

**Minutes of the Resource Committee meeting held on
Thursday 28th November 2024
Bedford College, Cauldwell Tower, Room 208
17:00**

- Present:** Alasdair Simmons (Chairing on behalf of Cliff)
David Moran
Faheem Mir(online)
Shaun Wilson (online)
Tom Dove-Wallington(online)
Varsha Mistry(online)
Yiannis Koursis (CEO)
- In attendance:** Caroline Biddle (Executive Director of HR)
Gulam Fatima (CFO)
Rachel Nicol (Group Director of Governance)
Sara Gonzalez (Senior Governance Coordinator) (Minutes)
Sheraz Amin (Executive Director of Digital Transformation)

R/36/24 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cliff Wragg (noted to be on an approved leave of absence)

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

R/37/24 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

The Chair opened the meeting with the review of the Action Log. The Committee were content with the items marked complete and these will now be removed from future reports. For future meetings actions believed to be complete will be marked as “proposed to complete” and then removed from future reports.

For the open action on development of the Estates Strategy it was agreed to bring it to the Creative session in April.

Committee members were thanked for accommodating the change in date for the meeting.

ACTION: to review the Estates Strategy on the Creative Session in April.

Attract, Retain and Develop Staff

R/38/24 People & Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2025



The Executive Director of Human Resources (EDoHR) summarised the new Organisational Development & People Strategy. This document focusses on refreshing the existing strategy and to incorporate the Learning & Development side which now sits under her remit. She highlighted:

- The format is the same (different colour pallet) complementary to the Group strategy
- Split of this into the three areas “attract”, “retain”, “develop”

Discussion and questions:

Members mentioned that the objectives of Attract, Develop & Retain are a better way to articulate the strategy rather than the 4 strategic themes we referred to before last year. Nonetheless, they sought to understand how the targets mentioned against each objective related to the strategy or ‘how’ the target will be achieved. As an example, the targets for “Attract” related more to operational efficiency rather than something to do with attracting high-quality and high performing staff.

The EDoHR explained that the document presented is high level and will be shared externally, therefore the information in it won’t be explicit on the “how” as this is covered in the internal business plans. Governors were invited to meet with the EDoHR to understand more of the operational detail.

Regarding turnover (reasons and expectations), TBCG does not have a formal exit interview process, which means it is not easy to measure the reasons behind individuals departing. With planned structural changes, it is expected that turnover will increase and then reduce again. TBCG target is to have a 15% turnover by the end of the Strategy period. A governor commented that in their experience higher turnover in some roles or areas can be planned for and is effective provided it is a rational strategy.

VM believed the document presented (Organisational Development & People Strategy) is good but requested that the strategy is be reviewed annually, to make sure TBCG continues on the right path, thinking of the right targets, and can adjust the strategy to circumstances.

ACTION: CB will be bringing the glide path to next meeting, explaining the how we get there and how it aligns to the strategy.

The Committee agreed to recommend the Strategy to the Board for approval.

Employee relations update [Minute redacted for confidentiality and commercial sensitivity]



The Executive Director of Human Resources provided the latest Key Performance Indicator (KPI) figures as of end of October 2024.

There are 3 KPIs highlighted in red in the list, for the following reasons (it was proposed that these will be removed going forward):

- The Leadership Award in Health & Wellbeing has been suspended at present. We were informed we had met the standard, but unfortunately until the award is 'live' again, we cannot be formally awarded the Bronze.
- New Teacher Support has moved to the Teacher Education team, and our Learning & Development ("L&D") team now work with them in a supporting role rather than leading on it.
- Learning & Teaching coaching workshops are now led by Learning Excellence and again, L&D are in a supporting role for this. There are 9 KPIs highlighted as amber, and this is because the work to achieve them is in the early stages or will be starting in the new calendar year

Discussion and questions:

The Members were confused by the colour coding of the KPIs. The EDoHR confirmed that the colour coding on the current document does not reflect RAG rating as traditionally seen but the red items highlight those measures no longer within the HR remit (the KPIs shown having been implemented in 2024). It was discussed that some of the items should have target levels through the year, to be able to review them better. The lagging indicators (LAG) needs to have a system so they can be managed better. A committee member highlighted some inconsistencies in the KPIs between the Overall strategy and the Organisational Development and People Strategy one. The Executive are working on how the Group's Objectives are tracked through the right KPIs and the right RAG measurements.

