

BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 21 June 2021 at 5.30pm remotely via Zoom

Present	Matt Roach	Chair
	Heather Ancient	Vice Chair
	John Laramy	
	David Allen	
<i>To item 7.2</i>	Glenn Woodcock	
	Emma Webber	
	Carol McCormack	
	Sally Wolkowski	
	Mike Owen	Co-opted
Apologies	Stewart Noakes	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth	Deputy Principal/CEO
	Richard Church	Chief Financial Officer
<i>Item 4.1 only</i>	Gemma Noble	Director of People and Organisational Development
<i>Item 7 only</i>	Toby Coombes	Director of Finance, Funding and MIS
<i>Item 8 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 Sally Wolkowski. The Committee noted that this would be David Allen and Heather Ancient's final Committee meeting and the Chair thanked them both for their extremely valuable contribution to the Committee.
2. **Minutes**
 - 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021, as circulated, were agreed.
 - 2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021, as circulated, were agreed.
3. **Matters arising**
 - 3.1 Banking Update
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

Gemma Noble joined the meeting for item 4.1

4. **Policies**

4.1 LGPS Discretions Policy Statement

The Committee received the updated LGPS Discretions Policy Statement and noted the amendments which related mainly to flexible retirement.

The Committee approved the LGPS Discretions Policy Statement

4.2 Retention and Disposition Policy

The Committee received the Retention and Disposition Policy and noted the addition of a reference to subsidiary companies.

The Committee agreed to adopt the Retention and Disposition Policy

5. **Risk Management**

5.1 Risk Register

The Risk Register that had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 7 June 2021 was received by the Committee. The Chief Financial Officer highlighted the key changes, high-risk areas and associated mitigations.

The risk related to failure to sustain Ofsted outstanding had increased on the basis that the probability of having an inspection has increased and the College will be in scope from September 2021. The risk of IT 'hacking' had also increased due to incidents nationally rising, especially in the education sector. It was advised that the College had implemented insurance and was working on the IT infrastructure and policies.

A new risk had been added related to insufficient capacity within the IT team to reflect that reliance on IT had risen significantly over the past year.

The Committee questioned how confident the College was about the success of the nurseries. It was advised that a project had been commenced to address the issues experienced over the past 18 months including income, ratios and the ability to fill vacancies. It was noted that the College nursery is rated Ofsted good and Owlets, as a new provision, was yet to be inspected.

Referring to the risk of recruiting high quality staff, the Committee questioned the attrition rates for teaching staff. It was noted that the College is recruiting teaching staff well and the attrition rate is stable. The challenge relates to recruiting support staff, related to growth, and it was accepted that starting salaries may need to be adjusted.

The Committee raised the issue of student satisfaction in a time where Covid-19 has forced a significant change to the entire education infrastructure and questioned whether this will contribute to the risk related to an Ofsted inspection. The Principal referred to a recent survey of student satisfaction and that 96% of students are happy or very happy at College and 98% of students knew what to do to keep Covid safe. It was noted that for the majority of Exeter College learners, education had been successfully provided in college.

The Committee noted the Risk Register

6. Strategic Matters

6.1 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.

Toby Coombes, Director of Funding, Finance and MIS joined the meeting for item 7 only

7. Financial Matters

7.1 Management Accounts

The Committee received the management accounts for April 2021 and the Chief Financial Officer highlighted the key elements. The Committee noted that income was above budget resulting in a positive operating surplus being forecasted. The financial health of the College was predicted to be a comfortable 'good' at the year end.

The Committee was pleased to note that the presentation of the management accounts had improved.

The Committee noted the management accounts

Glenn Woodcock left the meeting

7.2 Exeter College Provisional Budget for 2021/2022

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

7.3 Cashflow 2021/2022

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

7.4 2022/2023 Budget Outline for finance return

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

7.5 Exeter College Services Ltd Provisional Budget for 2021/2022
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

7.6 Student Recruitment
The Committee noted that recruitment for 16-18 learners was positive and that numbers are consistent with predictions, due to the robustness of the data.

The Committee noted the report

Steve Strang, Head of Estates, joined for item 8 only

8. Property Matters

8.1 Estates Master Plan

It was noted that governors had received a Master Plan update at the Special Board meeting the previous month. It was pleasing to note that planning permission had been granted for Blocks B and C, however the College was still waiting for a decision in terms of funding.

The Institute of Technology had been completed and teaching commenced in the building from 7 June 2021.

The Committee received a short-term addition to the College's estate's strategy which outlined the priorities, progress against those priorities, as well as medium and longer-term proposed projects.

The Committee challenged how land-based programmes fit into the wider College strategy. It was noted that the inclusion of land-based programmes in the strategy would allow the College to explore any opportunities that may arise, as this was the only provision not currently provided by the College.

It was suggested that the College might consider building more strategic links with local estate agents to be able to take advantage of any opportunities to acquire appropriate property in the locality. It was also proposed that the current property portfolio should be reviewed to ensure it meets post Covid work patterns and changes to the delivery of learning.

Governors challenged how drone technology fits within an estate's strategy. It was advised that this was due to a specific current opportunity that the College was exploring.

The Committee was keen to ensure that the revised estate's strategy clearly indicates how the priorities link to the overall College strategic plan. Governors also encouraged the College to explore opportunities and funding proactively rather than be reactive to individual opportunities.

The Committee agreed:

- a) to accept the short-term addition to the current estate's strategy**
- b) that the original estate's strategy is updated over the next year to reflect the changes since its formation to ensure it remains fit for purpose.**

8.2 Property Update:

The Committee received the property update and noted the works that had taken place at the Future Skills Centre and the progress of the works related to the ESFA maintenance investment funding.

The Committee noted the report and warmly thanked Steve Strang and the team for their hard work.

9. **Committee Business**

9.1 Committee Self-evaluation

The Chair referred to the draft self-evaluation and encouraged the Committee to respond to the Clerk direct with additional comments related **all** to the Committee's effectiveness over the past year.

The Committee agreed to receive a narrative to consider at the Clerk autumn meeting

10. **Emerging Risks**

The Committee considered any risks that had arisen from the meeting and had nothing to add to the current Risk Register.

11. **Future meetings**

11.1 Items to take to the Board

The Committee agreed the items to take to the Board as:

- Banking update
- Policies
- Provisional Budget 2021/2022
- Provisional Nursery Budget 2021/2022
- Master Plan and Property Update

11.2 Items for the next meeting

Items for the next agenda were agreed referring to the current cycle of business.

11.3 Dates of meetings

20 September 2021
22 November 2021
28 March 2022

12. **Minutes/reports for information**

The following reports were received and noted:

- 12.1 Safety, Health and Environment minutes
- 12.2 ESFA Financial Health Score
- 12.3 ESFA Finance Dashboard