

Resources, Culture & Impact Committee MINUTES

Date	28 th September 2023	Time	15:00-17:00
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Venue	EC205 – ECAT House, Eastbourne Campus
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Chair	Andy Davy
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<p>Membership – Andy Davy (Committee Chair), Becky Cooke (Committee Vice Chair), Rebecca Conroy (CEO & Principal), Alexandra Cheeseman, Graham Cook, Ashley Heminway, Ian Mehrrens</p> <p>In Attendance – Hannah Caldwell (Chief Operating Officer), Sam Brasier (Executive Director of Finance), Lauren Crawley (Director of People), Belle Howard (Director of Governance – <i>minutes</i>)</p>

Quorum: The meeting was quorate throughout.
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Apologies: Graham Cook, Richard Pearson (<i>Prospective Governor</i>)
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#	Item	Action
1)	<p>WELCOME & APOLOGIES</p> <p>1.1 The RC&I Committee Chair opened the meeting at 15:02 with a warm welcome to colleagues.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Graham Cook and Richard Pearson (Prospective Governor).</p> <p>1.3 The RC&I Committee Chair shared the following introductory update on the approach for the RC&I Committee moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members were encouraged to thoroughly review all meeting papers in advance of the meeting and to actively participate in discussion as appropriate. A copy of the Management Accounts would continue to be distributed on a monthly basis to support early review. To maximise opportunities for strategic discussion, detailed questions would be invited in advance of meetings, with a view for Lead Officers to cascade answers and any supplementary information, as required. These questions and answers would be incorporated into committee meeting minutes as an appendix, to further evidence Governor scrutiny, support and challenge. Opportunities to leverage input from Staff and Student Governors would be prioritised wherever possible. All Governors were reminded of the need for confidentiality, due to the sensitive information that would routinely be discussed in these committee meetings. Lead Officers would be encouraged to assume that papers had been read and therefore should focus their updates on key strategic priorities during meetings. 	15:02

2)	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 15:12 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest received.																													
3)	MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS & MATTERS ARISING 15:13 3.1 Approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors considered the minutes from the following meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People & Culture Committee – 17th May 2023 ○ Finance Committee – 15th June 2023 • Governors agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of what was discussed. 3.2 Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People & Culture Committee (17th May 2023): <table border="1" data-bbox="177 1014 1369 2022"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Owner</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Due Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4.1.1</td> <td>LC</td> <td>Include a breakdown of teaching vs support staff for the 'turnover' and 'reasons for leaving' data points in the next People Services Report.</td> <td>Complete – 'Reasons for leaving' by job category had been added to the 2022/23 dashboard. 'Turnover' by job type will be included for 2023/24 data.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.3.1</td> <td>LC</td> <td>Update the Key Performance Indicators table within the People Services Report to include an additional column detailing any +/- movement between reporting periods.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.1.1</td> <td>BH</td> <td>Update the Resources, Culture & Impact Committee Terms of Reference to incorporate the changes requested by Governors.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.2.1</td> <td>IM</td> <td>Propose that the current practice of joint annual meetings be discontinued, following alignment conversations with members of the Finance Committee and Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.2.2</td> <td>BH</td> <td>Update the draft Schedule of Governance Meetings to indicate proposed meeting locations and formats for 2023-24.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.1.1</td> <td>HC</td> <td>Update the Health, Safety & Welfare Policy to detail 'storage' in Section 6.5 (Hazardous Substances) and include 'Governors' in the list of visitors to the college (Section 5.12.4).</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Owner	Action	Due Date	4.1.1	LC	Include a breakdown of teaching vs support staff for the 'turnover' and 'reasons for leaving' data points in the next People Services Report.	Complete – 'Reasons for leaving' by job category had been added to the 2022/23 dashboard. 'Turnover' by job type will be included for 2023/24 data.	4.3.1	LC	Update the Key Performance Indicators table within the People Services Report to include an additional column detailing any +/- movement between reporting periods.	Complete	6.1.1	BH	Update the Resources, Culture & Impact Committee Terms of Reference to incorporate the changes requested by Governors.	Complete	6.2.1	IM	Propose that the current practice of joint annual meetings be discontinued, following alignment conversations with members of the Finance Committee and Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee.	Complete	6.2.2	BH	Update the draft Schedule of Governance Meetings to indicate proposed meeting locations and formats for 2023-24.	Complete	7.1.1	HC	Update the Health, Safety & Welfare Policy to detail 'storage' in Section 6.5 (Hazardous Substances) and include 'Governors' in the list of visitors to the college (Section 5.12.4).	Complete	
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- **Finance Committee Meeting (6th March 2023):**

