

**Minutes of the Resources Committee
Thursday 31 January 2019
Tower Board Room, Cauldwell Campus, Bedford**

Present: Sol Miah (Chair)
Helen Day
Roger Marriott
Ian Pryce CBE, Principal & Chief Executive
Alasdair Simmons

In attendance: Sherida Carter, Interim Director of HR
Roy Currie, Director of Information & Learning Technologies
Diane Gamble, Director of Estates & Facilities
Pat Jones, Director of Finance
Rachel Nicol, Director of Governance Clerk to the Corporation
Allan Schofield, Governor, as an observer

		Action
R/1/19	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from Tom Brown and Greg Guilford. Sherida was welcomed to her first meeting as the new Interim HR Director	
R/2/19	Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest relevant to the items on the agenda.	
R/3/19	Matters arising An update was given on the merger between West Herts and Barnfield colleges. There were no other matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.	
R/4/19	IT Strategy It was agreed that the Committee would consider the IT Strategy at agenda item 5 first.	

It was noted that the updated strategy was taken and approved by Executive in January. A number of issues raised in previous discussions at the Committee had been followed up and an update was provided as follows;

- The approach to the planning and development of systems has been strengthened by the establishment of a Systems Development Group. The terms of reference were referenced as an appendix to the strategy.
- The approach to e learning and learning technologies were highlighted. Following on from the directors planning days a working group has been established to canvas opinions across the Group and will feed back to Executive at the end of March.

The Committee considered whether they felt there had been sufficient clarity in the strategy for learning and for business support needs. They were also asked if there was sufficient clarity on IT testing and business continuity.

The Chair sought further assurance on the business continuity and referenced paragraph 72 of the strategy.

It was confirmed that there is an IT Disaster Recovery Plan and the outline was given. It was questioned whether the plan would cover the student focussed systems such as EBS, pro monitor etc. Assurance was sought around security of data on checking, testing and resilience. Access recovery from different locations has also been considered.

Comments of the committee were;

- The document is comprehensive but requires further information on the different strategic lines.
- The requirement for a high level time line, the operational plan having been presented at the previous meeting.
- The establishment of the Systems Development Group was welcomed.

- The terms of reference for the Systems Development Group to be strengthened to ensure the group is not only aware of but also responsible for overseeing development.
- A balance is required between business facing systems and learner facing systems and consideration given to membership of the group to reflect this. It was explained that the membership will be flexible depending on the nature of each project and additional members will join as appropriate.
- The requirement for objectivity and accountability was raised. It had been agreed that the Vice Chair of the group will be a member of curriculum staff. The appropriate number of members and impact on decision making was discussed.
- The length of the strategy and information required (balance between strategy and operational). It was suggested that there could be an extraction of key strategic points for highlighting.
- The requirement of the group for accurate data to facilitate decision making.
- The ability to review systems and processes and whether this should be within the remit of the Systems Development Group was discussed. It was agreed that business review is needed but this is not the direct responsibility of the Systems Development Group who are looking at the connectivity of particular systems. A separate review is being carried out on data management. This review will look at a range of components including staff, systems and training requirements.
- Asch (attending as an observer) was asked to comment. It was noted that there is a lot of positive content but that further development is required in strategic terms. The Board wants to identify; what does the College want from the strategy, evidence from user feedback, to what extent is performance across areas of the Institution robust and appropriate key performance indicators.

- The impact on the next strategic plan. It was raised as to what a high level IT Strategy of the future will look like. The 5 year planning cycle was outlined including changes such as merger. It was considered that funding restrictions minimise the implementation of visionary ideas. It was agreed that these points can be taken forward at development days and as part of the Strategic Planning process in due course.
- Further points for consideration in addition to the above were agreed to be; the requirement for a detailed operational plan beyond the current year and capital expenditure planning; reference to feedback including staff and student surveys, feedback from Heads of department and focus groups.
- Further consideration will be given to the evolution of learning, evidence from learning walks and presentation of material and benefits for learners.

