

**Tuesday 19th September 2023 at 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting**

MINUTES

Members present:

Michael Belfourd – Chair of the Committee/Foundation Governor
Sarah Medicoff - Foundation Governor
Graham Thompson – Principal

In attendance:

Clare Baskott - Clerk to Governors
Ciaran Graham – Associate Principal (Observer)
Margaret Searle - Director of Finance & Resources

Apologies:

Eve Preece – Staff Governor (support staff)
Nader Sheta – Vice Chair of the Committee/Foundation Governor

The meeting was quorate.

Item 1 Opening Prayer

The Principal opened the meeting in prayer at 5:33pm.

Item 2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Eve Preece and Nader Sheta.

Item 3 Declarations of Interests

None.

Item 4 Minutes of previous meeting, 20th June 2023: for review and agreement for signing (*in papers*)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed electronically on GovernorHub by the Chair of the Committee. **Action: Clerk/Chair of the Committee.**

Item 4.1 Matters Arising for this meeting not on the agenda.

The following had been approved by the Full Governing Body on 4th July 2023:

- Accountability Agreement
- College Financial Forecasting Return including the College budget for 2023/24.
- Health and Safety Report.
- Treasury Management Policy.

The Director of Finance & Resources reported that all returns had been filed with the ESFA on time.

The Principal gave an update on the T Level Broadcasting bid. The bid had been successful and the college was awaiting confirmation on student enrolment numbers, before deciding whether to proceed later this year.

A robust discussion took place about ensuring that the Governing Body were fully aware of all the costs of purchasing the equipment and future replacement costs.

Governor question: If the number of students increases for the T Level Media, Broadcast and Production course; will the equipment costs increase?

Response: No, the equipment costs will not increase, as students will be studying at different times of the week. We are looking at purchasing enough equipment for 40 students in year one. The same equipment will be used for 80 students in the second year.

Governor question: How often will the equipment need to be refreshed?

Response: We have raised this issue with the Media Department; and they think it will be similar to the way in which we replace IT equipment. We will receive additional funding for T Level students.

Governor question: How much of the expected costs will be to get media room fully established and how much will be for replacing the equipment?

Response: The reason the equipment costs are high is due to the initial spec. We are asking Barkers for the project to be re-costed and tendered with fixed equipment being included in the project rather than being included in the special equipment allowance. Rigging funding will come from a special equipment allowance. However, the Specialist Equipment Allowance is likely to go down. We are also involved with the London Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), which has been set up to provide colleges with the funding required to meet the local skills gap. We are planning to submit a bid for Digital and Creative funding. The funding will serve a dual purpose; it will be used for T Levels and also to offer courses for the wider student population in digital or creative skills. The LSIF funding would bring the college contribution down for the special equipment allowance. Confirmation of the Specialist Equipment Allowance bid will not be confirmed until March 2024. We can also put any fixed equipment into the building costs. If we decide to go ahead, the main building work will start in June or July 2024.

A discussion took place about the potential future costs to refresh the equipment. The Principal explained that the college's IT equipment was written off every three years.

A robust discussion took place about the capital budget and the impact the issue of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) will have on future capital budgets in education.

The Principal explained that the college had a duty to meet the local skills environment plan and the skills gap for London. The existing media courses will not be available in the future and students need to be offered an alternative. The Director of Finance & Resources will re-work the cash flow once student numbers are confirmed.

Governor question: Is there a high demand for these courses?

Response: The existing media course is full and we could open up to more groups if there were sufficient staff. These students will automatically move over to T Levels in the future and we are not aware of other local providers offering this course.

Item 5 Premises and Accommodation

Item 5.1 Reports and plans: to include T Level grant decisions including Wave 5 T Level Project Bid for TV Broadcasting and Production update

The Principal gave an update.

The Condition Improvement Project began during the summer break and work was continuing, however, there were restrictions on when contractors could work. The project was expected to come in on budget.

The Health and Safety Audit had also taken place over the summer with Hettle Andrews, Chartered Insurance Broker, who made several recommendations which were outlined in the report. One priority was to make the fire evacuation procedures more explicit and to ensure that they aligned with the fire evacuation procedures with the new school, which was expected to open in April 2024. The college had written agreements with the new occupiers, and they will share the same fire evacuation procedure with the nursery.

It was agreed that the Health and Safety Officer will produce a Health and Safety Report for the Full Governing Body meeting in December 2023. **Action: Health and Safety Officer.**

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

The college had had a full site condition survey in summer 2022 and no issues were raised about potential RAAC. However, RAAC was not part of the survey, so the college was following the Department for Education's guidance and a full RAAC survey had taken place on 13th September 2023. The Principal had received verbal feedback that there was no RAAC in the college and a written report will follow.

Governor question: Will you forward a copy of the report to the Diocese?

Response: Yes, the report will be forwarded to the Diocese, who have indicated that they want to get a full picture of what is happening regarding RAAC across the Diocese.

The Principal gave an overview of the three projects which had taken place over the summer. The development of the social space in the Quad had been completed and was now used by students. The project had gone over budget by £70k as the scoping

project had underestimated the costs. The Principal and Director of Finance & Resources voiced their disappointment in the significant under estimation of the scoping project.

Governor question: Is there anything in the contract, where we can apply to receive a clawback?

Response: The estimate was a best guess, some of the additional costs were due to unforeseen circumstances and others were due to ground-works.

