

AQUINAS COLLEGE

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 14 February 2023
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss M Braithwaite, Mr C Green, Mr P Horton, Cllr T McGee and Mr D Pearson,
Miss M Braithwaite in the Chair.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Bailey Vice Principal
Mrs D Blackburn Assistant Principal
Mr T Conlon Clerk to the Governing Body

1. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Miss Braithwaite.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr B Hickey and Mr J Mairs.

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

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Minute 5 (b) – Reclassification of Sixth Form and FE Colleges

Miss Braithwaite asked what were the implications for the college following re-classification. Mrs Blackburn replied that the college was now in the Public Sector and that it cannot borrow money commercially. It is hoped that the college will obtain a grant for the planned additional accommodation. If the application for a grant is unsuccessful the college will use its reserves. In addition HM Treasury want the financial year to end on 31st March which has massive implications for the sector.

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Management Accounts for January 2023 that had previously been circulated. The first full re forecast of the budget had been done for the January Management Accounts. There had been a number of changes already made to the original budget due to large changes in utility prices. Contingencies have been reduced to balance this impact. The cumulative effect of all the changes is still to show an outturn close to the original budget.

The college is on a fixed rate for energy until April 2023. The college has asked a broker to look at what options will be available from April 2023. Cllr McGee advised Governors that the local authority are buying at short term contracts of three to four months at a time and do not want to be locked into long term contracts.

Mr Horton asked that now the college is in the Public Sector why does the Government not fix a rate at which the college could borrow. The Government does have a central lending process that the college can in theory apply for.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the costs for the new build are shown in the Management Accounts as capital and will be up dated monthly.

If Governors had any questions on the January 2023 Accounts they were asked to contact Mrs Blackburn.

RESOLVED: That the Accounts for January 2023 be received.

7. BUDGET UPDATE 2022/2023

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the budget had been re-forecast at the end of January 2023. The main points to note are as follows;

- a) The staffing budget for teachers had been re-forecast to include an estimate of the pay settlement. The support staff budget includes the pay award that was settled in November and backdated to September 2022. There is a contingency of around £116,000 in the staffing budgets.
- b) The utilities budget has been increased by £437,638 and remains an unpredictable area.
- c) The high needs budget income is still being finalised at the budget stage so a prudent estimate of income is included which is often exceeded. The budget has been increased by £252,000.
- d) The budget is running as expected.
- e) The surplus on the budget has decreased from £398,000 to £387,000.

Mr Horton asked if there was a bar on investment. Mrs Blackburn replied that the college does not have an investment policy any surplus is held in deposit bank accounts.

RESOLVED: That the budget position be noted.

8. FUTURE FUNDING METHODOLOGY

Mrs Blackburn introduced the paper that had previously been circulated. The paper gave an overview of the ESFA funding for 2023/2024. The funding is based on the following factors:

- a) Student numbers based on the October 2022 census date

- b) Banding into study program hours
- c) Retention factor
- d) Program cost weighting
- e) Disadvantage funding

A spreadsheet showed how the budget was built up for 2023/2024 along with comparisons for the previous four years. The overall effect is that the college should receive a reduction of £133,285 compared with an increase of £1,332,548 for 2022/2023. The budget for 2023/2024 will be based on a decrease in student numbers, 2,395 down from 2,413, a decrease of 18. The funding overall rate per full time student has increased from £4,542 to £4,642. The funding for level 3 Maths and English has been confirmed at £750 per subject if they are studying a 2 - year programme or £375 per subject if they are studying a 1 - year programme.

9. UPDATE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT – BENCHMARKS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the paper that had previously been circulated. Governors attention was drawn to the table on page 3 of the report where the results show that the college continues to perform well in comparison to other colleges and is a safe and healthy place to work.

From the benchmarking exercise it can be seen that there are high instances of fire in the sector, particularly with arson where 11% of colleges survey had suffered an arson related fire. The college continues to be careful when considering potential arson within the fire risk assessment and attendant security procedures.

Relatively low numbers of near misses were recorded within the sector when compared with the total numbers of accidents. The college would look to promote near miss reporting.

Cllr McGee reiterated that the Health and Safety reports should highlight progress made against the objectives of the Health and Safety policy. The college will revisit these reports to ensure that it is explicit which part of the policy they refer to.

It was agreed that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the committee showing the up to date position.

10. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the current Resources Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. After a full discussion it was agreed that no changes would be made at this moment in time.

11. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE NEW BUILDING

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had appointed an architect, structural and mechanical engineers and electrical contractors. In response to a question from Miss Braithwaite, Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had gone out to tender to firms who had carried out similar work in the sector. He added that at this stage there was no need for Governors to be involved in the process.

A set of plans would be drawn up following a series of meetings with the architect, the next meeting is on 22 March 2023. More information will be available at the Governing Body meeting on 21 March

2023. A decision on the grant application is expected in Spring 2023. The planning application process will probably take between 12-16 weeks if there are no areas of concern.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Health and Safety Policy

The Health and Safety Policy had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Safety Policy be recommended to the Governing for approval.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 6 June 2023 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____