



EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Monday 24 September 2018 at 5.30 p.m.
in the Boardroom, Tower Building, Hele Road Campus

Open Minutes

MEMBERS: Matt Roach* (Chair); Chris Hoar* (Vice Chair);
David Allen*; Heather Ancient*; Philip Bostock;
John Laramy* (Principal); Stewart Noakes;
Emma Webber*; Glenn Woodcock*

IN ATTENDANCE: Lily Garth* (Clerk to the Corporation)
(all meeting) Steve Champion* (Vice Principal Finance & Business Operation)
Rob Bosworth* (Vice Principal Schools Partnerships & Curriculum)
Ben Gardner* (HE Student Governor) - observing

IN ATTENDANCE: Kate Barczok* (College Accountant)
(part meeting)

** Indicates presence at today's meeting (including part-meeting attendance).*
The meeting was quorate throughout.

Minute

Action for:

1.

**PRELIMINARIES:
WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- Apologies were received from Philip Bostock and Stewart Noakes
- Glenn Woodcock declared an interest in aspects of Item 4 - relating to his role in Oxygen House/Exeter City Futures - he would withdraw from the meeting when requested

The Chair welcomed Members to the first BS meeting of the year. Specific welcomes were also noted for:

- Heather Ancient as a new External Governor and BS Committee Member
- Emma Webber who has joined the Committee
- Ben Gardner as the new HE Student Governor who would be observing at this meeting

A software update seemed to have caused a failure in the usual

Board e-paper system. College IT staff were working hard to resolve this. Governors had been supplied with additional hard copies.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2018

The Committee **APPROVED** both the public and confidential minutes as correct records to be signed by the Chair.

The public set would be published on the College website.

3. MATTERS ARISING

All MAs were covered elsewhere on today's agenda.

4. OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS REGISTER

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Committee was pleased to **note** the positive management accounts for the period to 30 June 2018. Although the July accounts had not yet been finalised, the indication was that, subject to standard audit checks, the College would achieve Outstanding Financial Health for 2017/18. This was a great outcome in a sector which largely was struggling with financial health due to year after year of funding cuts.

Governors still challenged whether there was more which could be done to improve pay costs. SLT were working on this. There would be a pay award update at the October Board meeting.

The Committee was also pleased to note improvements in debtor management, utilising a collection agency who were behaving appropriately in respect of debt collection. There had been no adverse comments/complaints.

The College, following the FE sector norm, did not charge interest on outstanding debts - but would consider whether this might be appropriate in the future. College Accountant

6. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes

7. **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Committee Members, noting the length of the Financial Regulations, tested the practicalities of whether staff would genuinely be able to sufficiently familiarise themselves with the rules and implement them. Assurance was given by the College Accountant that key aspects were highlighted to relevant staff (for example budget holders).

Further to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's decision on 19 September (where Members rejected the reduction of the gifts' register threshold to £50 which was considered to be impractically low), the Committee **RECOMMENDED Board Approval** of the Financial Regulations *with the gift register threshold remaining at £100* (as in previous versions)

Board

8. **POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BREXIT ON FE**

The Committee noted and discussed the Principal's paper and the uncertainties surrounding Brexit.

In particular, discussion was cross-referenced with Property - Item 9 below - because although the College's debt/capital loans were on a fixed-basis and therefore would not be impacted for the duration of the fixed-terms by any rise in interest rates as a result of Brexit, the likelihood is that construction costs - supplies and wages - would rise and could potentially significantly impact on the Property Masterplan.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Brexit Risk be increased in terms of potential impact and the narrative updated to reference the Property Masterplan (mitigation should include careful wording of tender documents and appropriate contract exit-clauses).

ARA /
Board

9. **PROPERTY**

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes

10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

These items were **noted**:

- a. HR Annual Report (discussed in detail at Quality and Standards Committee and would be forwarded to the Board to note) - The BS Committee's comments echoed the QS discussion of the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff in a location with such high employment and in competition for staff with a rich University nearby
- b. Safety Health and Environment Minutes
- c. Risk Register (discussed in detail at Audit and Risk

Assurance Committee) Highlights and comments were consistent with the points recorded in the ARA minutes, with the added proposed update to Brexit R42 (cross-referenced above)

11. COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Committee discussed its self-assessment outcomes and **AGREED:**

- the listed points in the paper would be included in its self-assessment narrative
- the Committee's self-assessment grade as Outstanding to be included in the SAR (in a year when the College was expected to have Outstanding Quality and Financial Health)
- other positive points for inclusion would be:
 - good challenge and chairmanship
 - good oversight and handing of not getting a levy contract
- the 'even better if' about inexperience on Board referred to the turnover of Governors, with new Committee Members needing time and support to gain familiarisation with the Committee's context and work

Clerk
Nov 2018

12. ITEMS TO TAKE TO THE BOARD

- Financial Regulations
- Property updates and approvals
- Opportunities and Developments Register
- Risk Register proposed update in respect of Brexit and the Property Masterplan

13. ITEMS FOR NEXT QS COMMITTEE

The Committee **noted** and accepted the draft business of the next meeting as referred to by the Clerk in the approved business cycle plus any time-sensitive updates/developments.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm

APPROVED 26 November 2018(Chair)