



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

Date: 22 November 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
Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive and Principal and governor
Talia Logan, student governor
David MacDougall, governor
John Mothersole, Chair of Governors (via video-conference)

In attendance: Rob Barnett, Internal Audit Partner RSM
Ian Falconer, Chair of ARAC (Observer)
Martin Harrison, Executive Director Finance
Andrew Hartley, Executive Director Commercial and Operations
Anne-Marie Holdsworth, Director of Governance
Robert Knowles, Internal Audit Manager RSM
Emma Lake, Executive Assistant (note-taker)
Stuart McKay, External Auditor, Audit Partner MacIntyre Hudson
Paul Senior, member of ARAC (Observer)
Alison Shillito, Governance Advisor and Clerk to Governing Body
Paul Simpson, Executive Director People

Action

by whom by when

23/4/1 Welcome, introduction and apologies

- 1.1 The meeting started at 08.30am and was quorate.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed to their first meeting of FEGP Talia Logan, a new student governor and member of FEGP, and Anne-Marie Holdsworth, the college's new Director of Governance. The Chair also welcomed observers who were the chair and a member of ARAC; External Audit Partner; Internal Audit Partner and Internal Audit Manager.

23/4/2 Declaration of interest

- 2.1 The committee noted the following standing interests.
 - 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 Head of Marketing in relation to the marketing report. This was an assurance report and did not require a vote, so no action was required in relation to the declaration.

23/4/3 Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 The committee confirmed the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting on 20 September 2023.

23/4/4 Matters Arising & Action Record

- 4.1 The committee received the Action Record. The committee confirmed they were satisfied that all matters arising were included either on the agenda or on the Action Record. The Clerk commented on actions still in progress as follows

Minute 23/3/5.2: People KPI 2023-24: proposed indicators were included in the People Report and it was agreed that this action be closed.

Minute 23/3/6.3: Fire Risk Assessment: the health and safety report provided the additional information requested and reassurance that actions due by 30 November would be completed on time. It was agreed that this action be closed. Reporting on completion of other actions was already included in the FEGP workplan regular health and safety reporting.

Minute 23/3/11.7 Environment Sustainability the deadline for circulating a carbon literacy module to governors was extended to the next Governor Strategy Event 17 January 2024 in preparation for a discussion about the college environmental action plan.

The Committee approved the removal of completed actions and noted the revised deadline to complete one outstanding action.

David MacDougall joined the meeting at 08.40.

23/4/5 People Report

- 5.1 The Executive Director People (EDP) introduced the report, which provided the committee with an in-year update for the first quarter of 2023-24 and highlighted the proposed key performance indicators for monitoring the People Strategy.
- 5.2 The committee received the report and commented as follows.

Team meetings and 1:1s following up feedback in the 2023 employee engagement survey, a member asked if managers were ensuring that they had regular 1:1 and team meetings with their staff. The EDP said that 1:1 meetings at this time of year would be for Go Further Reviews (GFR). The number of GFR meetings recorded on the iTrent system was below the number expected and this was being followed up in performance review. There was work to do to make it easier to record GFR meetings.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), the committee welcomed the increase in the number of job applications being received from people from minority ethnic backgrounds but noted that they were less likely to be shortlisted for

roles than white applicants. The EDP said that the People Team had yet look in detail at the reasons for the difference, but the college used anonymized shortlisting procedures which made it more likely that the difference related to specific issues in the application. For those applications that were shortlisted, there was no difference between ethnic groups in the rate of successful appointments. The People Team would be doing further analysis to understand the reasons for the lower shortlisting rate for some groups to see if there were common features that might explain the difference or if some roles were more affected than others t.

- 5.3 The committee noted the progress in the priority areas and approved the KPI measures proposed for 2023-24.

23/4/6 Health & Safety report

- 6.1 The EDP introduced the report which provided information on the following:
- **In-year update** on incidents in the first quarter of 2023-24, with comparator data for 2019 - 2023
 - **Major Incident Procedure:** update on first use of the new policy when Hillsborough Campus was affected by a fire nearby
 - **Fire Risk Assessment actions** - progress on completing the actions from the Fire Risk Assessment completed May 2023. Two actions remained to be completed by end of November 2023.
- 6.2 The committee received the report and members received assurance that the college was taking appropriate action to provide a safe working/learning environment for staff and students. The committee were reassured that two medium priority actions from the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) were on to track to be completed by the due date, 30 November.

23/4/7 Commercial and Business Development: Marketing update

- 7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director Commercial and Operations (DCE) presented an annual update on the college's marketing activity and plan for supporting recruitment, internal communications, college reputation and celebration events. Members considered the report and welcomed the additional data provided on the effectiveness of marketing interactions.
- 7.2 The committee received the report and congratulated the team on the coverage and high quality of its work.

23/4/8 Estates and sustainability update

- 8.1 The DCE introduced the report which covered the following:
- **Estates Strategic Developments** including progress on planning for future use of Peaks, a new Construction Centre, upgrades to Olive Grove (Advanced Technology Centre) and 6th form centre
 - **Other Estates Matters** including the survey report on the cladding system of the Tower at City Campus (TSC's only "high rise" building. We are currently awaiting feedback from the insurer on the findings

- **Environmental sustainability update** – the benchmarking including in the Carbon Reporting internal audit review (requested by GB) has been circulated. The college is sitting in the middle of the benchmark group of colleges and compared to University of Sheffield’s score. The ELT has agreed an action plan and will be launching this to staff at the December Staff Development event. It will be shared with governors at the Governing Body Strategy Event in January 2024.

