

Meeting of the Resources Committee

MINUTES (Public)

Some items considered confidential on the grounds of commercial or personal sensitivity have been redacted from published minutes

Date	Wednesday 4 October 2023
Time	18:00 to 20:15
Location	Via Teams
Present (Governors):	Fred Gray (Committee Chair) Ian Carey (Support Staff Governor) Craig Mahoney (Chair of Corporation) Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive) Paul Stedman
In attendance	Ashok Patel (Interim Executive Director Finance) Donna Wall (Head of People) – item 3 Jordi Garcia (Logixx) – Item 4 Andy Ricketts (Head of Health and Safety/Int Head of Estates) – item 5 Nolan Smith (Estates Project Manager, Fusion) – item 6 Melissa Drayson (Director of Governance)
Apologies for absence	Hilary Omissi
Quorum	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
1. Preliminary items	
1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. Apologies from Hilary Omissi were noted. The Director of Governance flagged the vacancy on the committee created by the resignation of a governor over the summer. This would be discussed at the forthcoming Search and Governance Committee.	
1.2 Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interests relating to matters on the agenda. Previously declared interests were carried forward.	
1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance The Principal/CEO raised one item of other business, recorded under item 11.	
2. Minutes	

2.1 The Minutes of the meeting on 13th June 2023 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record and confidential sections were confirmed.

2.2 **Matters arising**

Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

It was noted that the all actions from the previous meeting had either been completed, or were on the agenda.

3. **Termly People Report**

Supporting paper presented by the Head of People

The Committee noted the following key points from the report:

- Measures to reduce the number of agency and sessional staff since the June report had been successful. Out of 222 employees, 187 were now 'establishment'.
- Since June, thirteen staff had been recruited from 16 advertisements. Vacancies still existed in critical areas including Computing, Carpentry, Brickwork, Electrical and Maths
- The Brooklands Track, showcasing the new College values and behaviours, had been developed in consultation with the college community and had now been rolled out. September was 'We Care' month, with staff encouraged to demonstrate how they care about themselves, students and our surrounding community.
- The College Performance Development Review process had been reviewed, to align with the Brooklands Track values, and to ensure that reviews were adding value and aiding understanding of how individual roles contributed to the wider college objectives.
- The college salary review had been completed. This had not resulted in any college wide changes apart from an uplift to the lowest paid staff to ensure that their pay is in line with the National Living Wage increases for 2024. Salaries in hard to fill areas had also been increased to align with market rates.
- Exit interview information showed that the main reasons for leaving between June and August were retirement, the commute and a role change outside of FE. For most teaching staff who left the college, the commute/relocation was the main reason for moving on, whereas for support staff the main reasons related more to personal circumstance and work-life balance. 50% of employees had taken up the chance to have an exit interview.
- With a continued focus on staff wellbeing and support, a range of staff events had been held, and new staff benefits platform had been launched.
- An update was provided on staff on capability processes, staff grievances and support for staff on long-term sick leave.

Governors queried the current take-up levels of exit interviews and suggested a target of 90%. Management considered that take-up would increase due to improved capacity within the HR team. In response to a question, it was confirmed that important learning points or common strands were communicated back to individual line managers.

It was noted that anxiety accounted for 26% of staff absence. The question was raised about whether this was mainly work-related or

outside work. It was confirmed that the source of the anxiety was recorded and that it varied, but that a range of employee assistance support measures were in place, including online packages and a college counsellor. Anxiety and stress had risen following the pandemic, and exit interviews were showing that work-life balance was an issue. The college was receiving more requests for flexible working and, whilst management was keen to meet these where possible, they needed to be balanced against the needs of the college's learners.

4. **IT and Cyber-Security Report**

Supporting paper presented by the Head of IT and Logixx

The Committee noted the extensive work that had been undertaken over the summer to upgrade IT infrastructure, and equip classrooms with new technology, especially for the new T Level digital classrooms. Day to day requests for IT support continued to be managed effectively.

Cyber security monitoring showed a similar profile to the previous report in terms of volume of email and numbers intercepted. Measures were in place to avert breaches caused by phishing, and the risk attached to students creating rules to divert college email to their personal accounts. Robust systems had been introduced to prevent personal data loss. The team was working to create barriers to make the college website more resistant to hacking.

Electronic access to all buildings had been installed during the summer, activated by college ID badges, to enhance safeguarding and security. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the system recorded individuals entering, but not exiting, so could not yet be used to monitor who was in the building.

Governors sought assurance that IT was adequately resourced and supported. It was confirmed that there was good communication and the college was responsive to requests to improve systems and security.

An external review of cyber security was being commissioned to bring recommendations on further improvements.

ACTION: To report the cyber security review key findings and recommendations back to the Committee

**J Garcia,
Logixx**

5. **Health and Safety Termly Report and policies**

Supporting paper presented by the Head of Health and Safety/ Interim Estates Manager

It was noted that the Head of Health and Safety would be giving up the interim Head of Estates role, which would provide more time to focus on completing actions from the Health and Safety audit in the summer, and instilling a strong Health and Safety culture.

Departmental risk assessments had been undertaken in high priority areas, and full completion would be prioritised. Compliance with chemical storage and ladder safety was being checked weekly.

Fire safety inspections were now underway, with training for key staff and fire marshals. First aid training had been delivered to twenty staff, with a further tranche planned.

The cross-College Health and Safety Committee had been refreshed with membership extended to middle managers.

The Health and Safety Policy had been reviewed in consultation with staff. All staff were being reminded of their responsibilities, and middle managers required to sign to confirm that they had fully read and understood the Policy.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that contractors were being managed effectively in terms of health and safety.

The Committee noted that a RAAC survey had been completed, and it had been confirmed orally that the campus was free of RAAC. The written report would be received soon.

