



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP HELD VIA ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCE **ON WEDNESDAY 4 MAY 2022**

PRESENT:	Sam Foley	(Chair)	<u>Meeting Attendance</u>
	Gillian May	(Group Principal)	(3 out of 4)
	Tina Coates		(4 out of 4)
	Angela Wellings		(4 out of 4)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mohan Ratnam	(Head of Finance)	
	Roberts Disbury-Mockett	(Director of Information & Business Systems Technology)	
	Richard Munday	(Finance Director, BCA)	
CLERK:	Lynn Payne		(4 out of 4)

PART I

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
The meeting started at 5pm.	
1. <u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received from Kiran Virdee.	
2. <u>Declarations of Interest</u> Sam Foley declared an interest in relation to matters related to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). She advised Members that for Part I and Part II meetings of this Committee ongoing, she would like to register this interest.	
3. <u>Minutes of the previous Resources Committee meeting held on 2 March 2022</u> The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 March 2022, having been previously circulated to members, were agreed as an accurate record and the Chair's electronic signature would be applied to the Minutes. All Members were agreed.	
4. <u>Matters Arising from the previous Resources Committee meeting held on 2 March 2022</u> It was note that there were no matters arising.	
5. <u>Standing Agenda Items</u> a) <u>Risk Register 2021/22</u> This item was presented by the Group Principal who informed members there had been no movements in the risk ratings since the last meeting. She confirmed there was a Post-Merger Steering Group in place now, that would continue until after the merger. Members noted the key additions to the Risk Register in relation to safeguarding, student recruitment, new Level 1 provision, student outcomes and future funding risk, IT security and Covid-19 disruption. The Group Principal advised members that in connection with the risk to failure to meet the budget forecast, to reduce the operating deficit, the period 8 management accounts forecast was under budget, and that the contingency funds had now been fully utilised. In relation to risk 3, poor student outcome data in some curriculum areas at Langley College, resulted in a challenge to the "Good" Ofsted rating and the resulting impact on quality and	

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reputation, the Group Principal informed members that in-year retention at R05 (March 2022) showed an improvement across the College Group (93% vs 86%) with a noticeable improvement at Langley College. It was noted retention rates at Langley College indicated a significant year-on-year improvement, and full costing for additional learning support was underway for delivery in 2022/23.

In relation to risk 5, IT failure with loss of data for staff and students, with increase in cyber-attacks across the FE sector, the Group Principal informed members that the Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan would be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and agreed and would come to the Audit Committee in the Autumn term post-merger.

The Group Principal advised members that a new Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plan would be created post-merger and that they were currently being considered in the merger workstream and would come to the Audit Committee in the Autumn term post-merger.

In relation to risk 13, poor financial control systems result in risk of internal and external fraud, the Group Principal informed members that there was no evidence of successful instances or significant weaknesses in controls in this area.

The Chair felt the layout of the Risk Register was very easy to follow with the updated points highlighted in colour were most useful. The Group Principal reminded members that the risks in the register would go through the individual committees that had responsibility for them, during the term.

The report was noted.

b) Treasury Management Update 2021/22

This item was presented by the Head of Finance. Members were informed of the latest credit ratings of the College's approved counterparties, and **these were noted**. Members had received details of the College's current investments, and **these were noted**.

Members were asked to agree to recommend to the board that the Barclays Bank account held by the College was closed. The Head of Finance informed members that prior to the merger in 2017, the main day to day banking for the College was with Barclays Bank. In 2017 it was switched to Santander, but the Barclays current account had been maintained in order to keep open the option of future investments. The Head of Finance confirmed no significant investments had been made with Barclays during the time since 2017, and that interest paid by Barclays was historically lower on balances, than the other approved counterparties. He confirmed there were no transactions going through the Barclays account. He advised members there was an administrative burden in managing and maintaining the bank accounts and accordingly it was proposed the account was closed.

Members asked questions relating to whether the sustainability credentials of banks were considered. The Head of Finance informed members that he did look at the ethics of banks but that they were all, almost the same, with Barclays being the worst. The Chair felt the College should monitor the banks they were dealing with, and the Group Principal agreed and said this could be picked up as a post-merger workstream matter that Richard Munday would action.

The Finance Director, BCA informed members that BCA were heavily into sustainability and green issues and agreed the College should consider ethical banking going forward. Tina Coates confirmed all banks were similar, safe and secure, it was whether the College wanted different levels of ESG. She would send information through to the Group Principal.

The Chair of the Board thanked the Chair of the Committee for her comments and reminded members they had already been referred to at a previous Resources Committee meeting, in connection with how College students themselves would feel about these issues.

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**Members agreed to recommend to the Board the closure of the Barclays account.
Members noted the report.**

**Refer to
Corporation**

6. Period 8 Management Accounts to 31 March 2022

This item was presented by the Group Principal. Members were advised that the College's forecast year-end income and expenditure position now reported, was for a deficit of £0.788 million, which was £187,000 lower (better) than the previous £0.975 million approved deficit budget for the year. It was also noted as £22,000 lower than the previous period 7 management accounts. Members were informed that the forecast excluded the estimated costs of the planned merger, in the sum of £0.323 million, therefore the forecast including the merger costs was a deficit of £1.11 million.

