

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2015
2:00 PM IN ROOM 202, SKINNER BUILDING

Present

Mr David Babb (Chair)
Dr Kevin Brown
Mr Stephen Lawrence
AVM Gavin Mackay
Rev. Canon Professor Peter Neil
Professor Mark Thompson

In attendance

Dr Anne Craven, Registrar and Secretary
Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Rob Jones, Director of Enterprise (up to item 6)
Mr Fred Robson, Head of Estates
Mr Barrie Shipley, Head of Finance
Ms Alison Smith, Head of Human Resources (for item 8 only)
Ms Emma Smeaton, Governance Officer & PA to University Council

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and in particular welcomed Mr Barrie Shipley, the new Head of Finance to his first meeting. It was however NOTED that The Director of Resources had prepared the items for the present meeting and would present them as the Head of Finance was still very new to BGU.

2. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Action

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 24 February 2015

The minutes of the last meeting held on 24 February 2015 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

5. Matters arising

(i) Action points

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the progress against the action points from the last meeting.

(ii) Any other matters

There were no other matters to discuss.

6. Finance

(i) Budget/financial forecasts

The Director of Resources presented the budget and financial forecasts, NOTING that they had been slightly amended following the Reserved Council meeting held on 27 May. It was also NOTED that the HEFCE template only went up to 2017-18 so we had provided more information than required by the Funding Council. The following points were HIGHLIGHTED:

- In 2016-17 we would be close to breaking even, although no overseas students or research based income had been included.
- £1.6m had been left in the forecast which could be used for purchase of land. Members AGREED that the purchase of the land would still be a good investment and an opportunity to be taken even if the student numbers were not as expected.
- The 2017-18 staff costs had increased due to the increased number of academic staff, recruited to cater for the increased number of students.
- The Director of Resources would amend a staffing label to 'teaching and research' contracts, rather than using the term 'research' posts.
- Although the capital expenditure for 2015-16 did not seem that high there was still money to be spent on Constance Stewart Hall and the remodelling of existing spaces.
- The assumptions around the capital were 'guesstimates' at the present time; however the projected figures would be presented to University Council.
- Contingencies had been made for the event of HEFCE funding cuts.

SD

SD/FR

- It had been assumed in the budgeting process that everything happens from day one; however, as this was not often the case, this in itself also created some contingency.

The Committee NOTED the challenges in bringing in enhanced student numbers as well as a new portfolio, and subject to the changes noted, APPROVED and RECOMMENDED the budget and financial forecasts to University Council and AGREED that the tabled paperwork would form the submission to HEFCE in July 2015.

**University
Council**

(ii) Financial Regulations, Procedures & Purchasing Policy

The Director of Resources presented the Financial Regulations, Procedures & Purchasing Policy NOTING that the changes made were mainly job title updates and the University title. The following points were raised:

- July 2015 should be corrected to June 2015 in point 1.2.1.
- Taking into account point 2.9.2, the November 2015 FE&GP Committee meeting, which was to follow the Audit Committee meeting that was to be convened for the morning of the same day, would now be rescheduled so that FE&GP would meet first in the morning and Audit Committee in the afternoon. This would ensure that the correct reporting lines were followed. The Governance Office would email members to arrange this change.
- It was AGREED that the Expenses Policy and Gifts Policy, which were sub-policies to the Financial Regulations, would be brought to the FE&GP Committee at its next meeting.

SD

AKC/ES

**Next
FE&GP**

The Committee RECEIVED and APPROVED the updated Financial Regulations, Procedures and Purchasing Policy, RECOMMENDING them to University Council via the Audit Committee who were due to meet the following week. The Audit Committee would report to Council.

(iii) FRS 102 Implementation

The Committee RECEIVED the new reporting standards coming in for 2015-16 onwards for information. It was NOTED that this would also be on the Audit Committee agenda the following week. The Director of Resources also NOTED that it would be proposed to the Head of Human Resources that the holiday year were altered. The Committee AGREED that the proposed actions to be taken at BGU by the Director of Resources, as discussed with the external auditors, were appropriate. The Committee thanked the Director of Resources for all he had done over the last 12 months, in particular taking on the responsibilities of the Head of Finance during the period before a replacement was appointed.

SD

(iv) Limited Company update

- Board minutes

The minutes of the BG (Lincoln) Ltd. Board of Directors meeting that took place on 4 June 2015 were TABLED for information.

