

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 14 June 2023 at 4.30pm

Present physically: K Chapman N Savvas, CEO

Present virtually: A Duffety, Vice Chair (part) E D'Souza
C Higgins, Chair R Hetherington, Co-opted

In attendance: A McGarel, CFO
A Swift, Group Director Estates
A Wheeler, Executive Director Curriculum Initiatives
G Grainger, Chief Information Officer
M Chatt, Deputy CFO
R Stevenson, Group Operations Director
S Gales, Governance Professional
S Graham, Chief People Officer

Apologies: C Willcocks, Group Director IT

Action

1. **Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence**

C Higgins, E D'Souza and N Savvas declared their roles as Trustees of Suffolk Academies Trust. No conflicts of interest in relation to the items on the agenda were declared.

No apologies for absence were received.

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

3. **Matters Arising from the meeting held on 1 March 2023**

Of the fifteen matters arising from the previous meeting were complete and three were ongoing.

Governors discussed MA2 relating to training to support governance understanding of the IT data metrics, and noted this will be delivered in 2023/24. Governors noted, however, that the papers were becoming less opaque to those less familiar with IT matters.

Governors discussed MA10 relating to identifying the root cause of trends in the Gender Pay Gap, and noted the CPO will liaise with the Vice Chair to discuss as agreed at the last meeting.

Governors discussed MA12 relating to identifying the urgent priorities and the medium/long term priorities within the building condition report, and noted this being implemented. It was suggested more time should be spent on the issue of prioritisation in the face of budget constraints , at a future meeting.

4. **Risk Register Extract**

Governors received an extract of the updated Risk Register.

Governors discussed the new risk WSCR063 relating to the impact of unbudgeted pay costs resulting from union pay negotiations, and noted this is a national risk to the sector. Governors queried whether this risk is intrinsically different to WSCR016 and whether they should be combined and/or have the same RAG rating. The CEO confirmed the risk is specifically linked to union relations and provided a verbal update following negotiations with the unions and advised that this risk may reduce as a result.

Governors discussed the new risk WSCR062 relating to the impact ChatGPT and other AI on assessments and learning, and agreed it was right to have this on the risk register.

Governors discussed WSCR024 and noted this is a national issue affecting the sector and, despite our confidence on our mitigations and cyber security, needs to remain on the risk register.

Governors discussed WSCR032 and queried the note to state it had been reworded. The FA Risk to check and update as appropriate.

FA Risk

Governors reviewed the risks and **felt assured** that the mitigations proposed were appropriate.

5. **Executive Board summary report**

i. **Health and Safety (Spring term)**

Governors received and considered the overview report provided which summarised the discussions from the Health and Safety Board.

S Hart summarised the new systems being implemented to support oversight and monitoring, e.g. SmartLog for Health and Safety Incident reporting, TTC Continuum for Driving to Work, etc. appear to be improving effectiveness.

S Hart noted that we continue to learn lessons from trips and visits being run across the Group to further strengthen processes for future.

Governors noted that mandatory training completion is slightly below target and queried if this is an internal target or a regulatory target, and what the impact of under-target completion has on Health and Safety arrangements. S Hart answered this and the CPO confirmed the strategies being implemented to encourage and ensure all staff to complete their mandatory training.

Governors noted difficulties in the sector securing First Aid and Fire Marshall provision coverage across our centres, and queried if this is issue at the College. S Hart answered this and the processes in place to recruit new staff to these roles.

A Duffety joined the meeting at 5.05pm

ii. **Sustainability**

Governors received and considered the overview report provided which summarised the discussions from the Sustainability Board.

A Wheeler presented an update on the Green Skills Project legacy.

Governors commended the progress of the team in finding ways to embed sustainability within everything we do. Governors commended the innovative projects being run with students and queried how we can facilitate this more and maximise engagement. R Stevenson answered this. Governors asked the Executive to propose some metrics to monitor the impact of these engagements and to help ensure future prioritisation of activities and spend.

R Stevenson

6. **People Update**

i. **KPI Report**

Governors received and considered the paper which provided metrics and trend analysis on the staffing establishment, labour turnover, sickness absence, absence management, employee relations and recruitment; plus the EDI metrics.

