

CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
POLICY SUSTAINABILITY & RESOURCES
TUESDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2023 AT 2.30 PM
At Moulsham Street Campus, Chelmsford
(via MS Teams by exception)

Minutes

Attendees: Amanda Montague, Mark Emerson, David Warnes, Trevor Bolton, Peter McKercher, Debbie Garroway, Paddy Reilly, Sarah Noble, Richard Davidson, Barbara Vohmann,

Present: Debbie Garroway, Debs Hurst, Fiona Chalk (Interim Clerk), Beverly Mahoney (Item 21/22 only), Mark Emerson

FORMAL MATTERS

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

18. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND TO NOTIFY ANY CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

No new declarations.

19. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 1ST 2022

It was noted that the draft minutes provided needed further amendments. The Committee agreed to approve via email after the meeting.

20. MATTERS ARISING

- DH to report on uninsurable risk

DH to come back with a proposal on thresholds of spend. Under ONS reconsideration, the Financial Regulations will need an update. Wait whilst guidance from DfE is issued over the coming months. High level proposal

Duplication of approval as financial statements to approve annual statements. Risk sits with Audit committee. Update ToR at the annual review.

Joint meeting between Audit and PS&R to consider the annual financial statements. Schedule for Autumn 2023.

Confirmed Sarah and Barbara have stepped down.

Uninsurable Risk – Insurance relationship manager has been consulted. They have confirmed that they are unable to insure main items for general wear and tear. If we entered a commercial contract but failed to deliver, the poor performance would not be covered. Governors now feel comfortable with knowledge of where there are any gaps in cover. A summary page on insurance to continual to be presented to the Board annually. Perhaps IA could do a review of the insurances.

Action: To suggest the Audit committee that the Internal Auditors consider an audit of Insurance provision

TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE / RECOMMEND

21. GENDER PAY REPORT

Governors noted the report, including:

- The mean gender pay gap at 19.5% down from 20.1%
- The median gender pay gap at 31.2% down from 34.9%
- There has been a marginal increase in male staff members
- The job types in each quartile
- More women in the lower pay quartiles, particularly in the nursery
- The impact of length of service on pay gap, which male staff tending to stay longer than female staff
- Applications were made up of 2/3rds female and 4/5ths of appointments were female
- More males decline offers of employment
- There is greater parity of pay in academic and learning support staff
- The improvements are a result of: differentiated pay awards has helped – those on a lower wage received a greater pay award; national minimum pay wage; ongoing reviews of business support pay grades; a change in contract status for LSAs
- Embedding a culture of ‘think gender’ in everything the college does and continue to offer hybrid working, to continue to improve these
- The report, by government dictat, is based on sex at birth, as opposed to gender

Governors requested next year’s report to reflect on these actions and to show actual impact.

ACTION: The Committee recommends the report to Board for approval.

22. HR REPORT

Governors noted activity under Employment Relations, Recruitment, and Absence Management.

The impact of the activity is noted as improved communication, compliance with new employment law, increased activity in appointments, reduced agency costs, and well-being activities continue to contribute to absences being close to target.

Retention shows 18 of 63 staff left within a year due to many different reasons. 10 of these are business support staff, for which remote working in the private sector is attractive. Governors requested the same data be made available for staff who have been in place over a year. Covid has impacted on early retirements, which have increased.

Governors asked how they use their contacts to promote the college vacancies?

Action: Beverly to circulate vacancy list to all governors and use LinkedIn to join up networks.

23. STAFF CPD REPORT

Governors noted the CPD that the college has been put in place and that the college has been an early adopter of the ETF leadership standards.

Governors noted the College offers 10 days of training to each staff member annually, which is one of the highest in the sector.

Governors asked:

- What action does the college take when a staff member is accused of a non-criminal offence, is going through a disciplinary process but then leaves the college to take up a role elsewhere before the process is completed?

It is in the college's gift as an employer to refuse a resignation and to ensure the process is in place. In other circumstances, when references are taken up and the question asked about the 'fitness' of the person, a negative response would be given.

- What the additional cost is of having two estates over one estate and whether it is worth looking at the implications of this.

This exercise was undertaken 7 years ago as part of the area review and this could be updated.

