessment and updates on:

- RIDDOR incidents in the second quarter of 2022-23,
- The college receiving a merit grading under the British Safety Council awards scheme
- Health and Safety training and development including a highly successful Health and Safety Stand-down exercise for College Leadership Team. This would be offered to all staff as part of upcoming staff development days.

10.2 The committee welcomed that most of the actions from the Fire Risk Assessment had been completed and asked about completion of the Fire Door inspection programme. The EDCO said that this was part of planned maintenance as it could be minor damage to a door. The committee said that they expected to see a protocol in place for regular inspection and reporting of maintenance issues with fire doors.

10.3 Commenting on recent incidents, the committee welcomed that there were routine reviews of incidents and near misses. The EDCO reported that as a result of a car accidentally crashing into the nursery wall, the college would be installing bollards in front of the nursery.

The committee received the report, welcomed the assurance and requested the following.

ACTIONS: reassurance that all Fire Risk Assessment actions were completed including a protocol for maintaining fire doors.

23/1/11 Review of meeting

Members commented that there remained a lot of questions about the impact of reclassification on the longer term finances of the college and the responsibilities of governors. It would be useful to understand the issues, threats and opportunities on which the sector as a whole was campaigning.

23/1/12 Date and time of next meeting

28 June 2023 at 0830-10.30 in the New Boardroom City Campus