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
3.3.2	RC	Update the 'ESCG Partnership Framework' document to include an additional point related to the opportunity for students to supplement their learning experience through the college's subcontracting relationships.	Complete

- **Finance Committee Meeting (15th June 2023):**

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
6.1.1	SB	Update the draft budget summary slide to include details of the percentage variance between the draft budget and the FY23 forecast.	Complete
6.1.2	SB/HC	Explore options for benchmarking the college's non-pay costs in the draft final budget for 2023-24, following an alignment discussion with the Deputy FE Commissioner.	Complete – As a consequence, the college was now engaged in a pilot benchmarking exercise led by the FE Commissioner's Office and focused on key business functions. The college had also participated in a separate Estates benchmarking project, also led by the FE Commissioner's team.
7.2.1	SB/HC	Revisit the assumption within the Five-Year Strategic Plan related to utility costs, having taken further advice from the college's energy broker.	Complete – Current contract expires in September 2025 and relies on hedging prices for both gas and electricity, which has been built into the five-year plan assumptions. Options for gas and electricity supply beyond September 2025 under review.
8.1.1	NH	Share a copy of the Avison Young Commercial Advice presentation slides with the Director of Governance, with a view for these to be distributed to Finance Committee Members.	Complete

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
10.2.1	SB	Confirm whether the 'Glass Plains' insurance claim had since been resolved.	Complete – £38K was sent to the college on 9 th August 2023 and the claim was now closed.
11.4.1	BH	Update the Governance Improvement Plan to amend the RAG rating for the Five-Year Financial Strategy item to Green/Amber.	Complete

Becky Cooke joined the meeting at 15:14.

4) **FY23 ENROLMENT & BUDGET UPDATE** **15:14**

4.1 Update on Enrolment & Budget Changes

- The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update:
 - Student enrolment for 16–19-year-olds had been strong, with enrolment numbers currently 885 ahead of the funded learner numbers of 4443, equating to a growth level of 120%.
 - High growth levels had been experienced across all campuses and many curriculum areas, with Construction, Hair & Beauty, Travel & Tourism and the Pathways Engagement provision having proved particularly popular.
 - As a result of these unprecedented growth levels, waiting lists had now been opened for some curriculum areas.

- The following discussion then occurred:
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – what had caused such unusually high levels of student enrolment growth this year?** The CEO & Principal explained that the subject areas that had seen the highest levels of growth had been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in prior years, and interest in these areas had subsequently reemerged. Similarly, also as a result of the pandemic, there had been a large number of young people who were NEET (not in education, employment or training), who had since opted to re-engage with their learning and development at the college.
 - The CEO & Principal also shared the following update:
 - Growth for the A Level provision had been relatively static.
 - In contrast, there had been rapid growth across the college's T Level curriculum.
 - Lower than expected GCSE results had also impacted course choices for some students.
 - A notable volume of students had opted to travel to the college from the Kent area, due to the limited local offer available nearer to home.
 - Moving forward, the college would continue to target and engage with those NEET young people, with a view to attract them to the college's varied apprenticeship and vocational provision.

