Southport Education Group

Minutes of the Southport Education Group Resources Committee

Meeting held in the Board Room (Southport Campus)

Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 5pm

Present: Margaret Boneham (independent member)
Michelle Brabner - Principal – (member)
Rob Firth (Committee Chair - independent member)
Alex Gamil (Committee Vice Chair- independent member)
Rebecca Matchett (independent member)
Claire Moffat-Lonsdale (independent member)
Paul Walker (Corporation Chair)

In Attendance: Paris Bonwick – Vice Principal - Business Services
Lisa Farnhill – Clerk to the Corporation
Diane Hutchinson (independent governor, as a Committee observer in capacity of HR Link) (up to & including item 7)
*Chris Leach (SDA) (item 15.3 only)
Alison McDowell (HR Dir) (up to and including item 7)
Stephen Musa (Vice Principal Curriculum and Support)
*Alan Simpson (10 Architect) (item 15.3 only)
Paula Smith – Dir. Finance

Apologies:

*indicates attendance via video conferencing facilities

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
R.24.62	**Welcome and Apologies**	
	The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming new member, Claire Moffat-Lonsdale and observer Diane Hutchinson to the meeting.	
	Brief introductions were given with it confirmed there were no apologies for absence.	
	Item 1 - Noted:	
R.24.63	**Item 2: Declarations of Interest**	
	Members noted standing interests, with no interests declared relating to agenda items.	
	Item 2 - Noted:	
R.24.64	**Item 3: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30th January 2024**	
	The Committee Chair invited members to raise any points of inaccuracy, none were raised.	

The Clerk clarified that the comment under item 8, Employer Engagement Strategy, had been highlighted for agreement, explaining members had asked for the wording to be agreed ahead of documenting an action for the Vice Principal Business Services that may not be achievable. Members agreed the wording sufficiently captured their request for more detail, without being too prescriptive. The minutes were approved by the Committee.

Item 3 - Approved: *The Committee resolved to approve the minutes as a true record for the meeting held on 30th January 2024.*

R.24.65 Item 4: Review of Impact Statements, Actions and Matters Arising

The Committee noted the progress made as documented in the report, clarifying where matters arising and actions would be addressed by items included for discussion within the agenda.

The Vice Principal confirmed future Employer Engagement Strategy Reports would now include benchmarking, start points, rolling monthly recruitment, and income.

The Vice Principal Business Services added that since paper circulation, a response had now been received from the ESFA relating to the lack of updates to employer feedback. The ESFA informed the College they had one further set of data to upload, with the Vice Principal suggesting this may not be accurate, with four employers having informed the College they had provided responses. The ESFA therefore agreed to look into this, with the action being carried forward for a further update.

The Committee members endorsed the impact statements as detailed.

Item 4 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to note the details of the actions report and approved the impact statements.*

R.24.66 Item 5: Confidential Business

5.1 - Identify any minutes that need to be regarded confidential

Members attention was drawn to the aspects highlighted for potential redaction, agreeing that these were commercially sensitive and should be redacted from the public minutes.

5.2 - Determine whether any items of business are confidential and should be discussed in a separate part of the agenda

Members reviewed the agenda and confirmed nothing on the agenda needed to be discussed without the presence of staff, with the minutes to be reviewed at the next meeting to consider if any aspects needed redacting for confidentiality.

Item 5 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to redact the section from paragraph three from minute R.24.47 (item 7) and paragraphs three to eight of minute R.24.51, along with the resolution for item R.24.51 (item 11.1) from the record of the meeting of 30th January 2024.*

R.24.67 Item 6: KPI Scorecard

The Committee members were given an overview of the data with attention drawn to the positive position in relation to 16-18 FE numbers, impact of the exceptional in year funding, and risks and impact of the areas below target, including apprenticeships, Test and Learn and Tuition Fund, noting some progress with catch up lessons since the report had been issued.

Members asked for clarification as to the conditions of the at-risk funding, impact, mitigations and clawback. The Committee was assured by the prudent approach taken by the college, with their approach having been a low risk one, of integrity and honesty, ensuring funding rules were strictly adhered to. This was contextualised against information and examples given of other colleges having utilised the funds in ways that were not strictly permitted and would now fall foul of audits being initiated by the funding body.

