

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 9 March 2022 at 4.00pm

Present physically at SAT HQ: C Higgins, Chair N Savvas, CEO
E D'Souza S Clarke

Present virtually: A Maltpress K Points
D Wildridge, Vice Chair R Murray

In attendance: D Townsend, Health and Safety Manager
G Chittock-Nash, Group Vice Principal Students and Admissions
J Raffel, CFO
R Bamford, Group Vice Principal Data and MI
R Stevenson, Group Operations Director
S Gales, Governance Professional
S Graham, Group HR and Shared Services Director

Apologies: J Wakelam
M Whittingham

Absent: None

1. Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence

C Higgins, E D'Souza, N Savvas and S Clarke declared their roles as Governors of West Suffolk College. K Points declared an interest related to *agenda item 4.ii.* associated with her employment with Abbeycroft Leisure Centre. No other interests were declared in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies were accepted from J Wakelam and M Whittingham.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising from meeting held on 24 November 2021

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had either been completed or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress.

MA1 An HR KPI Report will be provided to each Committee, with additional reports (like Gender Pay Gap) ad hoc to meet statutory reporting deadlines.

MA2 The IT KPIs will be considered by the new Group Director IT.

MA4 The LRC KPIs will be reported to the Educational Excellence Committee.

MA5

4. Executive Board summary report

4.i. Health and Safety Overview

The Committee received and considered the overview report provided which summarised the discussions from the Health and Safety Board meeting on 9 February 2022.

D Townsend noted that, now that Covid-19 rates are lower, the team are focussing on core health and safety compliance and monitoring work.

The Board proposed additions to the Health and Safety policies to specifically cover Educational Trips, Visits & Work Experience. The Committee Chair, as Trustee lead for Health and Safety, to recommend the updated policy to the Trust Board.

Action

DTownsend
SGales

Trustees queried how work is progressing to harmonise policies and procedures across the Trust. D Townsend noted that the Health and Safety policies are getting ever-closer, however some procedures across the Trust still need harmonising.

Trustees queried the reference within the report about capturing student health needs, and asked what the next steps are. D Townsend noted that the next step is to further refine and standardise the process for capturing student need information across the Trust to ensure that appropriate support can be put in place.

Trustees queried how staff health needs are captured. D Townsend summarised how this is captured.

Trustees queried if we are also harmonising our Health and Safety policies and practices across the Group. D Townsend confirmed that we are.

4.ii. **Environmental Sustainability Overview**

The Committee received and considered the overview report provided which summarised the discussions from the inaugural Environmental Sustainability Board meeting on 15 February 2022.

N Savvas summarised the discussions at the Board meeting which was established to develop and oversee the implementation of the Group's Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, aligned to the DfE's strategy with 4 strategic aims:

1. Excellence in education and skills for a changing world: preparing all young people for a world impacted by climate change through learning and practical experience.
2. Net zero: reducing direct and indirect emissions from education and care buildings, driving innovation to meet legislative targets and providing opportunities for children and young people to engage practically with the net zero concept.
3. Resilient to climate change: adapting to mitigate against the worst impacts of climate change in our education and care buildings and infrastructure.
4. A better environment for future generations: enhancing biodiversity and increasing access to nature in and around education and care settings.

And to the Association of College's themes:

1. Delivering green skills and supporting green jobs;
2. Educating students and communities to build a more sustainable future, and; Developing net zero campuses and building resilience to environmental change.

Trustees queried how the Sustainability Centre interactions with the Sustainability Board. R Stevenson confirmed that the Sustainability Centre is a part of the work we are doing (linked to Educating students and communities to build a more sustainable future), whereas the Sustainability Board will be reviewing the Group's progress against its sustainability objectives.

Trustees agreed that the Sustainability centre should report into the Resources Committee through the Sustainability Board, not independently. Trustees noted that the Board is considering many areas of sustainability, some long term and some short term, some urgent and others just important.

R Stevenson noted that working practices across the Group are changing to create a culture with sustainability at its core, to consider the environmental impact of decisions before making decisions and/or purchases.

There is a need for prioritisation. Two long-term planning priorities were suggested and agreed.

(a) Given rising inflation and energy costs and energy supply concerns resulting from the conflict in Ukraine; the Committee needs to consider the Trust's energy strategy to ensure financial savings and environmental sustainability as well as energy independence for greater energy security.

(b) Trustees also noted that the Trust will be expected to become net zero at some point in the future, so the Committee needs to lead on reviewing progress towards

this goal. Trustees noted that, like our property strategy, we need to plan the Trust's journey to net zero to invest appropriately to achieve the ECG's sustainability ambitions.

Trustees asked the Sustainability Board to lead on proposing these strategies for the Group to the Resources Committee and Trust Board.

Sust. Board

Trustees discussed Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form which is a best practice example being supported by the DfE and energy suppliers. R Stevenson to make contact with them to share best practice.

RStevenson

5. **Workforce Update**

5.i. **KPI Report**

The Committee received and considered the paper provided.

S Graham noted there has been an increase in the number of staff employed by the Trust (16 people) though the full-time equivalent is lower (12.65 FTE). Sickness absence remains under the national benchmark of 2.6% at 1.38. The twelve months rolling labour turnover figure is 16.57%, which is lower than the national average of 18.2% and reflects national reports published by that noted that 41% of organisations had seen an increase in labour turnover in the last six months. Recruitment remains high but effective, with 12 vacancies.

S Graham noted that we are piloting the use of Best Companies at OSFC to undertake staff surveys and, following consultation with staff, we are making good progress to implement a Trust wide approach to appraisals.

Trustees commended the Executive for the very positive metrics, which indicates a good staffing culture.

Trustees queried how the Trust Board would know whether staff are over-worked, over-whelmed or over-stretched. S Graham advised that we have a very active relationship with Trade Unions who regularly feedback on staffing concerns, we monitor trends to concerns for staffing absence, stress-related illnesses and concerns cited via the employee assistance programme. Furthermore, we support staff directly through HR's open-door policy and via line managers who feedback any concerns to HR and/or the senior managers. We also support staff via the wellbeing ambassadors

Trustees also commended the KPI metrics used as helpful for Trustees to understand the performance of the Trust. Trustees noted the high number of vacancies being recruited; and asked S Graham to provide more data to support Trustees to understand if there are pinch points or concerns related to the vacancy/recruitment data.

SGraham

6. **Property Update**

The Committee received and considered the paper provided.

R Stevenson noted that we are progressing with the HVAC renewal project; whilst we await the outcome of the Capital Improvement Fund bid.

7. **IT Update**

7.i. **Operational structures update**

The Committee received and considered the paper provided. In future the IT report will be given by the newly appointed Group Director IT.

R Stevenson summarised the projects underway to enhance and upgrade our IT infrastructure and estate and informed that the Trust is strengthening its IT team with a new Group Director IT and a Group Cyber Security lead and Group Networking lead to bring new skills and bridge skill gaps.

8. **Policies**

8.i. Appropriate Policy

The Committee received and considered the policy provided.

S Graham noted that the Trust is required to have this policy under the Data Protection Act 2018 to outline how we collect, hold and use data. This policy has been drafted by the Trust's data protection officer

The Committee **agreed to recommend** the policy to the Trust Board for approval, with the request that the Trust Board delegates future approval of this policy to the Committee.

9. Any Other Business

It was agreed that N Savvas should consider whether it was best use of her time for G Chittock-Nash to attend resources committee.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm