



BRIGHTON HOVE AND SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION'S RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 11th MARCH 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), Chris Newson (Governor and Deputy Committee Chair of Resources), Marcus Palmer (Governor and Chair of Resources), Jo Usher (Support Staff Governor)

In attendance: Jutta Knapp (Vice-Principal), Livvy Birney (HR Manager) – until the end of item 2.1), Mark Monahan (Assistant Principal (Digital and Communications) – for item 3.3 only (Cyber Security and Digital Update) and Louise Pennington (Clerk)

1.1 Apologies and Welcomes

Apologies: None

Welcomes: Livvy Birney (HR Manager)

It was resolved to take 3.3 before item 2.1, noting that Mark Monahan would be leaving to travel to a work conference later this evening.

1.2 Minutes of the last Meeting held on 20th November 2023

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.

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

William Baldwin gave the following update to the Committee.

TRANSFER sub-items a and b TO CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES ONCE DRAFT APPROVED:

a) Option to purchase Brighton and Hove Girls Junior School Site

- Q & C Committee which met at the end of February 2024 has been updated with the information.
- Site owned by Girls Day School Trust.
- The acquisition of this site would be ideal for the College's development and increasing numbers, together with the location, which is less than 10 minutes' walk away. The College has several modular classroom units which are rented and with increasing numbers of Students next year, the modular units will need to be increased, thereby increasing the costs to around £500K. If the College was able to acquire capital investment from the DfE this would make greater business and economical sense, however the DfE (representatives have

met with the Principal to discuss the matter, but without any promise of financial support at present). It was recognized that SLT's proposal to submit a bid for the site, would provide a better use of public funds, compared to continuing to rent modular classrooms.

- The site could be used immediately with minor expenditure, noting that there were 20 classrooms and 2 large halls, which would in effect be an asset which would provide double the space of the rented modular classrooms, for a fraction of the cost of a new build (£10.5/11M), whilst the guide price for the site is £4.5M.
- In addition to the DfE, the Principal has also met with the Estate Agents, Lawyers, ESFA and real estate specialists, and has received lots of useful advice over the last 3 weeks.
- The Principal confirmed that with Governors' support (from Resources Committee and Q & C Committee to date, and hopefully endorsement at full Corporation on 27th March 2024), it was intended to submit a bid by the 14th March 2024 deadline. However, the College would be unable to put up the full price upfront, and at this point it was also noted that since the ONS reclassification of FE Colleges, the College could no longer seek a bank loan (which under the previous criteria, it was thought the College's bankers (Lloyds), would almost certainly have been able to provide a loan covering say £2.5M to £3M, with the College probably being able to put up £2M upfront). The Principal also explained that during the discussions with the DfE representatives, the option of arranging for the College to receive full funding at the outset for all Students, would assist the College's financial situation too and it was noted that this would continue to be revisited during future discussions with the DfE.
- The Committee recognized the business sense to acquiring the site, which would also appreciate over time and which would allow the College to grow and cater for its existing Students, without the requirement to meet the sizeable and sunk costs of renting the modular classrooms. Should the local demographics reduce in a few years, the College would then always have the option of consolidation and selling the site if needed.
- The current proposal regarding the bid, is likely to comprise £2M upfront with £1M per year in staged payments and with the lawyers advice SLT are confident that this will provide a competitive bid in light of the existing site's education provision, which would be sustained by BHASVIC's acquisition.
- The Committee noted that others interested in the site included property developers and groups wishing to establish accommodation for older people/care home. Planning permissions would also have to be submitted and agreed with the Local Council and consultation with neighbours should planning permission be required by other bidders, would be necessary.
- At this point the Principal updated the Committee on the ongoing process regarding onsite developments proposed, prior to the site coming on to the market, namely the multi-surface pitch on the field and the canteen extension, also noting that the costings for this were already included in the budget/forecasts.
- Jutta Knapp confirmed that she had provided various financial modelling in respect of the proposals and bid which SLT had considered, noting that a budget of £1M per year had been allocated for this with the money coming from the £500K savings arising from the modular classrooms which would no longer be needed and savings also from the halt on the canteen extension and multi-use games areas on the existing site.
- Regarding essential works required on the School site, should the College's bid be successful, SLT thought that this would be manageable and would comprise painting, carpeting and possibly a new boiler, plus minor repairs such as roof leak etc. The site would not only provide classroom space and an examination area (2 Halls), there was also study space and an equipped kitchen.
- The Girls' School trustees, would also want to retain parking and the all purpose pitch, together with retaining the associate flood lights for the latter.
- Should the College's bid be included in the final preferred bidders, likely to be the best 3, according to the lawyers, it was proposed that the Premises Group should convene to take the work forward, with the agreement of the Corporation. **ACTION: Chair/Principal**
- The Principal reported on the discussions held at Q & C Committee on this subject, including proposals to set up a crowd funding initiative and in this regard, 3 of the Q & C Committee Members with various expertise, including marketing, social media etc, had met after that meeting. It was recommended that the College should not rush into crowd funding at this late stage before the deadline and that this suggestion, could be re-visited should the

College's bid submission be amongst the preferred bidders, with an aim of raising some local capital.

- In response to a question from the Committee regarding the management of the bids, it was noted that this was managed by the estate agent, Knight Frank and that approaches to the Trustees was not recommended.

In conclusion, the Resources Committee endorsed the bid proposal in principle subject to submitting a non-binding bid at this stage and recommended this to Corporation. **ACTION: Chair/Principal**

b) East Sussex CC and A Level Feasibility Study

The Committee were informed that the Director of Education met with the Principal and Deputy to discuss the need for high quality A Level provision within Eastbourne and that East Sussex County Council had moved to a feasibility Study stage in respect of the A Level Offer in Eastbourne, being based primarily on data collection. The outcome will be advised once the exercise has been completed and BHASVIC will be updated at this point. The Principal confirmed that the opportunity for BHASVIC to become involved in providing A Levels in Eastbourne, would be considered, but should the above option above a) regarding the B and H Girls Junior site, the latter would take precedence if the College's bid was accepted and the College would be unlikely to proceed with both.

c) Success Stories

- Students' Wellbeing Ambassadors gave a Students' Wellbeing presentation to the Council at the Town Hall, on behalf of the Citizens UK (Brighton and Hove), seeking funding for additional mental health counselling in Schools and Colleges. The Council agreed a £200K budget for next year as a pilot, but it's likely that this will initially focus upon Year 10 Students. It's hoped that following the pilot, funding will continue to be allocated to local Schools and Colleges to support mental health counselling.
- BHASVIC has 53 Oxbridge offers this year and is the 6th year that over 50 BHASVIC Students have gained Oxbridge offers.
- 2 of the College's women academy players represented England Colleges in a football competition final in Italy recently.
- Fashion Show was held in the Hall earlier this term and 3 Governors were also present – the event was a great success.
- Peter Kyle MP visited College recently and gave a talk to Staff and Students.

d) Other Updates

- Budget confirmed with 1.89% funding uplift (inflation rise)
- Other updates – refer CDP Section 4 in papers.

Thanks were recorded to William Baldwin for this report.

2.1

a) Termly Update on HR and Related Matters

Livvy Birney (HR Manager) provided the following report:

- Update from last meeting: **Staff Wellbeing and Absence:** in light of suggestions made at the last meeting the report in future will be reduced in length and following the Committee's recommendation, key headlines within this report have also been shared with Staff (January 2024 Staff Meeting), together with a reminder of HR's work in this area; as a result of this briefing, HR received 4 counselling referrals from Staff. Future reports will comprise summaries, bullet points, tables plus an action plan The Report has not been published yet, but will do so in the near future. **ACTION: HR**
- The HR Team has been considering whether to make use of the Bradford factor ((formula used by HR Departments to calculate the impact of employees' absence on an organisation) to analyse Staff absences in order to better inform the Department but also to draw attention

to Heads of Department regarding absences which owing to insufficient information to date, may otherwise be overlooked. It would also be useful towards managing more complex absences including those associated with dismissals and HR will be investigating this option prior to the intended implementation, including potentially measuring Staff absence against the Staff average to better determine the impact on each Department. Initially monthly reports will be generated and should absence levels appear high and above the average, reports will be provided to the affected departments, with supportive conversations with Staff encouraged to demonstrate impact on the department etc (this is already carried out with Students to show impact of absence which works well in improving absences).