Governors noted sickness absence is increasing and queried the cause of this. S Graham answered this and informed that it is due to more serious and long term medical issues, rather than work-related causes.

ii. **Operational/Strategic Updates**

The Committee received and considered the paper provided, which provided an update on the development of the license to lead programme and a new onboarding and

orientation programme, an update on recruitment and selection processes and the implementation of iTrent (the Trust's new HR system), an update on wellbeing activities and employee relations, plus an update on staffing and organisational changes across the Group.

Governors noted the staffing and organisational changes and queried whether there are any cause for concern from staff feedback on the implementation of these. S Graham answered this and confirmed there have been no concerns raised.

Governors noted the EDI information and queried how closely our staffing profile reflects our student body and/or local community. S Graham to include analysis in future reports.

S Graham

Governors noted the importance of community representation, and queried how we can identify and remove any barriers to support applications and appointment of staff from all EDIMs. S Graham outlined the strategies being implemented.

The team was commended for staying ahead of the game at a difficult time for staff recruitment/retention.

7. **Physical Infrastructure Update**

i. **KPI Report**

Governors received and considered the paper provided, which provided metrics and trend analysis on unplanned repairs, desktop support, planned and preventative maintenance, core infrastructure reliability, asset maintenance, planned refurbishment, a summary of planned investment, planned room moves, and an update on the condition surveys and plans to further refine building utilization reports to create the College's space strategy.

Governors commended the report and agreed to devote significant time at the next meeting, once the Executive has had an opportunity to analyse the data, to discuss the condition survey and prioritisation in relation to available funding.

ii. **Property Strategy**

Governors received, considered and **recommends the paper to the** Corporation on the basis that there will be a substantive review next year.

R Stevenson advised that work is underway to do a more substantial update of the Property Strategy to reflect our new capacity, updated student projects, etc. Governors agreed to devote significant time at a future meeting to discuss this once it has been updated.

8. **Virtual Infrastructure Update**

i. **Operational/Strategic Updates**

Governors received and considered the paper provided which provided metrics and trend analysis on cyber security, servicing and on the IT domain project, network upgrade project, replacement of IT hardware and migration to Azure.

Governors commended the progress of the team and the clarity of the report.

Governors queried how the IT domain project will be affected by a prospective merger with another organisation. R Stevenson answered this.

Governors queried how we backup systems to mitigate the risk of loss in the event of a cyber security attack. R Stevenson answered this. Governors noted blackmail is a rising trend in how data from cyber security attacks are used and queried what our contingency would be in such an eventuality. R Stevenson answered this and noted this links to our business continuity plan.

Governors recognised the risk of cyber-attack could never be fully mitigated and asked about communication plans should our systems ever be hacked. R Stevenson agreed to develop a communication plan.

9. Data, Systems and Processes Update

i. Operational/Strategic Updates

Governors received and considered the paper provided which provided an update on the data information system transformation project.

Governors noted the array of projects and queried whether investment in these systems is included in the budget. N Savvas confirmed that it is within the capital expenditure budget and return on investment is a key consideration.

Governors discussed the need for value for money / return on investment for the systems investment. In the absence of KPI's the Committee discussed the need to be able to assure Governors that this high priority programme was on track to deliver our strategic aims. G Grainger to draft a high-level report for consideration in more detail at a future meeting.

G Grainger

10. Any Other Business

- Agenda's for 2023/24

Governors commended the success of the Executive and significant progress in developing the reporting to this Committee, and noted for 2023/24 we need to consider how best to organise the agendas to focus time and attention on critical areas and avoid duplication with the preceding SAT meeting. The CEO and Governance Professional to consider how best to organise agendas in discussion with the Committee Chair.

CEO
Gov. Prof.

- Mitigating management stretch

Governors noted the array of projects in development, and advised the Executive to carefully consider the capacity needed to deliver these projects when undertaking due diligence and implementing potential merger so that ongoing activities are not compromised.

CEO

The meeting closed at 6.16pm