- **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – how had the staff been impacted by this rapid growth in student enrolment?** The Staff Governor reflected that the college had understandably been very busy, with some classroom space shortages being encountered, though creative solutions continued to be explored. That said, staff had remained both buoyant and positive throughout this time.
- **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – how had the student experience been impacted by the unprecedented growth in student enrolment levels?** The Student Governor also noted that the campus had been busy, with various classroom spacing challenges encountered, particularly for the English and Maths provision. As such, it would be important to plan for this in readiness for the next academic year.
- **The Chair of the Board asked – was the college now at the point of being full to further student enrolment requests?** The CEO & Principal explained that waiting lists had been opened for certain provisions, which was unusual for the college. In the meantime, recruitment activity was being prioritised, with a view to provide additional Support Services resource. Where skilled staff had previously left the college, recruitment activity had included invitations for former staff members to return, where appropriate.
- **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – had significant cost challenges arisen, given that the college was funded through a lag funding methodology?** The Executive Director of Finance advised that the college’s forecasting had been revisited, noting that the college may incur additional costs in response to higher than anticipated growth levels. The college was currently awaiting further guidance from the DfE on an in-year funding adjustment that may be made to the college. Similarly, the college would need to determine the probability of retaining increased funding levels longer term as a result of the lagged funding, the impact of which would be seen in the next two years.
- **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – had there been a significant impact on cashflow as a result of this rapid growth?** The Executive Director of Finance explained that the impact remained manageable, following robust early planning, though any anticipated changes to pay and non-pay costs would be reflected in forthcoming reforecasting efforts.
- **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – were there any significant concerns for People Services?** The Director of People noted that the college was currently using higher than usual numbers of agency staff whilst they worked to develop a pipeline to recruit additional construction-based teaching staff.
- **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – would the college’s strategy be based upon an assumption of increased growth levels moving forward?** The Chief Operating Officer reflected that it was not just local demographical factors that had led to the current levels of increased growth for the college. As such, the assumptions detailed within the Five-Year Financial Plan would be revisited to include other priority factors.
- **The Chair of the Board asked – would the increased levels of growth also be reflected in the space modelling work that was currently underway for the Estate Transformation Programme?** The Chief Operating Officer confirmed it would be.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Board asked – what was the usual dropout rate at 42 days past enrolment? The CEO & Principal advised that this typically ranged between 6-8%, though last year had been particularly volatile and the range was higher. ○ The Chair of the Board advised he would shortly be issuing a communication to staff, to thank them for all of their hard work throughout this unusually busy period, which had resulted in such significant growth for the college. ○ The CEO & Principal advised that additional testing would be conducted to enable a better understanding of the key areas that were currently under the most pressure as a result of increased growth levels. ○ The Staff Governor advised that the college’s Pastoral Tutors had been invaluable in engaging directly with students to support their enrolment process, with a view to support retention efforts. 	
5)	<p>FINANCE UPDATE 15:28</p> <p>5.1 Management Accounts & Budget Forecast – September 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ahead of the meeting, Governors raised various detailed and strategic questions related to the Management Accounts, against which the Lead Officers had provided comprehensive answers. ● The Executive Director of Finance presented the following update: <hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <p>EXEC SUMMARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Corporation agreed the Original Budget in July 2022 and Governors agreed a revised budget in December 2022. ■ The current forecast surplus for the College is £1.157m which is £1.093m less than the revised budget position. ■ Forecast income has increased by £1.16m compared to the revised budget with the main movements being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduction in Apprenticeship income £0.4m ■ Reduction in Tuition Fee delivery £0.4m, mainly through expected Co-Funded students being Fully Funded ■ Increase in AEB delivery £0.6m ■ Increase in HE delivery, mainly sub-contract £0.8m ■ Increase in Other Income £0.97m including SDF2 and Multiply projects ■ The main movements on expenditure are an increase in staffing costs £0.91m and operational costs (inc Utilities) £1.34m. Overall expenditure forecast is £2.25m over the revised budget. ■ The year end cash position was £4.6m at the end of July of which £3.8m is capital& T-Level allocations received by the DfE in year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There would be a variance between the month 12 accounts and the final Year End Financial Statements and work was underway with External Audit to finalise the current position. ○ The revised budgeting approach that had been previously outlined would not be reflected in the 2022-23 position, but would apply for the 2023-24 academic year. 	

