

**Minutes of the Resource Committee meeting held on
12th June 2024
Kettering, room 168
16:00**

Present: Cliff Wragg (Chairing)
Faheem Mir
Allan Schofield
Tom Dove-Wallington
Yiannis Koursis (CEO)
Noor Nazir
Alasdair Simmons attended for
a part of the meeting (online)

In attendance: Caroline Biddle (Executive Director of HR)
Karen Campbell (Principal Bedford)
Pat Jones (Deputy CEO Finance)
Rachel Nicol (Group Director of Governance)
Natasha Stringer (Senior Governance Coordinator) (Minutes)

R/23/24 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies

Apologies were received from Alasdair Simmons for the majority of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the matters on the agenda.

R/24/24 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

A paper had been included outlining proposed changes to the farm tenancy at Shuttleworth. The Deputy CEO Finance provided background information for the Committee on the planned changes in provision and impact for the tenancy. The Committee noted that changes to the arrangement with land will require application of the College seal although the changes themselves do not require governance approvals.

The Committee heard that a farm strategy group was formed as a group of local employers supporting the team on the design of the curriculum, and identification of skills gaps.

The Committee received assurances that anything presented to the Committee had been scrutinised within the business planning process.



After a brief discussion the Committee were supportive of the proposed changes and happy to note them, and recommend to the Board that use of the seal be approved

R/25/24 Digital flight an update

The CEO summarised the update on the Digital flight path provided by the Executive Director of Digital Transformation, emphasising the significant items of infrastructure upgrade regarding bandwidth.

Questions and Discussions

25.1 The Committee discussed what success would look like, and the CEO confirmed that success is when the running of IT is invisible, with no interruption to day-to-day work, and is focused on the future.

25.2 A discussion was held on the challenges, focusing on affordability and how the College is prepared for hybrid delivery. The CEO confirmed that adaptability is built into the planning, but the underlying premise is that hybrid learning is not the best practice for 16-18-year-olds.

25.3 The Committee sought and received confirmation that JISC will carry out the update in June 2024.

The Committee noted the report.

R/26/24 3 year Financial plan (including budget 24-25)

The Deputy CEO Finance summarised the report for the Committee, which included:

- Budgeting follows the normal route, determining income strands, determining learner numbers and contract positions.
- The Executive team have determined how surplus funds should be allocated through the business planning process with a workshop to make final determinations
- KPIs for next year set out
- High-risk areas confirmed as apprenticeships and Higher skills

Questions and Discussions

26.1 The Committee sought and received assurances on the robustness and resilience of the approach to building the budget and setting targets.

26.2 The Committee discussed the confidence levels regarding the expected increase in student numbers. This was based on marketing intelligence, demographic information, growth plans, progression, and conversion rates from application to



enrolment. The current demographics for the 14-16 age group are projected to feed into Bedford College but are not positive for other campuses.

26.3 The Committee discussed staff recruitment and received assurances that the resourcing of the recruitment team will have a positive impact on recruitment and cost savings by managing the vacancy factor.

26.4 The Committee discussed in some detail the national picture for staff pay awards and questioned the expectations of the College staff. Further discussion on the staff pay awards focused on the need to remain sustainable.

26.5 A detailed discussion took place regarding the growth of Esports, as well as logistics and hospitality. TBCG, as part of a pilot simplification project, offers flexibility to address local skills requirements and manage their own end point assessments.

The Committee agreed to recommend the financial plan to the Board for approval.

R/27/24 Capital programme

The Deputy CEO Finance summarised the report for the Committee, which included:

- National College for Motor Sport. Applications have increased and will exceed the physical capacity if the conversion level remains constant.
- The implementation of Esports Arenas to support an identified growth area in the curriculum.
- Likely additional movement on the capital programme as priorities from Business Planning are finalised.

Questions and Discussions

27.1 The Committee discussed Esports in some detail, requesting clarification on how the programme within the sports department would run and hearing about the set-up of the arenas. The Committee sought and received assurances that the bandwidth would be sufficient. The Principal (**Bedford**) **will bring further insight and images to the next resources meeting. Action KC, Autumn term.**

The Committee agreed to recommend the capital programme to the Board for approval.