In response to member questions, the timing and impact of potential clawback was outlined, with members proposing more commentary was needed to support the KPI scorecard, particularly where lines had been red since September. Examples were discussed of where some lines would now not change, whereas others could be further influenced by positive action or funding uplifts on achievement. Members indicated this was not clear from the raw data, with supporting information needed to assist them in understanding the figures, particularly the impact and consequences of underachievement. In response to a question, members were assured the budget had been adjusted to take account of potential clawback. **VP Bus. Serv.**

Members discussed the benefits of accurate target setting, beneficial for budget setting and reducing the risks around clawback, being advised of the difficulty for some lines, in particular those that were funding rates were post code dependant.

Members were given more information about the conditions of funding for the different lines, noting the challenges with RAG rating complex data, agreeing the need to focus on effective cost management and resources utilisation, which the commentary would support.

In response to a question about EBITDA, members were informed line one was paid on a lagged basis, therefore the other lines would have an in-year impact, however, a drop in student numbers for 16-18 FE learners would affect the following year.

Item 6 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to use the information to support and direct discussions.*

R.24.68 **Item 7: Risks Related to the Resources Committee**

The Dir. Finance provided the Committee with a summary of the overall risk register, focusing on movements relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

In highlighting the decision to lower the risk relating to achieving adult funding targets, members were informed this had been as part of the review some weeks ago, with it possible this would now need to be amended again. A member clarified if this meant it would increase again, with the Dir. Finance agreeing it was likely to need to increase.

A member noted the word ‘pace’ had featured in two of the risks reviewed, asking if this was in relation to speed of action, and by who. The Principal provided an explanation relating to improving staff performance, acknowledging that previously the College had not addressed capability issues swiftly. It was explained how there had been a culture shift, underpinned by the focus on best practice and performance improvements, not managing staff out. This resulted in support now being seen more positively, removing stigma and hesitancy in initiating support for underperformance resulting in more positive outcomes for staff and students.

Members asked if there were time frames associated with achieving outcomes, with it explained that this was individualised, depending on the circumstances and level of support and intervention needed.

Members asked staff if there were any concerns the Committee needed to be made aware of, asking if there was any further information or data to support their oversight of this staffing performance risk. Committee members were assured that the management team were focused on positively enforcing the need to improve, with HR data now presented as a standing item to the Committee, therefore there was nothing further that needed to be flagged for members attention. The Dir. HR added that in addition to formal monitoring and reporting of HR procedures, there were preliminary stages, with informal support which were not included in the figures, adding that the focus on improvement had resulted in an increase in the numbers, however, more positive outcomes were being seen, with formal processes not seen as a way of being managed out, but as a genuine tool for support and improvement.

A member indicated that the figures were significant enough to have seen the risk rating change, with it explained this was in part the timing of the last review and in response to the Ofsted inspection outcome, with management taking ownership of the outcome, reflecting on how their oversight of the pace in which performance issues were addressed could have improved the outcome. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Support explained how this was now being done, utilising the monthly Performance Board's, with the HR team supporting this process.

The HR link Governor indicated the positive shift in approach to performance management was evident from her visits, asking if the Unions had been consulted or had cause to raise any concerns following the increased focus on and scrutiny of performance, indicating they could potentially support the college in this area. The Principal advised that there remained a positive working relationship with the Unions, with no concerns having been raised, with their ongoing support and consultation in relation to staffing policies and matters. The HR Dir. confirmed they had been actively involved where formal processes had been initiated, and were supportive of the college's approach, with the long-standing Union Representative aware that the college had a positive reputation for fair application of processes.

A member indicated they had expected the Risk O12, relating to apprenticeship income, to have been higher, particularly given the focus on this following the Ofsted inspection. It was explained that careful consideration was given to the potential impact of the inspection, noting a number of local colleges had been downgraded and not seen recruitment impact, adding that the action plan, and prudent budget review had resulted in this being considered amber post mitigation, agreeing that this would be considered in full as part of the next review, once the report is published.

Principal/ Dir. Finance

Members indicated there was inconsistency relating to supporting comments and time frames, with some outlining mitigations, other only highlighting the reason for the increased risk, asking for more information to assure the Board that the College is addressing and mitigating risks within their control.