- Managing Director Report – financial and operational

The Committee RECEIVED and NOTED the content of the BG (Lincoln) Ltd. papers which included the Managing Director Report, the Budget and the 2015-16 Business Plan. The Director of Enterprise NOTED the following:

- It was year two of a four-year plan.
- The budget included a £150k drawn down facility.
- A fixed rent working from a variable rate of 8% to a fixed cost of £75k per annum for the next two years was proposed.
- Discussions with the Students' Union on how the bar is operated were taking place following the reduction in bar takings. It was thought that students were now using the social spaces provided in the new halls of residence rather than using the bar as a social meeting place.

The Budget was RECOMMENDED for approval.

RJ

7. Students' Union

- (i) Draft budget

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented the Students' Union budget for the academic year 2015-16. The budget which required approval by the Students' Union Trustee Board following the change in the status of the Student's Union which became an independent charity in the course of the present academic year was ENDORSESED by the Committee.

SU Trustee Board

8. Human Resources

- (i) Staffing report

The Committee RECEIVED the staffing report NOTING the year-to-year trends.

(ii) Workforce plan update

The Committee RECEIVED the Workforce plan update for information and NOTED that a paper on pay differentials would be pulled together for the next meeting when the Head of Human Resources had completed the benchmarking. The Committee NOTED the vast work done by the Human Resources department on recruitment for a small institution.

**Next
FE&GP/
AS**

(iii) Workforce planning – Research focussed staff

The Committee RECEIVED the paper for information NOTING the current doctoral supervision capacity. The framework for recruiting new staff and for where to place fully funded doctoral studentships was APPROVED. The introduction of teaching and scholarship contracts was also APPROVED, subject to consultation. The targets for doctoral qualified staff in each of the three Schools and the rationale for annual QR spending to support research at BGU were NOTED.

(iv) Discretions Policies for Local Government Pension Scheme

The Discretions Policies were RECEIVED and the Head of Human Resources NOTED that there were no concerns from pensions advisors at LGPS. The Committee APPROVED the Statement of Policies Covering Statement and Flexible Retirement Policy. Members thanked the Head of Human Resources for all her hard work in this area.

(v) Sickness Absence Policy

The draft Sickness Absence Policy was RECEIVED. It was however NOTED that the policy had a controversial element to it and whilst no direct feedback had been received from staff and Unison, UCU had stated that the introduction of the Bradford Factor was in the opinion of that organisation inappropriate. The Committee APPROVED the Policy subject to the inclusion of extended payment for terminal illness circumstances, at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor/Head of Human Resources, in the Policy.

9. Estates

(i) Building works update

The Committee RECEIVED the building works update presented by the Head of Estates for information NOTING that projects were running on time.

10. Student recruitment update

The Committee RECEIVED the student recruitment update for information. The Registrar & Secretary NOTED that students seemed to be making their decisions earlier this year and that the Recruitment and Retention Committee was monitoring the situation. The Recruitment Team was working closely with the academic Schools using numerous methods of recruitment and conversion, applying the majority of them at BGU for the first time this year.

11. Data submissions

The Registrar & Secretary gave a verbal update on where BGU were at regarding data submissions. It was NOTED that:

- The DLHE return was now complete.
- The commitment had been done for the Institutional Record submission to HESA with only two queries coming back, both of which being issues which HESA had already been informed about earlier by the BGU Data Team.
- The Student Record submission to HESA was well on track.
- The Aggregate Offshore return would be submitted during the summer, with HESES following in the autumn.
- Staff had received extra training for HESA collections, and work was continuing to ensure that submissions were well on track and ready to submit early.
- Good feedback had been received from both HESA and HEFCE and work continued.

12. Agenda suggestions

- Year-end accounts;
- Expense Policy & Gifts Policy;
- Benchmarking from Human Resources.

13. Any other business

The Health & Safety Policy was RECEIVED and ENDORSED and would be submitted to Council for approval.

14. Key items for the University Council

- Budget/financial forecasts
- Financial Regulations, Procedures & Purchasing Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

15. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance, Employment & General Purposes Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 3 November 2015 at 2:00 pm. However, as stated earlier, this would be moved to a morning meeting commencing at 10:00 am. Lunch with members of the Audit Committee who would be meeting during the afternoon of 3 November would be available at 1:00 pm.

16. **RESERVED BUSINESS**

The reserved minutes of the last FE&GP Meeting held on 24 February 2015 were RECEIVED by Committee (Lay Council Members only. These were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

Signed  Date 3/11/15
The signature is a cursive 'J. Ball' written in black ink. The date is '3/11/15' written in black ink.

