



## **BRIGHTON HOVE AND SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION'S RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2024 AT 6.00 P.M.**

#### **IN ROOM 538, TOP FLOOR, ELMS BUILDING**

**Present:** Kirstin Baker (Co-Chair of Governors), William Baldwin (Principal), Mick McLean (Governor and Digital Link Governor), Marcus Palmer (Governor and Chair of Resources Committee)

**In attendance:** Jutta Knapp (Vice-Principal (Resources), Livvy Birney (HR Manager) – until the end of item 2.1), Mark Monahan (Assistant Principal (Digital and Communications), Alison Mansell (Governor), Louise Pennington (Governance Professional),

#### **1.1 Apologies and Welcomes**

Apologies: Paul Lovegrove, Jo Usher

Welcomes: Livvy Birney (HR Manager) and Alison Mansell (Governor and new Member of Resources Committee subject to approval at Corporation on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024)

#### **1.2 Minutes of the last Meeting held in June 2024**

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

#### **1.3 Matters Arising**

It was agreed that matters arising detailed in the action log were included on the agenda, in progress or closed. Regarding the item on financial health confirmation and the financial dashboard, Jutta Knapp confirmed that all Governors had been given access to the portal for the purposes of reviewing this information, notwithstanding that a paper with this information is brought to Governors on a regular basis. It was confirmed that the benchmarking dashboard, which is new and has only just been uploaded by the ESFA to the website, will be brought to the next meeting, once SLT has had an opportunity to review and select the most appropriate comparator Colleges. It was also noted that benchmarking information was included in the Finance Record, which is a summary of the Annual Report and Financial Statements due to be submitted to the ESFA by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 after approval by Corporation. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

#### **1.4 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations received, apart from those already disclosed in the Governors' registration and declarations of interest/and related party transactions as recorded in the Annual Report and Accounts.

#### **1.5 Principal's Update – Quality & Curriculum and Audit Matters**

William Baldwin introduced his report and summarised the key matters reported and considered at Q & C Committee and Audit Committee.

At this point Mick McLean joined the meeting.

Thanks were recorded to William Baldwin for this report.

#### **2.1 Termly Update on HR and Related Matters including National Staff Pay Negotiations**

## **Papers: Front Sheet, Staff Wellbeing and Absence Report, Trade Union Facility Time, Gender Pay Gap**

Livvy Birnie (HR Manager) provided the following report:

- **National Pay Negotiations:** Government Funded pay increases will not include SFCs and will only therefore apply to Schools and Academies including SFC Academies, which have already received the funding. NEU (Teaching Union) Strike Action will go ahead, with 3 individual days before Christmas and continuous strike action planned for the New Year. The SFCA which acts on behalf of its members (including academized and non-academized SFCs) has submitted a legal challenge based on discrimination. Furthermore, the Government has included £300M in the budget for FE but this is not going to be available for staff pay and will be assigned to Colleges in relation to increasing demographics.
- **Employment law updates** – Employment Rights Bill was referenced and the HR Manager had attended a SFCA webinar on this topic yesterday. It was thought unlikely that there would be any changes introduced before 2026 at the earliest and including a consultation process, noting also that there was a focus on unfair dismissal. Other proposed changes may be adopted by the College once agreed such as paternity leave amendments, flexible working and other family friendly practices. Governors were also informed about new laws relating to sexual harassment and the associated employers' duties, reflecting the requirements of the new Act. A risk assessment is required as part of this process and the College will be investigating staff training options.
- **Staff wellbeing/absence report** – Currently the HR Department is supporting 40 members of staff with physical and mental health issues, which has increased since last year. The HR Manager joined CQT last Friday to talk through the various HR staffing matters. Nationally all industries have seen an increase in absence based on AoC data and having had feedback from the S7 HR Managers, all are experiencing an increasing number of Staff with health issues. Various HR training courses have been attended by the HR Team including bereavement, domestic abuse, with arrangements in place to cascade the training within the department and management. Regarding wellbeing, the department is investigating various options relating to counselling, taking into account the budgetary constraints. The increase in Managers' absence was also noted, having doubled from 5 to 10 days, but reflecting operations/recovery time etc in 3 of the 5 higher cases.
- **Gender Pay Gap** – overall mean decreased but median increased which appears to be misleading but in fact reflects the staff pay scales. Overall gender pay is improving, except the mean has increased for teaching staff reflecting the fact that more female teachers were appointed at the lower spine points for the given year. The analysis will shift again this year as the College has recruited male early careers' teachers in September. In response to the HR Manager's invitation to provide other information/analysis, it was suggested that a more detailed termly sickness absence report would be useful, rather than the current end of year report. It was also agreed that key aspects could be added to the dashboard and brought to Resources Committee via SLT. Livvy Birney also agreed to investigate benchmarking tools for Support and Teaching Staff. **ACTION: HR/WJB**