VP Bus Serv/ Dir Finance

In acknowledging the need to minimise detail for effectiveness, Cyber Security was discussed as an example, with members advised there was a separate risk register solely for the purpose of analysing and mitigating cyber risks, with the Committee asking that where there are documents that provide the additional detail, these need to be referenced on the risk register.

In concluding, the Chair asked the SLT if there was anything further that had changed since the report had been issued and anything the Committee should be made aware of and were informed of the receipt of the 16-18 funding allocation.

<u>Item 7 - Resolved:</u> *The Committee resolved to note and reflect on the information throughout the meeting.*

R.24.69 **Item 8: Termly HR Report**

The Dir HR provided details of the introduction of a ‘refer a friend scheme’ which now concluded the action for follow up from previous meetings.

Data was summarised, highlighting how recruitment had slowed down, with the move to earlier curriculum planning having allowed for September vacancies to be advertised earlier, expected to bring in a higher calibre of applicant. Members discussed the impact of the Ofsted inspection on staff recruitment activity, with it noted that the issues around how the inspection was conducted were already known to the sector, therefore the release of the report, which reflected positively on staff culture, was not anticipated to have any impact on staff recruitment. Members were reminded how proud the College was of their reputation for being a supportive organisation. An example was given of the positive outcome of the recruitment for a Director of Apprenticeships and members discussed the positive impact of the lower grading, with staff attracted to the challenge of improving an organisation, and the difficulties associated with taking up a role in an ‘Outstanding’ organisation.

The low response rate to the staff survey, along with actions to improve this were discussed in detail, with members questioning the potential reasons for the low response rate and commending the proactive steps by management and staff representatives to further improve this, with historic issues around anonymity and lack of a sense of action following feedback considered to be the root causes.

The Committee members considered how the more open and approachable culture, and lack of concerns may underpin lower response rates, with members given examples of immediate action taken by managers following feedback and concerns, noting the high return rate of predominantly positive responses given to the Ofsted staff survey.

Members highlighted the impact on the College of staff absence, clarifying what was considered long term, and asking if there were any trends in the data. They were assured that the data had been analysed, and although it could not be reviewed against the same point in the previous year, as reporting in this way had only commenced in this academic year, it had been analysed for in year trends, looking at team, area, reason, and other possible correlations, with none notable. It was agreed this should be documented in future reports for the reassurance of members, with the Dir. HR reassuring the Committee that the reasons and categories for absence were recorded, offering to include this in future reports, with members confirming it was not the detail, but the reassurance that this was being explored, and where correlation was evident, it was being addressed, that needed to be reported. In response to a question about sector benchmarking, members were informed this was only provided annually, not broken down monthly in this way, however, local colleges may support with a benchmarking exercise, with this idea to be explored.

Dir. HR

Dir. HR

Members considered the impact of performance scrutiny, fatigue, impacting different points in the year, seasonal differences, and Ofsted on absence levels, agreeing that more data would be needed ahead of drawing any conclusions, suggesting numbers, in addition to percentages should be included as the shifts in staffing numbers may skew the data and not provide a complete picture.

Dir. HR

Members asked about the process and triggers for conducting return to work interviews, and were assured these were always completed, with support offered tailored to the individual needs of the staff member.

It was clarified that this was now included as a risk relevant to the Standards Committee, with the Dir. HR and HR link Governor thanked for their time and contributions.

<u>Item 8 - Resolved:</u> *The Committee resolved to accept the assurances provided by the update.*

The HR Director and observer, Diane Hutchinson, left after this item.

R.24.70 **Item 9: Marketing Strategy 2023/2024 – Enrolment Update & Progress Report**

The VP Curriculum and Support summarised the key data and trends from the report, contextualising the changes, and providing assurances in relation to the shift in applications from KGV to Southport. In response to member questions, explanations around application trends were provided, highlighting the impact of the grade boundary changes, and summarising the actions to offset the impact, including the new Level Two courses at KGV. Members commended the evidential integrity in ensuring course entry requirements were maintained, ensuring students were only enrolled onto courses that were suitable based on their prior attainment levels, not enrolled to bolster application numbers where a students' chances of success could be limited.

