Minutes of Full Board

Date: 21st Mar 2024 **Time:** 4.30 - 6.21pm

Location: Itchen College, S10

Present:	Mr A Scott (Principal)	Mr C Breckenridge
	Mr B Jones (Chair)	Mrs M Harris-Bridge
	Mr D Batten	Mr M Mccauley
	Mrs C Carpenter	Mrs S Hammett
	Mrs L Court	Mr T Grant
	Miss S Garner	Mr E Unuigbe *[arrived 1654, item 5]*
	Miss S Duggan (via Teams)	
In attendance:	Mr D O'riordan (Cliftons) *[left 1645, after item 2]*	
	Mr R Spiels (Stepnells) *[left 1645, after item 2]*	
	Mrs S Carter	Mrs M Malcom (AoC, external reviewer)
	Mrs R Stratton	Miss F McIntyre
	Mr M Jones	
Apologies:	Mr R Parke	Miss M Lico
	Mr D Holloway	
Absent:	Mrs D House	Mr M Brown
	Mr B Tyers	

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies received and accepted as above. Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the new build update would be the first item as joined by representatives from Cliftons and Stepnell.

2 New Build Update

2.1 From Cliftons DO and from Cliftons RS welcomed to the meeting.

2.2 Price is now inline with College expectations; the new concern is more the timescale. The last draw down on funds is available March 2025.

2.3 The next stage is going to be pre-construction and getting the planning conditions discharged. Normal to have conditions to discharge but tight timeframe. All information will be submitted in 2.5 weeks and the statutory is 8 weeks response. Need to keep on planners.

2.4 Part of the building process is finalising design so need to get part 4 in place for the procurement. Do not want to be in a position to be delayed by weather. Steel frame will go up quickly in weeks 6 and 7 then building will be water tight shortly after.

June 3rd is the start date. Which gives the finish date on 4th March 2025. There is a possibility of starting a little earlier to overlap the decision making process.
4th March - building will be finished 3 weeks prior to that. The last weeks are testing and commissioning.

2.5 Questions from governors invited.
Q: March 4th, this is the absolute last date?
A: Hoping to get some movement and one week is identified and another week is possible.
Q: Does procurement help?
A: Yes, if can convince planners to allow pre-commencement enabling works. The eight week planning window has two weeks overlap but hoping to use more.
Q: When is demolition of huts?
A: At the start during June as need access.
Q: What would the impact be of not having the huts?
A: It will have a manageable impact in summer term but more concerning for Autumn term. RS has plans in place.
Q: Are there asbestos considerations?
A: Had tests done and all clear.
Q: Impact of huts,why is there less impact in summer?
A: Do not have all students on site. Autumn will have the students in.
Q: Figures on budget and cashflow?
A: Cash flow is top priority to update so can pull plug any time if issues are identified. Confident in cash flow as it stands at the moment.
Q: Below £800,000, why is this a problem?
A: Not necessarily a problem but an internal limit put on College to ensure we have funds. Need to ensure if the funding did come through due to banking glitch can afford to pay salaries. This is the key concern. During the month it can ebb and flow.
Q: Clarification of cost around end of life temp accommodation, downside of not downing doing it outweighs the risk. Para 6 likely replaced £600 to £800K. When discussed in minutes it was £600. Has there been an increase or was a higher amount considered?
A: £500 to £800 was what initially said as the cost of temp accommodation went up considerably.
Q: Will this be a line on the risk register if it has additional risk?
A: Already have risks on the register around building projects. Would foresee the risks associated with building work not managing the projects appropriately and over this period would expand the items on the risk register rather than add new.

[DO and RS thanked for time and left 1645]

3 Declarations on Interest

3.1 None in addition to those previously declared.

4 Chairs Update

4.1 Building program has been a drain on time for staff but good to see progress.
The Chair and Principal meet weekly to update.

4.2 Governors thanked for taking time for the annual governance reviews. A report will be produced.

4.3 Recruitment of new governors - have secured funding for governor recruitment for two governors. Should be in place for the July meeting.

4.4 Have made an appointment for a senior post holder and Emma Barrett will return to College in May in a slightly different role.

4.41 *Q: What is the role?*
A: Similar to before but with industry and skills links. Adult and community education will be part of the role too. Marketing will sit under EB.
Q: Will new governors fill gaps in committee? Opportunities to switch around?
A: Gaps and can move. Also want to consider succession planning.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

5.1 June 2022 - typos

[EU arribed 1654]

5.2 *Q: Boiler, is it still ok?*
A: Had some problems around college but not the boilers but the pipework. The boilers are working fine. Submitted a SIF bid and should hear in May

5.3 **Minutes approved**.