- The college was now very close to achieving its Adult Education Budget (AEB) target and as such a claw-back was not expected for 2022-23.
 - The college had stabilised its non-pay budget, though this continued to be at risk of inflationary pressures.
 - Given the year end cash position of £4.6m, the college’s bank balance was comparatively healthier, year on year.
 - **Income** – it was anticipated that there would be less EU funding or one-off projects in the current academic year.
 - **Expenditure** – a much more stable budget projection was anticipated related to operations and maintenance costs in the year ahead.
 - **Variance** – work was ongoing to minimise the levels of variance between income and expenditure moving forward.
 - **Income Tracker** – the green, amber and red figures detailed the varying levels of risk associated with each level of income projection.
 - **Cashflow** – moving forward, both operational and non-operational cashflow information would be included in presentation updates.
- The following discussion then occurred:
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – could a further update on the AEB position be presented at a subsequent meeting?** The Executive Director of Finance confirmed that this was feasible, noting that the position would be illustrated more clearly against the 2023-24 budget. Additionally, RAG ratings would be aligned more directly to the Board’s KPI measures, ensuring a much more objective assessment of the year’s performance.
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – would the percentage variance between income and expenditure be more clearly reported moving forward?** The Executive Director of Finance confirmed that the new format management accounts would present this more clearly and would also be supplemented with appropriate commentary.
 - **The Chair of the Board reflected on the level of variance between income and expenditure and asked – was the college operating significantly beyond its means?** The Executive Director of Finance clarified that the college continued to carry a surplus at this time.
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – how could the quality and reliability of forecasting be improved?** The Chief Operating Officer reflected that the college had seen significant variations in income from the DfE, which would mean that the college would continue to experience a degree of fluctuation in forecasting. The Executive Director of Finance advised that moving forward, there would be a careful review of run rates to strengthen forecasting at the college.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – who was held accountable for budget and forecasting figures? The Chief Operating Officers advised that the Finance Team continued to partner closely with Budget Holders to ensure close monitoring of figures, which had been supplemented with a newly established income tracker tool. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – was a KPI in place related to ‘Expected Surplus’? the Executive Director of Finance reflected that it may be possible to include this, whilst referencing the FEC benchmark of 1%. The Chief Operating Officer also advised that surplus had been reflected in the Five-Year Financial Plan, so it should be relatively straight forward to include an additional KPI on surplus, with a view to track against this moving forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Action 5.1.1</u> – Include an additional KPI related to ‘Expected Surplus’, with a view to report the college’s position in the next reporting period. ○ Governors reflected that the Income Tracker table included in the presentation was more useful as an internal report for the college. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Action 5.1.2</u> – Exclude the Income Tracker slide from Management Account Presentation updates moving forward. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – what steps needed to be taken to transition the college to a ‘Good’ financial health grade? The Executive Director of Finance reflected that much of the work that was already happening to enhance budgeting, forecasting and cashflow management practice would directly contribute to this outcome. Similarly, the additional funding that would result from the recent growth in student recruitment would also significantly assist in improving the college’s current position. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – what was the cost of the college’s current debt? The Executive Director of Finance committed to provide an update at the next meeting. The Chief Operating Officer explained that the college currently had three main sources of debt: 1) Barclays Loan, 2) DfE Loan and 3) DfE Recovery, which related to a legacy subcontracting arrangement. The Chair of the Board reflected that the college may need to consider its options for re-financing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Action 5.1.3</u> – Provide a detailed breakdown of the current cost of debt to the college and associated recommendations related to re-financing options. <p>5.2 New Format Management Accounts 2023-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governors considered the proposed new format Management Accounts for 2023-24 and agreed that it met their needs and was fit for purpose. ● The Chair of the Board reflected that it would be important to adopt a suitable colour palette, to ensure that it was accessible to all users. Governors agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Action 5.2.1</u> – Ensure that the new format Management Accounts for 2022-23 utilises a fully accessible colour palette. 	<p>SB</p> <p>SB</p> <p>SB</p> <p>SB</p>
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	<p>5.3 Five Year Financial Plan Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further to the draft Five Year Financial Plan that was discussed at the last Finance Committee meeting, the budget had been updated to reflect an increased surplus position. ○ Additionally, now that the delivery route had been agreed for the Estate Transformation Programme, any related budgetary and cashflow implications would shortly be incorporated into the plan. ○ Further to the three capital funding streams that had been allocated by the DfE earlier this year, it had since been confirmed that these funds could be utilised in part for the Estate Transformation Programme and existing enabling projects. ○ The assumptions detailed in the plan, would continue to be revisited as appropriate. ○ Further to the forthcoming Strategy Day on 13th October 2023, the Board would be determining its risk appetite for a range of scenarios. As output of this exercise, key assumptions linked to the Five-Year Financial Plan would be updated and the plan subsequently finalised, pending Board approval. • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – should both a trading and non-trading Five Year Financial Plan be developed for the college? The Chief Operating Officer clarified that the cashflow for both would be clearly delineated within the Five-Year Financial Plan. 	