Members asked for clarity on whether the two campuses remained as distinct brands with separate offers, with it confirmed they were, however, where a student had made an application made to each campus, this would not be double counted. In response to a question, members were informed where a dual application was made to both sites, students would be offered a course discussion at each site, and they would be allowed to make the decision as to the most suitable option to meet their needs.

In response to concerns over low conversion rates, members discussed application strategies and timing, noting students were no longer applying to a number of colleges, but now making more considered choices, to a smaller number of providers, supported by a careers guidance discussion, making it easier to predict enrolment from applications. Members asked if applications were preference ranked, with it confirmed they were not, being advised that in some regions, colleges had successfully collaborated to create a joint application, allowing students to use one application for all providers. Members were informed this had been explored in other regions locally, but not implemented.

Members asked about the split in the target for recruitment, being advised there were three distinct targets, one for new applicants based on school leavers, one for progression from year one into year two, and a third for internal progression onto higher level courses.

The impact of higher recruitment into lower levels was discussed, with it highlighted how this offered more opportunities for internal progression. Members asked if lower recruitment to KGV had impacted staff morale. The 70% increase to recruitment over three years was highlighted as unsustainable, having resulted in significantly larger class sizes, therefore the impact on staff morale was unaffected, as they were still seeing significantly larger numbers in their classrooms when considered against recent years. Members acknowledged the recent improvement to recruitment at the KGV site, although highlighted this was from a low start and declining trajectory, asking for assurances that efforts were continuing to maintain the momentum. Members were informed further increases would result in a need for additional classes, and would have cost and resource implications, with targets set to maintain recent increases, assuring the Committee there was no complacency or intention to accept or expect a decline.

Members were informed the requirement for teaching staff to interview prospective students had been removed, freeing up around ten evenings a year for staff, with the time instead utilised for liaison activities, allowing greater control and influence in recruitment to their subjects.

In concluding, members asked if there were any courses causing concern, with the main area highlighted being the over recruitment to trades, due to the sector wide difficulties recruiting and retaining staff due to the higher pay available working in the industry. Members were reminded of the earlier Curriculum Planning process as discussed under the HR item, which had allowed for earlier recruitment.

Item 9 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

R.24.71 Item 10: Internal Audit Reports Relevant to The Resources Committee

Members were informed of the positive outcome of the Health and Safety Audit, noting there were no recommendations or implications relevant to the Committee's terms of reference, explaining this was why the report had not been included.

Members noted that although oversight of risk management processes were owned by the Audit Committee, the report had been circulated as it was considered to have relevance to the Committee as they also maintained oversight of and owned a number of risks. Members attention was drawn to the areas of good practice identified and the Dir. Finance highlighted the recommendation relating to the embedding of the risk appetite statements into the register, confirming this had been accepted and implemented. Members asked who the link for risk was, with the Clerk confirming it was Alex Barton.

A member asked if the College had paid for the review, with it clarified this was part of the rolling programme of reviews completed by the internal audit service therefore was included within the scope of that contract. A member asked if it was felt the review had been effective and had offered value for money, with the Dir. Finance advising this had been completed ahead of her joining the college, therefore it was not something she could comment on, however, was actively involved in the review work currently being undertaken, which was considered to be going well, indicating the auditor communicated well and there were no issues. It was clarified the report circulation for risk management had been delayed due to the staff changes and a need for management comments, which had been delayed.

The VP Business Services was asked to comment on his experience with the service. He confirmed he had been through 4, with the first two having felt less thorough, focusing more on compliance than establishing areas for improvement, proposing this may have been as a result of the reviewers not being subject matter experts, however, confirmed the current two reviews had been more in depth, commending the knowledge of the reviewers.

Item 10 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

R.24.72 Item 11: Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Report Progress Review

Members were advised that this report was the first follow to the CEFS review, and focused on the staff utilisation, as a key controllable highlighted for follow up at the presentation of the report.

Members noted the progress made, with an explanation given of the potential savings based on the timetable model. Members questioned the utilisation targets and tolerance and commended the progress made.

In response to a question about what would be classed as utilisation, hours were explained, along with the changes made as part of the pay offer, with clarity sought on the in year changes and variations.