6 Principal's Report

6.1 The Principal highlighted the following points from the report circulated to governors prior to the meeting.

6.1.1 Sixth form colleges election manifesto has been released - all worthy asks.

6.1.2 Local strategic change - Southampton College groups. In terms of what is happening it is consolidation and moving provision between the Colleges. BJ has met with the Chair. No aggressive movement and a lot to sort out.
UTC - does not look like the building identified will go ahead which will delay the start of the UTC potentially for a long time.

6.1.3 Skills Improvement - meeting needs of community
Now government guidance - dated December but only came out in the last few weeks. Will go through at the next strategic meeting.

6.1.4 Credit to SC on building project management. Not been served well by project managers and made clear to them.

6.1.5 Applications - Does look like going to be very busy next year with less accommodation for the first term. 1910 applications currently. Lots to be tested. Looking at progression. Puts in a strong position but will bring challenges as well.

6.1.6 Included curriculum mapping across the city. Shows Itchen is putting on additional provision but not the same at other institutions.

6.2 Questions invited.
Q: Applications, may be too early whether they are clustered in particular areas and if it will cause staffing issues?
A: It is spread out. So there are some additional needs for staffing. No particular area that is standing out as unusual. There are several new courses and the take up for those is positive.
Q: Will some areas may need specialist equipment?

A: Struggle a little with sport as the numbers are high and until having a new building will be challenging but no other areas requiring specialist equipment. Some investment with the T levels to build provision which is planned in.
Q: Applications, numbers increase year on year, Would there be more expansion plans?
A: To some extent what doing with the new building as additional classroom space. Also the demographic is high currently but it will fall away over the next few years. Will be at a point where can manage numbers.

6.3 New build update report
6.3.1 Report circulated prior to the meeting. Governors approval required for budget and contractor.
6.3.2 Stepnells is a large company with offices across the country. Gives some reassurance that they can achieve what they are stating in terms of date.
6.3.3 When bids were first submitted they did not due to covid. When they went back to retender they were able to submit a bid.
6.3.4 Cliftons have been disappointing in this process with the costs being over £1m more than their suggested costs.
6.3.5 **Vote - approved**

7 Finance Report
7.1 Finance report was to the end of January as February is still being finalised.
Outturn of full group of £108,000 but has since reduced due to more information coming through on funding. Employers pension contributions going up 5% from April. Funding slightly short of what was expected. Higher than expected agency costs due to long term sickness which is unavoidable.
7.2 End of February overall group surplus of around £50,000 to £60,000. It is still a positive position considering how many unfunded students are on site.

7.3 Cashflow
7.3.1 Cashflow still looking good with £3.5m construction costs but gone down to £3.4m. Included within that is a £100,000 contingency in the cashflow. Built into cash flow so an element of cushion.
7.3.2 Next twelve months will be tight not because of problems with affordability but can only pull down funding once incurred the cost. This will hit the college the most. It is managing the in and out flow and ensuring it does not put College at risk. The project managers need to ensure the invoices come in at the right time.
7.3.3 ESFA would consider reviewing how the money is coming so this is plan B to go back to them.
7.3.4 Confident cash flow overall is good

7.4 Financial performance indicator P4
7.4.1 Some concerns with not meeting targets. Largely due to low surplus. But also due to significant growth. In a very different position to anyone else in terms of growth and the investment needed.

7.5 Company

On track no concerns.

7.5.1 *Q: The indicators where there is red, this does not have other implications and needs to be monitored?*

A: Short term difficulties for long term gain and have the narrative can be put in to explain circumstances.

7.5.2 If the financial grade health score is inadequate it would be looked at. Need to ensure borderline good and improve on this. The others are national benchmarking.

7.5.3 It would be more of an issue if being supported in anyway but clear narrative

7.5.4 *Q: If the building is delayed and went over the March deadline, would this be an issue?*

A: Hoping to not get to this stage. Every month have reports to draw down funding. There is not the mechanism to pull funding after March 2025. So would need to ensure the funding is pulled down first.

8 KPI Update

8.1 Mid point report against targets set against SIP. The green areas show good progress. Amber is slightly worried about and red not going to meet. Attendance is red.

8.2 Attendance AoC is doing a national survey so will be able to benchmark against national average. Have done local benchmarking and stand better than the city. National average expected to be 82% was 84% last year

8.3 *Q: Is there a caveat that some students have complex needs?*

A: Yes, dealing with complex needs. When students are not in College it affects attendance.

Q: So it is not choosing not to come in?

A: Always have students missing lessons here and there. This is managed well.

Q: Occasionally parents get messages that children are not at lessons due to lessons cancelled. Does this affect attendance?

A: Not eventually. The messages are sent automatically and the registers are updated.

8.4 Dealing with high numbers of students who need support and have low attendance but as a College do everything possible for these students to get them into College as the right thing to do. Will not just give up on them as they struggle to get in.

