

**Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting on
24 April 2024
Online, Microsoft Teams
16:00 – 19:00**

Present: Tom Dove-Wallington
Allan Schofield
Alasdair Simmons (Chair)
Yiannis Koursis (CEO)

In attendance: Sheraz Anim (Executive Director of Digital Transformation (part))
Caroline Biddle (Executive Director of Human Resources)
Diane Gamble (Director of Estates and Facilities) (part)
Patricia Jones (Deputy CEO Finance)
Rachel Nicol (Group Director of Governance) (Minutes)
David Roffey (Director of Projects & Sustainability) (part)

R/12/24 Apologies For Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies

Apologies were received from Faheem Mir, Noor Nazir and Cliff Wragg

Declarations of Interest

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

R/13/24 Matters Arising

The Deputy CEO Finance announced to the Committee that she would be leaving the Group in the summer for a CEO role at another College. Governors passed on congratulations and commended the years of hard work and sound financial management.

The Executive Director of Digital Transformation attended the meeting. An outline paper had been uploaded to the portal setting out the timeline in relation to a recent cyber incident relating to vulnerability in respect of one the firewalls in operation, including identification, advice received from the firewall provider and JISC and steps to mitigate the vulnerability. Assurance was provided to confirm there was no loss of data and that policies and actions were appropriate.

The Committee congratulated the team for taking prompt action.

It was suggested that future reports outline the conclusion (from a business perspective) up front to provide governors with immediate assurance before the detail.

R/14/24 Estates Update (agenda item 4)

The Director of Estates provided the Committee with a report on the progress of current estates developments including:

- Corby Sixth Form, essentially complete apart from one gate/fence, solutions are being reviewed by consultants.
- Tower Block recladding project, final mechanical and engineering (“M&E”) installation signed off with one issue on the filtration system outside the original contract being reviewed by the M&E consultant.
- Only minor snagging issues remaining on the works at Bedford Sixth Form (“BSF”) with assurance given that sufficient funds have been retained from the contractor until snagging is complete.
- Kingshill Farm development - the classroom is being used and the temporary classroom has been demolished. Signage is due to be installed and governors had been invited to the official opening on 21 May.
- Halls of Residence – Shuttleworth, the College used the Government’s Contracts Finder to tender works for refurbishment of 5 halls of residence using 2 different funding streams, Salix and non-Salix. Work had been split for tender purposes into refurbishment works, infrastructure works and the roofing tender with contractors now appointed. Work will be carried out in phases around student occupation, commencing with the unoccupied block.
- Trinity Arts & Leisure – Pool, the current position was explained in terms of the structural engineer’s report and options for repair / replacement. It was agreed to pick this up in discussions on the Capital Programme.
- Leases and disposals - the College has reviewed all leases post classification and continues to review the Estate for efficiency.
- Motor vehicle centre - the disposal is complete and funds received. Assurance was given that proceeds will be reinvested in capital.
- *Redacted point due to commercial sensitivity*
- St Marks Corby no longer holds any provision and solicitors are seeking to resolve an error made in the title registration in respect to the carpark area so that the site can be sold.
- Corby Learning Centre - College Executive are reviewing current provision and course delivery as the lease is due to expire in the summer and an approach has been made to ascertain the renewal terms. If the lease is not to be reviewed there will be a dilapidations charge.



Discussion/Question

The Committee had previously discussed the merits of holding a session with a group of governors to explore estates issues in more depth for longer term planning.

Governors asked about the current position at CBC following the electrical fault reported at the March board meeting. Assurance was provided that the fault had been rectified and that the insurance claim submitted is expected to cover all losses over and above the excess.

The team was commended for managing a significant number of projects to conclusion and for progress made.

The Committee noted the report

R/15/24 Capital Programme (agenda item 5)

The Director of Projects and Sustainability (previously the Director of Revenues) attended to present the current draft of the capital programme, the 2024-2025 programme was reviewed by the Committee in January and by the Board in March.

Highlights included;

- Use of science and digital t level funding received to upgrade science and computer labs in the Tower Block
- Funding received for equipment and training after the College led the Local Skills Improvement Fund Strand on green technologies
- Use of capital and revenue funding for Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)
- Use of funds received from grant applications by curriculum areas from the Connolly Foundation
- Investment needed in growth areas including electrical installation, National College for Motorsports and Esports

Discussion/Questions

The Committee asked whether the planned level of investment in Esports was sufficient. The £0.5m funding allocated will fund 3 classrooms and required arenas as well as equipment. The timing of commencing delivery was questioned and confirmed to be September 2025. It was explained that the course needed sufficient time for advertising to ensure viable numbers for a positive student experience.

Further questions were raised on plans to accommodate the demand at the National College 4 Motor Sports (NC4M) given capacity will be exhausted if conversion rates are as expected. Options being explored in terms of sourcing additional accommodation or altering existing accommodation were discussed. Clarification was



provided on the relationship between the College and Silverstone UTC. Capacity in terms of over-night accommodation for students within the local infrastructure was also noted to be a limiting factor requiring further thought.

The CEO outlined the current business planning process, proposals made for capital investment by different areas and how the Executive are now looking to prioritise resource allocation. It was confirmed that the capital programme has been built in alignment with the MTFs with allocations across years estimated to help timing and scale of expenditure.

Trinity Pool

The Committee noted the detailed report from the Director of Estates & Facilities summarising the options presented by the structural engineers following their review of the current position.

