

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2017
ROOM 102, 14:00 HRS**

Present

AVM Gavin Mackay (Chair)
Dr Kevin Brown
Mr Stephen Lawrence
Mr Alan Stacey

In attendance

Mr Jonathan Batty, Director of Marketing (for item 8 only)
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Mrs Alison Coton, Head of Human Resources
Mr Barrie Shipley, Head of Finance
Mr Kieran Parrish, SU President (for item 9 only)
Mrs Natalie Pickles, Governance Officer & PA to University Council (minutes)

Action**1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Mr David Babb, Rev'd. Canon Professor Peter Neil and Mrs Jackie Croft.

3 Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on Monday 7 November 2016

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 November 2016 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting. The Chair was authorised to sign them.

5 From the part of FE&GP Committee, to give approval to the minutes of the joint FE&GP and Audit Committee meeting held on 7 November 2016

The minutes of the joint FE&GP and Audit Committee meeting held on 7 November 2016 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting from the FE&GP members' perspective. The Chair was authorised to sign them.

6 Matters Arising

(i) Action Points

It was NOTED that all of the Action Points listed were as agreed at the previous meeting.

The members NOTED progress against each of the action points.

(ii) Any Other Matters

There were no other matters.

7 Finance

(i) To note and consider the mid-year financial update and summary variance notes

The Head of Finance presented the mid-year financial update and summary variance notes highlighting the following:

- The main changes to the figures were attributed to the award of two key contracts: National Collaborative Outreach Partnership (NCOP) and SFA Contracts.
- The reduction in student numbers had been offset in part by the above two contracts, as well as underspend in pay costs due to key staff departures and delays in recruitment.
- Year-end predictions were now for a surplus of £623K as opposed to a deficit of £126K.
- It was noted that the underspend in student recruitment and marketing was due to the new Director of Marketing re-profiling expenditure across the year – which was now re-focussed on the main recruitment cycle period.

(iii) To consider for approval the Reimbursement of Expenses Policy

The Expenses Policy was APPROVED, subject to references being made throughout the document as to which aspects applied to staff and which applied to Council members.

8 To receive an update on student recruitment

Jonathan Batty, Director of Marketing (DoM), joined the meeting to present this item.

The DoM directed members to the report provided on recruitment which showed a breakdown of applications, offers and acceptances by Schools. The following key points were made:

- A difficult year in general, but a lot of work had been done to address the low level of applications. This had resulted in more acceptances of offers, and this work would continue prior to enrolment. One example had been recalling

- applicants yet to make a decision, resulting in one evening session leading to an extra 91 people.
- 2018 entry would have a far more strategic approach. BGU's weakness currently was delivering on applications because the institution was not widely known – where it is, who it is or what it can offer. A key part of the plan going forward was to have a successful application process which would be implemented using a new CRM (Client Relationship Management) system. This would allow a record to be created for every single enquiry, which would then go through a number of interventions to ensure absolutely everything possible was done to encourage each application to BGU.
 - FE&GP Committee NOTED that it would be useful to know the conversion of insurance offers to acceptances. The DoM AGREED to provide this information to FE&GP.
 - It was NOTED that key to increasing public awareness of BGU was the delivery of coherent and interactive messages about the institution. It was NOTED that the refreshed draft strategy (incorporating a strategy theme to simplify the vision, identity, mission and ethos) was being presented to Sponsor Board on 10 March 2017. FE&GP NOTED that Sponsor Board remit was to help ensure delivery of the strategy and that to formulate it was a remit of the whole of Council. It was AGREED that the first draft would be circulated to both Sponsor Board and University Council, following its review by SLT on 6 March. The draft would also be presented to Council on 23 March and then again in July.
 - The DoM confirmed that data going forward would enable the marketing team to provide academics and schools with information as to how their courses were performing, based on a range of different metrics (school visits / open days etc). This would allow the marketing team to take ownership for recruitment activity, with the school maintaining responsibility.

DoM

Governance
Office

Jonathan Batty left the meeting.

9 To receive an update from the Students' Union

Kieran Parish, Student Union President, joined the meeting to present an update to the FE&GP Committee – highlighted the key items from his written report.

It was AGREED that the Director of Resources would have a discussion with the SU President outside of the meeting regarding the Astro turf pitch.

It was NOTED that the recent Dean of Chapel's Table lunch had been cancelled due to no representation being available from students. The SU President stated that this had worked well in the past and that he would look at how to ensure there would be attendance from student representatives in future.

SU Rep

10 Employment

(i) To receive the HR Staffing report

The Head of HR (HoHR) NOTED that academic/non-academic staff ratio was still something to monitor. There was a discussion about taking more of a risk and recruiting academics in anticipation of student numbers. It was confirmed that all managers have been asked to use workforce planning tools rigorously in this

round of business planning, so that an informed debate could be had around real training needs rather than employment of additional people.

(ii) To receive an update on the Staff Survey

The HoHR noted that they were continuing to communicate with staff on the follow-up actions from the Staff Survey. As well as local plans, the CLT (Corporate Leadership Team) had also identified three key institutional priorities, progress of which will be monitored.

Periodic updates on the Staff Survey and Action Plans will be brought to FE&GP

HoHR

11 Estates [Checking with DoR level of restriction]

(i) To receive a building works update

The DoR summarised key points from the building works report:-

- Funding for the LORIC bid had just been approved. There are additional costs to be added to the project (not included in the report figures) due to an increase in match funding requirements (staff costs could now not be used as part of the matched funding). This was in the region of £350k – some of which would be expended over a period of time and some of which was revenue related.
- There was a requirement for BGU to purchase the property as soon as the funding contract was signed. It was therefore highly likely this would be done prior to the next Council meeting. The build would take 18 months to complete, but other operational aspects of delivering the project would start straight away from existing BGU premises.
- It was NOTED that BGU would potentially have to commit its funds for the purchase and build before the monies contracted could be drawn down. The fund would come in from the EU through DCLG – usually quarterly claims in arrears.
- The new amount (with additional costs of £350k) would need approval from FE&GP. It was AGREED that the DoR would circulate the contract letter to FE&GP for approval as it was likely the contract would need signing by BGU and returning prior to the next Council Meeting on 23 March 2017.

DoR

12 Agenda management & review

Dr Kevin Brown confirmed that all the meeting's business had been covered.

13 Any Other Business

(i) Discussion held at Disbursement Committee

Stephen Lawrence confirmed he would send a brief note to FE&GP Members regarding a discussion held at Disbursement Committee.

14 Key Items for University Council

- Recruitment
- Limited Company note
- Pay & Reward/Employment
- Student Accommodation (for noting)

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14 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of FE&GP Committee will take place on Thursday 15 June 2017 at 2.00pm in Room 102

Signed..... *JV Benth* Date..... *15/6/17*

