

MINUTES

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting
held via Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 18:00

Date and timings: 	18:00 to 20:21
Location	via Microsoft Teams
Present (Governors):	Lee Freeman (Chair) Oluwaseye Awolusi (OA) Steve Collins (SC) Rick Olver (RO) Denise Brown (DB) CEO and Principal
Clerk to the Corporation	Lana Jackman
Minutes	Carrie Brown- College Group Clerking and Policy Officer
In attendance	David Hughes (DH) Chief Operating Officer Zed Mohammed (ZM) Executive Director for Finance Jayne Sheehan (JS) Vice Principal- Innovation Roney Brooks (RB) Executive Director- People and Organizational Development

Apologies

Quorum (4)

Item	Action lead
0.0 Agenda	
1.0 Preliminary items. LF welcomed SC and OA as new Governors to their first Committee meeting.	
1.1 Committee Chair and Vice Chair appointment 23-24 LF is ELECTED as Chair of Policy and Resources Committee (nominated by RO and seconded by DB). The Committee RESOLVE to defer the election of a Vice Chair due to the small number of Committee members and the number of new Governors on the Committee.	
1.2 Apologies for Absence. No apologies were received.	
1.3 Declarations of Interest. There were no other new declarations of interest other than those already standing (<i>in accordance with the requirements of section 177 of the Companies Act 2006</i>).	
1.4 Urgent items of other business. There was no other urgent business notified in advance.	

2.0 Minutes of previous meeting.

2.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2023 were **APPROVED** as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising.

The Committee notes from the minutes the 66% compliance with the Performance Review process and asks for an update on the actions to improve compliance this academic year. RO responds that training with the management team is taking place on Friday and new deadlines have been set for this academic year (November) to improve monitoring and tracking opportunities.

OA asks if the Auditors are being consulted for the depreciation policy changes. DH confirms that they are noting that auditors will not allow a change in depreciation rates without a robust argument that underpins the change that SECG has for some of its assets such as computers, which are used far beyond three years.

There were other outstanding matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting 26 June 2023 that were discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

3.0 Human Resources.

3.1 HR report.

The Human Resources Termly Report was **NOTED**.

RB presents the report to the Committee highlighting the table at 6.1.2 which supplies the added detail that Governors requested on sickness and absences, this is a LTR of 6.29 days per person for the staff cohort that is currently at SECG (removing the figures from those that have left SECG). RB details the work that is being done cross SECG for staff and learners to aid with psychological stress and anxiety, which has had an increase in the last three years, including the Health and Wellbeing strategy.

RB highlights that the annual turnover has reduced by 5% in the last year, which is a significant good news story (the sector average is 19%). RB adds that 41 staff have been promoted internally.

RB confirms to the Committee that the UCU TU ballot did not reach the threshold for quoracy, and those that voted did not support the ballot. RB details that TU membership is relevantly low at SECG.

The Committee reflect positively on the quality of the data within the report, particularly the trend data over the last two years, and asked if this could be provided by college in line with the College Management Structures. RB responds that she and DH are reviewing the data that is provided currently, with the aim of data better reflecting the college organisational structure.

ACTION: trend data over the last two years to be provided by college in line with the College Management Structures

3.2 Staff Survey.

The Staff Survey Report was **NOTED**.

RB presents the report to the Committee detailing this had a 53% turnout (sector benchmark of excellence is 50%) commenting on how well SECG has done in the survey highlighting particularly the improvement in manager communication- however there is more work to do in this area. RB adds that the action plan will be further developed.

DB noted low engagement in communication techniques and there needs to be a two-way path in the communication element. DB comments that she views the staff survey as a health score but feels that there will not be a large shift until the larger issues staff feel more connected to SECG, staff feel better off, and pay and workload issues are addressed.

RB details the communication points teams channels, staff bulletins, meetings, Principal's bulletin, intranet etc. DH adds that there is a responsibility on Middle Managers to cascade down and ensure that their teams are aware of key issues which needs to be developed.

The Committee thanked RB for her detailed report.

4.0 Finance.

4.1 Finance Paper including management accounts year end 31.07.23, updated financial position and cashflow forecast.

The Finance Paper was **NOTED** by the Committee.

ZM presents the finance paper noting the improvement in the rating from 'inadequate' to 'requires improvement' for FY 2022/23 detailing the changes that have eased this. ZM highlights the EBITDA is 7.68%.

DB informs the Committee that the energy costs were a huge issue for SECG last year and led to a bigger than budgeted operating loss, without this increase SECG would financially be in a healthier position (energy bills were £2m greater than originally budgeted).

ZM details the cultural changes around spending- switched to a need only basis. ZM notes that the cash flow will be updated on a rolling basis and be compared to budget moving forward.

ZM and DB note that a 6.5% pay award has been recommended by the AOC, SECG needs to find at least a 6% pay award which needs to be found in savings- DB confirms that the savings plan is being actively developed.

ACTION: Next PRC to have a report on the actions for where the savings will come from to support the staff pay award.

