

**Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting on
31st January 2024
Online, Microsoft Teams
16:00 – 19:00**

Present: Tom Dove-Wallington
Yiannis Koursis (CEO)
Faheem Mir
Noor Nazir
Allan Schofield
Alasdair Simmons (Chair)
Cliff Wragg

In attendance: 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)
David Roffey (Director of Revenues) (part)
Natasha Stringer (Senior Governance Coordinator) (Minutes)
Rob Lawson (External Board Reviewer)

R/1/24 Apologies For Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies

Apologies were received from Scarlet Ennis, student Governor.

Declarations of Interest

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

R/2/24 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

The Committee welcomed Yiannis Koursis to his first Committee meeting as a member since joining The Bedford College Group (“TBCG”) as the new CEO at the start of January.

R/3/24 Capital Projects Update

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

- Corby Sixth Form
 - External signage installed
 - Collapsed side elevation was deemed a near miss but non-reportable. It has been replaced after consultation, and the Subcontractor involved is no longer used.

Committee approved
24/04/2024



- Trinity Arts & Leisure – Pool
 - Following a report from a structural engineer in July, TBCG is looking at undertaking remedial works. The work includes:
 - Removal of pool surround and floor slab
 - Replacement of specific supports and corroded steelwork
 - Reinstall services and new pool liner
 - Install a new desk system and flooring that forms a complete seal with the pool gutter
 - Once the full scope of work has been specified, a tender will be submitted.
- Brunel Road
 - The College has been notified that the site will be subject to a rate review in 2025

Redaction of paragraph due to commercial sensitivity

Discussion/Question

The Committee sought and received assurances about the security of the Corby Sixth Form, including in the cycle store, and that the entrance to the site has gated access.

The Committee discussed access through the riverside entrance of the Tower block and the potential of allowing public access. Safeguarding is prioritised, but the gated system has the ability to disarm at appropriate times with security in place.

The Committee received assurances on the safety of the pool at Trinity Arts and Leisure, the timing of the works, and the impact of the ONS decision. ***The Committee will receive a paper detailing the work to be done on the pool.***

A discussion on the lease position, including rent reviews, breaks and dilapidations, was held; it was shared with the Committee that an accommodation committee and the Executive team are reviewing internally, and provision is made in the accounts for dilapidation claims.

The Committee noted the report

R/4/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy (“MTFS”)

The Deputy CEO Finance presented a report to the Committee, highlighting the budget model and its relationship with the number of students. The income of the organisation is directly proportional to the number of learners. This year, the focus is on setting targets and taking ownership of them at the department level. The targets include attendance, retention, and achievement. The Heads of the Departments will be encouraged to take ownership of their targets, which will not only include learner



numbers but also progression rates. The Deputy CEO Finance gave assurances to the Committee that, in the background, a budget will be set that does not put the organisation at any risk.

The Deputy CEO Finance provided two scenario planning increases in ESFA unit rate to demonstrate the gap in budget for the further funding allocation planned to be received 2024/2025 in the FE sector.

Discussion/Question

The Committee discussed the move from Higher Education to Higher Skills, including Higher Technical Qualifications, Access and Higher Apprenticeships. A discussion was held exploring the demographics and local market intelligence available to predict numbers.

The Committee discussed in detail the three-year financial plan that was agreed upon in the summer, with a projected deficit in the first year and the debate as to whether to invest in quality or work towards having a surplus. The current year's financial position has improved, the Executive is still working towards the three-year plan, prioritising investments in the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment.

The Committee sought information on the review of Wellingborough in terms of project delivery, financial efficiency, student numbers and future strategy, a paper to review elements of this will go to the Audit Committee in March 2024.

The Committee noted the report.

R/5/24 College Information Report

The Deputy CEO Finance summarised the College Information Report for the Committee, which included everything being green for the Key Performance Indicators, a summary of additional income and significant movement, additional settlements to maximise positions at year-end and on the whole, has seen a net positive movement.

