

WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Woking College held on
Wednesday 5th July 2023 at 5.00pm remotely via Teams

Present: Gary Botha
Erica Ehoru
Brett Freeman Principal
Alastair MacAulay
Anne Middleton
Mike Mulheron
Rosh Sellahewa Chair of Finance & Audit Committee
Tim Stokes
Andy Williams

In Attendance: Fiona Munday Director of Finance & Estates
Barbara Maude Clerk to the Board of Trustees

Item	Agenda Description	Action
STANDING ITEMS		
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest Apologies had been received from Ben Smith, Cullum Mitchell and Jonathan Miles.</p> <p>From senior management, apologies had been received from the Deputy Principal, Nuweed Razaq.</p> <p>No Trustee or member of senior management declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest in the item on the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that this was a special meeting convened to discuss one main agenda item which was the approval of the 2023/24 Budget.</p> <p>It had not been possible to approve the 2023/24 budget at either the Finance and Audit Committee meeting on 15th June 2023 or the Board meeting on 28th June 2023 as management were waiting on the results of an appeal against the current funding allocation for 2023/24. Management had submitted a business case to the ESFA in April 2023 based on exceptional case criteria to challenge the current 2023/24 ESFA 16-19 funding allocation. The grounds of the challenge related to the impact on the College’s data of the cyber-attack that had occurred in June 2020.</p>	

	<p>The College had built an exceptional business case around the various implications of the cyber-attack. As part of the business case, the College had also asked for two years of non-lagged funding, on the assumption the growth in student numbers exceeded ESFA expectations, as the College believed the cyber-attack had impacted on recruitment in 2022/23.</p> <p>The College had just received notification that they would receive an additional £53k to the original funding allocation. Whilst management would continue to appeal the decision, the draft budget had now been re-worked to include the additional funding. The revised draft budget, incorporating that change, was now presented to the Board for approval as agenda item 2.</p>	
STRATEGIC ITEM		
<p>2.</p>	<p>Budget 2023/24 & 2 Year Financial Forecast</p> <p>The Finance Director presented to the Board the revised budget for 2023/2024 and the 2-Year Financial Forecast.</p> <p>Based on current figures, and allowing for the modest increase in the funding allocation, following the ESFA’s review and moderation of the College’s business case the College proposed, for Board approval, the Budget for 2023/24 which was a deficit budget.</p> <p>The revised budget now indicated an operating deficit of (£261,759) increasing to (£315,454) in 2024/25 and then reducing to (£128,229) by 2025/26.</p> <p>The Finance and Audit Committee had previously looked carefully at the sensitivity analysis provided by the Finance Director. The Committee had also reflected on the drop-in student numbers experienced in 2022/23; the increase in energy costs and general inflationary pressures.</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee highlighted that based on the forecasts, the College would drop below the agreed £600k reserves position by 2025/26.</p> <p>Both the Board and the Finance and Audit Committee had previously discussed the submission of a deficit budget and had concurred that in all the circumstances this was the appropriate and only course of action.</p> <p>Therefore, the Board fully supported the presentation of a deficit budget, noting that the submission of the Budget Forecast Return (BFR) to the ESFA within the next 14 days would satisfy the Board’s requirement under the Academy Trust Handbook of its obligation to notify the ESFA that a deficit budget was being proposed.</p> <p>It was also noted that the Board had previously approved delegated authority for the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee to sign off the BFR by the July 2023 deadline.</p>	-

	<p>The Board resolved: To approve the 2023/24 Budget and 2 Year Financial Forecast.</p>	
3.	<p>Any Other Business There were no other items to discuss.</p>	
4.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 14th September 2023 at 4.15pm. The Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 5.20pm.</p>	