The Committee supported the removal of the KPIs in red into relevant departments (no longer HR KPIs) with the exception of the Awards KPI, with assurance given that they would be monitored appropriately.

ACTION: For CB to present the final proposed KPIs with RAG rating at the next meeting.

The Committee approved that the HR KPI report had provided assurance.

R/40/24 Pay award proposal in light of NI and National Living Wage changes

The Chair explains that the Remuneration Committee met on the 14th November 2024 and had discussed the proposal for pay awards specifically in reference to the senior post-holders. The document presented was a reflection of those conversations.



The Executive Director of Human Resources summarised the report providing assurance that the proposed pay increase for TBCG is affordable. The planned award is confirmed to be in line with the budget approved by the Board in July.

Discussion and questions:

Regarding the increase on minimum wage, the members asked what percentage of TBCG workforce is on minimum wage. To this, the EDoHR explained that directly employed by TBCG (including Bedford College Professional Services (“BCPS”) and Bedford College Services (“BCS”) it is estimated to be around 100 people. A number of workers hired through agencies (cleaning, security, etc.) are also understood to be on minimum wage.

The discussion centred on the percentage agreed and previous stated objectives of TBCG, including not having staff members on minimum wage. Members highlighted that the 3% increase is not aligned with the estimated national inflation rate and staff members will be impacted negatively when doing grocery shopping for instance. Further discussion took place on the interplay with the National Insurance increases and inflationary pressures. The EDoHR explained that there is no budget to increase more than 3% for all staff members right now and a decision to give a higher pay rise would result in cuts elsewhere. The CEO explained that the Association of Colleges is a member organisation and not a pay representative body and that the aim for the Group is to drive performance and success internally which can then be reflected in future awards.

The Committee approved assurance was received that the pay award proposal is affordable and in line with the budget approved by the Corporation.

The Committee was comfortable with the management decision to align the eligibility date to the academic year.

R/41/24 Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

The CFO summarised the paper which provided an updated Anti-slavery and human trafficking statement to be reviewed and recommend to the Board aligning with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Discussion and Questions:

The members requested assurance that the suppliers TBCG uses are also following the same guidance and recognised the challenges of putting the right checks in place to avoid reputational damage. The CFO and CEO provided information on how the supply chain operates and confirmed a significant amount of activity is accounted for through awarding body relationships and through use of a procurement framework.



DM pointed out the importance of Procurement Act 2023 to individuals and business and the potential for a future internal audit was raised. The CFO is working through the implications of the Act.

When we are looking to assess companies, the team check the paperwork and websites and review contractors.

The Committee agreed that the paper provided assurance, confirmed the statement is recommended to the Board for approval and signature of AS and YK in due course.

R/42/24 Staff survey

The Executive Director of Human Resources showed the outcomes of the annual staff survey carried out in June 2024. She flagged the following:

- The most satisfied role was that of Leadership at 85%, but that is to be expected as an outcome on any survey. When excluding this group Professional Services become the most satisfied groups with a rating of 84% for teaching and 83% for non-teaching.
- The least satisfied group was Teachers with a 73% rating, though the results of all areas had improved on last year's survey.

Focus groups carried out with those in Teacher roles showed the following 3 issues affected their satisfaction most:

- Communication
- Resourcing
- Consistency of words, actions and behaviours

Discussion and Questions:

A governor commented that teachers are the 'core engine' and 'lifeline' of delivering our purpose. Their satisfaction level is at 73%. How do we improve their satisfaction? Would it make sense to include specific KPIs for teacher satisfaction in our objectives for "Develop" and "Retain" in the Organisational Development & People Strategy? The EDoHR explained that the main issue found in the focus groups was their voice and how they feel about being heard and listened to.