Thanks were recorded to Livvy Birnie for her report after which she left the meeting.

### **3.1) Annual Accounts and Financial Statements for the Year to 31//7/24**

#### **Papers:**

- Annual Accounts Report**
- Financial Statements for year to 31/7/24**
- Management Report (for information)**

Jutta Knapp presented the paper to the Committee highlighting the following aspects:

- Audit was completed in September having commenced in August, with no amendments or recommendations.

- The Committee is invited to review the Reports and Statements, and recommend these to Corporation for approval.
- The College has achieved a clean audit as referenced in the Audit Management Letter attached for information, which will go to Audit Committee next week for consideration.
- reference was made to the pension calculations, noting the investment fund performance was in surplus which is not shown in the balance sheet unlike a deficit.
- All bank covenants have been met and financial targets are met or close.
- The College has very thorough financial processes, with an experienced Finance Team.
- Subject to approval by Corporation the signed Annual Report and Financial Statements are required to be submitted to the ESFA, along with the Audit Management Letter, Letters of Representation and Regularity Audit, by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

The Committee considered the various papers and recommended the Annual Report and Financial Statements to Corporation for approval. **ACTION: Chair/Jutta Knapp**

### **3.2) Management Accounts for 9 months to 31/10/2024**

#### **Papers:**

- a) Front Sheet**
- b) Management Accounts**

Jutta Knapp presented the paper to the Committee highlighting the following aspects:

- 3 months' accounts in line with the budget.
- Planned overspend iro the CCTV project (increase in CCTV site coverage and overall CCTV project cost is approximately £14K installation plus £11K for 1 year licencing) which will be reflected in next month's figures.
- 3% pay rise has been included – risk of the SFCA National Agreed negotiations resulting in above 3% award was noted, which the College could not afford to pay out of its existing income and would also not be able to utilise its reserves for this as it would breach its bank covenants.
- NI increase has been included which the Government has confirmed will be funded – awaiting details and this will be with effect from April 2025.
- Bank loans which are on a 5 year rolling arrangement are due to renew in May 2025 with Lloyds Bank – but noting the ONS reclassification of Colleges into the public sector, no commercial borrowing is allowed so the College has been negotiating with the ESFA to take over the existing borrowing and the details relating to this are awaited; The College made the initial contact with the ESFA in May 2024 seeking instructions on requirements and the form provided has been completed and submitted, but no further response has been received from the ESFA.

The Committee was reminded that the Management Accounts would be circulated to the Corporation at the December 2024 meeting. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp/LEP**

### **3.3) ESFA Condition of Funding and Accountability Agreement** (full document available on request)

Jutta Knapp introduced the paper and the changes to the document were noted by the Committee.

### **3.4) ESFA Dashboard and Financial Health Confirmation**

#### **Papers:**

- a) Front Sheet**
- b) ESFA Financial Health Confirmation**
- c) ESFA Dashboard Report**

Jutta Knapp presented the papers to the Committee, the contents of which were noted and the following points were highlighted:

The College submitted the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) for 23/24 to 24/25 by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 and self-assessed the College's financial health as "good" for both years, which the ESFA has endorsed.