Members asked about teaching specialisms, experience and class size, confirming that the cost efficiency varied depending on the course, noting this was calculated and reported separately.

In concluding, the team were commended by the Committee for the improvements made.

Item 11 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

R.24.73 **Item 12: ESFA Guidance Updates**

The Dir. Finance informed the Committee of the launch of the new Financial Handbook, similar to that in place for academies, drawing on key regulatory and oversight requirements. It was highlighted how this mainly consolidated information, incorporating the bite size guides into the financial planning framework, rather than introducing new requirements, with the exception of the introduction of a requirement to disclose holiday accrual figures on a separate line. Members queried the timing and frequency of the disclosure, discussing the implications of the possible move of the college financial year end to move in line with the DfE, noting this was being trialled by some colleges.

Item 12 - Resolved: The Committee resolved to have due regard to the statutory guidance when conducting their work.

Item 13: Financial Reports

R.24.74 **Item 13.1: Financial Regulations**

The Dir. Finance summarised the updates, reassuring the Board of the thorough process, supported by the Finance Manager, both new to post, providing additional objectivity and extensive experience to the review.

Members queried the suggestion within the executive summary that this may need a further review. It was clarified that was due to having been drafted ahead of the release of the guidance circulated under item 12. It was explained that as the handbook was a new document, never previously published, it was anticipated it may introduce new requirements and result in an overhaul of the financial regulations, however, now released, it is clear the new document only consolidated previously separate guidance, with nothing further added that will affect the financial regulations, as the public money guidance notes had already been incorporated at the last review.

Members clarified the process and frequency of review, and were advised it was reviewed at least annually, or whenever statutory or recommended practices were updated, with statutory guidance usually released in spring, to allow for review and approval ahead of the start of the next financial year.

Item 13.1 - resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the Corporation approve the updated Financial Regulations.

R.24.75 Item 13.2: Management Accounts

The Committee asked for the presentation of March only, confirming that the position had not changed since some members attended a pre meeting with the Dir. Finance.

The positive year to date operating deficit against the budgeted deficit was highlighted, whilst pointing out that income was behind the forecasted position, with the figures having been run through the CFFR to establish that financial health remained ‘good’, with staff pay as a percentage of income having improved.

Figures were summarised, with members being informed non-pay costs were behind the budgeted position, however, pay costs were favourable, outlining the variances in the system.

In response to questions, the Dir. Finance clarified some of the movements, including the phasing of exam costs and confirmed that the non-pay budget would not be increased, highlighting how some cleaning, security and additional premises related costs were directly incurred as a result of the two Ofsted inspections.

Members asked for assurances over the control of non-pay, and were told of control measures in place, including the declining of purchase orders where budgets had already been fully spent. Profiling and timing were discussed, and members were assured that the end result would be that the final position would be on budget.

Members expressed concern over apprenticeship income, highlighting the poor performance year to date and gap between the current position and end of year income budget. The Vice Principal Business Services explained how income is profiled, with 20% weighting on achievement, predominantly in July and how the ILR calendar is open for fourteen months against a finance budget of twelve months. Members were assured that the adjusted income had been cautiously estimated, anticipating no further enrolment or growth, however, did anticipate continuation and achievement at a prudent level. The Committee were informed that the initial budget set had been overly optimistic, particularly as the offer was under review and being refined, however, reassuring them that the revision was not. Members thanked the Vice Principal Business Services for the explanation, confirming it gave them confidence in the position.

In approving the Management Accounts for January, February and March, members asked if there was an update on the finance team structure and recruitment. The Dir Finance explained that the Head of Finance had prepared the management accounts, ahead of returning to his previous external role. Members were advised following this, there had been a review of the existing skills of the team, with a decision taken to utilise the knowledge and experience of those already within the college, and offer development opportunities on a secondment basis to experienced staff, with the Committee commending the approach, which allowed for internal progression and enhanced job satisfaction. Members asked if this solution provided suitable resources and support to the Dir Finance and her team, with the Dir Finance highlighting and reassuring members how improved processes and the clear visible ledgers would ensure a smooth handover, with every confidence in the abilities of those undertaking the new roles.

<u>Item 13.2 - approved:</u> The Committee resolved to approve the Management Accounts for January, February and March.

