

# Brooklands College

Minutes of the Resources Committee  
co-ordinated remotely via 'Zoom' meeting platform software  
across various domestic locations, commencing 19.15 hrs on 3 March 2021.

Present:	Fred Gray Andrew Baird Melanie Harding Christine Ricketts	Chair Chair of Governors  Principal
In Attendance:	Barbara Spittle Mary Hughes Jackie Pearson  Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE Sarah Glasspool John Brady Jonathan Lipscomb Nolan Smith	Vice-Chair of Governors Safeguarding Governor Chair of Curriculum and Performance Review Committee CEO Director of Finance and HR Estates Manager Clerk to the Governing Body Fusion
ESFA Observer:	Chris Dearnley	

## PART 1

### 1. Action in the event of fire

Action to be taken in the event of fire was left to the individual.

### 2. Welcome and apologies

There were no apologies for absence. The meeting was confirmed as being quorate.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

- i. Andrew Baird declared his other relevant positions as Chair of South Orbital Colleges and as Chair of the East Surrey Conservative Association.
- ii. Chris Dearnley was attending as an observer and as such he, and the ESFA, are not party to any decision made by the Governing Body.
- iii. Dr Barbara Spittle declared that she Barbara Spittle is a former Chair of Governors of East Surrey College and had been a Governor of Merton College prior to its merger with South Thames College.
- iv. Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE declared his position as Chair of the Sainsbury's T-Level Committee.
- v. Melanie Harding declared that she remained Education and Inclusion Service Manager, South West at Surrey CC until 26 March and would on 12 April be taking up a position as Project Director with the DfE.
- vi. No other declarations of interest were made.

#### **4. Notification of Any Other Business**

The Chair had not been notified of any other business.

#### **5. Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting (Part 1) on 11 November 2020**

The Clerk was asked to make two corrections:

8.2 the second bullet point should read '31 March 2021' not 2020.

11.1 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point requires a K after £1,059.

These corrections aside, the minutes were accepted as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair when circumstances permit.

#### **6. Draft Minutes of the Joint Audit & Resources Committee on 1 February 2021**

The minutes were accepted as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair when circumstances permit.

#### **7. Matters Arising and Action points from the Minutes of the Committee Meeting (Part 1) on 11 November 2020**

Referring to the minutes of the Resources Committee on 11 November 2020 (p4), the Director of Finance & HR updated the Committee on the VAT position vis-à-vis the Ashford Health & Beauty Salon.

Most College activities are exempt from VAT meaning in turn that the College may not reclaim any VAT on its expenditure. However, many activities at the Salon where the College is dealing with the public, are VAT standard rated. The case was being put to HMRC to reclaim VAT on a proportion of construction costs (perhaps 30% based on number of learning hours) over the life of the building and also any further running costs.

The external auditors, Buzzacott are supporting the application and have made the submission on the College's behalf. There is a high expectation of success.

Both the action points listed by the Clerk in his summary had been completed.

*[Lee Holloway joined the meeting at 19.24]*

#### **8. Capital Expenditure [RES 20/21-08]**

##### **Noted:**

- i. It has been clear for some time that the College's MIS is not fit for purpose and is inefficient, having lacked any development for some time.
- ii. It is a key recommendation of the FE Commissioner that there should be an improvement in reporting and replacement of the current MIS was something that came out of the Performance Reviews.
- iii. A proper business case for replacing the MIS is therefore being assembled and it will require capital expenditure.
- iv. Replacing the current MIS ought to achieve savings of c£12K per annum on maintenance costs along with efficiency savings on staffing. Further savings may be achieved by switching away from CELCAT.
- v. Assuming that the College goes ahead, it will need to give notice to its current suppliers in the next few days, ahead of finalising the business case and entering into a procurement process with the aim of completing the project by 1 July 2021.

- vi. If the new contract is for more than three years then the cost will exceed £50K.

**Agreed:**

**MIS**

- i. That the replacement of the current MIS has come up at Performance Reviews and was recommended by the FE Commissioner. It will improve information collection and reporting.
- ii. The Resources Committee supports SLT in replacing the MIS and Officers are to proceed with speed to a tendering process. Governors: Fred Gray, Jackie Pearson and Melanie Harding are to be kept apprised.
- iii. If the cost is >£50K then approval will be sought from the Resources Committee, by Chair's action or in written form between meetings.

