

BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 29 June 2020 at 4.30pm remotely via Zoom

Present	Matt Roach	Chair
	Chris Hoar	
	David Allen	
	Glenn Woodcock	<i>(from item 6)</i>
	John Laramy	
	Stewart Noakes	
	Emma Webber	
	Carol McCormack	
	Heather Ancient	
Apologies	None	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth	Vice Principal, Schools Partnership and Curriculum
	<i>To item 7</i> Toby Coombes	Director of Finance, Funding and MIS
	<i>To item 7</i> Kate Barczok	College Accountant
	<i>Item 7 only</i> Steve Strang	Director of Estates and IT
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**
The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and expressed a particular welcome to Carol McCormack. The Committee noted that this would be Chris Hoar's final Committee meeting and the Chair thanked Chris for his extremely valuable contribution to the Committee.
2. **Minutes**
 - 2.1 The Questions/comments/responses of the meeting held on 27 April 2020 as circulated, were agreed and would be signed by the Chair when possible.
3. **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
4. **Risk Management**
 - 4.1 Risk Register
The Risk Register that had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 15 June 2020 was received by the Committee. The Deputy Principal/CEO highlighted the changes and high risk areas.

The Committee particularly noted two additional risks: R56 – failure to deliver appropriate teaching and learning in September 2020 and R57 – failure to recruit 16-18 learners.

The challenges in terms of transport for learners was discussed and although public transport is operating, the restrictions in place may hinder learners' ability and desire to attend Exeter College. It was acknowledged that the transport issues are largely out of the College's control, however a 'Lift Off' marketing campaign has been implemented by way of mitigation.

The Committee questioned what positively differentiates Exeter College in its online delivery from its competitors. Exeter College is renowned for its teaching and learning and as well as becoming an EdTech Demonstrator College, online live learning is now being provided using Microsoft Stream. It was confirmed that funding is not negatively impacted due to online learning.

Referring to the intended minimum offer of 50% at College learning, the Committee questioned how that would affect students on more vocational or practical courses. It was explained that the 50% minimum is an academic framed offer and other students are likely to attend more often. Vocational learners tend to be in smaller group sizes and therefore will receive a more normal experience.

The Committee challenged that the risk relating to HE had been reduced. It was confirmed that declining numbers was no longer a risk and therefore the emphasis is now about the impact of HE funding. The College has reduced the risk due to being prudent when setting the budget.

The Committee noted the Risk Register

4.2 Covid-19 Recovery Plan

Governors reviewed the Covid-19 recovery document and the Deputy Principal/CEO explained the levels of planning and preparation for September 2020, which relate to the strategy of stabilise, mobilise, normalise.

The Committee was reassured that the College can invoke a plan to close again if required due to a spike in Covid-19. The College has also been building resilience in terms of staffing. HE posts have been postponed, however the College has increased staff to support digital delivery and invested in the IT infrastructure.

Governors questioned where their concern should be directed and whether more resources are required in certain areas. The Deputy Principal/CEO responded that the College is confident in its strategy and the focus is now on the detail of the plan.

The Committee questioned the relationship between the risk register and the recovery plan. It was explained that following similar challenge at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the risk register would be reviewed and the impact of Covid-19 incorporated into existing risks where appropriate. Although SLT and Governors had understandably taken a specific interest in the Covid-19 recovery plan, going forward it will be owned by the Business Continuity Group and reported into Committees through the normal cycle of business.

The Committee noted the report

5. Strategic Matters

5.1 Opportunities and Developments Risk Register

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

Glenn Woodcock joined the meeting

6. Financial Matters

6.1 Provisional Budget for 2020/2021

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

6.2 Cashflow

This item was incorporated into item 6.3 Loan Facility.

6.3 Loan Facility

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

6.4 Integrated Financial Model

The Principal/CEO gave an oral update to the Committee in terms of the return that must be submitted to the ESFA by end July 2020. Full guidance had not yet been received and therefore the return was not ready to share with the Committee.

The Committee agreed that the Integrated Financial Model may be submitted to the ESFA without further reporting **SLT**

6.5 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.

Steve Strang, Head of Estates, joined for item 7 only.

7. **Property Matters**
7.1 Estates Masterplan
7.2 Property Update:
Items 7.1 and 7.2 were dealt with as confidential items in accordance with the College’s confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.
8. **Committee Self Evaluation**
The Chair led a discussion on the Committee’s effectiveness over the past year. Governors considered the following areas: Goals and purpose, resource and support, time and location of meetings, quality of discussion and decision making, attendance and contribution.
- The Committee agreed to receive a narrative to consider at the autumn meeting** Clerk
9. **Emerging Risks**
The Committee considered any risks that had arisen from the meeting and had nothing to add to the current Risk Register.
- 10 **Reports and Minutes for Information**
The following reports were received and noted:
- 10.1 Management Accounts (April 2020)
10.2 ESFA Letter
The Committee questioned a financial control issue that appeared to remain outstanding from the previous year. The Clerk explained that the action referred to the requirement for the register of business interests to be shared with the Finance team, which had been completed in October 2019.
- 10.3 FE Commissioner’s Letter
10.4 Safety Health and Environment Minutes
10.5 Terms of Reference
The Committee agreed the terms of reference, however questioned the length and detail of the responsibilities of the Committee and that some areas of assurance may be duplicated with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- It was agreed:**
- a) to recommend the Terms of Reference to the Board for approval on 3 July 2020.** Clerk
- b) that the Clerk will further evaluate the terms of reference as part of a future governance review.** Clerk
- 10.6 Items to take to the Board were agreed as: Provisional budget, Loan facility, Masterplan update, Terms of Reference
- 10.7 Items for the next agenda were agreed referring to the current cycle of business. However, the Clerk will review the cycle of business to allow for four meetings per year. Clerk

11. **Dates of future meetings**
 - 21 September 2020
 - 23 November 2020
 - 29 March 2021

The meeting ended at 6.25pm