6)	<p>FINANCIAL HEALTH GRADE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">16:00</p> <p>6.1 Discussion Paper – Key Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following discussion occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – what additional help and support was needed from the RC&I Committee on this important issue? The Executive Director of Finance requested confirmation that the Management Accounts presentation continued to be helpful in its current format. Governors confirmed that it was a helpful update. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – had there been any impact to students that had arisen from the recent ‘Requires Improvement’ financial health grade? The Executive Director of Finance confirmed that there had not been a direct Impact to students, and reflected that moving forward, the key priority would be to ensure that the correct resources were in place in response to increase growth in student recruitment levels. Additionally, another key priority would be to ensure that Finance Business Partners worked closely with Budget Holders to better understand needs and priorities. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – how were debt write-offs managed at the college? The Executive Director of Finance explained that depending on the level, approval for debt write-offs were overseen by the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee and Board. Additionally, the college were obliged to notify the DfE, again depending on the level of debt write-off. ○ The Chair of the Board asked – would there be benefit in engaging with the Student Council to update the student body on the college’s financial health grade? The Student Governor reflected that it was likely that there would be a high level of interest from students in receiving an update on this important area. The Executive Director of Finance suggested that it would be helpful to work closely with the Student and Staff Governors to ensure that any updates to the Student Council were pitched at the correct level. Governors agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 6.1.1 – With input and support from the Student and Staff Governors on tone and message, present an update at the forthcoming round of Student Council meetings on the college’s Financial Health Grade. 	SB/HC
7)	<p>CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE 16:09</p> <p>7.1 Estate Transformation Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The college were currently working closely with LocatED to complete space modelling assessments. ○ It had now been confirmed that a portion of the DfE Capital Funding that had been allocated to the college could be used to fund the programme in part. ○ A key next step would be to complete a cashflow analysis for the programme. <p>7.2 Enabling Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Green Centre of Excellence (Ore Valley) – there had been extensive delays in finalising the Grant Funding Agreement with Hastings Borough Council (HBC). Work had been undertaken to address concerns related to two key clauses, which had since been resolved. As a result of these delays, the original project schedule had been impacted and discussions were currently underway with HBC to agree a new project timeline. Once agreed, the Grant Funding Agreement would be finalised and signed. ○ Institute of Technology (Ore Valley) – this project continued to proceed at pace and was currently in the Design phase. It was anticipated that the project would complete by early January 2024 and would include the delivery of newly re-designed classroom space at the Ore Valley site. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – had any work been undertaken to engage with students about the new facilities and provision that these enabling projects would provide? The CEO & Principal advised that a communication plan was currently under development, which would ensure effective communication and engagement with both staff and students. 	
8)	<p>PAY FRAMEWORK & 2023-24 PAY AWARD 16:12</p> <p>8.1 Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At its last meeting in July 2023, the Board approved a 5% pay award for all staff, excluding senior leaders, effective from 1st September 2023. ○ The AoC recently recommended a 6.5% pay award level for the FE sector. ○ Negotiations were underway with the trade unions, in view of an ongoing national ballot for strike action, which was currently due to close on 10th October 2023. ○ The college was currently exploring options for a potential pay award for its senior staff members as well. ○ Several teaching staff had received a further increase on top of their 5% pay award, also effective 1st September 2023. • The CEO & Principal then shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussions had been ongoing with FE Sussex, with a view to explore the feasibility of the college making up the shortfall in staff pay, relative to other colleges. ○ The trade unions had also submitted a request for a 6.5% pay award, along with a commitment for the college to implement a Workload Agreement. ○ As a result, it was anticipated that a 6.5% pay award would be proposed to the Board, with a view to bring the college in line with other local colleges. • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – would a further 1.5% on the original 5% pay award be incorporated into future forecasting for the college? The Executive Director of Finance confirmed that it would. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – would the 6.5% award also apply from 1st September 2023? The Executive Director of Finance also confirmed that it would. ○ The Chair of the Board asked – does the college’s plans to offer a pay increase for senior leaders exclude Senior Post Holders? The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that it did, as pay decisions for Senior Post Holders were the responsibility of the Board. 	