**Transformation funds**

- i. Approval was given for consultants to prepare the first phase of the bid for 'Transformation Funds'. The fees for this may be capitalised if the project goes ahead. If the College passes Stage 1 of the process then these will be refunded anyway.

**9. Report of the Director of Finance & HR [RES 20/21-09]**

**Noted:**

- i. **Management accounts** to the end of January forecast a deficit of 195K (an increase of 64K against plan). Since December's management accounts had adjusted AEB income down by £350K, leaving the College with a negative variance of £368K against plan. Savings of £200K in pay costs are planned. £100K of this will be by not filling vacancies but action will need to be taken to effect the further reduction.
- ii. Savings of £104K against non-pay is anticipated in respect of contracts (e.g. cleaning contracts) with the reduced College footprint and a reduction in spending directly related to the COVID pandemic.
- iii. Risks remain around income and AEB income in particular is being monitored on a weekly basis.
- iv. **Cashflow forecast** shows a low point of £1.3M. The GLA have agreed to a delay in our paying their clawback which means that March will now not look as bad as had been anticipated. March 2022 will be another low point of £0.5M.
- v. The Principal reported that the current week's AEB funding review against target showed an increase of £34K. It is recognised that the College has further to go but it is moving in the right direction.
- vi. The CEO added that since Prime Minister's announcement, the take up of such courses has increased considerably.
- vii. Outturn has been reviewed on a line by line basis.
- viii. The objectives in the College Improvement Plan have been updated.
- ix. In the case of **Bank covenants** the College has breached a covenant during each of the past two years. This year, SLT are forecasting that the College will again breach one of its two covenants.
- x. Operating Leverage which considers the operational deficit against borrowing is forecast to be satisfactory in that it will be at an acceptable proportion.

- xi. However, it is forecasted that the covenant relating to cash movements during the year (whether from cash available, is it affordable to pay back both the principal and interest on the loan) is forecasted to be at 55% against the required 100%. This is largely due to movements in debtors and creditors and because of the clawback.
  - xii. The College has updated its fee policy for 2021-22, largely reflecting good practice already in place but with the addition of a paragraph intended at protection against liability in 'unusual circumstances'. The confirmation of a detailed policy in this respect was noted.
  - xiii. The Chair raised a concern over safeguards needing to be in place in the case of cash receipts for courses so as not to fall foul of money-laundering provisions. The College needs to make sure that receipts are from a legitimate source, particularly in the case of overseas students.
  - xiv. The College website has been updated to make sure that students understand the process which will be followed in the event of non-payment, as recovery is becoming increasingly difficult.
  - xv. **Outline budget for 2021/22 and 2022/23.** The table shows where the College plans to be for these two years. The study programme is largely known and allocations agreed. It is still hoped that release from COVID restrictions will bring increased earnings.
  - xvi. As expressed previously there is a need to make savings of £250,000 to balance the operating deficit for the year.
  - xvii. Any early downsizing will influence the cost of certain contracts.
  - xviii. Budget work is at present merely a scoping exercise. SLT will return to the Committee with firm proposals in due course.
  - xix. The budget as expressed does not include any development costs.
- [Dr. Barbara Spittle leaves the meeting at 19.48.]*
- xx. It was reported that the application for a loan with the 'LEP 3' is in progress, as is the revaluation of the assets – the surveyors had been on-site that day and the Estate Manager gave a brief update on their visit.
  - xxi. The Chair thanked the Estates Manager who together with the Executive Assistant had provided voluminous amounts of information to enable the visit to proceed smoothly. The outcome is expected to be known in two to three weeks.
  - xxii. The HR Report for 2019-20 was received.

**Agreed:**

- i. The fees policy 2021/22 was approved for onward submission to the Full Governing Body for their approval on 31 March 2021.

