



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Held on Thursday 29th November 2007 at 4:30pm in the Boardroom, Lakes College

PRESENT: Joe Halliday, Damian McSweeney, Cath Richardson, Neil Smart, Bill Southward and Mike Davidson (from 10/07)

APOLOGY: Clare Gray

IN ATTENDANCE: Karen Wilson (Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Joan Bayliff (Personnel Manager) and Hilary Hemm (Clerk to the Governors)

The Committee welcomed Damian McSweeney as a new member of the Committee

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

01/07. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2007.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

02/07. MINUTES OF JOINT STAFF NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE 14 MAY 2007

The Personnel Manager reported that the policies referred to in these minutes had been endorsed and were now in use. The Committee raised the issue of smoking on site. It was reported that compliance with the total on-site ban had generally been good. There was regular monitoring of the situation.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Minutes be noted.

03/07. EVALUATION REPORT OT STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 2006/07

The Personnel Manager took the committee through the main points of the report, highlighting the Ofsted report comments from December 2006 that there were well planned and extensive staff development opportunities and closely aligned strategic and quality improvement plans. The contributions of staff development to continued improvement with quality of provision had led to a move from grade 3 to grade 2 (good). Collaborative working and initiatives had been outstanding.

The committee sought reassurance that not only was staff development enabling staff to do their job better, but also that it ensured that the College was complying with all legal requirements. It was agreed that a template of legislative requirements should be drawn up to monitor compliance and that this should be reviewed at each annual report. This may link to a compliance matrix for governance drawn up by the clerk.

The Committee also requested that for training statistics, numbers should be recorded not only of those attending training but also of numbers who required the training, in order that achievement could be measured. It was agreed that this would be incorporated in the report for next year.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted.

04/07. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2007/08

The Personnel Manager highlighted the priorities for the year as set out in the report, noted that they are ongoing and that they linked to the College strategic objectives for the year.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted.

05/07. REPORT ON NEW FE WORKFORCE REGULATIONS

The Personnel Manager explained that new FE regulations came into force in July 2007. A number of areas still required clarification but the impact, requirements and implementation of the changes were set out in her report. Most teaching staff would now have "Full Teacher" status and require a Certificate of Education or equivalent. All staff were required to register with the Institute for Learning by 31 March 2008 and arrangements to assist staff to comply were in hand. The Committee raised the possibility of the College providing a PGCE course. This would be considered. It was important to ensure that there were adequate mechanisms and staffing in place for this to happen.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted.

06/07. EMPLOYERS SKILLS PLEDGE

The Personnel Manager reminded the Committee that the Pledge had been signed by the Principal on behalf of the College at the recent Kendal Collaboration event. It was important for the College to make a commitment to invest in the improvement of skills of all college staff. There were currently 6 staff required to reach Level 2 qualification. She also noted that the College was to be reassessed for Investors in People status in June 2008 and that a member of this Committee together with the Chair of Corporation would be involved in that process.

RESOLVED that the College commitment to the Skills Pledge be endorsed.

07/07. REVISED GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR STAFF

The Personnel Manager informed the Committee that this procedure had been reviewed in accordance with new legislation. As part of collaborative working, the procedures at other Cumbrian colleges had been compared and the colleges were working towards "normalisation" of procedures.

RESOLVED that the Procedure be endorsed.

08/07 GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY FOR SENIOR POST- HOLDERS

The Personnel Manager reported that these new policies had been developed in line with AoC guidance, with minor alterations having been made in order to bring them into line with Lakes College policies and the Instruments and Articles. As new legislation means the Instruments and Articles may be changed early in 2008, some consequential alterations may then be required.

RESOLVED that the Procedures be endorsed.

09/07. HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT

The Personnel Manager presented her Annual Report. There had been many good achievements during a period of great change. Modernising pay should give a career structure which both retained and attracted staff. The Performance Review was in the first stages of implementation and was the key to raising performance in order to attain a grade 1 evaluation. There were still issues with absenteeism and there had been a slight increase in staff turnover. The Committee queried what action was being taken with regard to absenteeism. The Personnel Manager set out various strategies which had been adopted particularly to target short-term absences, with managers monitoring the situation monthly.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted.

10/07. RENEWAL OF PAYROLL CONTRACT

The Personnel Manager reported that this contract was due for renewal and that the College had received good service from the current provider. She recommended renewal of the contract for a period of 3 years with the current provider, Capita dbs. A comparison of contracted services had been carried out with other colleges at collaboration and she was satisfied that the College had a value for money service.

RESOLVED that the renewal of the Capita dbs contract for a period of 3 years be endorsed.

11/07. IMPLEMENTAION OF PAY AWARD 2007 AND MODERNISING PAY ARRANGEMENTS

The Personnel Manager provided an update on the pay award. The Corporation had agreed to implement the recommended award of 2% from August 2007 and 1% from February 2008. College had paid the first instalment with the November salary. Although the local branch of the UCU had accepted the award, it had been rejected at national level and there was therefore to be a ballot in the New Year with the possibility of industrial action to follow. It was hoped to minimise local disruption by paying the award now.

Implementation of Modernising Pay had continued and the Personnel Director sought the Committee's endorsement for a 3-point incremental scale to be put in place for the Assistant Principals.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted and the arrangement for Assistant Principals be endorsed.