- **Emily Andrews** returned in January 2024 following maternity leave and has taken on the part time role of HR Business Partner, 2 days per week, leading on various HR projects and this is working very well. An update on various HR projects will be given to Governors at a future meeting.
- **Current HR Priorities:** the HR Cintra System is not fit for purpose and work is underway to develop a new HR tracking system which will improve all HR management matters and records and also improve the induction process, PDR (professional Development Review) planning and contract revisions' processes etc.
- **Recruitment:**
 - this is the time of year when recruitment is at its highest level with 39 posts being sought to date, which compared with about 30 last year. Much has been done to improve the number of applications received including via improved information and presentation together with making applications easier and also introducing a Talent Register of Interests, the latter of which is working well, with 64 interested candidates having registered in readiness for roles within a relevant field, being sought by the College. A stand alone teaching page will also be made available on the website shortly to attract candidates interested in particular Teaching roles, when vacancies arise. The Committee was informed that the application numbers varied significantly depending upon the curriculum area eg Heads of Department roles usually receive several applications, whilst some Teaching posts at the moment, such as a Psychology Teacher vacancy, has far fewer applications (6 applications currently for a recent vacancy). Some curriculum areas do see a higher turnover and may reflect current Staff taking a sabbatical and others looking to progress their career.
 - Entry level vacancies in non-Teaching areas have also been difficult to recruit such as catering, but improvements in the recruitment processes has made it easier for applications to be made. Student Cleaners have also been recruited which has proved to be very popular with the Student body.
 - Level 7 Apprenticeships – 3 Members of Staff have enrolled, including Livvy Birnie (HR) and one of the IT Team (Cyber Security).
 - The new applicant pack has been developed in association with Virgin Media.

At this point Livvy Birnie was thanked for her report and she left the meeting.

3.1) Management Accounts for 6 months to 31st January 2024

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

- Assurance was provided to the Committee that there were no specific issues of major concern, apart from the level of Government funding for SFCs.
- The original budget was retained despite having had additional funding, which in effect will improve the outturn, moving from a small deficit to a £150K surplus, the latter of which will allow for any unexpected expenses.
- Significant variances were highlighted – professional fees relating to the proposed new building to reach the planning submission stage, totalling £200K and secondly high needs funding, where cash had been placed on deposit, which has generated interest which had not been accounted at the outset of the budget.
- Notwithstanding the overall improved budgetary position, the margins remain tight in a difficult climate.

- Cashflow is unchanged, despite the information reported to Governors earlier in the meeting in the Principal's Report, so the costs for renting the 8 modular classrooms remains in the figures. It was noted that a separate budget had been drafted but not yet shared with Governors, relating to the proposal discussed earlier within the Principal's Report. – refer confidential minutes. Furthermore, other development options to the College site regarding the proposed canteen developments and multi-surface sports pitch on the field, had not yet been included in the current figures.
- The bank covenant which requires the College to maintain £1.25M in the bank at all times was highlighted and the impact on any future proposed site/space developments, although it was suggested that a discussion with the bank regarding the covenant terms, may be helpful, but also noting the DfE permissions required under certain circumstances, should loan structure changes be possible with the bank's agreement.
- Increase in funding rate for next year of 1.89% was noted again, noting that this did not reflect the rate of inflation and that this was also the last year of the comprehensive spending review, with no information issued yet from the DfE regarding future spending within the SFC sector.

It was noted that the management accounts would be included in the Corporation meeting papers (via link) for all Governors to view. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

3.2 Premises Update

Refer Principal's Update recorded in confidential minutes.

3.3 Termly Digital Update including Cyber Security Audit Follow-Up

Mark Monahan presented his Digital Update and Report on Cyber Security Audit follow up to the Committee, recording the following:

a) Headlines on Progress with Digital Work and Developments at BHASVIC

- **Classroom infrastructure:** new interactive screens have been on loan and installed in classrooms and are being trialled within the maths, science and humanities areas, to determine whether this works well for Teachers and Students. Following a review a decision will be made whether to implement the changes.
- **Salamander:** The use of this utility is a Microsoft Office 365 tool which is able to mirror data from the College's MIS systems, is being used to improve the College's processes regarding Student applications and other data, which should make the College's systems and processes in this area more efficient and effective.
- **Sharepoint and Teams:** progress is being made in these platforms, with the intention of simplifying Teaching and Learning; discussions have also been held with other similar Colleges to exchange practice.
- **Microsoft Booking Tools:** This week, Teachers are making use of this option to manage and process the subject progress reviews for Students, with all bookings being recorded within this tool. A first run through is underway to ensure a consistent approach and experience, with feedback being obtained from Students in respect of the subject areas.
- **AI:** As reported at the recent Q & C Committee meeting, Mark Monahan and James Moncrieff are progressing this area which includes collaborative work with FE Sussex and S7 Collages. Staff Inset is planned for June and September this year and a position statement is being drafted, together with best practice guidance for Students and Parents. The College is keen to promote sensible and ethical use of AI and to explain its plans and proposed developments in this area. FE Sussex is currently working on how to build own AI data projects. BHASVIC is looking at developing BHASVIC Chat GP, using its own documents/website to generate questions/answers regarding key areas of interest and enquiry. The latter is at an early exploratory stage, noting that other Colleges are doing a similar exercise, so with collaboration, it may be easier to replicate other College's proposals. The end goal will be to make data accessible via a secure means of report for all users of such information. In response to a question from the Committee, Mark Monahan reported that some large College Groups had progressed the AI initiative to a further level, particularly certain Technical FE Colleges and noting that where other Colleges had policies

and guidance already in place, sharing of such good practice was welcomed by others in the sector.

