

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
held at Bicton College on Monday 28 April 2008**

PRESENT: Mr C Harvey - Chairman
Mr J A T Lee - Chairman of Governors
Dr F Harper
Mrs A Liverton
Mrs J Wymer
Mrs L Twigg - Interim Principal

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Kelly - Interim Director of Finance and Planning
Mrs D West - MI / Quality Systems Manager
Mr G R Copper - Clerk to the Board of Governors

APOLOGIES: Ms J Bashford

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommended an increase of 5% in tuition fees for 2008-9 for approval by the Board and an additional sum of £100 to be charged for additional qualifications for 19+ full time learners.

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2008 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

1.2 Matters Arising

Minute 1.2 (6.2)

It was confirmed that the College would be receiving the sustainability funding applied for from the LSC. This would be paid in two stages with final payment on completion of the work. The capital expenditure planning for the remainder of the year would be adjusted to reflect the sustainability expenditure.

Minute 3.1

The Chairman reported that the Strategic Options Review was almost complete and would be sent to Governors by the end of the week. One or two short briefing sessions were being planned for Governors and the Governor

Development Day on 20 May would be used to consider the report in detail.

2. ENROLMENTS REPORT

- 2.1** The MI/Quality Systems Manager reported on LSC funded enrolments and was confident that the College would achieve the funding allocation target. Enrolments of 19+ part time learners was below target but some courses planned for the summer term had yet to enrol. 16-18 full time learners were above target but 16-18 part time learners were still below target.
- 2.2** The spring term additional learning support (ALS) funding data had yet to be included but it was expected that the College would necessarily spend significantly more than the LSC allocation. The additional work based learning allocation of £80,000, which was not budgeted, was unlikely to be achieved although any new starts before the year end would demonstrate growth in numbers to the LSC.
- 2.3** The Interim Principal reported that the College was trying to secure a Train to Gain contract and would be improving the co-ordination of skills and knowledge already available. Ten potential tenders had been reviewed and it was considered possible to make a submission for three of them.
- 2.4** Higher Education student numbers had now been agreed with the University of Plymouth and calculated as 159 FTE. The contract value had now been confirmed. Governors requested that the contractual position with the University of Plymouth also now be confirmed for 2008-9.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT

- 3.1** The Interim Director of Finance and Planning reported on the management accounts for the period to 31 March 2008. The funding position for many colleges was tight and the accounts corroborated the previous forecast. Because the College did not have a full month end closure procedure, accruals were not accounted for month by month and the financial position therefore deteriorated as the year end was approached. Income and expenditure were examined in detail and the forecast outturn position noted. Governors were assured that management was controlling costs. The pension provision with regard to FRS17 would be investigated as this was a volatile matter which could significantly affect the outturn.
- 3.2** Borrowing at year end was expected to be £400k above the overdraft limit; the LSC had indicated they were prepared to meet the shortfall if required. provided. The College was not now proceeding with the bank loan application. The College was now formally in recovery due to the financial position and the LSC would be regularly meeting with the management team to monitor action taken to improve the financial situation. The LSC required a recovery plan to be prepared and a three year financial forecast. This fitted in with the preparation of the budget for 2008-9. The Chairman of Governors had noted that the LSC website financial data showed a serious situation was being faced by a number of land based colleges.

- 3.3** Capital expenditure had been restricted but some essential property and residential accommodation work was now needed, particular as there was high utilisation of accommodation during the summer period.

4. LSC DELIVERY PLAN

- 4.1** The Interim Principal said that there was nothing to add to the report made to the Board meeting on 1 April. The LSC had recognised the additional 41 learners from 2007-8 and 16-19 funding was up by £255k on 2007-8. It was again noted that funding was now based on standard learner numbers (SLNs) and not full time equivalents (FTEs).

5. FEES AND CHARGES

- 5.1** The Interim Director of Finance and Planning explained issues with provision of additional qualifications and costs. It was proposed to include a sum of £100 within the course fee to cover the costs of this additional delivery to full time 19+ learners. Fee remission and other funding support systems would still be available. This would enable the College to demonstrate compliance with the requirements to charge fees and be in line with other colleges. 16-19 year old learners were unaffected by this change. The curriculum for 2008-9 had been reviewed to ensure that only additional qualifications which were funded or paid for by fees would be delivered. Some qualifications were being reviewed for funding eligibility. Overall it was proposed to raise tuition fees by 5% for 2008-9. The proposed fee increase and charge for additional qualifications was recommended for approval. A detailed paper to be circulated.

6. HR REPORT

- 6.1** Received the HR report and noted the employment data. It was confirmed that budgetary control of staffing costs was the responsibility of individual budget holders. Turnover of staff appear high but there had been some replacement of agency staff in the nursery and catering. A list of appointments made since 1 January 2008 was tabled and the Interim Principal confirmed that all recruitment of staff was subject to senior management approval. An analysis of staff leavers was requested by Governors. Sickness absences were being investigated as the days lost in the last three months were high, although it was hoped that this would now improve. Governors wished to acknowledge the work involved in producing the report in the new format.

7. PROPERTY STRATEGY

- 7.1** Cllr Liverton reported on the meeting of the Estate Advisory Committee held on 1 April. The College had now advised East Devon District Council of the status of land at Woodbury Salterton. The Vice Chairman of Governors referred to the temporary classroom used for the Routes course which was considered in the SAR to be in need of replacement or re-siting. This would be looked into. The Committee had noted the enthusiasm of staff to develop a farm shop to sell Bicton produce, particularly meat. The issues involved were being looked at.

7.2 Members of the Estate Advisory Committee would be touring the campus and estate on 13 May.

8.1 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next scheduled meeting Tuesday 24 June 2008 at 10.00 am.

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____

ACTION ITEMS			
Minute	Action	By	When
2.4	Requested that the contractual position with the University of Plymouth also now be confirmed for 2008-9.	Interim Director of Finance and Planning	24.6.08
5.1	An additional paper detailing tuition fees proposed for 2008-9 to be circulated.	Clerk	30.4.08
7.1	To look into the replacement or re-siting of the temporary classrooms used for the Routes course	Interim Director of Finance and Planning	24.6.08