R.24.76 Item 13.3: Cash Flow

It was clarified that the figures were based on the original budget, not yet linked to the amended budget for 2024/2025, however, some key assumptions had been made, including a funding increase of £1,600,000, a reduction of apprenticeship income, increased pay costs, inflation and assumed level of capital expenditure.

Members indicated they felt reassured by the presentation, asking if the pay increase of 2% as incorporated in the update, presented a realistic offer. Members were informed that this had been a figure muted as the potential recommendation of the AOC, however, not confirmed, or formalised, with the expectation being that pay awards would return to more normal levels now the rate of inflation was reducing. The pay award process, including the SFC and school processes and funding were outlined, along with a detailed explanation of funding, Union expectations and negotiation processes. Members clarified the cost to the college for each percentage of pay award and balanced this consideration against the cost of the loan and impact of rising interest rates on borrowings.

Members agreed the ideal position would be to be offering a pay award above the recommended increase, to cement their commitment to being a better paying organisation, with pay reflecting the people centred approach of the organisation, however, conceded that this could not be to the detriment of the college's financial health and sustainability.

Members asked if the college anticipated any grants would be available to offset the capital expenditure, with the Vice Principal Business Services confirming it was unlikely, with more detail to be presented under item 15. It was explained that there had been a reactive approach to maintenance, with no other budget set aside for investing in the estate, noting how this presented a risk of needing significantly higher funding to replace what has not been maintained and repaired. Efficient utilisation of the proposed £200,000 annual maintenance budget was therefore essential.

<u>Item 14.3 - Resolved:</u> The Committee resolved to note the update.

R.24.77 Item 13.4: Write Offs

The Dir. Finance reminded the Committee of their obligation to approve write offs, following the ONS reclassification, confirming this was a positive variance.

Members were assured that following her appointment, the Dir. Finance had conducted a thorough review of all finance systems, with some historic sales and purchase ledger items being cleansed ahead of the introduction of a new accounting system.

Members were advised some sales ledger items, dating as far back as 2013 would not be economical to pursue. Members noted unpresented cheques ranged from 2013 to 2021 and were now out of date, whilst stock balances of outdated hair and beauty stock were used only for display purposes, and were unchanged at year end for the last two years and needed to be cleared.

Members noted the end position was a write off of a net credit balance of £3,284.91, with the write off being approved by the Committee. It was noted that these items had not previously been raised as being of concern by the auditors, however, it was essential that it was tidied up ahead of the introduction of the new system and to make it easier for the new staff.

***Item 13.4 - resolved:* The Committee resolved to accept and approve the write off.**

R.24.78 Item 14: Sustainability Strategy Update

The Vice Principal Business Services summarised the progress, asking the Committee to support a redraft of the strategy, to ensure it was measurable and realistic, reminding them this had been approved in 2022, with a target of becoming net zero by 2030, with a total of 42 targets built into the plan.

The Vice Principal Business Services informed the Committee that an effective decarbonisation plan would support with grant funding applications. Members agreed the original strategy had been overly ambitious, and supported the approach to utilise external consultants to reassess what would be a realistic, measurable and achievable strategy. Members asked about the timeframe to review the targets, and plan, with this being dependant on the availability of data and the company that would be enlisted to support with the review. **VP Bus. Serv.**

Progress to date, including grant funded projects and reduced gas and electricity consumption, contextualised against a larger student body, were commended.

A member asked if staff were on board with supporting greener initiatives and were actively approaching all procurement was done with a sustainable mindset to support with collaborating to achieve net zero sooner. The Committee was advised that there had been initial buy in, particularly within the estates team, however, admitted the focus had not been maintained.

The Committee discussed the progress with estates matters, including the plans to replace the remaining single glazed windows, and the requirements and limitations of the T Level works.

***Item 14 - resolved:* The Committee resolved to accept the update and supported the redraft.**

R.24.79 Item 15: Estates Matters

Item 15.1: Accommodation Strategy Update

The Vice Principal Business Services reiterated the earlier discussion point around the expectation that there will not be any grant funding as the DfE estates budget had been focused on resolving the RAAC issues in the education sector.