8.2 The committee considered the report and the main issues discussed were

Estates Development Strategy, members asked whether, if successful with regard to the proposed site for the Construction Centre at Sidney Street, it would retain its open space. The DCE provided assurance that it would.

Members were also concerned about having previously been out-bid in attempting to acquire new sites and asked whether consideration had been given to increasing TSC’s bid. The CEP said careful consideration would be given but the college didn’t want to get into a bidding war if they were only to be used to attract other developers to offer a higher value still. The college’s priority in determining whether to bid primarily related to the viability of the land to meet the requirements of the project. The CEP assured the committee that the local authority were supportive of the possibility of use of the site for the college’s requirements.

Other Estates Matters, the committee noted the survey information regarding cladding of the Tower at City Campus. They agreed for the current action to be closed regarding acquiring an expert opinion on the risk or otherwise of fire due to the nature of the cladding. However, they requested that a new action be opened for follow-up with TSC’s insurers for confirmation on whether the college was adequately insured on the basis of the report.

8.3 The committee received the report, noted the assurance on progress in respect of estates and environmental sustainability matters.

ACTION recommend that ARA open an action to gain appropriate assurance regarding the college’s insurance position given the report on cladding of the Tower at City Campus

Chair
ARA 20.03.24

23/4/9 Finance Report

9.1 The Executive Director Finance (EDF) presented the report on the college’s financial position at the end of the first quarter of 2023-24 and the main points discussed were as follows.

- **Pensions Statement** – the EDF provided information about the LGPS fund being valued as in surplus and the proposal for handling this in the accounts
- **Students’ Union accounts** - the EDF provided accounts information for 2022-23. FEGP were assured by the statement of expenditure
- **Subsidiary company reports** – the EDF provided reports for note. FEGP considered the proposal to make Sparks Solutions Ltd dormant following the transfer of the last staff from the company to college

employment shortly. It was noted that since ONS Reclassification in November 2022, colleges were unable to create new companies without prior Treasury approval via Department for Education (DfE). It is a vehicle available for the directors to use in future. It would not be costly to retain the company on a dormant basis and the company had no contingent liabilities that might make it unattractive to use for future trading activities.

On behalf of the college (the company's sole shareholder), FEGP advised the Board of Directors that it would be useful for the college to retain a registered company limited by shares in case the college needed a corporate vehicle for future trading activities outside the college's charitable object. The committee asked the Board of Directors of Sparks Solutions Ltd to have regard to this use when considering the future of the company after transfer of staff had been completed.

- **ESFA Finance Record 2022-23** – it was noted that the college had received the ESFA template as the report was being written. It was agreed that the EDF would complete the ESFA Finance Record and present it to GB for approval on 13 December 2023.
- **Waiver of the procurement rules** – the committee noted that the EDF had agreed to waive the “three quotes” rule to appoint a market research company with experience of conducting student destination surveys. It was noted that managers had obtained two competing quotes and had consulted the Chair of FEGP before approving the waiver due to the difficulty of identifying a third provider of this specialist service.
- **Modern Slavery compliance update and Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2022-23** – the committee received the update and the statement. It was noted that the college was making expected progress on improvement actions recommended in the Internal Audit Report. The GAC confirmed that the Modern Slavery training circulated to managers had also been circulated to governors, as requested by FEGP. The committee recommended approval to GB of the Modern Slavery Annual Statement 2022-23.
- **ESFA Health Scores** rate the college as outstanding for its forecast outturn 2022-23 and good for its Financial Plan 23-24 (Dashboard now available and uploaded to TeamEngine).
- **Delegated Authority Matrix** – the EDF provided a summary of GB delegations drawn from financial regulations, standing orders and committee terms of reference to aid managers in determining appropriate approval routes. The update included changes to committee terms of reference to approve more policy changes and ONS Reclassification requirements for certain matters to be referred to Department for Education or His Majesty's Treasury for approval.
- **College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR)** - grade for 22/23 is outstanding.

8.2 The committee received the report and:

- recommended approval to GB of the Modern Slavery statement 2022-2023
- approved updates to the Delegated Authority Matrix
- discussed the going concern status of Sparks Solutions Ltd and recommended to the Board of Directors to keep Sparks Solutions Ltd open on the basis it had no liabilities, it would not be costly to maintain a dormant company and it would be more difficult for the college to incorporate a trading subsidiary company in future, should one be required.

23/4/9 Review of meeting

9.1 Members said that it had been an efficient meeting and it was pleasing to see the progress being made along with the quality of reports provided. It was commented that college managers had a high number of concurrent capital projects in progress.

ACTION: in the Estates Capital Projects report, update report to show due dates for expenditure and the expected profile to assist members in monitoring progress against the final due date.

EDF 13/12/23

23/4/10 Date and time of next meeting

13 March 2024 at 0830-10.30 in the New Boardroom City Campus

26 June 2024 at 0830-10.30 in the New Boardroom City Campus

23/4/11 The members of FEGP were joined by members of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and reconvened in joint session to receive the report of the External Auditor and consider the draft Members' Report and Financial Statements for 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023. The minutes are recorded in the minutes of the ARAC meeting on 22 November 2023.