



BHASVIC

**BRIGHTON HOVE & SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON
TUESDAY 9TH MARCH 2021 AT 6.00 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA M. TEAMS**

Present: William Baldwin (Principal), Julia Holgate Turner (Governor – Support Staff), Mick McLean (Governor), Chris Newson (Governor), Marcus Palmer, (Governor), Sandra Prail (Chair of Governors), Mark Snape (co-opted Committee Member), Tom Wolfenden (Vice-Chair of Corporation and Chair of Resources).

Chair: Marcus Palmer

In attendance: Neil Perry (Vice-Chair of Governors, Audit Committee Member and HR Lead Governor), Genevieve Walton (HR Manager) – for item 2.1 HR, Jacquie Punter (Director for Digital Strategy) for Digital Update item 3.4, Jutta Knapp (Assistant Principal), Louise Pennington (Governance Director/Clerk)

NOTE: FOR EASE OF REFERENCE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM GOVERNORS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN BOLD ITALICS

SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence and Welcomes

Apologies: None

It was noted that Tom Wolfenden had informed the Chair that he would be delayed joining the Committee meeting owing to work commitments.

Welcomes: Genevieve Walter (HR Manager) was welcomed to her first meeting and it was also noted that Jacquie Punter (Director for Digital Strategy) would be joining the meeting for item 3.4 only.

1.2 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23rd November 2020

The minutes were approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them. Governors were reminded of the online meeting protocols.

1.3 Matters Arising

The contents of the actions' schedule were noted.

1.4 Declaration of Interests – None

1.5 Covid-19 Update

The Principal gave the following update to the Committee based around resource implications:

- Staff and Students have returned on site with effect from Monday 8th March for Covid testing purposes only and Teaching due to start tomorrow.
- Testing has taken place across 3 venues on site, with over 26 bays and 30 Students have been invited in every 5 minutes, with the aim of ensuring that Students have a negative test prior to returning to lessons.
- The test uptake has been very good at 85%, with 2,647 tests taken (out of a possible 3091) with 6 void tests and 1 positive test reported to date and the remainder being negative.
- Logistically this has been a significant operation and one experienced by all Colleges (and Schools) across the Country.

- The Estates Team and the Health and Safety Officer have worked at a very high level to ensure that the venues and procedures were in place in the short timeframe available.
- 3 Covid Operations' Managers have been recruited in the short term, to manage the 3 venues, as once Teaching re-commences, Teaching and Support Staff will not have the time to manage the testing process.
- An internal track and test process has been established and Covid Marshals continue to ensure compliance with social distancing and mask wearing requirements.
- Other mitigating action – the College will continue with the Autumn Term xyz timetable, whereby 2/3 of each class returns at any one time, which will allow for adequate social distancing in classrooms to be maintained; the 1 way system will continue to operate and cleaning on site remains at the higher level established last year.
- There are mixed feelings across both Staff and Student communities in terms of anxiety and confidence in returning to the College site.
- The remainder of this term is short with only 3 weeks and 2 days before Good Friday.
- SMT has still to decide on operations post Easter and consideration will be given as to whether to return to full class cohorts once further analysis becomes available and giving time to determine the rate of infection in Brighton and the College, nearer the time. Returning to "normal" would assist the assessment process for A2 Students.
- A2 subject Assessment grading process – there is flexibility for Colleges to determine their own way of calculating the assessment grades which in some ways makes it more likely that there will be appeal challenges in view of the lack of consistency across the sector. In comparison to last year, in 2020 Students had completed their courses, sat their mock exams etc, whilst in the current year this has been a very different experience - of the 13 weeks on site last term, following the 2/3 model, key assessment points have been missed. The latter means that a new process must be established to take into account assessments made to date, whilst also giving Students an opportunity to boost their grades over the next few weeks of possible testing. Some Students who perform well in exams or who tend to work intensely at the end of their time at College, would prefer to sit exams, rather than have their grades assessed via alternative means. Next Thursday, the Principal will be taking proposals to Heads of Department with the intention that assessments are based on course activities, key homework, non-examined assessments, in class assessments e.g. mini-exams etc in order to provide a balance of areas to achieve the final grade award and to maximise the opportunities for Students to achieve as well as possible. Once the details have been resolved, Students and Parents, who are very keen to find out the methodology, will be informed by the College. Regarding the various assessment proposals, it was noted that the application of the various elements may be more difficult to achieve depending on the subject area.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- *In response to a question from Governors, the Principal explained that some Colleges had indicated that they would be implementing full on site examinations which BHASVIC would be uncomfortable with bearing in mind that nationally, examinations have been cancelled. The most common approach seems to be in class assessments.*
- *Staff have been tested onsite twice per week, over recent weeks (approximately 40-50 have been on site during the lockdown). Since Monday, Staff testing has moved to the use of home testing kits (voluntary testing) and no figures are available yet regarding take up as currently Staff are signing up for test kits via a form in the Staff Room.*
- *Staffing of the Student testing operation has been very good with 120 Staff volunteering to support this and thanks were recorded to Staff for doing this. The College has recruited 30 Staff externally to facilitate the Student testing process from tomorrow, as Staff will have had to return to Teaching etc as normal.*
- *The test results are linked to the Government's testing website so that the figures may be calculated on a national basis and there is an incentive for Colleges to follow this process, as funding is received for every test submitted – the funding converts to £20K for every 1K Students which means that the College is likely to received up to £55K for the next 2 weeks' of Student testing; once the home testing process commences, post the 2 week period, no further funding is awarded.*