Historically, Learning Centres have been very engaged and very positive with their feedback. On this survey the results were lower than usual. DM requested more information about it and the EDoHR confirmed that they had a better experience regarding Covid to the rest of the Group (so had a higher satisfaction starting point). The students in learning centres also have a different age demographic and it is more about training. It is also a small cohort of staff (almost single digits). The CEO also flagged that they are reviewing the Learning Centres positioning, as they are very happy in their own area but they are 'disconnected' from the rest of the Group.



Members raised the question of how to help staff members to get involved with the survey and respond to it to increase participation. Unfortunately, as flagged previously, individuals tend to fear that if they speak the truth there will be a reprimand and that people will know it was them, as well as they have the belief that nothing will change, even if they flag the issue. TBCG has the target of 85% engagement. Some members considered this to be high and gave examples of lower expectations in industry. Nonetheless, the CEO aspires for staff to have more ways of communicating, not just the survey, and for the Executive to be able to listen to them.

The Committee agreed that the paper offered assurance.

R/43/24 Mandatory training update

The Executive Director of Human Resources informed the Committee of the new structure and platform for oversight of the mandatory training and the completion rates within these as at the end of October 2024.

Safeguarding was the main training that Ofsted was focused on during their last visit this week. TBCG is expecting the table showed to be completed mandatorily by all staff members.

Discussion and Questions:

Members asked what is the consequence of not completing the training and the CEO explained that whilst historically the approach had not been consistent this is being looked at, in particular in respect of induction and mandatory training requirements. Another point raised was promotions; brilliant teachers get promoted and they are not necessarily brilliant managers. It has been recognised that they need support and training as managers. TBCG is reviewing the onboarding, the offboarding and the mandatory trainings.

Members questioned if Executive had thought of linking the pay rise to the training? To this, the CEO and EDoHR replied that the policy of withholding pay increases for this reason has not been applied historically more than a handful of times. They want to get to a place where they can be on top of everyone's training and make it clear that the pay award goes to the ones that are compliant, and not to everyone independently.

The Committee agreed that the paper provided assurance.

Maintain financial strength & continuous capital investment

R/44/24 Indicative 2023–2024-year end position

The CFO provided an indicative financial outturn for the year ending 31 July 2024, subject to the successful completion of the audit, with comparisons to previous years.



The CFO explained key movements including in income, and gave the example of achievement of the Adult Education Budget. More achievement means more funding and more funding. All in all, 2023/24 was a good year and we continue focusing on quality this year.

Discussion and questions:

Members flagged that the intended appendix (Financial Statements) was not on the portal for Governors' review. The CEO confirmed these had now been received from the auditors and governors were assured that the paper will be uploaded and ready for the Board meeting.

The Group Director of Governance flagged that there is an Audit Committee happening next week (3rd December) and invited the members to send through any questions on the Financial Statements once uploaded so they can be asked during the meeting.

The Committee agreed the paper provided assurance

R/45/24 Management accounts

The CFO highlighted the following points:

- TBCG income is higher than the targeted one.
 - Linking the point to progressing our students and supporting them.
- Note for new governors on lagged funding: the funding for additional students does not come all in one academic year. TBCG will receive 50% this year and 50% the following.

Discussion and Questions:

FM pointed that TBCG used to have something called College Information Report to show the learner volumes that underpin the income lines. The high-level summary is excellent; however, it would help if the learner information is also highlighted to avoid questions. The CFO took note of this request.

Also, FM asked how is the in-year growth of £2.5m distributed across the group? To this, the CFO replied that she does not have the specific numbers of where the funding is going in front of her, but it can be shared if any Governor would like to review. She is certain that part of it will be going towards supporting the larger amount of English and Maths students this year, apprenticeships and improving the recruitment process. The Finance team is reviewing the areas that have grown from previous years and checking if the current resources are enough or if they need to invest on them. Regular performance reviews of areas are carried out.

