

AQUINAS COLLEGE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 7 November 2023

Time: 4.30 pm

Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss M Braithwaite, Mr C Green, Mr P Horton, Mr I Ishaq, Mr M Matthew, Mr T P McGee and Mr D Pearson.

Miss M Braithwaite in the Chair.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Bailey Vice Principal

Mrs D Blackburn Senior Assistant Principal (Finance)

Mr T Conlon Clerk to the Governing Body

1. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Miss M Braithwaite.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr Pearson for his late arrival.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023 copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Management Accounts – Minute 8 (iv)

Miss Braithwaite asked if a decision had been made on the possibility of the year end changing from 31 July to 31 March. Mrs Blackburn replied that the year end would remain at the 31 July but extra information would need to be provided for 31 March each year. The final decision is yet to be made but if that is the outcome there will be a considerable amount of extra work for the department.

b) Management Accounts – Minute 8 (v)

Mr McGee advised Governors that he had just received the college's financial assessment from the ESFA along with the financial dashboard. The college's financial health was

Outstanding for 2022/23 (the latest outturn forecast year), and Good for 2023/24 (the current budget year).

6. **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023**

Mrs Blackburn introduced a paper that had been prepared by Neil Lowe, Assistant Facilities and Compliance Manager, which had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The report was in a slightly different format than previous years and covered the academic year 2022/2023 and the main points were as follows:

- a) There have been no significant regulatory changes affecting the college.
- b) In 2022/2023, 80 actions were raised as a result of active monitoring. 68 had been completed and 11 were in progress and within their agreed target date at the end of the academic year. 1 was in progress but beyond the target date.
- c) Accidents reported for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 were summarised by cause. The number of accidents was 7 compared to 9 in the previous year. One incident had been reported under RIDDOR.
- d) Work related ill health – 3 members of staff had been absent due to work related ill health resulting in 11 days absence including weekends and bank holidays. Governors noted that the main causes of absence was musculoskeletal disorders resulting in 8 days of absence. In the previous year 6 members of staff had been absent from work with work related ill health for a loss of 107 days.
- e) Benchmarking data had been provided that showed that the college was performing well in comparison to other colleges and that the college is a safe place to work and study.

Within the review of departments carried out to advise the college of any remedial action needed, findings are classed as follows:

Low – There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality

Medium – Internal control risk management issue that could lead to: hospital treatment or financial loss which could affect the effective function of a department or loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage or negative publicity in local or regional media.

High – A serious internal control or risk management issues that may lead to: major injury or substantial losses or violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage or negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

Extreme – Permanent disability/fatality, serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to catastrophic loss.

The college risks are mainly low with a few classed as medium. Four departments, Art and Design, Facilities, Kitchen and Science were classed as high risk. Whilst IT, Physical Education, Performing Arts and Pathways were classed as medium risk.

Miss Braithwaite asked what did COSHH and CLEAPS stand for, Mr Green replied that COSHH stands for Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and CLEAPS is an advisory service providing support in science and technology for a consortium of local authorities and their schools.

RESOLVED: i) That the Health and Safety Report for 2022/2023 be received.
ii) That the Governors record their appreciation to all staff for their work during this difficult time.

Mr Bailey arrived whilst this item was being discussed.

7. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Management Accounts for October 2023 that had been circulated to Governors. Mrs Blackburn added that the accounts covered the 3 months. The results show a trading surplus of £379,00 year to date and the monthly result for October shows a surplus of £198,000. There was little to report on results to date but there has already been an exercise to re-forecast due to the items covered within the budget update below.

The accounts include an accrual to cover the costs of the pay awards to date for teachers and support staff. The financial health of the college remains good.

If members had any questions on the October Accounts they were asked to contact Mrs Blackburn.

RESOLVED: That the Accounts for October 2023 be received.

Mr Pearson arrived whilst this item was being discussed.

8. **BUDGET 2023/2024**

Mrs Blackburn introduced a set of papers in relation to the budget for 2023/2024 that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The papers contained a) a spreadsheet of cash income and expenditure b) the same converted into accounting format and c) a written summary

The main changes to note since the budget was approved in June 2023 were:

- a) ESFA Income has increased by £330,000 due to the pay award for teachers being supported by a Government Grant with an increase in the highest rate of funding from £4,643 to £4,753 and other bands changed proportionally. Both teachers and support staff pay awards will be paid in November backdated to 1 September 2023.
- b) High Needs income had increased to £475,000 from £350,000 following the completion of negotiations with Local Authorities who are responsible for the students.
- c) Bank Interest rates have increased between 2 and 3% to over 5%. In addition the delay in the new Capital Build has meant that significant sums of money can be placed on 3 monthly periods generating around £80,000. The budget has been increased from £60,000 to £200,000.
- d) Staffing costs will increase by £50,000 for teachers and £103,000 for support staff.
- e) Examination fees will increase by £21,000 due to an increase in entry fees by 7%.
- f) Adult Education will show an increased net profit of £8,000 to £15,000 due to increased activity.

The initial cash budget for the year was £81,606 and that has increased to £487,210, which gives an accounting surplus of £541,377 up from £136,821. The valuation of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund has resulted in the debtor being increased from £814,000 to £2,527,000. This is shown as a negative liability within the Provisions of the balance Sheet.

The budget would be reviewed in January 2024. This updated report will be provided for the Governing Body meeting on 28 November 2023.

9. **DRAFT STATUTORY ACCOUNTS 2022/2023**

Mrs Blackburn introduced the draft Statutory Accounts for 2022/2023 that had been circulated previously to members. It was noted that the Audit Committee had also considered the draft Statutory Accounts at its meeting on 6 November 2023.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that this year there were an additional notes in the Statutory Accounts due to the reclassification of the college into the Public Sector. Reference was made to the DfE “Dear accounting officer” letter of 29 November 2022 and the ESFA’s bite size guides. In addition, there had been a change in the pension asset of £814,000 to £2,527,000. Pension costs are normally a liability, not an asset. There was a discussion about where this should be shown in the accounts, there was no definitive answer from the ESFA. Mr McGee added that the GMPF distorts the accounts.

All members were asked to check the draft Statutory Accounts for any mistakes or typing errors and to advise Mrs Blackburn accordingly.

The accounts remain draft until they are approved by the Governing Body and signed by the Chairperson, Principal and the auditors.

RESOLVED: That the draft Statutory Accounts for 2022/2023, subject to any governor amendments be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

10. **FUTURE FUNDING METHODOLOGY**

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he was not aware of any proposed changes to the funding methodology. The college is currently 20 students over the funded number for the current year.

11. **CAPITAL BUILD**

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there had been some delays in getting planning approval and as a result the building programme has been adjusted. There are a number of things that need to be completed before the building can start e.g. drainage. It is still hope that the building will be completed in time for the September 2024 academic year.

A number of meeting have been arranged with the design and mechanical engineering teams. The design of the building will be refined to remain within the original budget. The priority is to have the building completed to a good standard even if there is a slight increase in cost rather that driving the costs down and getting an inferior outcome.

Mrs Blackburn informed Governors that the college had started claiming money from the ESFA for the cost of the build. At the moment £231,000 had been paid in relation to fees. Mr Horton asked what was the cost of the build. Mr Pearson replied it was £3.95m, with a grant of 80% from the ESFA. The college will have to pay for the fixtures and fittings of the build. VAT will be payable on fees, furniture, fittings and IT equipment.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no any other business.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

13 February 2024 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____