At this point Tom Wolfenden joined the meeting.



Governors recorded their thanks to Staff for their significant efforts in ensuring that the testing venues were ready for the return to the College.

1.6 Strategic Plan – Draft

The Principal presented the updated draft Strategic Plan and explained that subject to any further changes, the final draft would be considered at Corporation for approval at its March meeting.

- The useful strategy session at the January 2021 Corporation meeting was discussed noting that the input from Governors had been incorporated into the latest draft.
- The document has also been shared with Staff and Student Ambassadors for consultation.

Headline Revisions:

- The 7Cs have been removed – based on Governors recommendations and also supported by Staff.
- The above has been replaced with a tag line “Contemporary, Creative, Learning Community” which reflects the development of the College’s Strategy since the Principal’s appointment.
- There are 4 key aims under each of the key strategic aims in the tag line above.
- Of the 4 main suggestions made by Governors at the last Corporation meeting, all have been incorporated into the latest Plan: sustainability; income generation (via proposed feasibility study in respect of adult skills Level 3 qualifications as part of an expanding evening offer); Student Services and Guidance – ongoing discussion reported via the Quality and Curriculum Committee regarding the balance of resources in this area and possible restructuring/resourcing, noting that phase 1 of the consultation process with the respective Staff – this aspect has been included in the Strategic Plan within the section referring to getting the balance of resources right and also when to signpost to external providers etc; under the community section, stakeholder engagement has been incorporated, noting that a separate document will be generated to cover this aspect – a stakeholder engagement strategy which will include such topics as partnerships, strategic direction, priorities etc

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

- *The Principal confirmed that the intention would be that the new Strategic Plan would be in place until 2025.*
- *Annual reports relating to the Strategy are reported via the College Development Plan (CDP) with updates provided termly to Governors.*
- *The Committee indicated that to some degree and owing to the pandemic, the strategic review process had been condensed and had been carried out online rather than the usual face to face review event and that Governors were keen to ensure that all aspects had been considered and that sufficient time had been allocated to this process. However, on reflection it was thought that all issues of importance had been taken into account and that there were no particular concerns. However, it was noted that should further thoughts or ideas become apparent, these could be passed to the Principal by 15th March 2021 before the final paper is included with the Corporation meeting papers, due out on 16th March 2021. In response the Principal advised that some of the suggestions made by Governors would be discussed in more detail via the feasibility study and the stakeholder paper.*
- *Other points raised by Governors were around the risk of funding cuts (owing to the impact of Covid costs) and the digital transformation ongoing work including costings and any implications arising from these. regarding the latter, in particular the details of the spending allocation was queried – are we spending the same amount in different ways, or spending less, how reliant is this on income generation, are the IT costs assessed as a percentage of fees, how much flexibility is there in the budget? It was noted that the latter issue would be dealt with within the Digital Strategy reports, rather than the College Strategic Plan, and that*

the digital transformation budget would be incorporated into the whole College Budget for the Committee and Corporation to consider later this year. The Principal also explained that the digital developments would be a priority but that this would have to take into account affordability and also noted the cross over cost impact between legacy systems and licensing for which the College is still paying, but will come to an end soon and the new live systems which will provide longer term cost savings in due course. It was agreed that although this was a significant factor in the College's future operations, it would change the intent of the Strategic Plan, although the timing of the digital plans, may in some instances take more time to implement owing to cost implications. At this point Mick McLean (Digital Lead Governor) added that there were 2 key elements of the digital transformation, being the transformation itself (road map etc) and identifying how can this support other initiatives within the Strategic Plan which will need to be worked through per area to determine capacity and then review costings depending upon the bronze, silver or gold target initiatives.