The Principal reported that the canopy was expected to generate additional income through lettings. The refurbishment of the gym had taken place during the summer, the project went over budget as air conditioning had also been installed. New flooring, ceiling and lighting had been installed in the foyer of the college and had been favourably received by staff and students.

Item 6 Financial – Margaret Searle/Michael Belfour

Item 6.1 Preliminary end of year position 2022-23 from Monthly Commentary, Accounts and Cashflow (Report)

The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair of the Committee referred the committee to pages 6 and 7. There was a variance in the budget of £143k due to the meals being included. The Director of Finance & Resources reported that the college had received a net rate rebate of £50k. The budget deficit also included savings of £166k in staffing costs.

The preliminary results for the year ended 31 July 2023 were before the FRS 102 pension adjustments because the Actuaries' report had not yet been received.

Item 6.2 Funding – Financial update report. To include enrolment for 2023 and to consider any variation to the financial plan/CFRR

The Director of Finance & Resources reported that the college had received additional 16-19 funding of £328k, which had been allocated to support the pay increases of circa 6%. The budget forecast was 6% for pay increases, schools had been offered 6.5%. The Director of Finance & Resources reported that if there was a 6% pay increase the college may break even in 2023/24. However, the college would still be graded as 'Requires Improvement', as under the new guidance, colleges were required to generate 1% of their own income to be graded as 'Good'.

Item 6.3 ESFA/DfE:

To note the Annual Strategic Conversation Outcome Letter from the DfE

The Annual Strategic Outcome Letter from the Department of Education, dated 11th August 2023, have been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee noted the letter.

Item 6.4 Staff pay awards update

Item 6.4.1 Teachers Pay Awards

The Principal and the Director of Finance & Resources gave an update on the proposed staff pay awards. The school unions had accepted the pay review body's offer of 6.5%. However, sixth form colleges do not form part of the pay review body. Colleges had

been awarded additional funding per student of £111, plus an additional 10% for free college meals and the disadvantaged block two funding had also been increased.

A discussion took place the increasing numbers of students who were eligible for the disadvantaged block two funding. The Sixth Form College's Association were keen to negotiate with unions to agree a circa 6.5% pay award.

Item 6.4.2 Support Staff Pay Awards

Last year the support staff accepted a pay award of between 5-7.5%. Negotiation had begun for this year. Historically support staff pay increases were aligned with Teachers. Unions were also asking for an extra day's holidays and to level out the London fringe allowances for support staff.

Governor question: Has industrial action been halted?

Response: The NEU has stopped industrial action. The NASUWT has begun industrial action around workload, which is largely connected to work outside of staff's contracted hours and days. We are confident this will not impact on the college.

Item 6.5 Treasury Management: Monitoring Report – Director of Finance & Resources

The Treasury Management Monitoring Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair of the Committee gave an update. The college had moved to a sweep account with Barclays which had increased the amount of interest the college received.

The Director of Finance & Resources recommended that the college open a second overnight instant access Barclays savings account with an interest rate of 5%.

The Committee approved the opening of the second Barclays savings account.

Item 7 SFX Corporate Services Ltd – Margaret Searle

The Director of Finance & Resources reported that the SFX Corporate board meetings will take place on:

- Thursday 2nd November 2023
- Thursday 1st February 2024
- Thursday 6th June 2024

The Director of Finance & Resources reported a surplus of £70,405 for year-end 31st July 2023, which will be gift-aided back to the College (unaudited).

A discussion took place regarding recharges for Corporate Services, the Director of Finance & Resources explained that the surplus will be gift aided back to the college.

The Committee noted the report. It was agreed that the report will be added to the agenda for the FGB. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 8 2023-24 Membership: Updates (if applicable)

None.

Item 9 Has the Committee identified any new or heightened risks to be advised to the Audit Committee for the risk register?

None.

Item 9.1 Committee review of effectiveness, membership and skills: online questionnaire for completion after the meeting

It was agreed that the Clerk will circulate the survey following the meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 9.2 Has the Committee identified any new or heightened risks to be advised to the Audit Committee for the risk register?

None.

Item 10 Any Other Business

Governor question: Do we have a Corporate Governance guide for over runs in projects? If costs are likely to over-run in a project, do they come back to the Governing Body for approval?

Response: Yes, there is a spending limit which is set out in the Scheme of Delegation. The Governing Body also devolves responsibility to its subcommittee for some projects. The annual programme of works is approved by the governing body. We did highlight that in a previous meeting that the capital project would go over budget. Larger capital projects have a project committee, the meetings are minuted, and a governor sits on the committee. The Governor reports back to Governors.

It was agreed that the programme of works will be included in the reports for the full governing body meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 11 Identification of confidential items

None.

Item 12 Dates of meetings for 2023-24

- Tuesday 14th November 2023 at 6:30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 5:30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 5:30pm via Zoom

Item 13 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 6:56pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair of the Committee

Actions:

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed electronically on GovernorHub by the Chair of the Committee. **Action: Clerk/Chair of the Committee.**
2. It was agreed that the Health and Safety Officer will produce a Health and Safety Report for the Full Governing Body meeting in December 2023. **Action: Health and Safety Officer.**
3. The Committee noted the report. It was agreed that the report will be added to the agenda for the FGB. **Action: Clerk.**
4. It was agreed that the Clerk will circulate the survey following the meeting. **Action: Clerk.**