LF thanked ZM for his excellent and clear paper.

4.2 Procurement report.

The Procurement report was **NOTED** by the Committee.

DH presents the report noting that the tender waiver process is being used much less frequently.

4.3 Learner Numbers and Allocations.

The Learner Numbers and Allocations paper was **NOTED** by the Committee.

DH presents the report noting that this was written two weeks ago and day 42 has now passed. SECG currently has 4300 16-19 learners, dropping to around 4250 once all the withdrawals are processed. DH notes that, considering the subcontracting numbers, SECG will have the same funding level next year as this year.

The Committee challenge the Executive on the student numbers citing the high enrolment figures given in the July Board meeting. DB notes that the lengthy enrollment process was an error and affected the learner numbers this process needs to be much swifter next year as applications were 34% up therefore the reporting to the July board was correct. DB adds that the low GCSE maths and English grades achieved by applicants, affected the engineering T-Level recruitment.

The Committee asks about the actions around the attendance rates including the text message to parents. DB responds that the attendance is 10% up from last year due to the measures SECG has put in place- attendance is at 88%, which is high for the sector.

DB highlighted the improvement in HE according to plan which is positive and bucks the previous SECG trends over the last two years.

5.0 Operations.

5.1 Estates, including update on capital projects.

The Committee **NOTE** the Estates paper.

DH detailed the risk around the air handling units and the installation of these. A decision will need to be taken on these in the future. DH noted that if the air handling units fail part of Luker Road site would need to be closed for the installation to take place. The installation of these is 4/5 weeks but the company do need a lead in time, hence their installation being planned during the summer break.

5.2 Health and Safety Annual Report.

The Committee **NOTE** the Health and Safety Annual Report.

5.3 IT update.

DH gives a verbal update from the risk around the aging infrastructure. SECG is developing an investment plan, and a large amount of work is being undertaken in the background to keep this operational.

6.0 Policies.

6.1 Risk Management Policy (Annual).

The Committee **APPROVE TO RECOMMEND TO CORPORATION BOARD** the Risk Management Policy (Annual).

6.2 Health and Safety Policy (Annual).

The Committee **APPROVE TO RECOMMEND TO CORPORATION BOARD** the Health and Safety Policy (Annual).

6.3 Safeguarding Policy.

The Committee **APPROVE TO RECOMMEND TO CORPORATION BOARD** the Safeguarding Policy.

6.4 Fees Policy.

The Committee **APPROVE TO RECOMMEND TO CORPORATION BOARD** the Fees Policy.

6.5 Subcontracting Policy.

The Committee **APPROVE TO RECOMMEND TO CORPORATION BOARD** the Subcontracting Policy.

6.6 Reserves Policy.

The Committee **APPROVE TO RECOMMEND TO CORPORATION BOARD** the Reserves Policy.

7.0 Operations update.

7.1 Committee self-assessment 2022-23.

LJ confirmed these were received and will be anonymised and taken to the ARC working group.

7.2 PRC Terms of Reference for approval/update.

The Committee **APPROVE** the Terms of Reference.

The Committee **AGREE** that a Sustainability Report will be presented at the Spring Committee meeting,

8.0 Any Other Business.

Communication Around Agenda.

LF noted that once an agenda has been agreed by the Chair it needs to stand without further amendment.

Confidential minutes 26th June 2023.

The Committee **APPROVE** the confidential minutes with one amendment- date of the meeting to be corrected.

9.0 Committee Evaluation.

Due to timings issues the Governors were invited to email the Chair with any comments on improvements for future meetings.

10.0 Dates of future meetings:

Tuesday 28 November 2023 17:30 MS Teams- Joint PRC and ARC

Tuesday 6 February 2024 18:00 MS Teams

Tuesday 19 March 2024 18:00 MS Teams

Tuesday 23 April 2024 18:00 MS Teams

Tuesday 4 June 2024 18:00 MS Teams- Budgeting Group

Tuesday 25 June 2024 18:00 MS Teams

There being no further business the meeting ended at 20:21 hrs.

Signed..... Dated.....

Meeting of the Policy and Resource Committee Meeting

Matters Arising and actions from previous meetings.

Actions to be confirmed ongoing/completed

Actions confirmed completed will be removed from the table.

Item	Actions	Deadline	Lead	Status
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Actions from 17 October 2023				
26/06/2023	3–5-year Strategy to be presented to Policy and Resources Committee.	March 2024	DH/ZM	
26/06/2023	Financial Strategy to be presented to Policy and Resources Committee.	March 2024	DH/ZM	
26/06/2023	Result of the Collab Group benchmarking exercise to be presented to Policy and Resource Committee.	March 2024	DH/ZM	
3.1	Trend data over the last two years to be provided by College in line with the College Management Structures for the HR reports	March 2024	RB	
3.1	DH/RB to explore the possibility of the insurance paying for more training for managers.	March 2024	DH/RB	
4.1	PRC to have a report on the actions for where the savings will come from to facilitate the staff pay award.		DH/ZM	