- *In response to a query regarding the performance indicators on page 22, Jutta Knapp confirmed that the indicators in the Strategy document provide a "good" outcome, based on the following drivers – earnings before interest and tax, current ratio, financial health scores, which provides the overall rating and noting that the last Strategic Plan had had a "satisfactory" financial health rating which changed to "requires improvement".*

Noting the comments made above, the draft Strategic Plan, was recommended to Corporation for approval. **ACTION: William Baldwin**

SECTION 2: HR AND RELATED MATTERS

2.1 Termly Update on HR and Related Matters

Papers: a) front Sheet, b) Employment Checks' Update, c) Pay Issues – National Pay Negotiations

Genevieve Walter, HR Manager gave the following update to Governors following an introduction given by Jutta Knapp.

- Timetable for b) Employment Checks' Update was inherited from Emily Andrews who is on maternity leave, noting the end of January for completion. Having had the lockdown and the need to complete this physical exercise of reviewing files on site, consequently the project has been delayed. The end date has therefore been revised to the end of March which remains a soft deadline owing to the current workload for the HR Department and the possibility of other demands arising eg mass testing. It will be made a priority though noting that should an Ofsted Inspection be notified, the Update must be completed prior to Inspectors coming on site. The HR Department is intending to close the office for 1 day in order to assist in the completion of this task and have scheduled this for 18th March 2021.
- There are 2 tribunal cases on going – 1 of which has a hearing scheduled for the end of August 2021 and the other has a preliminary hearing scheduled for 14th June 2021. Updates will be provided at the next Committee meeting.
- Consultation process in respect of Student Services, Guidance and Tutorial Teams has been progressed with feedback from HR being provided to SMT in terms of improvements, priorities etc. The process has been seen as a very positive one to date.
- Staffed Student Covid testing process using Staff volunteers over the last 2 days, together with additional paid Staff to provide cover once Teaching commences tomorrow. This has been a significant undertaking but has run effectively.
- The College's recruitment process is preparing to move from online to on site with immediate effect, having completed a risk assessment in order to ensure that the College has complied with Covid related Health and Safety measures. The first interviews have been scheduled for Thursday.
- Legislative changes update – already mentioned the employment check timetable above arising from the new Immigration law post Brexit, gender pay gap reporting is due on 30th March 2021 and there is a change in the minimum wage from April 1st along with other statutory rate increases, such as Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).



- *Governors questioned the first impressions regarding Staff wellbeing particularly during the pandemic and whether there was any support required from Governors. In response the HR Manager advised that there was always more which could be done to support Staff but that she'd been very impressed with the level of input towards Staff wellbeing and how well-received this was by Staff, including wellness days and various groups on Teams which has established a good sense of a supportive community.*
- *The Committee also queried how many EU Staff were employed by the College and whether they were aware of the impact of the new legislation. In response the HR Manager advised that the Staff affected would not be known until the file check had been completed but that this would be taken forward as soon as the file check had been completed.*
- *Regarding the single central record checks, Governors queried whether there were any gaps and in response Genevieve Walter explained that in respect of newer Staff the records were complete, but that there were likely to be some gaps for Staff who have been employed at College for 20-30 years.*
- *Governors also queried whether there was a specific risk relating to the single central record in the College's Risk Register and it was noted that this would be included within the risk "failure to comply with statutory legislation".*

At this point Genevieve Walter was thanked for her HR Update and she left the meeting.

Item c) Pay Issues – National Pay Negotiations

William Baldwin reported that following negotiations, as reported previously last year the Support Staff Unions agreed a 2 year pay deal, but since the Teaching Unions had only recently agreed a better deal for Teaching Staff and in light of a clause to re-open the negotiations for Support Staff, the latter had reached a settlement at the same level as that which was agreed for Teachers. The deal is based on 2% in year cost to the College, which is ½% below the allocation provided in the College's budget, and representing a 3.25% increase on base. Hence, based on the Corporation's approval of the budget, this can now be implemented.

