

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JUNE 2023

1. PRESENT

Gerry Tawton (Chair), Gavin Booth, David Earnshaw, Claire Foster, and Kelly Harris.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Debbie Holland (Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services), Charlotte Robinson (Head of Finance) and Jen Durrant (Executive Director: People). Heather Lee, Helen Rumbold, Paul Tomlinson, Sandra Williamson and Nick Worth (Governors) attended for Item 2 only.

Apologies for absence were received from David Parnell.

Attendance 83%

2. BUDGET BRIEFING

Debbie Holland gave a presentation on the budget setting process. She explained the timescales for production of the college budget and the way that it is created. The presentation looked at sources of income, planned expenditure and significant differences from the current budget.

It was noted that funding for 16 to 19 year old learners represented the college's most significant income stream. It was explained that this was lagged funding with learner numbers each year determining the following year's funding. Gerry Tawton asked if there was any additional funding for increased numbers in year and Debbie explained that this would only happen if the variance was significant.

A discussion took place about AEB funding and the challenges in delivering the funding allocation. A reduction in the number of HE learners is anticipated and this was noted to be common across the sector. Nick Worth suggested that the cost of living challenges could have an impact on this.

Members noted that use of the halls of residence offered an opportunity to increase revenue. Use of the halls by the NHS is a substantial funding stream.

Nick Worth asked why there was no provision for a pay award. Information was provided about the background to pay awards in the sector and the college's approach to this. It was noted that the cost of pensions was very different to that in the private sector. Nonetheless, the college would be reviewing the position on a pay award during the next academic year to consider affordability.

Debbie advised that a dashboard for monitoring performance was to be developed over the summer.

3. ACTION LOG

Members reviewed progress made against items in the committee's action log.

No response has been received from Boston Borough Council regarding the Peter Paine Performance Centre lease. Gerry Tawton asked if the Corporation would see the report on staff utilisation. Claire Foster advised that it should be available by the end of July and will be shared with committee members next term. It was confirmed that the budget

encapsulates the report recommendations and many of its recommendations have already been implemented.

4. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 27 March 2023 were reviewed and approved.

5. **GENDER PAY GAP**

Members received a report from the Executive Director: People on the Gender Pay Gap in March 2022.

Jen Durrant took members through the detail of the report and comparisons with data from other local colleges. David Earnshaw asked why the data was more than a year old and it was confirmed that this reflected the required reporting period. In response to a query from Gavin Booth, it was confirmed that there was no action required to be taken as a result of the analysis. Claire Foster confirmed that the college's priority is to get the right people in the right jobs although diversity is critically important.

6. **FINANCE**

a) 2022/23 Position

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services including the management accounts to 30 April 2023.

Debbie Holland noted that there had been a number of savings in staff costs. In response to a query from Gavin Booth, information was provided on the covering of vacancies.

The committee looked at the detail provided about aged debts. Gavin Booth asked if the college was able to insure against these but it was confirmed that the college was not aware of any such possibility. David Earnshaw asked if the increase in instalment payments was due to Covid. It was suggested that some payments may have been held anticipating the learner's potential return after the pandemic.

b) Draft Budget 2023/24

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services with the draft budget for 2023/24 and key performance indicators.

It was noted that the budget anticipates a surplus of £103,000 and that this is uncommon within the sector. Gerry Tawton asked about the stretch targets which had been identified and Debbie confirmed that these would achieve Outstanding financial health. An indication was given of the change needed to allow a pay award to be funded and Claire Foster commented on the need to reflect sector pay. Gavin Booth asked if pay was the key to recruitment. Claire commented that it was in part but the staff also recognise the benefits of working at the college.

The draft budget was noted to be prudent and the position regarding a pay award will become clearer when HE, adult and apprenticeship numbers become known. Claire pointed out that this budget compared favourably with the sector and at this time we needed to remain prudent yet ambitious.

Gerry Tawton commented on the reduction in the surplus in 2024/25 noting that it would have been preferable to see an improving trend. DH explained that a pay award was built in for 2024/25 – on this basis the Committee agreed that the reduced surplus position in 2024/25 was acceptable.

David Earnshaw commented that the committee is a reviewing body and it is important that the executive owns the budget. The Corporation has seen losses through the pandemic but now needs to look for improvement as circumstances settle. Claire advised that the FE Commissioner had reflected on the fact that there were still some opportunities for further efficiencies in subsequent years.

The committee agreed to recommend the budget to the Corporation and noted that it would be submitted with supporting appendices and the CFFR commentary. ●

7. KELLY HARRIS

It was noted that Kelly would be leaving the college in the near future and the committee thanked her for her contribution to its work.