The financial dashboard is available online to Governors in a new digital format on the ESFA portal, noting the copies included in the papers for information.

Benchmarking data will be reviewed and a paper produced for Governors at a future Meeting.

**ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

### **3.5) College Development Plan 2023-2024 – Final Update**

#### **Section 4 Leadership and Management, including Digital Aspects and Input from Digital Link Governor**

William Baldwin and Mark Monahan, with input from Mick McLean, Digital Link Governor, presented the written report and highlighted the following aspects, together with providing further details and updates to the Committee:

Headlines and infrastructure projects – Mark Monahan

- 1) **Internet Filtering Project:** completed – implementation and training with safeguarding Team. Staff workload has increased but greater ability to detect Student online activity, with alerts etc. The new project has provided safeguarding compliance with the DfE's digital framework and guidance for Colleges and Schools.
- 2) **Cyber Security Updates:** Microsoft Defender provides a multi-device security facility which assesses the College's digital assets, takes account of global threats and provides information on how to improve and make more robust improvements. The College's score in this area remains high and above average to other similar organisations.
- 3) One of the College's IT Network Technicians has left the College having decided to enrol on a full time degree, instead of remaining at the college to pursue a degree apprenticeship. Other members of the IT Team have taken over the work commitments including support for the CompSciT department and the IT support team.
- 4) **IT Audit** - actions from this have been completed and the team are now working with JISC to develop more substantial cyber security review, above that already established via cyber essentials. The College intends to carry out a CIS deep dive, together with data assets and investigate online Microsoft security too.
- 5) **CCTV project** –the project is progressing and additional areas of the site have been added to ensure effective coverage. The key areas for CCTV monitoring are being considered and also areas where buildings have changed, where additional coverage may be required, especially where students congregate and the perimeter areas. Costs will include the initial cost of equipment and installation together with the ongoing licencing costs. The aim is to protect Students and Staff and also to deter strangers coming on site. Reference was made to Martyn's Law. The process for implementation will start with the new system being implemented, following by a transition to more responsive elements – i.e. notifying estates team if/when strangers are on site etc.
- 6) **Printing Infrastructure:** This project is nearing completion, noting that a value for money exercise had been completed with one provider which were unable to provide all the devices and finishing reprographics and an alternative provider is being considered, with the aim of reducing annual costs and increasing capacity.
- 7) **Main Hall Audio-Visual Equipment** – this has been updated.
- 8) **Phased replacement of Classroom Smart Boards** – staff will also be receiving training on additional functionality.
- 9) **Digital Coaches** – these are in place to support colleagues with improving Student learning environment and a consistency of learning and auditing all course areas.
- 10) **Admissions Process** – project underway but further progress to be made, including checking data administration process and considering the development of AI options. Student Parents

inductions had moved to 'live' online events on YouTube to improve engagement, and to date engagement with A1 Students and Parents had been higher.

- 11) **AI** – whole Staff inset was held in May with the aim of developing the use of AI. We are now progressing to investigating and testing some Microsoft models to assess options and viability of future workload reduction tools.
- 12) **IT Infrastructure** – new router has been installed 10gb connection to better manage the capacity required on site during busy times e.g. lunchtime.
- 13) **Link Governor Meeting:** Mark Monahan and Mick McLean met earlier today to go through the various Digital projects and the progress made was acknowledged.

### **3.6) Non-ESFA Income Generation 2023/2024**

Reference was made to the written report presented and noted by the Committee, highlighting the 3 areas which generated income – catering, evening languages and lettings with an income increase in all areas; costs are lower in the lettings area owing to fewer staff required.