SECTION 3: RESOURCES AND RELATED MATTERS

3.1 Management Accounts for the Six Months to 31st January 2021

Papers: Management Accounts, Paper for Information – FE Commissioner's February 2021 Letter and Appendix re New Financial Measures' Benchmarks

Jutta Knapp introduced the management accounts which were noted by the Committee and the following points were recorded:

- **The financial targets on page 22** of the papers were highlighted and the two adverse variances were noted, namely Current Assets: Current Liabilities predicted to be greater than/equal to 1.22, which compares to the new FE Commissioner's Benchmark of greater than/equal to 1.4, which was thought to still be acceptable despite not meeting the target and noting that this was as a result of the cash utilised in respect of the Capital Project payments. Secondly Pay as Percentage of Income, being 76% and noting the new, low target set by the FE Commissioner's Benchmark of less than 70% which the whole Sixth Form Sector agrees it an impossible target to achieve. Regarding the latter, the contents of the attached FE Commissioner's February 2021 Letter and appendix, detailing the new financial benchmarks, was noted, together with the fact that the SFCa was challenging the justification for Pay percentage with the Commissioner. All other financial targets were classified as "favourable".
- **On page 23 the actual predicted outturn** was slightly better than the budgeted figure, notwithstanding that this may still change once Staff and Students return on site.
- The Capital Expenditure breakdown was highlighted.
- **Page 25 balance sheet** – noting that the net current assets were quite low but showing signs of improvement from July 2020 and have improved further since then.

- **Page 26 - cash flow 2021** – the Committee was reminded that the College is required to have £1.25M in its bank account at all times as a condition of the bank loan covenants and noting that this was difficult to achieve during March, when the monthly ESFA funding allocation is at its lowest. Jutta Knapp informed Governors that she was meeting with the Bank next week and would discuss this with them, but advised that they recognised the ESFA funding allocation timetable over the year and that it was not likely to be an issue.
- **For 2022 the indicative budget** was noted, although it was very early in the preparation of this; cash levels are also predicted to be satisfactory for that year.
- Regarding cash generation generally, it was recognised that owing to the pandemic the College was not generating much income and Jutta Knapp has had to include estimated figures going forward which are likely to vary over time. However, notwithstanding this, Jutta Knapp confirmed that she was confident that the College would have reasonable cash balances going forward.
- **Page 28 Variances between forecast operating outturn and budget** (noting that this was circulated to the Committee Members after the main meeting papers had been issued, having been omitted from the original pack) was considered and in summary the following points were highlighted – additional £251K funding reflecting the ESFA’s decision to ensure that all Students were fully funded in year, in BHASVIC’s case this represented 53 Students; it’s been confirmed that the second part of the Teachers’ Pension contributions will be paid based on the financial year to 31st March for both 2021 and 2022; regarding income, the College was able to take advantage of the flexible furlough scheme in respect of a significant number of Support Staff and this has resulted in an additional and unbudgeted income of £114K; in contrast it’s apparent that the College’s earnings has reduced in respect of non-core income, namely catering, evening language provision which means the additional funding received has proved very helpful and has meant that a the positive variance of £98K has been achieved.
- **Page 29 Cost of Borrowing** – this has been updated to provide a forecast through to 2029.

QUESTIONS:

- *The Committee thought the borrowings update was very useful and queried the impact on the debt payment ratio in light of the reduction in non-core income. In response, Jutta Knapp explained that the ratio reflecting the College’s affordability of debt rather than reflecting the percentage of income received. She also confirmed that this aspect was a requirement of one of the bank’s loan arrangement covenants and would be monitored closely by the College.*
- *Page 23 – in response to a query regarding the capital expenditure profile and the slight delay in timing, it was noted that this was an outcome of the pandemic delaying works and consequently associated payments, which in effect just changed the year in which some of the payments were recorded, reflecting the actual timings.*
- *Sandra Prail (Chair of Governors) confirmed that she would be writing directly to the FE Commission prior to his retirement on 31st March 2021, regarding the unrealistic expectation that SFCs can meet the pay as percentage of income target set at 70%.*

The Management Accounts were noted and that a copy of the final version would be included in the Corporation Meeting papers for information. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

3.2 Premises Update – owing to the confidential nature of the business, this item has been transferred to the confidential minutes

The Committee was reminded that a visit for Governors to view the new building would be made as soon as Government restrictions have been lifted. **ACTION: William Baldwin/Jutta Knapp**

3.3 Risk Assurance

Jutta Knapp introduced the paper which detailed the risks within the Risk Register, which were attributable to this Committee, the contents of which were noted. The risks listed on page 38 were the key risks scoring 6 or 9 and the Committee confirmed that adequate assurance SMT that the risks are being managed with appropriate levels of mitigation.