9)	<p>PEOPLE SERVICES REPORT</p> <p style="text-align: right;">16:19</p>	
	<p>9.1 The Director of People shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People Services KPIs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ % Staff Turnover (17.4%) – down from 21.9% in the prior year. ○ Sickness absence levels, days per year (6.4) – 0.4 above the KPI target, though 0.1 below the prior year. ○ % Apprenticeship levy deployed (19) – up from 15 in the prior year, though well below the target of 25. ○ Single Central Record and Risk Assessments (100%). ○ % Staff declare EDI data (84.5%) – up from 79.3% in the prior year. ● Apprenticeship Levy – whilst there had been increased use of the apprenticeship levy, further work was needed to meet the KPI target, which was currently resulting in the college returning approximately £4K in funding each month. A range of options were being explored, including transferring a portion of the apprenticeship provision to local charitable organisations and small & medium enterprises. ● Sickness Absence – the distribution of short and long term sickness absence at the college had shifted. Work was underway in 2023-24 to better understand the cost of sickness absence, ensuring that staff were well supported, whilst ensuring that difficult decisions were made as appropriate. ● Time to fill rate data – this would be reported following the launch of a new system. As such data would be collected in the 2023-24 academic year. A KPI target of 90 days would apply for this metric, which tracked from the date that the vacancy was posted, through to the point at which an offer was made. ● Recruitment & Retention – People Services continued to prioritise recruitment for open roles. The forthcoming AoC Conference would include a session on the recruitment of younger staff, which was expected to provide useful insights for the college. ● Performance Management – a new appraisal programme had recently been launched called MyReview, which enabled a more agile approach to performance management through continuous development and appraisal conversations across the year. <p>9.2 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The RC&I Committee Chair reflected that the 90-day period proposed for the ‘time to fill rate’ metric seemed overly long, and asked – should this include notice periods, i.e. to reflect the actual start date? The Director of People reflected that notice periods varied significantly depending on the role type, so it would be difficult to set an appropriate timeframe, unless a tiered approach was adopted. The Chief Operating Officer suggested that the purpose of the metric was to assess the effectiveness of recruitment administration activity and therefore it was not meaningful to include notice periods in the metric criteria. Governors agreed. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RC&I Committee Chair raised a concern about the potential reputational risk associated with ongoing underperformance against the mandatory training metric. Governors agreed. The Director of People explained that this remained a priority focus area for the college. As such, some courses, such as Safeguarding & Prevent, had already transitioned to in-person delivery. Work was also underway to explore the feasibility of delivering Health & Safety training in-person as well. Additionally, the college had plans to invest in new mandatory training software to enhance the user experience. Finally, a new process was now in place to manage staff who persistently failed to complete their mandatory training. • The Chair of the Board asked – what consequences were being applied for persistent offenders? The Director of People advised that the following process was currently in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One Month Overdue – a member of the senior leadership team would write to the individual to remind them to complete their training. ○ Two Months Overdue – the member of staff would be required to meet with the Director of People to explore any barriers to them completing their training. ○ Three Months+ Overdue – a range of consequences would apply, up to and including a written warning and if appropriate, dismissal. • The RC&I Committee Chair asked – does the college measure student completion of mandatory training? The CEO & Principal confirmed that this was measured by the college and results were reported to the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee. • The RC&I Committee Chair asked – what steps were being taken to increase staff engagement with the annual survey? The Director of People explained that the timing of the survey had been changed from the end of the Summer Term to mid-way through the Autumn Term. This was also supplemented with wide reaching communications to maximise awareness and engagement. Additionally, an external provider had been appointed to execute the survey and therefore provide additional assurance to staff around anonymity. • The Staff Governor reflected that the Employee Assistance Programme remained a highly valued resource for staff, however, there had been mixed feedback on the value of the MyExperience Rewards Programme. • The Chief Operating Officer advised that a new item had recently been added to the Risk Register related to Staff Recruitment & Retention, in recognition of the additional pressure that rapid growth in student recruitment levels had placed on staff resourcing. 	
10)	<p>NEWHAVEN MARINE WORKSHOP UPDATE 16:48</p> <p>10.1 Denton Island Lease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operating Officer directed participants to the supporting paper and shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initially, the college had planned to surrender its lease at Denton Island, following the transition of the college’s provision to the Marine Workshops site. 	