**10. Health & Safety Report [RC 20/21-10]**

**COVID-19 Testing**

- i. Further to the report and following the announcement by the Prime Minister, the College's COVID testing centre had had only two weeks to upscale from testing 50 essential staff members, twice a week to between 1,200 and 1,500 tests per week as the students return.
- ii. This had been one of the best team efforts the Health & Safety Manager had ever been involved in with almost every part of the college having assisted.
- iii. A core team of nine members over the past six weeks was being expanded to the point where training sessions for 30 volunteers from the local community (parents and other stakeholders)

were to be held on each of the following two days. They had undertaken the mandatory NHS training and were now receiving practical hands-on training. The volunteers have a wide range of skillsets and some have experience of a clinical environment and even vaccination centres. All this had been assembled at pace and had brought every element of the College together. It has gone very well.

- iv. From the following day, staff will no longer be tested in the on-site testing centre but will avail themselves of home testing kits to test themselves twice a week. An instruction video is being circulated.
- v. General refresher content on core Health & Safety matters (and in particular on the College's COVID reporting procedures) was being developed with the Human Resources department for dissemination to both staff and students as many have been away from the campus for some time now.
- vi. Members were pleased to see a renewed emphasis on recording near misses. The Health & Safety Officer attends departmental meetings where possible to impress upon staff the importance of such reporting in accident prevention.
- vii. The Principal was keen for members to recognise that the Health & Safety Officer's efforts had been instrumental in setting up the testing centre and related protocols. The scale of the task had been significant.
- viii. The Governors present expressed their thanks to the Health & Safety Officer.
- ix. Asked if staff who are working at home can borrow chairs and monitors not currently in use in the school, the Health & Safety Officer confirmed that home working had been very much in mind and for example laptop stands have been issued where appropriate.
- x. Weekly COVID communications have reminded staff that the HSE have useful information on their website about home working.
- xi. Working together with Human Resources, the Health & Safety Officer had sourced an array of 'well-being' resources, arranged for Mental Health First Aiders to be available and developed a Health & Safety microsite within the College intranet. He remained open to any suggestions as to how these and other initiatives might be supplemented.

*[Item 12. Was taken next]*

## **12. Estates Report [RES20/21-12]**

### **Noted:**

- i. Locke King Phase 1 will be completed on 12 March (Main Hall, Finance and HR moving into the Locke King building).
- ii. Phase 2 will begin on 15 March with a target completion date of 30 April; the need to follow HSE guidelines on asbestos removal having caused delays. That removal process was now complete.
- iii. The Ashford Hair & Beauty Salon will be moved from its temporary accommodation on Friday 5 March along with any related stock and the official opening is pencilled in for 8 April.
- iv. Many cleaners were on furlough, with a view to returning to work on Monday to provide reassurance to returning students over the cleanliness of the premises.

*[Lee Holloway left meeting at 20.06]*

## **11. IT Report [RES 20/21-11]**

### **Noted:**

- i. By way of additional information to the report, the Principal informed members that she and the Director of Finance & HR had that day met with the Internal Auditors (RSM) to decide on the scope of the forthcoming IT Audit and had agreed to focus on secure remote working, incorporating five core aspects of cyber-security. The audit is set provisionally for mid-April.
- ii. Members were concerned about a minority of issues that prove difficult for the Helpdesk to resolve and whether support was available for students and staff, encountering such challenges.
- iii. The Principal cited cases of both staff and students who were finding it very hard to work remotely on account of problems with IT. Arrangements had been made for them to come in to teach and learn on-site. SLT were doing their best to respond to individual cases.
- iv. Asked about the routing of IT messaging between the Campuses at Ashford and Weybridge, the CEO responded that for reasons of efficiency, the faster 'Hub and Spoke' model was being utilised.

## **13. Status of Policies relevant to the Committee's remit**

- i. An Excel spreadsheet of College policies had been assembled by the College policy group and these policies aligned to the Governing Body Committees.
- ii. This had been circulated and members had been asked to note those that had been aligned with this committee and to advise whether they believed that any of the policies aligned to other committees instead belonged with Resources.
- iii. One further new policy had been approved by the Policy Group: 'Careers Advice and Guidance' and this will be added to the spreadsheet.

## **14. Any Other Business**

There being no other business, Part Two of the meeting was closed at 20.13.

## **15. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Resources Committee will be convened on 16 June 2021.

Fred Gray  
Chair of Resources Committee

Jonathan Lipscomb  
Clerk to the Governing Body