12/07. DRAFT FINAL ACCOUNTS 2006/07

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the draft accounts which were in draft form awaiting the addition of two notes and approval by the Corporation. She reported a surplus of £324,000 after accounting for FRS17 and Cumbria Colleges. This was a considerable improvement on the deficit that had been forecast and had been achieved as a result of better control of expenditure, increased income and good support from all staff. The College's financial health had been self-assessed as category B and she hoped to achieve category A this year. Lakes College was in the strongest position of the Cumbrian colleges. The position of the College both financially and on quality placed it in a strong position within the collaboration group.

The Director referred the Committee to the designated reserve on the Balance Sheet of £100,000. She sought the Committee's recommendation to Corporation to release a further £100,000 to the capital programme for investment in ICT resources. In the past approximately £300,000 had been released each year but in view of the difficult position earlier this year, £200,000 had been released and £100,000 held back. The Committee was assured that the college's cash position was strong. The Director of Finance indicated that she felt it was important for there to be a visible effect of the achievement of a surplus and which would benefit all staff. Investment in ICT would have an impact on teaching and learning.

Methods of recognising staff contribution to the College's financial health and appropriate rewards for staff were discussed. It was agreed that the Principal would send an e mail to all staff to notify them of the surplus, to congratulate them and to pass on the Committee's congratulations.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted, that the financial accounts be approved and referred to the Corporation and that the release of a further £100,000 to the capital programme for investment in ICT resources be recommended to Corporation.

13/07. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the management accounts to the end of September 2007 and gave an update on financial performance in the year to date together with a forecast position for the year. The forecast surplus for the year was now £172,000 as against the budget of £134,000. She took the Committee through the College's financial and non-financial performance against its four major contracts. In particular she noted that on the Employer Engagement targets, the Assistant Principal External Relations was working on these and there should be a clear impact from this during the year. The College's financial health had been assessed as "A". Cumbria Colleges Ltd had a slight deficit at the time of reporting but she had no major concerns on this as it was very early in the year.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted

14/07. FE STUDENT NUMBERS AND YIELD YEAR-TO- DATE

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported that student numbers were slightly down on last year, largely because the College was concentrating on “larger” courses and had reduced the provision of distance learning and smaller courses. This was in accordance with LSC priorities. 16-18 FT numbers were above LSC targets, adult numbers were under but more were coming through and generally the figures were better compared to last year.

The yield was still above allocation. College was working to do work above allocation in the current year with a view to increasing allocation in future years.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted

15/07. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services took the Committee through the main points of the report which included a new policy for security of college assets in classrooms and a report on two premises leases which were due for renewal in 2008, subject to satisfactory terms being negotiated. The Committee sought further information on Incident Statistics. The Director of Finance and Principal outlined actions taken by management and staff regarding incidents involving students. The management team regularly reviewed strategies to deal with student behaviour and any disciplinary matters. The Principal was due to talk to a number of student groups in the near future regarding conduct at College. Parents were involved whenever there was an incident with a student under 18.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted, that the Security of Assets in Classrooms Policy be approved and that leases on Units 1 and 3A be renewed once a fair market rent has been negotiated.

16/07. FRANCHISING ACTIVITY

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services spoke on behalf of the Assistant Principal External Relations regarding his report. She noted that the contract with ASSA had been terminated and that GEN 11 had effectively taken over that provision. The College had self-assessed as grade 3 for 2006/07, had identified areas for improvement and was working on these.

GEN 11 had been a new franchise partner last year. This work-based learning provider works with engineering companies, with GEN11 doing the technical aspects of training and College providing the academic part.

The Committee’s approval was also sought for two new franchise partnerships with Trainrite and Systems Group to provide training for NVQ 2 in Plant Operations and related qualifications.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted and that the two new franchise provisions be approved.

17/07. RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided the Committee with the main details of the review of the risk register. A Risk Management Group had been established in accordance with the recommendation of the 2006/07 internal audit report and had met this term. It would continue to meet termly. In response to Committee queries, it was confirmed that no major health, safety or environmental issues had been identified as high risk in the current review. Strategies to deal with risks related to staff retention and recruitment were discussed. The Personnel Manager confirmed that HR policies relating to this would be reviewed with a view to the risk being considered more explicitly. One strategy adopted by the College was to build up capacity internally in order to minimise the risk of loss of key personnel.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted.

18/07. LSC PRIORITIES AND FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS 2008/09

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services noted the three LSC priorities for the year: - Creating demands for skills, Transforming FE and Delivering better skills, jobs and lives. She explained how the College was working on all three areas which largely relate to supporting those with disadvantage into work. There were to be major funding changes from LSC, with some assessment of the impact of the changes still to be done. It was not anticipated that the College would have any major issue but details were still awaited. In response to a Committee query, it was confirmed that government proposals regarding 16 – 18 year olds would mean that schools and colleges would need to continue to work together to provide education and training to this age group.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted.

19/07. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented a draft procurement strategy and action plan to the Committee for review and approval. There was a national drive to improve procurement with a letter to this effect having been sent recently to Chairs of Corporation as well as Principals. She reported that collaboration with other colleges and other bodies in the sector would also assist this strategy.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Report be noted and approved.

The meeting closed at 6:30pm