Members were assured that the planned maintenance schedule had been completed, with the College now looking to work on a ten-year maintenance plan, with the support of an external organisation to sense check the projections, estimates and lifespan of materials. **VP. Bus Serv.**

The Committee was made aware of issues relating to site plans, advising that there were no detailed technical drawings for either site, discussing this at length, being advised the lack of technical drawings had caused problems with accurate tendering and quoting for some works, resulting in being charged day rates for some works, like the flushing of pipes. Members were informed the commissioning and completion of the plans was expected to take a number of years, requiring contractors to identify where wiring and pipes are when works are being completed.

REDACTED.

<u>Item 15.1 - resolved:</u> The Committee resolved to accept the update.

R.24.80 Item 15.2: Projects Update

The Vice Principal Business Services summarised the report, explaining the purpose and content of each Annex.

Members indicated concern over the timeline for spending, with it clarified the deadline for spending was 2025, however, works were planned over the summer to minimise impact on course delivery.

<u>Item 15.2 - resolved:</u> The Committee resolved to accept the update, agreeing to recommend the Corporation receive this as essential information.

R.24.81 Item 15.3: Capital Projects Tender Contract

The Vice Principal Business Services outlined the tender process, including timeline and scoring. Risks, including clawback risk, were detailed and the recommendation to appoint John Turner Construction Group was discussed at length.

Members clarified who had been involved in the scoring process and the weighting of different elements, asking the representatives from Architect 10 and SDA for their comments.

The strengths of the recommended contractor were outlined, along with the reasons others had not scored as well, including the inability to meet the strict timelines in place for completing the project and spending the grant funding.

Members asked if there was evidence to support the recommended contractor being able to meet the deadline, questioning at length the contingency, risks and consequences associated with delays.

Assurances were provided, with the Committee reminded the tender and approval timelines had been restrictive to allow for additional flexibilities within the works schedule. The Committee acknowledged that internal remodelling would be less susceptible to weather related delays, received information and options for phased handover and prioritisation of key areas in the event of a delay, whilst reflecting on the successful management of recent large scale capital projects.

Members asked about the steps for notification to the successful team, with a letter of intent to be signed once approved, with the full contract to then be prepared and signed by the Chair of the Corporation, subject to Corporation approval. Members questioned the payment schedule, with assurances of the monthly review and return to the ESFA in line with the grant conditions, seeking assurance other key stakeholders, including BT and the insurers had been notified.

Ahead of approving the recommendation, members considered the impact on and benefit to the students, both during and following completion of the works. The measures to safeguard students were discussed and significant reassurance provided, in terms of wellbeing, health and safety and safeguarding clarified.

Item 15.3 - resolved: ***The Committee resolved to recommend to the Corporation the appointment of the recommended contractor John Turner Construction Group to be circulated by Written Resolution.***

R.24.82 Item 16: Review of Risks

The Chair asked the Committee to reflect on the risks related to Resources Committee Terms of Reference and propose any suggested score or wording changes as a result of their discussions. Members reflected on the extensive discussions, challenges and reassurances, concluding that these did not result in any need to amend the risk register in any way.

Item 16 - resolved: ***The Committee resolved to note the risks remain unchanged.***

R.24.83 Item 17: Items to be Reported to the Corporation

The Clerk summarised the items as included on the agenda of the Corporation to be presented as follows:

- Advise the Corporation to review the updated ESFA guidance as essential information
- Ask the Corporation to approve the updates to the Financial Regulations
- Advise the Corporation of the approval of the Management Accounts, circulating the latest set as essential information
- Ask the Corporation to note progress against the Sustainability Strategy as essential information.
- Request by Written Resolution the approval of the appointment of John Turner Construction Group for the T Level Capital Project as the outcome of the Tender

Item 17 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to present the information to the Corporation as detailed above.*

R.24.84 Item 18: Date Of Next Meeting (and Closing Comments)

Members were informed the Chair was unavailable for the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, with it noted that this also clashed with an event at the College. Members considered options for bringing forward or delaying the meeting, however, due to paper availability and alignment with other Committees, the most suitable option was to maintain the date, to be Chaired by the Vice Chair, having the meeting at the earlier time of 4pm.

Item 18 - Approved: ***The Committee resolved to hold the next meeting at the earlier time of 4pm, to be Chaired by the Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair.***

The meeting closed at 7.40pm