- However, a side agreement from 2013-14, which was tied to a previous 14-19 diploma programme unexpectedly came to light. This agreement revealed the site's value to the college, prompting a delay in surrendering the lease. The site was currently occupied by SCDA under various licenses, and services there continued to be maintained.
- Work was currently underway with Lewes District Council (LDC) to explore options for the site's future use, with further details to be presented to the Capital Development Board for consideration at a subsequent meeting.
- The following discussion then occurred:
 - **The Chair of the Board asked – had further details on the side agreement been obtained?** The Chief Operating Officer advised that it was anticipated that the side agreement was likely to have legal standing, though further enquiries were being made with East Sussex County Council. Additionally, External Audit had been engaged to assess the associated financial value.
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – did the college have the right to sub-let the Denton Island site?** The Chief Operating Officer clarified that the position was complex, as two separate leases were in place for the site. As such, enquiries were ongoing.
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – was the side agreement attached to one of the leases?** The Executive Director of Finance advised that the side agreement was linked to one of the buildings at the Denton Island site. The Chief Operating Officer explained that the associated value of the side agreement resided in the leases.
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – what was the length of the leases?** The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that both leases had a 125-year duration.
 - **The RC&I Committee Chair asked – was there a notice period on the Licence to Occupy with SCDA?** The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that there was.
 - The RC&I Committee Chair reflected that it was appropriate for the associated paper to also be referred to the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee. [Governors agreed.](#)
 - **Action 10.1.1 – Include the Denton Island Lease Update paper as a late inter-committee referral to the ARaC Committee, ahead of its next meeting on 5th October 2023.**
 - Governors also considered the benefit of conducting a combined site visit and RC&I Committee meeting at the Marine Workshops site in the Spring Term.
- The Chief Operating Officer also shared the following update on the Marine Workshops site:
 - A 'Tenancy at Will' with LDC had now been successfully established.
 - Significant progress had been made in preparing the space for teaching over the summer break.