ASch/RC

It was agreed that ASch would send any further comments to RC.

The Committee noted the progress made and would welcome further updates in due course.

The Director of Information and Learning Technologies left the meeting

The update was noted.

R/5/19

Estates review (Agenda Item 4)

Lease update.

It was confirmed that the Committee had read the summary. The Director of Estates and Facilities provided an update on progress since the last meeting.

Reviews of current premises have been carried out to determine the appropriateness of lease renewals and best location for provision based on utilisation. Dilapidations will be negotiated where leases are terminated as the provisions were noted to be high.

Opportunities for use of the Corby Manor House are being explored, including further educational provision

Chair approved 18.03.19

and events.

VAT issues in respect of multi occupancy site leases were discussed. Assurance was given that the College had engaged lawyers and VAT consultants to protect the interests of the College and negotiations will be progressed.

AS confirmed he had attended the Estates Advisory Group meeting. The lease expert has recently retired from the group but assurance was provided that issues have been thoroughly reviewed.

The Committee questioned further;

- Relationship between disposals and quality of provision and how dialogue is managed.
- Strategic considerations over provision and location appropriateness between campus and off campus sites.
- Whether the curriculum requires revisiting as part of the strategic review and the balance with community demand.

The committee was assured that strategic options will not be limited and flexibility is built into the estates planning to accommodate this.

The report was noted.

Estates Review development work

The report had been read. The zoological centre steels have gone in and the staff are noted to be happy with progress. There will be a camera in place to enable continuous review of progress. The Estates contractor is doing some HE training and has taken groups of students to view the project which has been received positively.

Development in Wellingborough is progressing with tenders out on a number of elements. Planning should be determined by the end of March.

The grant has been received from SEMLEP with expenditure conditions attached. The capital program is being reviewed to accommodate conditions while managing risks.

A decision has been taken to not bid for European funding at the current time so the budget for Wellingborough is limited to £10million and work is being planned accordingly.

The Director of Estates and Facilities left the meeting.

The Committee noted the progress and assurance provided.

R/6/19

Financial Regulations (Agenda 16)

It was noted that the Financial Regulations had previously been agreed in 2018. The Director of Finance highlighted the principle changes around post holders and titles including Director of HR and Operations Manager in the Finance department. It was explained that the individual is a qualified accountant.

Minor amendments to the wording have been made.

It was confirmed that the levels of authority have not been changed since the last review.

The Director of Finance made a reference to paragraph 35 changes to ensure the Financial Controller can determine who holds the credit cards.

The following will be further reviewed;

4.5 – PJ to talk to Financial Controller on whether to add the Operations Manager PJ

4.27 Cross check to Fees Policy in respect of the Distance Selling Regulations.

It was agreed that subject to the above paragraphs being further reviewed and the document recirculated the Committee recommends the amended Financial Regulations are approved by the Board.

R/7/19

MTFS

The item at agenda 7 was presented. The MTFS Policy document has not changed.

The paper explains the approach to the planning exercise and the connectivity between items. The May

meeting will review the full group position including the rolling cash flow forecast.

It was explained that the ESFA changed the funding factors shortly before the papers came out including;

- Reduction in deprivation factor due to the higher starting level. Executive are reviewing costs accordingly
- Area cost weighting between areas. The factor has been aggregated to the detriment of the College due to the growth in Northamptonshire.

The actual settlements will be announced in March but it was confirmed that predicted impact of the factors have been reflected in the report.

In 2020 account has been taken of work placement costs.

The following was highlighted;

- Teachers' pension are out for consultation with a proposal that employers contribution is to be uplifted from 16 to 23 percent. An eleven month grant is proposed but thereafter the costs will have to be met by the College
- The only growth shown in the plan is in HE until the end of 5 year period when demographic numbers for 16-18 rise again.