The Sports Café is no longer available to hire as it's been converted into a gym and the Drama Studio is now an "immersive" room for Staff and Students only too. Governors were reminded that the Strategy was such that both catering and evening languages were operating on a value for money service to the Students (catering) and local community (evening languages – currently 624 Students). Venue hire does generate a useful income, but again as it's mainly for the local community to hire, charges are reasonable too; the Sports Hall is fully booked for the year.

### **3.7) Premises Update**

The Committee was reminded of the 3 main projects:

- Extension to Piazza Café – work commencing on Monday, with contractors which the College is working with for the first time. A Marquee, with heating, has been set up in the lower concourse next to the Elms Building providing additional study/social space for Students and furniture from the Café has been transferred here. The extension work should be completed by early March 2025.
- New Students/Student Services building proposal to replace the leased modular buildings. The planning application is in progress and expected to be completed shortly. Once approved, the College will investigate relocation options for the temporary classrooms which will be moved to enable the building works to commence; funding for this project will also be required and bids will be submitted once options are made available.
- Artificial all-weather pitch and netball/tennis court, with flood lights, supported by Sports England – planning application will be submitted once the second, Student Services building project above has been agreed; funding has not yet been made available for the Student Services building.

#### **b) Access to Capital for Future New Building Projects**

The Committee was informed that this would probably be deferred until the CSR (Comprehensive Spending Review) had been completed. It was also reported that although the Government had announced that £300M of capital had been included in the budget for Further Education, Sixth Form Colleges (non-academised SFCs) were excluded from this. At this point it was recorded that the SFC sector average square meterage per Student was 4sqm, compared to the overall sixth form sector average of 6sqm.

The Committee was reminded that the ONS reclassification of SFCs into the public sector has meant that SFCs can no longer participate in bank borrowing and are therefore reliant upon Government grant funding.

The Committee recommended to Corporation for approval, to appoint Square One as the Construction Team for the Student Café Extension as recommended by the Premises Group. The Committee is asked to note the report and confirm the appointment of Square One as contractors for the student café extension as recommended by the premises Group. **ACTION: WJB/JHK**

At this point Kirstin Baker left the meeting and the meeting remained quorate.

**c) Premises Group Terms of Reference – revision to TOR**

It was agreed that the terms of reference should be updated and recommended to Corporation for approval, to reflect the change in membership, removing the requirement to have a member of Resources Committee with building expertise, taking into account that there may not be a member fitting this category. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

**3.8) Sustainability Update – Report from Sustainability Link Governor (presented by the Principal on behalf of Simon Porges)**

The contents of the report submitted by Simon Porges, Link Governor, were noted and thanks were recorded to Simon Porges.

**3.8) Risk Assurance**

William Baldwin introduced the paper to the Committee, the contents of which were noted, including the fact that there were 6 “finance related” risks scoring 10 or above.

The Committee considered the details with the Risks and confirmed their endorsement regarding the score, mitigation and evidence, which would be confirmed to the Audit Committee next week.

Regarding the Risk Assurance, the Committee reviewed the document and confirmed that with regard to those key risks for which the Committee was responsible, sufficient assurance had been gained, notwithstanding the revision required to the sustainability risk as recorded above. It was therefore resolved to confirm this to the Audit Committee. **ACTION: William Baldwin/Jutta Knapp**

**SECTION 4: CONSENT AGENDA**

**Policies and Other Documents**

**4.1 Policies:**

- a) **Health and Safety Annual Update**
- b) **Fire Safety Policy**

Noting the contents of the front sheets and confirmation from SLT that only some minor housekeeping changes were necessary, the policies were recommended to Corporation for endorsement. **ACTION: SLT**

**SECTION 5: OTHER MATTERS**

**5.1 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**5.2 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6.00 p.m. in room 538 Elms Building**

**SECTION 6: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**6.1 Confidential Minutes from Last Meeting – none**

**6.2 Matters Arising – none**

**6.3 Any Other Business (confidential) – none.**

**Meeting closed: 8.03 P.M.**

Chair ..... Date .....