

B O S T O N C O L L E G E

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2015

1. PRESENT

Mr S McCracken (Chair), Mr P Cropley and Mr M Gallagher

Also in attendance: Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Mrs F Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality), Mr T Tharby (Director of Workforce Development) and Ms D Holland (College Accountant).

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Mosek and Mr P Scarlett

Attendance: 60%

2. ACTION LOG

Steve McCracken brought Members attention to the Action Log from the 17 November 2014 meeting. It was noted that there were no issues outstanding.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2014

Members received a copy of the Minutes from the meeting held on 17 November 2014 and agreed that they were an accurate record.

There were two Matters Arising;

Firstly, Peter Cropley sought clarification regarding the item concerning 'Trade Creditors' (page 5, 4th paragraph). Janet Hemmant confirmed that the issue had been a timing issue and was not down to a change in accounting practices.

Secondly, Peter Cropley referred to the item 'Rents Received' (page 5, paragraph 5) and again Janet Hemmant confirmed that the item was 'Rents Receivable' and that the difference in the figures was due to a mismatch of accruals.

Steve McCracken enquired what the rent was per square metre at RLQ and as Janet Hemmant did not have that information to hand asked that she find out and advise the Committee accordingly.

Steve asked for an update on how things were progressing with the Sage Restaurant. Janet advised that the agreement is in the process of being completed and the rent arrangement will not now be on a profit share basis but rather a 9% of turnover with the first year free of charge. This has been agreed with the tenant. They are currently recruiting staff and are aiming to be open before Easter.

Steve asked for an update on the bids which had been submitted to the Greater Lincolnshire LEP.

With regard to Shodfriars Hall Janet said that there had been no feedback received to date however a meeting had now taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund when two possible funding streams were discussed. The Heritage Lottery people were

positive about the project although their likely timescales were disappointing. Another meeting is to be arranged with them when more detail has been worked up. A possible European bid is also being followed up.

Members were referred to an email Amanda had received from Lincolnshire County Council, in response to her email to Ursula Lidbetter from the LEP, on behalf of the Board expressing dismay to learn that the College's EMAT bid had been unsuccessful and requesting formal feedback. The content of the email gave some feedback as to why the bid had been unsuccessful and a suggestion was made that the EMAT centre proposal should be shared with the LCC funding team for consideration under alternative funding streams. Steve said that this matter needed to be taken up with the LEP board. It is considered paramount that a dialogue with LEP helps them understand the College's needs. Mick Gallagher questioned why educational provision gets mixed up with transport/roads needs. Members suggested that a meeting be arranged for Peter and Amanda with Ursula to try and find a way forward so the importance of investment in the College could be understood.

4. **FINANCE**

Members received a Finance report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services. Members reviewed the Management accounts for the period ended 31 December 2014. Concerns were raised with regard to ongoing issues within Catering income and expenditure. Fiona Grady said that the College was looking at the staff:student ratio and steps which will have to be taken to improve efficiency. Steve requested that a report be provided at the next meeting on the way forward.

A discussion took place about debt management. Janet explained that debt collection is challenging due to a number of factors including the volume of fees now being collected and the complexity of grants systems.

Members sought clarification on a number of lines within the budget and Janet addressed these.

5. **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Members received a Human Resources report from the Director of Workforce Development with an additional paper on staff utilisation from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality.

Steve explained that the report had been presented to the meeting today under the new agreed arrangements for the Finance and Resources Committee and a report will be presented at alternate meetings.

Members were asked to review progress to date and note actions taken to improve sickness absence, reduce costs and improve recruitment.

Keith summarised the actions taken to reduce levels of sickness and absence namely, services of the counselling team to support staff with work related issues, provision of monthly absence reports to all managers and regular meetings with their lead HR contact to discuss actions required, prompt referral to Occupational Health, provision of phased return to work for staff who have been on long term absence and the continued Westfield Health benefit scheme which is being well used by staff.

With regards to savings made with recruitment costs, this had been possible via a number of initiatives such as, a successful jobs fair which will be repeated again in April, two successful bids for Maths graduates, website improvement making it easier for people to apply for posts, improved links with universities and in particular Lincoln University and the effective use of different on-line job boards and selective use of print media.

Fiona gave an overview of the staff utilisation report data and explained how the data had been compiled. The overall rate is currently 99% with a total of 720 lost class contact hours, an average 4 hours per full time equivalent teacher per annum. This is a significant improvement on the 2013-14 utilisation rate which was 93%.

6. PROPERTY

Peter Cropley and Janet Hemmant gave feedback from the meeting they had attended with the landlord of the Skegness property to look at possible resolutions of the lease.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The content of a letter regarding transport provision for students from the Spalding area to their 'nearest college' were read out and discussed. Members agreed that the content of this letter needed publicising.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 20 April 2015.