The Committee agreed that the necessary assurance should be provided to the Audit Committee in respect of the risks attributed to the Resources Committee. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

3.4 Digital Update

Jacque Punter joined the meeting for this item and presented the paper which was shown on the shared screen. The following points were recorded:

- Progress with Digital Strategy was noted together with the need from some variations owing to the Pandemic and in particular, lockdown.
- From a digital perspective, the College is entering an intensely busy phase in which several projects are progressing including phone replacements, cloud migration (target end date September 2021) and sharepoint (the latter in May half term and combined with Staff training as Staff will need to be involved). Also reached the last phase of moving Microsoft log in, some of the work is being done in house and other aspects via the Colleges partners, some of whom are being recruited at present. Most of the strategy implementation has been carried out in house by the IT Network Team with some external provider expertise, but going forward to the next phase of works, the Collee will rely more on input from external partners.
- Cost Update Table on second page of document (page 43 of the papers) – the error in total figure (nominal allocated budget column) was highlighted. The table separately records the operating budget and that relating to change implementation (ie of the Digital Strategy).
- The most significant part of expenditure has been in respect of hardware in order to equip Teachers with ThinkPads during the year – particularly to enable remote teaching, and in effect could be classified as a Covid related expense.
- Quotations are currently being sought in respect of the expenditure needed to enable the next phases of the various projects towards completion – aiming to finish later in this academic year.
- Inevitably the majority of work will take place in the last quarter of the academic year based on the fact that to do this work which is implemented live, this can only be done when the majority of Staff and Students are not on site, hence July and August will always be the busiest time for such work. As noted above, the Sharepoint work will commence earlier in May to tie in with the necessary Staff training.
- Staff training has been scheduled for the Summer Term which will include the topic of security awareness.
- Regarding Students, the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Policy, will be actively promoted to new and existing Students, combined with an induction programme, in order to encourage Students to make use of their own devices whilst on site.
- Page 44 Risk Register which includes those which are deemed to have the more significant risk and also details mitigation.

QUESTIONS:

- *In response to a question from Governors regarding the costs/expenditure table on page 43, Jacque Punter provided further explanation including the separation of the two budgets – operational and transformation (digital strategy).*
- *From the information provided, Governors' perspective was that the Strategy and associated work was progressing well and that the College had progressing quickly in the last 2 years, notwithstanding the difficulties experience owing to the pandemic and the 3 lockdowns, when Staff weren't able to come on site to complete the necessary digital work. The IT Network Team has been very quick to learn and take forward the various new initiatives.*
- *Further explanation was requested regarding the Cyber Security Project and the associated malicious attack risk which has been categorised as "red", and Jacque Punter explained the process of reaching this decision following discussions with the Principal and Assistant Principal (Resources) and in recognition of the fact that Colleges and other institutions are coming under more regular and effective malicious attacks and the need for the College to focus on doing as much as possible to put in place the necessary*

mitigation. Regarding the latter point, the new perimeter security was noted combined with associated Staff training in the Summer. To move from red to amber, Jacquie Punter explained that further mitigation which was needed, including more off premises aspects so that the College has fewer areas to defend and protect. The College has also reviewed its Disaster Recovery Plan relating to IT Network issues and the IT Manager is in the process of strengthening this, in terms of its own in-house procedures. It was also acknowledged that the weakest point was Staff (and Student) behaviour, hence the need for continued training in this area, catering for all devices. Regarding Staff behaviour and the Committee's query whether additional support was needed in this area, Jacquie Punter advised that there was a limited time window for implementation hence the current red classification for this, with potential vulnerability until the necessary mitigating action has been completed.

- *The Committee queried the cyber essentials' funding and Jacquie Punter confirmed that the College was going through the process to achieve certification, being a pre-requisite for achieving this funding.*

Jacquie Punter was thanked for her presentation, after which she left the meeting.

SECTION 4: CONSENT AGENDA

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

4.1 Policies: None

SECTION 5: OTHER MATTERS

5.1 Any Other Business

Marcus Palmer informed the Committee Members that following the proposal from the Search and Governance Committee, all Committees were looking to appoint a Deputy Chair and to date only Q & C Committee has so far appointed a Deputy Chair. In the first instance, he invited any Governor interested in the role to contact him via e mail to discuss the role, after the meeting and Louise Pennington agreed to circulate Marcus Palmer's e mail address to the Committee Members. If no one expressed an interest in the role at this point, Marcus Palmer will contact each Governor to discuss this. **ACTION: Committee Members**

5.2 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 21st June 2021

SECTION 6: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – refer separate record

6.1 Confidential Minutes from Last Meeting 23rd November 2020 - The minutes were approved by the Committee and the Chair authorised to sign them.

6.2 Matters Arising - refer confidential minutes

6.3 Any Other Business (Confidential Matters) - None.

Louise Pennington

Chair.....DATE.....