Questions need to be resolved, take the break-even point or invest earlier than planned. Managers need coaching, being considered.

Discussion/Question

The Committee discussed the breakdown of student numbers, including Higher Education, Apprenticeships and Adult learners and how the rolling cash flow is being added to the report. The Committee confirmed that the presentation was easier to read and understand.

The Committee heard from DR on savings made on gas and electrics since signing a new contract and some data will be added to the board portal for the Committee information.

The Committee discussed the unplanned surplus, providing the opportunity for the College to consider a range of in-year plans that could aid changes in the quality agenda. The Committee heard of the planned developments to bring improved quality which included a realignment of responsibilities and expectations around teaching and learning, a separation of quality assurance and quality improvement, a change to a coaching model for teaching and learning, investment in digital innovation, investing in staff recruitment and professional development moving to be overseen by Human Resources under a learning and development agenda.

The Committee noted the report.

R/6/24 Capital Programme

The Director of Revenues presented updates in the Capital Programme to the Committee, including progress on bids, which included acceptance of the Local Skills Improvement Fund (“LSIF”) bid which TBCG will receive funding to support green technology equipment and training, and science and digital T level bid being accepted to upgrade the science and computer labs within the tower block and well as a number of grant applications in connection to the acquisition of engineering equipment for the Leighton Buzzard site and the grant to support the acquisition of agricultural equipment.

Discussion/Questions

The Committee inquired into the potential incoming spend needed for digital transformation mentioned at the last Committee meeting, the Deputy CEO Finance shared they are awaiting a report to better understand the impact and the Committee noted the inherent flexibility in the Capital Programme and that they will receive a full paper on plans for digital investment and management of the high cost likely to arise in 2025.

The Committee discussed the Solar Sponge data presented in the Annex and inquired as to the position on energy sold, which the Director of Revenues will check. The Committee was pleased to receive a return-on-investment calculation during the solar sponge proposal.



The Committee noted the report

R/7/24 HR KPI Monitoring

The Executive Director of Human Resources presented a report to the Committee, which focused on the challenges faced with recruitment and the planned responses to see improvements. Turnover had seen improvements, but sickness remained high but static, with benefits seen with hybrid working in regard to Covid 19 cases.

Discussion/Questions

The Committee sought and received assurances that new escalation processes, performance management accountabilities, and trigger points will address sickness challenges.

The Committee discussed in detail the importance of training and developing staff. The planned leadership training, especially around performance management, was also discussed, and the development of a management training programme and as its link to succession planning and retention. The Committee noted that the Executive Director of HR would be repositioned to Organisational Development, refocusing this to create future talent and create a culture that encourages growth and staff progression.

A Committee member inquired as to the tracking of KPI around the time to hire and the work being done.

The Committee noted the report.

R/8/24 People Strategy Focus Review

The Executive Director of Human Resources provided and summarised the report for the Committee, which included updated information on the Job Family Matrix, approved by the Board in 2023, it is now finalised and will be shared across the organisation as the pay role evaluation structure going forward. This will ensure better control of Equal Pay as well as give a clear visual development pathway to the staff at all levels. As part of this work, all roles and job titles were reviewed, adding to the transparency. The Executive Director of Human Resources was pleased to share that there had been good engagement and feedback.

Discussion/Questions

The Committee expressed their thanks for the report and the work done on the family



matrix. The Committee sought clarification on the alignment of roles, links to the market, and knowledge of the industry, and the use of market rate payments.

A Committee member inquired about the sources of data for market rates. The Executive Director of Human Resources explained the various methods used to obtain the information.

The Group Director of Governance asked for this to be linked back to the Remuneration Committee for audit purposes and to ensure the SPHs remain under the remit of the Remuneration Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

R/9/24 Employee Relations

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

R/10/24 Decisions Under Delegated Authority

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

R/11/24 Minutes From 20 November 2023

The minutes were agreed as a fair and true representation of the previous meeting.