Three options included full replacement of the pool, relining and refurbishment work. An investment appraisal had been undertaken on payback. It was explained that the government pool grant had been oversubscribed and local funding had been allocated to Kempston.

Discussion/Questions

The Committee discussed the different options, affordability and benefits.

The process for decision making was raised. The matter will be considered by Bedford College Services Limited Board in May but it was explained that although the pool is run and managed by the College's commercial subsidiary it is a College asset. The Managing Director of BCS Limited has been involved in considering the options.

Investment appraisal had been carried out based on pay back, considering the revenue streams.

The appropriateness of different appraisal methods was discussed. It was however concluded that the method used was suitable for the current issue.

The CEO confirmed that the College would be funding the work and BCS would not be penalised. Any profits from BCS are gift aided to the College in any event.

On balance the Committee supported the recommendation to go forward with option 3 for remedial work which would then allow further time to explore funding routes.



R/16/24 College Information Report (agenda item 5)

The Deputy CEO Finance presented the report and confirmed a break-even position and financial position on track, consistent with that presented to the Board in March.

The Committee's attention was drawn to;

- JTL (electrical installation apprenticeship providers at Incuba in CBC) having given notice. It was understood that there will be a requirement to repay some of the initial investment and the College is in negotiation over the final amount. It was considered to be an opportunity for the College to relaunch electrical installation apprenticeships for direct delivery.

Discussion/Questions

The Committee further discussed the current position on apprenticeships in terms of achievement following the Board update in March. It was explained that risk on achievement is increased by the number of apprenticeships due to end at the year end. Assurance was provided that a review is taking place to manage the risk, including consideration of spreading start and finish dates.

The report was noted

R/17/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy ("MTFS")

The Committee noted the comprehensive report provided setting out the assumptions on which the budget is based and the impact of the funding settlement, now confirmed. The increase in the Adult Education Budget (AEB) had been reflected in the MTFS. The relationship between funded student numbers and forecast enrolments was set out.

The CEO provided more insight into the business planning exercise and work being done to look at funding available for growth activity and where this investment is targeted. The continued focus is on internal target setting and accountability at department level, in relation to learner numbers and progression rates. Assurance was, however, given that Group level budget setting and key controls such as staff cost percentage provide a framework within which Executive consider the allocation of targets and resource to ensure sound budget setting.

Discussion/Question

The Committee sought to understand the relationship between the plan presented and the three-year financial plan that was agreed upon in the summer. The three-year



plan still stands in terms of priorities to invest in quality and to return to a surplus position at the end of 2024-2025.

Questions were raised on how the College plans to meet the AEB in the current year as well as strategies for the future. It was noted that there may be limited use of select subcontractors in the current year with strategies being developed for more internal provision in future years.

The Committee spent some time discussing future opportunities and how these might impact the College communities. Universal Studios had held a public consultation at the College and the CEO explained more about potential plans for a theme park, the opportunities pre and post opening for local people, training and skills development.

An update on the MTFs will be discussed at the June meeting before Board approval is sought in July.

The Committee noted the report.

R/18/24 People Strategy Update (agenda 8)

The Committee confirmed they had read the paper. The Executive Director of HR confirmed that challenges continue with staff recruitment but that the addition of a talent acquisition lead and additional resource in the HR team will support progress in this area.

Discussion/Question

The Committee asked if there is a plan for a system to support delivery of the planned strategy. It was confirmed that the tender for the finance system was being approached in conjunction with HR to ensure system compatibility.

The Committee supported the direction of travel presented and confirmed that the components they would expect to see were present.

The Committee and Executive team had a robust discussion on the timing of reworked strategies, the development of KPIs underpinning individual strategies and how these will be picked up at Board level. Reporting to committee and the Board will be developed to ensure reflection on past performance, approval of future targets and mid-year reviews.



The timing of the presentation of the final strategy was debated. The Committee concluded that as a “stretch target” they would aim to review the strategy again in June.

The Committee noted the report.

R/19/24 HR KPI Monitoring (agenda 9)

The Executive Director of HR presented the report and set out a summary of the current establishment and current position.

Construction recruitment has been challenging given the job market in the private sector and we have also been having issues in the Sixth Form, which were discussed at main Board in March. Agency figures are higher in learning support due to the flexibility required to manage changing numbers of students and different levels of support required, as often these are not known prior to enrolment.

The Committee was pleased to note that sickness absence, although fairly static was now sitting below the not-for-profit sector average. CBC absence, although still higher than Bedford and Tresham was reducing, attributed to more robust but supportive approach.

Discussion/Question

The Committee questioned the relationship between the KPIs and surveys. Focus groups are taking place but actions to manage identified issues are already being undertaken. The CEO stated that the intention is not to undertake specific actions in response to survey feedback to focus on clarity of expectations, alignment of purpose, a culture leading to a satisfied workforce and leadership with integrity.

Governors raised the impact of the macro-economic environment on performance, for example the impact on turnover of employees seeking security but also the position where the College is performing against trends, e.g. with sickness levels going down whilst increasing elsewhere.

The Committee noted the report

R/20/24 Employee Relations (agenda 10)

The Executive Director of Human Resources provided the Committee with assurances that there were no issues of risk to report.



R/21/24 Decisions Under Delegated Authority (agenda 11)

No decisions have been taken under delegated authority since the last meeting.

R/22/24 Minutes From 31 January 2024

The minutes were agreed as a fair and true representation of the previous meeting save for adding Yiannis Koursis as present as a full member and removing from the attendees list.