- **Admissions Project:** work is continuing to progress, with Student Interviews reaching the end point. This year Staff have utilised laptops during the interview process, rather than paper work, which so far has proved to be successful. The next phase will be to ensure that all applicants are able to accept offers on the portal. Overall, this will avoid the substantial paper driven administration used to date in the admissions/interview process. Once places have been accepted by new Students, it's intended that curriculum information will also be uploaded to the online records.

b) Cyber security Audit Report – Follow Up

- Telephone Meeting with Mick McLean (Digital Lead Governor) was held earlier today to discuss this.
- The Committee recognised the problems with data leaks affecting companies of all sizes, including more recently Capita (HR provider) and Southern Water.
- The College is investigating how to tighten up protection and incident response reporting, with audit elements incorporated. The College is looking at frameworks for active monitoring, network security, end work security and information protection.
- Discussions have been held with the IT Team to establish support already accessible eg the College subscribes to JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee, being the UK digital, data and technology agency which focuses upon education), which provides internet services to the College, along with other consultancy options. JISC also has an incident response team, so discussions are underway with them; JISC notifies the College when cyber issues arise and in effect provide a detection and eradication service. The Committee welcomed the external validation work in this area from JISC.
- Lessons learned from cyber activity to date includes: identified job areas where security can be tightened up – servers, regular back-ups – including daily cloud transfers, which will improve the College's position should it ever experience a cyber attack.
- The College has also been looking into the balance between additional paid services which may give a high level of cyber monitoring and existing resources too, such as fire walls, servers and comparing all options and costs, to the existing providers of cyber security at the College eg via JISC, Focus Group and Phoenix. At this point reference was made to the JISC cyber expert and consultation is underway to determine the best way to deploy appropriate defences, taking into account expenditure and risk assessment. The cyber expert will be invited into College to review the existing settings and to see whether the College is following current best practice within the sector.
- SLT Strategy Day on Thursday – will be considering Cyber Security matters and at this point the Committee recognised the work done to date to reduce the College's cyber security high risk areas, although also noting that further essential work was required and underway.
- The Committee queried the disaster recovery/risk management plans should a cyber security breach occur at College and Mark Monahan explained that the College was investigating various scenarios which were being worked through with plans being devised to ensure immediate action including communications with staff, students and parents etc. It's intended that this issue will be discussed in more detail at the SLT Strategy Day. At this point it was made apparent to the Committee that the timing of a cyber security breach was critical eg particularly if this should occur close to results day or just before or during examinations – all such details have been taken into account in the disaster recovery plan.
- At this point Mick McLean added that the progress towards "green" within the risk assessment document was based on a strong and targeted approach and that he was working with Mark Monahan and the IT Team in breaking down the infrastructure to identify the detail of what IT does in College, with risk assessments being established per area. From this, processes and a security lifecycle, are identified and also broken down into a step by step approach to identify where protection is in place or where this is required, in order to reduce the overall risk, but

notwithstanding the implications of cost, making sure that the College accurately assesses what it can afford in terms too.

The Committee noted the Report provided by Mark Monahan and thanked him for this, at which point he left the meeting.

3.4 College Development Plan (Section 4)

It was noted that this item had already been discussed within the various agenda items above and also noting that the full CDP (Sections 1 to 4) had already been reviewed by the Q & C Committee.

3.5 Risk Register

William Baldwin introduced the paper to the Committee, the contents of which were noted and the following points highlighted:

- This is the second time the Committee has seen this version of the document and it was noted that at the recent Q & C Committee meeting a few minor amendments were identified.
- The Risk Assurance Map which appears at the end of the document was considered and the Committee agreed that the risks allocated to the Resources Committee, were rated appropriately, with adequate assurance provided to the Committee.
- The Committee noted the high rated “adverse Government Funding” risk and were also made aware of the cost of living impact and uncertainty over future Staff pay rise agreements and funding for this.
- Regarding accommodation and cyber risks, reference was made to the reports and discussions held earlier in the meeting.

SECTION 4: CONSENT AGENDA

Policies and Other Documents – none recorded.

5.1 – Any Other Business

The Chair recorded his and the Committee’s thanks to Chris Newson as it was his last Committee meeting before retiring as a Governor at the end of March and for his valuable input and contributions, long term commitment and helpful support over the last 9 years, including providing several new Governor recommendations and also taking on the Deputy Resources Committee Chair role.

5.2 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 17th June 2024 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: 7.10 p.m.

Chair Date