The Health and Safety link governor would continue to meet the Head of H&S on a regular basis to track progress against the action plan.

AGREED: That the Health and Safety Policy would be recommended to the Corporation FOR APPROVAL.

6. Estates and facilities report

Supporting paper presented by N Smith, Fusion (project manager)

The Committee noted key updates from the written reports.

In terms of summer works, both Locke-King and Vickers were completed. The Vickers project was under budget, and some funding would be returned to Surrey County Council. The target date for completion of Edge was after Half Term.

A bid had been submitted for Local Skills Improvement Funding, to convert the studio theatre into a low carbon technology centre. This was part of a collaborative bid with Surrey and Hampshire Colleges. If successful, the target date for works would be the Spring.

T-Level funding support had been received for the Ashford construction centre. The electrical installation curriculum timetable would be adapted to enable access to the building in the Spring.

It was noted that the recent and planned work at Weybridge would provide a good jumpstart in terms of the wider redevelopment.

The planning application was now due to be considered in mid-November. The number of letters of support had increased to over 200, and opposition had not grown. A councillor briefing session had been organised by Cala in September. There remained concerns about traffic and transport, and it was understood that Surrey County Council would be confirming to Elmbridge that they were satisfied with the plans.

Following the meeting, the Department for Education had written to the Chief Executive of Elmbridge Borough Council to reassert and clarify the position regarding the debt, and (VSC) Very Special Circumstances case. Governors were reminded that the opinion of legal counsel had been taken on the VSC, and that this had been included in the viability report.

The report and recommendation from planning officers would be made available prior to the Committee under the PPA (pre-planning agreement). The Committee decision would be one of three: approve, decline or defer.

Governors commented that they had received a letter from Elmbridge Borough Council regarding amendments to the scheme. It was clarified that these reflected the Council's feedback regarding aspects of the design including the colour of the cladding. Any change to the original scheme would trigger a reconsultation.

7. Finance

Supporting papers presented by the Interim Executive Director Finance

7.1 Management Accounts and Cashflow Report – July 2023

It was noted that the draft year-end out-turn was slightly adverse to that reported in March. This was due to the inclusion of the interest payment on the DfE loan.

There would be some final adjustments through audit. The accounts included provision for potential income related to apprenticeship over-delivery. There was also provision for clawback relating to adult under-delivery. There was, however, capacity for movement in the numbers and it was possible that the deficit would reduce.

7.2 Budget position and student numbers

Early indications were that the college was on track with its income and expenditure estimates, and that the curriculum efficiencies work undertaken in recent months had started to pay dividends in terms of increasing class-sizes, consolidating groups and achieving higher staff utilisation. Learner numbers (16-19) were on target and apprenticeships were looking strong, although the 42 day census for 16-19 was critical.

Over the summer, it had been announced that colleges had received an additional funding allocation to support pay rises. This would be built into future funding. This would provide a solid base for investment in staff and quality improvement.

ACTION: to share the detailed student numbers paper to CPR Committee with Resources Committee members.

PCEO

7.3 Staff pay award proposals

The options presented in the paper were discussed. It was noted that the Association of Colleges recommendation was 6.5% and this was the

minimum expected by the Unions. With the additional funding provided, the College would be in a position to meet this.

In response to questions, management confirmed that other Colleges would be paying the recommendation either immediately, or on a staggered basis. The local context was that Brooklands had not been in a position to offer a pay award for several years, so was lagging behind the sector. Not aligning pay could place the college at further risk in terms of attracting and retaining staff in key areas.

It was considered important that staff were informed of the decision as soon as possible. It was, therefore:

AGREED: That a Special Corporation meeting would be convened the following week, to consider a recommendation that Pay Award Option 2 should be implemented.

7.4 College insurance update

Supporting paper presented by the Interim EDF

The key points relating to the insurance renewal were noted. These included a significant premium increase, linked to the college claims history and the risk attached to 'mothballed' buildings. The new premium was based on a three-year renewal which was recommended, as accepting a one-year option carried the risk of a further premium increase in 2024-25.

AGREED: That it be recommended to the Corporation that the three-year insurance renewal option with Aviva be APPROVED.

8. College systems integration report

Verbal update by the Interim EDF

The payroll, MIS and finance systems were now working well, and data was robust. There was still, however, a further project to integrate the systems properly. It was thought that this would be an intensive piece of work, lasting 4-6 weeks. The decision about whether to engage a project manager would be passed to the new Chief Operating Officer with SLT.

AGREED: That the Committee would be updated with progress on systems integration, including costs and timescales.

9 Finance and Resources KPI and risk report

Supporting paper presented by the Director of Governance

The Committee noted that the risk register had undergone detailed review and had been considered the previous week by the Audit Committee. Of those risks falling within the remit of the Resources Committee, the score for finance risks had reduced as the financial situation had improved. Governors commented on the Health and Safety risk in the light of the evening's discussions, and the expectation that this would reduce rapidly with the actions being taken.

10 Committee matters

10.1 Review of Compliance with Terms of Reference 2022-23

Supporting papers presented by the Director of Governance

The Committee supported the opinion that it had complied with all of the tasks within the scope set out in the Terms of Reference. There had, however, been a delay to the review and update of the Financial Regulations. These would now be brought to the Committee by the new Chief Operating Officer in the Spring Term.

ACTION: to bring the updated Financial Regulations for approval in the Spring Term. COO

10.2 Committee workplan 2023-24

This was noted and ratified.

11. Other Urgent Business

The Committee was informed of recent staff changes within the staff team. Assurance was given that all key responsibilities were covered, but that overall capacity issues needed to be addressed.

12. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 29th November (including joint meeting with the Audit Committee)

Signed By: _____

Date: _____