BH

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ However, there had been minor issues related to Wi-Fi and plumbing, which had caused a slight delay in accommodating 16-18 year old students at the facility. ○ The Marine Workshops campus was on the verge of being fully operational, with final confirmation received that the Wi-Fi provision was now functional. The physical space had been fully furnished and was well organised, creating a conducive learning environment. ○ All students were expected to be on site from 2nd October 2023, totalling approximately fifty students across the 16-18 and adult provisions. 	
11)	<p>GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 16:39</p> <p>11.1 The Director of People shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All quartiles detailed in the Gender Pay Gap Report had reflected an increase for female staff members in 2022-23. ● The college continued to struggle in attracting male staff into lower quartile roles. ● Three staff had received performance related pay in the reporting period – 2 men and 1 woman. ● One college role continued to attract a performance related bonus, which was planned for review in 2023-24. The process for honorariums and acting up allowances was currently under review. ● A substantial job evaluation and pay review exercise was underway, with a view to ensure that vacancies were correctly advertised and staff were paid appropriately for the role that they were carrying out. ● The newly established appraisal programme (MyView) would ensure targeted development to encourage internal progression opportunities for all staff, with particular focus on the development of those in lower quartile roles. <p>11.2 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The RC&I Committee Chair asked – had staff been consulted on the key benefits that mattered to them? The Director of People confirmed that this was a key question within the last staff survey. 	
12)	<p>POLICIES & KEY DOCUMENTS 16:53</p> <p>12.1 Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Director of Governance outlined the following key updates to this procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Amendments to the list of mechanisms for engaging with staff and students. ○ Amendments to reflect new the Board & Committee structure for 2023-24, in terms of oversight of Student and Staff Voice. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Details included, related to 2022-23 Board activity in further embedding Governor oversight of student voice in its decision making. ● The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Board noted that some of the items listed related to staff and student engagement led by the college, rather than mechanisms for obtaining their views. Governors agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 12.1.1 – Update the ‘Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students’ to list only those items that provided a mechanism for staff to share their views. ○ The Chair of the Board requested that feedback be sought from staff and students on the draft ‘Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students’ document. Governors agreed. ○ The CEO & Principal suggested that Staff Think Tanks and Student Council meetings could be used as useful forums in which to gather feedback from staff and students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 12.1.2 – Gather feedback from staff and students on the draft ‘Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students’ document. ● Governor agreed to defer recommending this item to the Board for approval, pending the requested updates and inputs. <p>12.2 College Financial Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governors noted that this policy had been deferred to the next meeting, pending publication of the updated College Financial Planning Handbook by the ESFA. 	<p>LC</p> <p>LC/BH</p>									
13)	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS 16:56</p> <p>13.1 There were no further items raised for discussion.</p>										
14)	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING 16:57</p> <p>14.1 Governors noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 30th November 2023, 15:00-17:00, which would be a virtual meeting.</p>										
15)	<p>LIVE COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT 16:58</p> <p>15.1 Five survey responses were received from Governors, as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="162 1937 1348 2132"> <thead> <tr> <th>#</th> <th>ASSESSMENT QUESTION</th> <th>RESULT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Was the agenda sufficiently balanced between core governance business and strategic priorities?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Where the papers succinct, with clarity in the information being communicated and the action required by Governors?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	#	ASSESSMENT QUESTION	RESULT	1.	Was the agenda sufficiently balanced between core governance business and strategic priorities?	100%	2.	Where the papers succinct, with clarity in the information being communicated and the action required by Governors?	100%	
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#	ASSESSMENT QUESTION	RESULT
3.	Did you have all the information you needed to fully participate in discussion and decisions?	100%
4.	Was there sufficient time to debate priority items in depth?	100%
5.	Were you satisfied that decisions were arrived at in a proper manner?	100%
6.	Was the student experience at the heart of decision making?	100%
7.	Did the Chair facilitate the meeting effectively, enabling adequate focus on strategic priorities and creating an environment where a range of perspectives were considered?	100%
8.	Were opportunities created to invite input from Student and Staff Governors?	100%
9.	Any comments or suggestions?	1 comment*
<p><i>*It was an excellent launch of RC&I - excellently chaired and lots of discussion to support Lead Officers in their preparation of papers for future meetings.</i></p>		
16)	CLOSE	16:59
16.1 The meeting closed at 16:59.		

Action Summary

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
5.1.1	SB	Include an additional KPI related to 'Expected Surplus', with a view to report the college's position in the next reporting period.	30 th November 2023
5.1.2	SB	Exclude the Income Tracker slide from Management Account Presentation updates moving forward.	30 th November 2023
5.1.3	SB	Provide a detailed breakdown of the current cost of debt to the college and associated recommendations related to re-financing options.	30 th November 2023
5.2.1	SB	Ensure that the new format Management Accounts for 2022-23 utilises a fully accessible colour palette.	30 th November 2023
6.1.1	SB/HC	With input and support from the Student and Staff Governors on tone and message, present an update at the forthcoming round of Student Council meetings on the college's Financial Health Grade.	30 th November 2023
10.1.1	BH	Include the Denton Island Lease Update paper as a late inter-committee referral to the ARaC Committee, ahead of its next meeting on 5th October 2023.	Complete
12.1.1	LC	Update the 'Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students' to list only those items that provided a mechanism for staff to share their views.	Complete
12.1.2	LC/BH	Gather feedback from staff and students on the draft 'Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students' document.	17 th November 2023