Comment: College has a really positive reputation for this and the support and the caring,nurturing environment.

8.5 *Q: Energy consumption, net zero by 2030 - is this achievable?*

A: It was aspirational, put in place and it meets the government targets. It is going to be challenging. Replacing the boilers would have had a positive impact but that has been delayed. The building has also grown since then. New building will have solar panels and part of the BREEAM standard is to be as energy efficient as can be.

Q: Is the intervention fund energy reduction plan active?

A: Not yet. Part of the BREEAM standard so should be consumption reduction. The temporary classrooms are the least energy efficient part of the College.

Should return to as a governing body. The standards referred to have not yet been published but will be a training and development session.

Comment: Breeam standards when looking into it the excellent objective is solar panels and other worthy items. While costs are frustrating, the overall impact is important. When talking about building need to promoting this.

9 Reports from committee Chairs

9.1 C&Q

Met last week. Spent time on KPIs and attendance. Down on this time last year and where it wanted to be. But balanced by higher retention. Value added and the KPIs relevant to curriculum leaders.

9.1.1 Equality objective - level one and supporting them to achieve. Attendance is an issue here. All other QIP objectives are green or amber and achievable.

9.1.2 Heard curriculum updates and T levels and withdrawal of Btecs.

9.2 Audit

Met on the 29th February and received a report from the internal auditor on risk management. Reasonable assurance with risk

9.2.1 It was raised that all governors should have training for risks which will be done at the next training meeting. Item tracker - 18 items and 11 completed and most outstanding are in hand. IT and cyber security key area. New IT team is planning and getting structures in place to ensure everything is done in the right order so feel well in hand.

9.2.2 Also considered a tender process for internal auditors. External auditors contract renewed last year. Internal auditors are not proactive and lead does not attend meetings and have missed dates. They do not come into College and do work remotely.

9.2.3 Risk management policy discussed and for FB approval.

9.3 <u>Finance</u>

College accounts reviewed at last meeting. Challenging year but still positive. Happy college able to meet funding obligations.

9.4 <u>G&E</u>

Presentation by Debbie Finch and discussed the number of students who need support and where that support comes from with some of the external support that has been withdrawn.

9.4.1 Had robust discussion and felt strongly and action came to register a concern and communicate it externally.

9.4.2 Review documents with surveys staff attendance, diversity, age profile,
The age profile is skewed towards an older profile and spent time discussing why teachers come into sixth form later rather than schools.

9.4.3 Discussed the loss of adult education work but other smaller contracts. ABRI - cooking support. Support for post 50 job seekers so innovation in this area. Good move to diversification.

9.4.4 *Q: Was there a letter written to MP?*

A: Yes it coincided with a request to AoC who provided a standard letter which was personalised. No reply and no acknowledgement.

Q:Mental health side for students in College any recommendations to help or improve these facilities?

A: Debbie Finch went into detail on the services being offered and filled in the gap that is not being provided externally. It is a strong team but under stress due to the level of work that is required. It is a complex area and the increased numbers next year will bring increased needs.

9.4.5 Adrian Waters also discussed the tutorial program and the support this can offer students.
Comment: not all students are happy with the program but it is important to have across all the college.

9.5 <u>Search and Governance</u>
The Chair explained the amendment to the articles that was being proposed to allow governors to stay on for third term.
Articles - vote approved.

9.5.1 Attendance - committees have good representation and full board is generally lower. Discussion on number of meetings and suggestion to remove May full board meeting next year.

9.5.2 Suggestion for next year - full board would be in person only as very hard to have input whereas it does work well in committees.

9.5.3 Succession planning - ask for committees to discuss this and consider who would take over the chair and a discussion in July meeting about moving committee.

9.5.4 The Chair raised a strategic position of College discussion - FE college numbers cut by half in the last ten years. Discussion on the position of the College and whether it is happy small.
Also need to consider the reaction of the governing body if approached by a College merger. Discussed the Southampton College merger.
Student comment: the size of the College is positive.
Will keep on agenda and discuss and if being approached need to be considered.

10 Policies

10.1 Risk Management - reviewed by Audit Committee
Vote approved.

11 Governance Matters

11.1 Report on Governor visits to College
Governors are reminded to complete the visit form for any visits to College.

12 Impact and action review

- Building approved - Important to discuss & understand the issues on building
- Student governor input been very useful
- Important for governors to consider the future (Autumn training suggestion)
- Committee chair reports - important the G&E report and appreciation of the challenges
- Net zero challenge - will come back soon.
- More in depth challenge discussion - away day.

13 AOB

13.1 July meeting will be different format with slightly social aspect and discussion times

14 Date of next meeting - 4th July

Meeting concluded at 1821 and was quorate at all times.