The Committee Chair reported that he had picked up in the pre meeting that the "minimum cash position" is the end of year cash position required for reporting to the bank. The report narrative will be made clearer.

The Committee agreed that the paper provided assurance.

R/46/24 Medium Term financial strategy update

The CFO outlined the planned approach for updating the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, detailing timelines and activities for alignment with related strategies and the annual business planning cycle.

Discussion and questions:

DM pointed out that when a company has a good year, tends to let go and not focus as much as they should. The CFO assured the Committee that she is fully in control and remains focused on the key priorities (students, staff). CEO remarked that he doesn't believe that TBCG was lucky in delivering successfully against budget, but that the team worked hard to manage the position. To give an example of keeping the focus, the Executive are evaluating the CPD requests against the Group's priorities.

The group also discussed the Technology centre. The CFO confirmed that it is going to be worked on and that is already part of the expected spend and in the budget.

Some of the planned spend is however being deferred pending the Estates Strategy.

The ESFA letter confirming TBCG's outstanding financial health, both for 2023-2024 and on projections for the current year was noted by the Committee and will be presented to the Corporation.

ACTION: for RN/SG: Letter should go into the Board as a separate item.

The Committee agreed that the paper and ESFA letter offered assurance.

R/47/24 Update on capital projects and formation of Estates Strategy

The CFO provided an update on the current projects as well as the intended strategy for the College Estate. The new Group Director of Estates & Facilities starting in January 2025 will be tasked with driving this forward.

Questions and Discussion:

The CFO offered assured that TBCG wants to focus on:

- Assessing and managing current gaps
- The immediate issues
- Our future planning and strategy.

The Committee discussed the conversations with local authorities in Dunstable for future of learning facilities and potential solutions to be able to provide education required by the local communities and to meet the skills needs.

The Committee agreed that the paper provided assurance.



R/48/24 Financial regulations update

The CFO presented updates to the group's financial regulations for the board's review, the regulations having been previously approved in July 2024.

Questions and Discussion:

FM would like for the management accounts be sent across on a monthly basis going forward. The CFO assures that it can be done (except November and August). Historically, where submitted these have been uploaded to the governor portal and this can be tightened up.

ACTION: RN/SG/GF to upload management accounts to portal monthly where these are available.

The Committee agreed that the paper provides assurance
The Committee confirmed their recommendation of the Financial Regulations to the Board for approval.

R/49/24 Health and Safety action plan

The CFO highlighted that the H&S hire is a strong appointment in their knowledge and experience and they will start in February.

Discussion and questions:

No discussion/questions raised.

The Committee agreed that the paper offered assurance.

R/50/24 Digital Roadmap

The Executive Director of Digital Transformation summarised the progress of the Digital Roadmap. He highlighted that the final line has been completed. From the list attached, Number 18 (Implement Digital Labs) will be in launched later than expected (2 weeks delayed).

The Committee was particularly pleased to note that cyber essentials accreditation has been renewed and that connectivity at Corby Sixth Form has been secured.

Discussion and questions:

The members only had one suggestion on presentation: the table could have been divided better between summer tasks and 2024 completion tasks or by adding a column on due date. The EDoDT made a note of it.

The Committee agreed that the paper provided assurance.



R/51/24 Self-reflection and special projects

Support area SARs for noting

The Committee chair provided some background on the SAR process. Governors are invited to the SARs meetings (support areas or teaching). They are very helpful to see how we do our self-assessment process. Governors are encouraged to join (half day slots in various campuses). The professional area SARs had been included in the pack for information

R/52/24 Assurance, Governance, Regulatory

Decisions taken under delegated authority

The Group Director of Governance provided a verbal update to the Committee to confirm where delegated authority is used under the financial regulations to provide approval for certain transactions. It was confirmed that there had not been any exercise of delegated authority since the previous report.

No comments were raised and the update was noted.

R/53/24 Minutes of the previous meeting and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting on 12 June 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Part B discussion [minutes redacted for confidentiality and commercial sensitivity]

End of meeting: 20:25