The Committee questioned;

- The predicted drop in apprenticeship numbers in 2020-2021 and the impact. It was recognised that the income does not relate directly to the number of learners and that there is a downward trend in the sector.
- Budgeted income for 2018-2019 worst case scenario on the current year outturn. It was confirmed that discussions are still taking place with the ESFA and a further update will be provided at the next meeting.
- Planned payroll reduction relationship to the vacancy factor. Executive are currently reviewing every vacant post. The relationship

with quality and the learner experience was discussed. It was also reiterated that group sizes also need to be reviewed. The Group aims to avoid redundancies where possible.

- Early leavers on apprenticeships, to be reviewed by QSA Committee.

The further points were made;

A new bidding round for Wellingborough is to launch with the ESF next week.

Consideration of T level delivery may also have a positive impact.

Affordability of the capital programme if a surplus is not generated.

The plans are predicated on maintaining a planned surplus with adjustments made to other areas of the model.

There is potential for the Board to consider the overall strategy after 2020-2021 when committed capital expenditure has been spent.

The Executive are reviewing curriculum areas in terms of cost of provision and relationship with achievement.

The Committee was assured that Executive are reviewing the MTFS but that there are a number of areas of uncertainty to be determined.

Executive

A paper will be provided in due course from the Executive setting out how the gap is to be monitored and closed.

The Committee noted the report and recognised the difficulties faced.

R/9/19

Tribal benchmarking (Agenda 11)

The proposed exercise was explained, There has been some discussion on the nature of the exercise required and who the comparator should be. An option of a benchmarking club is also being considered. The preference is for a full review to consider in particular the provision of services the College does not receive funding to provide.

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The Committee was prepared to support an exercise subject to receiving more information on the scope prior to purchase. A concern was raised about how current the data for comparison will be.

A competitor assessment is being prepared for the Development Day.

AS left the meeting.

It was noted that the meeting was no longer quorate but that all matters requiring decisions had been considered.

R/10/19

Employee relations

A note was read from CH in respect of employee relations matters and the position noted. Support is received from EEF in relation to some matters.

The Committee discussed the potential increase in issues post merger and steps to mitigate these including;

- Training for line managers
- Focus within the People Strategy

Reports on Pay and structures and the staff survey will be presented at the next meeting

R/11/19

People Strategy (including HR action plan)

It was explained that the Executive has reviewed the People Strategy document and recognise further review is required.

The Chair explained that the document is to be considered work in progress following the changes in leadership in the HR department. The updated People Strategy was recognised to be ambitious.

The priority is currently to organise the HR team to ensure efficiency in the support provided. The Interim Director of HR confirmed that the focus is on getting to know the team, their roles and understanding the business.

It was agreed that iTrent and payroll systems

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implementation needs to be resolved before further progress can be made.

The Committee discussed;

- The positive and comprehensive nature of the document.
- The need for the Interim Director of HR to review the strategy to assess the realistic nature of the timescales and sequences to be reviewed and to allocate elements to different roles.
- Emphasis of candidate experience during recruitment, connections with social media

Suggestions made by the Committee included;

- Link to mission, values etc.
- Provision on trade union relationships, E & D, duty of care and risk management in HR
- Ensure strategy is realistic and engaging
- Grounding the strategy with the objectives and analysis of strengths and weaknesses
- Consistency in the use of terminology HR Strategy and People Strategy
- Requirement for KPIs and identification of key KPIs.
- Link with professional development and KPIs and QSA Committee.
- Board input into KPIs

The Interim Director of HR will continue to work on the Strategy with a further draft to be submitted in May. SC

R/12/19

Decisions taken under delegated authority

The report on decisions taken under delegated authority was presented and noted.

Chair approved 18.03.19

R/13/19

Capital Programme

The change in funding formula has impacted on programme and the following were highlighted;

- Impact of Zoological centre and Wellingborough main site
- Potential for sale of assets
- Membership of Wellingborough Realm steering group and potential funding.
- Longer term plans

- Demographic changes and requirement for investment

The Committee was satisfied with the approach being taken and noted the report.

R/14/19

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2018 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

R/15/19

Any other business

No other business was discussed.

Meeting closed