

# EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 20 September 2021 at 5.30pm remotely via Zoom

<b>Present</b>	Matt Roach Emma Webber Carol McCormack Stewart Noakes Glenn Woodcock Sally Wolkowski Mike Owen	Chair
<b>Apologies</b>	John Laramy	
<b>In Attendance</b>	Rob Bosworth Richard Church <i>Item 6.2 only</i> Kate Barczok <i>Item 7 only</i> Steve Strang <i>Item 7.1 only</i> Mike Loomes <i>Item 7.2 only</i> Adam Hart	Deputy Principal/CEO Chief Financial Officer College Accountant Director of Estates and IT Safety Health and Environment Adviser ICT Manager
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**  
The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. Apologies were received from John Laramy. There were no declarations of interest received.

2. **Minutes**
  - 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021 as circulated, were agreed.
  - 2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**
  - 3.1 Committee self-assessment update

The Committee reviewed the narrative prepared by the Clerk following the self-assessment discussion at the previous meeting.

**Clerk**

**The Committee agreed the self assessment**

4. **Risk Management**

#### 4.1 Risk Register

The Risk Register that had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 13 September 2021 was received by the Committee. The Chief Financial Officer highlighted the high-risk areas and the changes.

The Committee particularly noted those risks that had been raised to a medium category: curriculum and assessment changes, student residential capacity and safeguarding, new and increased competition, adverse publicity and reputational damage. One risk had been retired relating to the exam appeals process as there had been very few appeals.

The Committee questioned whether the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had considered the impact of inflation which was confirmed. It was suggested that this could be referred to within the financial stability risk.

The Committee sought clarification around the College's risk appetite which did not appear to be clear from the risk register. It was confirmed that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had discussed the College's general risk appetite and intended to evolve the risk register further. It was also suggested that it might be useful to have more risks focused on outcomes for students, although it was equally acknowledged that the Board is astute in its consideration of student outcomes and the student experience.

The Committee suggested that a wider finance strategy would be useful to fully understand the College's loan facilities alongside the number of projects the College is engaged in or pursuing. It was felt that a discussion around the strategic aims would be helpful.

The availability of building materials and electronic components was raised as a potential risk. The College confirmed that it is aware of the issue around building materials and that it had purchased a significant amount of IT equipment the previous year.

#### **The Committee noted the Risk Register**

#### 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.

#### 6. **Financial Matters**

##### 6.1 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.

*Kate Barczok, College Accountant joined the meeting*

- 6.2 Financial Regulations
- Financial Regulations 2021
  - Financial Regulations Appendices 2021
  - Financial Procedures 2021

The Committee questioned whether the amendments relating to leaving the EU would result in the College conducting tendering processes in a different way. It was felt that there would be no difference and the College uses the appropriate frameworks for significant projects.

The Committee challenged the reference to WTO and requested that this term is questioned with the CPC.

**The Committee agreed to recommend the Financial Regulations 2021, Financial Regulations Appendices 2021 and Financial Procedures 2021 to the Board for approval on 8 October 2021, subject to further clarification being obtained from the CPC.**

**KB**

*Kate Barczok left the meeting*

- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 Subcontractor Provision fees and costs  
The Committee noted that sub-contractor expenditure had declined over the last year, as planned, to below £100k and therefore it is no longer necessary to report the activity to the Board. The Committee was reassured that the management of subcontractors is in line with AoC best practice.

**The Committee agreed that it is no longer necessary for the subcontractor provision to be audited.**

*Steve Strang, Director of Estates and ICT and Mike Loomes, Safety Health and Environment Adviser joined the meeting.*

## **7. Property Matters**

### **7.1 Sustainability Report**

The Committee received the report and the Safety, Health and Environment Adviser gave an overview of the key activities and achievements. It was pleasing to note the high level of student engagement in sustainability issues at the College had been recognised by a national award.



The Committee questioned who the College benchmarks against to support the status of being a sustainability leader. The College is a member of The Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges which compares organisations using a score card methodology.

Governors acknowledged that the report improves each year and suggested there may be a benefit for there to be a business focus as well as a sustainability focus. It was also agreed to expand the strategy with the aim of supporting student/staff wellbeing

### **The Committee noted the report**

*Mike Loomes left the meeting. Adam Hart, ICT Manager, joined the meeting*

#### **7.2 ICT Annual Report**

The Committee received the report and the ICT Manager highlighted the challenges that had faced the service through the loss of key members of staff, major projects, the future focus on cyber security and Ofsted considerations.

The Committee asked how long the cyber security review with NCC will take and when the risks to the organisation will be available. It is hoped that the report will be received towards the end of October and will be tabled at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in November, resulting in clear roadmaps for the next two years.

Governors questioned the level of staff turnover and it was confirmed that staff had moved on to promotional opportunities.

### **The Committee noted the report**

#### **7.3 Estates Masterplan**

#### **7.4 Property Update**

Items 7.3 and 7.4 were dealt with as confidential items in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

#### **8. Emerging Risks**

The Committee considered that it may be advantageous to consider the College's appetite towards borrowing and the capacity for future development over and above the Masterplan.

**RC**

#### **9. Future Meetings**

##### **9.1 Items to take to the Board meeting on 8 October 2021 were agreed as:**

- Banking update
- Financial Regulations
- Student Recruitment

- Estates Masterplan

9.2 Items for the next meeting

The Committee reviewed and agreed the cycle of business for the next meeting.

9.3 Date of meetings for 2021/2022:

- Monday 22 November 2021
- Monday 28 March 2022
- Monday 13 June 2022

10 **Reports and Minutes for Information**

There were no additional reports/minutes to note.

*Signed by the Chair*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mark', written over a horizontal line.

22 November 2021