Members were advised that the most significant financial risk to the current and future years budgets continued to be learner recruitment and its impact on funding body grant income and tuition fees, as these represented 94% of the College's income. Specifically for the current year, based on the ESFA November R04 return position, 16-19 learners had reduced by 60. This change represented a reduction in funding in 2022/23 because of the lagged formula methodology. However, the Group Principal advised members that the ESFA funding settlement for 2022/23 had substantially mitigated this and members received full details of that in the updated financial forecast to the Board in February 2022.

Members were advised of the funding for adult learners who enrolled throughout the year. At the current time the budget was not forecast to be achieved overall, despite a good recovery from community ESOL enrolments. A shortfall of £140,000 was forecast and that would be funded from the contingency funds.

In relation to Apprentice learners and funding, following the significant impact of Covid in the past two years, it was noted that whilst the small increase was now forecast, the increase was less than assumed in the budget and a shortfall of £230,000 was included. This had also been funded from the contingency fund.

Members were advised that the three highest financial risks were, the risk of a further adult funding shortfall, a further apprentices funding shortfall and higher staffing costs. The salaries budget had been reduced in the current year following the restructure changes made in the summer term 2021.

The Group Principal advised members that the College continued to face challenges in recruiting to some curriculum posts that were in short supply, particularly in the construction trades, and there was therefore a need to rely on some agency staff.

The Chair asked what assumptions were made for inflation and asked for a report on this to the next meeting.

**Group
Principal**

It was agreed that inflation costs would now be placed on the Risk Register. The Group Principal informed members in next year's budget fuel costs would need to be increased by £0.5 million.

**Group
Principal**

The Chair asked what the arrangements there were for staff, in relation to flexibility of recruitment. The Group Principal informed members that new staff know their value and with the cost of living going up, were not reluctant to come forward to ask for more income.

Members thanked the Group Principal for her comprehensive report.
Members noted the report.

7. Health & Safety Summer Term Report

This item was presented by the Group Principal. Members noted the health & safety report for the spring term 2022, in particular the accidents and incidents, and were pleased to note there

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had been no reported accidents/near misses at Langley, Strode's or Windsor College this term.

The report was noted.

8. GDPR Annual Report

This item was presented by the Group Director of Information & Business Systems Technology (GDIBST) (including DPO). Members were advised that from April 2021-March 2022 there had been 9 breaches reported to the DPO. This was a decrease of 2 reported cases from the previous year. The breaches were investigated by the DPO and of these, only 1 was deemed to affect the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Members were advised that there had been an increase in the number of subject access requests (DSAR) in the year. The trend continued for past students requesting academic data, such as attendance, via a solicitor, as they were claiming an injury during the time affecting their study. It was noted none of the requests had been in relation to making a claim against the College. There were also 2 staff DSAR requests noted. The first was deemed as excessive as the request information totalled over 40,000 potential documents. The DSAR subject made a complaint to the ICO, which they passed back to the College advising that they deemed the request was not excessive. The second was specific in nature and the requested information had been provided. The Chair thanked the GDIBST for interacting with the ICO and a robust handling of the data protection matters.

The report was noted.

Stuart Markham joined the meeting – 5.30pm

9. Fees Policy

This item was presented by the Group Principal. Members had received the 2022/23 Fees Policy. Overall, it was proposed that fees were increased by 3%, unless there was a reason for not doing so, such as competitor fee levels. Members were advised that the College's policy and level of fees was important, as approximately £1.4 million was received from fees each year. Members were advised that to remain competitive, a 3% increase was felt reasonable. There would be no increase in HE fees.

The Chair noted the College were set at the lower end of the top quartile and asked what would enable a move up the scale, the Group Principal advised members there would need to be more demand and better group sizes.

The Group Principal informed members that at the next Board meeting she would present the HE numbers.

Mrs Coates referred to the decreasing numbers at Langley College and that it had not always been a first-choice destination, so felt being in the lower part of the top quartile was good.

Members unanimously agreed to recommend the Fees Policy to the Board for approval.

**Group
Principal**

**Refer to
Corporation**

10. Staff Survey Report 2021/22

The Group Principal presented the outcome of the Colleges annual staff survey for 2021/22. It was noted 158 responses had been received from a staff of 400. The Group Principal informed members that next year, more consideration would be given to the timing of, and accessibility for, staff to complete the staff survey. Members noted the outcomes from the responses to the questions and thanked the Group Principal for the excellent dashboard presentation of outcomes. The Chair of the Board asked for further consideration to be given to the questions relating to "I am motivated to see the College grow" and "I am not thinking of leaving in the next 12 months", as there was some conflict in the answers to those survey questions.

The report was noted.

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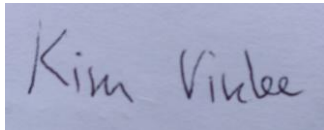
ACTION

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| 11. | <p><u>Evaluation of Meeting</u>
Members were happy that the papers were sufficient to inform decisions. The length of time spent on each agenda item was considered appropriate. The structure of the papers was not only easy to follow, but dashboard presentations were welcomed. Members felt they added value in the Treasury Management discussion on banking and the Period 8 Management Accounts on risks arising from inflation.</p> | |
| 12. | <p><u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings and Events</u>
The dates and times of future meetings were noted as follows:

Scheduled for 6.00pm on: Wednesday 22 June 2022
Wednesday 30 November 2022</p> | |
| 13. | <p><u>Any Urgent Business</u>
There were no items of other urgent business raised.

The meeting ended at 5.45pm</p> | |

Chair:



Kim Vinke

Date: 29 June 2022