ACTION: A review of the cost implications of having 2 campuses to be undertaken in
2023/24

24. FINANCE REPORT

Management accounts to 31st December 2022

- £240k behind forecast, without depreciation
- There are staff budget meetings planned for next week
- An updated forecast will come to the Board on 24th March

Governors challenged on AEB provision, which is underperforming contrary to what was predicted earlier in the year. Both sub-contractors are profiled to complete 4 months earlier than last year. Governors stated that this provision has been stagnant for several years, and that they believe there is an opportunity for this area to grow, which the college needs to be taking better opportunity of.

High level forecast against Project Future targets

- There is an adverse variance negatively affecting achievement of a surplus budget, with the surplus being reduced by up to 50% and year end cash position being about £300k below forecast
- The income budget will remain around £18m
- Staff costs are higher than budget – some elements such as case law and higher minimum wage, are out with the college's control. Hard to recruit to posts have agency costs attached to them, increasing staff costs
- Energy costs are hard to predict due to changes in weather
- Bank covenants to date have been met

- It is important to keep a watching brief on next year to ensure costs fit projected income, staffing costs being the biggest cost
- The balance between pay increases and staff costs will require difficult conversations.

Governors expressed concern around staffing budget implications against the difficulty to recruit and retain staff. The importance of the added benefits is a consideration in this conversation. There is a piece of work about to commence on workload and work pressures, to support the conversation around wage discussions. Governors stated that there is a need to consider innovative ways of using staff before reducing capacity.

25. LEARNER NUMBERS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS 2022/23

16-19 funding will remain static rather than growing. Recruitment of 32 learners in January, bringing the numbers up to 2222 learners in total, is below the Project Future target of 2250. The loss of income has been mitigated by an increase in base rate funding and weighting/course premium by the ESFA.

The formal allocation for the college for 16-19 will be stated in March and is likely to be in line with this year's figure.

There were several late withdrawals that affected the target figures, so there is more work to do around accuracy of the 42-day learner number.

Governors raised concern around not meeting the target numbers in Project Future and the financial implications of this. DG advised that work is ongoing with staff to help them understand the importance of costed curriculum planning and this cultural shift is marked and will have a positive impact going forward. Governors noted that the timing of this cultural change may be slightly behind the Project Future targets and timelines at present.

ACTION: Governors asked for the Head of Business Unit to make a presentation to the Board.

The Adult Education Budget is changing to the Adult Skills Fund in 24/25 which will be factored into curriculum planning. The rates have been simplified and there is a small uplift, depending on curriculum programmes. Governors asked if there would be increased costs associated with the uplift programmes. Historically, course funding has been based on the cost to deliver the course, whereas going forward, allocation of funding is now based more on the programmes that are in demand by employers.

26. REPORT ON KPIS FOR 2022/23 (FINANCE & HR)

Covered in the finance section above.

27. ESTATE REPORT

Governors received the update report and noted the activity undertaken:

- Staffing & review of team
- Managing day to day maintenance – keeping costs under control
- RIDDOR – no reportable incidents
- Student vandalism
- Electricity/gas – actions to manage costs
- Final claim for IOT totalling £289k has been made
- Final claim for T level equipment totalling £120K has been made
- Activity for the £153k received to support energy saving projects

- T level specialist equipment for 2023/24 allocations are not yet known
- Capital allocation of £389k is due in April
- T Level Wave 5 = £1.2m of funding
- Updated Estate Strategy is based on Curriculum Plan & Staff and Learner Feedback and Condition Survey

28. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

An update was presented following on from the strategy day on Friday 3rd February. The new Sustainability committee will work against the plan. Governors were encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to upskill in this area, as part of the curriculum and careers piece of the Sustainability strategy.

Governors asked if the college is considering its own qualification? Educate Global have developed a similar programme on a Train the Trainer basis, and there are AEB programmes too. The Sustainability committee is considering this and how training should be rolled out.

Governors stated that SMT shouldn't underestimate how long it takes to upskill an organisation on the sustainability agenda. As a local institution, the college should be looking to commercialise an offer around the sustainability agenda. The college would need to be able to demonstrate authenticity in this area in a sufficient manner in order to deliver such a commercial offer. Governors noted that the college is making good progress in this area and like most other organisations, is on a journey to become more sustainable.

TO RECEIVE AND NOTE

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DH – Essex Shared Services is undertaking a review of how its services are being delivered and how it should be resourced. A recommendation will come to the directors of ESS. Finance, payroll, and procurement are the services received from ESS by the college.

30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 2.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....