R/28/24 College information report

The Deputy CEO summarised the report for the Committee, which included:

- Currently looking at a forecast surplus against a budgeted deficit. The Board previously approved the investment in quality.



- Risk predicted around apprenticeships and withdrawals.
- Potential clawback of ring-fenced funding on free courses for jobs due to under-recruitment

Questions and Discussions

28.1 The Committee enquired as to why JTL was moving out of Incuba in Leighton Buzzard, and the Deputy CEO Finance explained it was JTL's own commercial decision.

28.2 The Committee discussed the reclassification requirements for reinvesting sale proceeds of an asset in the capital, the treatment of loss or gain on disposals, and the adaptability of the model for different election results.

The Committee noted the positive position of the management accounts.

R/29/24 Policies

The Deputy CEO introduced the agenda item.

Treasury management policy

29.1 The Deputy CEO Finance updated the Committee on the updates made to this policy, which were updated for the college financial handbook. The requirement for treasury consent was noted as part of managing public money, and assurances were given that this is in line with current practice.

Reserves policy

29.2 The Deputy CEO Finance confirmed to the Committee that the Treasury Management policy contains loan covenants that stipulate the maintenance of a baseline cash position of £4 million. The ESFA recommends the retention of two months' worth of operating cash, which is calculated as the cost base less depreciation and pension costs. The College has business interruption insurance in place. The Committee noted that as the College's size increases, the Reserve position would also grow.

29.3 The College's financial strategy includes a thorough analysis of cost movement from non-pay to operating pay and associated modelling of the plan. The strategy emphasises the need for leveraging to properly allocate capital grants. The financial strategy will be subject to annual monitoring and will depend on specific circumstances.

Fees policy

29.4 The Deputy CEO Finance presented the changes to the fees policy to the Committee, based on the latest guidance and in relation to consumer rights



legislation. The Committee noted that the policy had not been reviewed since March 2019, which is outside the three-year review window. Assurance was given that the policy meets the requirements of the OfS.

The Committee agreed to recommend the policies for approval at the Board.

R/30/24 Staff update

The Executive Director of Human Resources gave a verbal update which included:

- Focus groups will be set up once the current survey concluded
- Update to the Committee on the new questions relating to management, which is now split by management level.

The Committee noted the update.

R/31/24 Employee relations

The Executive Director of Human Resources gave a verbal update, which included the fact that there had been no tribunals.

Questions and Discussions

31.1 The Committee discussed performance management, with most of the cases involving sickness absence. The Committee noted there had been positive developments in performance management, and it is hoped that the number of cases will decrease by the middle of the autumn term. The Committee expressed concerns about the high number of people undergoing performance management and requested a report categorising the cases. ***The Executive Director of Human Resources will provide a breakdown of the cases by category in the autumn term. Action CB.***

31.2 The Committee discussed the relationship between development, risk, and costs, including reference to public sector guidelines and issues with absence management.

The Committee noted the update.

R/32/24 Staff framework

The Executive Director of Human Resources provided a summary of this annual report to the Committee and also included the job family matrix for information. Key messages from the report included:

- TBCG is made up of five contractual groups, Bedford College (BC), Tresham College (TC), Central Bedfordshire College (CBC), Bedford College



Professional Services (BCPS) and Bedford College Services Ltd (BCS).
(Highlighted were different contracts, hours, benefits, and staffing numbers.)

- Confirmation that a good percentage of CBC staff have transferred to BC/BCPS contracts, with 8 staff members at Tresham Choosing to remain on original contracts

The Committee noted the report.

R/33/24 Financial regulations

The Deputy CEO Finance summarised the update to the Financial Regulations for the Committee in line with the College Financial Handbook. The changes outlined in the report were noted to be insignificant as the existing regulations were already robust and met the regulatory requirements.

The Committee noted the report.

R/34/24 Decisions under delegated authorities

No decisions taken under delegated authority.

R/35/24 Minutes and any other business

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Committee noted that this was Pat Jones last Resources Committee meeting and formally thanked her for all her hard work and contributions to the Committee and the College and wished her well in her new role.